

Review Slides

Linkage Institutions

Ch. 9 - 12

Spring 2019

Big picture:

- **Linkage institutions** (i.e., media, IGs, political parties, and elections) help connect people to policy.
- Social movements — e.g., the Tea Party, #MeToo, Occupy Wall Street, etc. — also provide opportunity for participation and influence.
- These actors often compete — Madisonian faction v. faction.

Elections and campaigns

- We the people use elections to hold politicians accountable.
- Ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation.

Voting rights

Who gets to vote: dictated by the states, subject to the protections of the “voting amendments.”

- 15th (race)
- 17th (direction election of Senators)
- 19th (sex)
- 23rd (residents of DC get 3 Electoral College votes)
- 24th (no poll taxes in federal elections)
- 26th (age)

Models explaining voter behavior

- **Rational choice**

- What is in the voter's own best interests

- **Retrospective**

- Should person/party be re-elected based on record?

- **Prospective**

- Voting based on promises

- **Party-line**

- Voting based on candidates' party affiliation

Voter turnout

- Nature of election and structural barriers can predict differences in voter turnout.
 - Nat'l elections have higher turnout than state
 - Presidential elections have higher turnout than other elections
 - Voter registration, ID laws can depress participation
 - Voting incentives and fines can increase participation
- Factors affecting choice:
 - Party affiliation is #1 predictor of **HOW** someone will vote; education #1 predictor of **whether** someone will vote
 - Candidate characteristics
 - Political issues and candidates' positions
 - Demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, etc.)

Elections and campaigns: Campaign finance rules

- The bottom line:
 - individuals and PACs may give \$ to candidates, subject to limits per candidate per race.
 - corporations, unions, and super PACS may NOT give \$ to candidates but **may spend unlimited sums** of \$ on political speech of all kinds.
 - This is the real significance of ***Citizens United***.
 - Must be “**independent expenditure**” spending.
 - contributions must be disclosed, but 501(c) “social welfare” groups can make anonymous (a/k/a “dark money”) contributions.
 - candidates can spend unlimited amounts of their own money.
 - foreigners cannot contribute to US candidates.

Elections and campaigns (cont.)

Impact of primary system on presidential campaigns:

- Weaker party control (parties can't dictate who wins a primary or caucus)
- Favors early states — frontloading — which means that...
- ... media coverage is key, as are ...
- ... money and having a well-known personality.
- Two-party system is further entrenched — get publicity, access to more voters by running in R or D primaries.

Parties

Roles

- In elections
 - Recruit and nominate candidates (note shift from party bosses to primaries).
 - This has led to shift to **candidate-centered campaigns**.
 - GOTV efforts, voter registration drives
 - Offer label and other info about a candidate; prepare party platforms; communicate info to voters
 - Raise and distribute campaign funding
- In governing
 - Parties provide access to gov't. We elect the people we think will best represent us. Pals must pay attention to us or lose re-election.
 - Structure for legislative efforts (majority party controls House absolutely; not quite the absolute control in the Senate but still much more powerful than minority)

Parties (cont.)

- Disfavored at the outset of our country but an unavoidable part of the process now.
 - Can help clarify issues, moderate extreme views.
 - But can lead to hyper-partisanship and gridlock.
- Today we have a two-party system: Ds and Rs
 - Ds thought to be more “pro big gov’t” but it really depends on the issue
 - 3rd parties, yes, but main contribution is to offer new ideas.
- **Why 2 main parties?** Some ideas:
 - Winner-take-all plurality system of elections in presidential and Congressional elections
 - Ballot access issues
 - Incorporation of 3rd party’s ideas renders 3rd party less important (ironically)

Parties (cont.)

- Base v. “rank and file” voter
 - Base more ideological; rank and file more independent.
 - **Primary elections cater to the base; general elections cater to the rank and file (more centrist) voter.**
 - Delegates to a party’s convention typically will be from the base.
- Know which groups are likely to belong to which party (i.e., Dems have majority support from blacks, women, unions, big city dwellers, young people, etc.; Reps have support from whites, wealthy, southerners, older people, etc.)
- Structure of parties
 - RNC and DNC, each with their own chairperson, but **little control over state and local political organizations.**
 - RNC and DNC control the conventions (although states control delegate selection rules and process; lots of variations)
 - RCCC and DCCC (fundraisers in Congress)

Parties (cont.)

- Trend: More independents.
 - A “critical” or “realignment” election is a significant and lasting switch from one party to another
 - A “dealignment” is when significant numbers of voters leave all parties.
- **Reasons for decline of two-party system** (in addition to front-loaded primaries):
 - Pendleton Act (no hiring/firing for political reasons)
 - Hatch Act (no campaigning while at work)
 - Australian ballot
 - Greater reliance by candidates on new communication technology, consultants, pollsters, data management, thereby reducing need for parties
 - Dissatisfaction with two main parties
 - Open primaries

Interest groups

- Differences between parties and IGs:
 - Parties are **vote** maximizers (goal is to get their candidate elected), IGs are **policy** maximizers (goal is to get their policy adopted).
 - Thus, parties are advocating for a wide range of issues; IGs focus on a much narrower set of issues.
- IG work protected by First Amendment (free speech and freedom of petition clauses)
- Some are single-issue, some ideological/social movement seeking improvements in society more broadly.

Interest groups (cont.)

Participate in political process by —

- Educating policymakers (and, to a lesser degree, the IG's members)
- Drafting legislation
- Mobilizing grassroots efforts
- Framing issues
- Monitor policymakers

Are part of “**iron triangles**” and “**issue networks**”

Interest groups (cont.)

Tools:

- **Information. The #1 tool of lobbyists.**
 - May be 1-on-1; may be grassroots; may be astroturf
 - May come in form of draft bills or regs
 - May be simply info about a certain industry
- Campaign contributions. IGs will have PACs or super PACs.
- Lawsuits (either as a party or by filing an “amicus curiae” brief)
- Endorsements/ratings
- GOTV efforts

Interest groups (cont.)

- Rules governing IGs
 - Must register with Congress as a lobbyist
 - Must comply with campaign finance laws
 - No bribes, gifts, etc. to gov't employees
 - Post-employment bans on lobbying (know the term “**revolving door**”)
- Limits on effectiveness (pluralism, media, “**free rider**” problem, etc.)
- Some downsides of IGs:
 - may push for policy contrary to gen'l interest;
 - some groups can't afford representation and thus have unequal access

Media

Roles:

- **Gatekeeper** — they help set the agenda
- **Scorekeeper** — often in the form of “horse race journalism”; stories often will report on polls.
- **Watchdog** — reporting on wrongdoing, policy stances, etc.

Democratic debate and level of political knowledge are impacted by —

- increased media choices — more choices can lead to more information or it could lead to the media outlets competing through sensationalism
- Ideologically-oriented programming — overt bias in news stories can provide distorted view of an issue
- Consumer-driven media outlets — these can reinforce existing beliefs, contribute to competition through sensationalism
- Uncertainty about credibility of news sources — may undermine confidence in democratic process and policy

Media (cont.)

- Equal time rule. Today, it largely means sell ad space at same rate.
- Regulation of media
 - FCC — an independent agency; regulates technical, structural, and content-related aspects of the media.
 - Right of reply rule
 - Prior restraint — we don't like it. Acceptable in narrow circumstances, like threats to national security, obscenity, speech likely to incite violence.
 - Libel v. slander
 - Shield laws

Media (cont.)

- Bias is a big issue.
 - Media typically thought of as liberal; certain outlets today have sought to provide a balance.
- Role of leaks and trials balloons
- Limits on media's effectiveness (selective attention, relative importance of an issue to me, growing problem with "fake" news)

Media (cont.)

Trends:

- Internet and its impact on politics
 - Low publishing costs facilitate “narrowcasting”
 - Easier to raise \$
 - Easier to organize activists
- **Candidate-centered campaigns**
 - Greater use of sound bites
 - Focus on “horserace journalism” and “gotcha journalism”

Kahoot, Quizlet, & 2 Guys

- Political parties: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/cbcf506f-3dc9-4cd6-82ce-1007db15d9f3>
- Campaigns and elections: <https://create.kahoot.it/#quiz/412271ce-7dc0-4da3-8885-a212d1cac617>
- Campaign finance: <https://quizlet.com/205085980/campaign-finance-flash-cards/new>
- Media: <https://quizlet.com/510757/government-chapter-10-flash-cards/>
- Two Guys:
 - Parties: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXJcmFeIZBY&list=PLE7BA4D521708F298&index=8>
 - Campaigns and elections: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcd67HgIYzU&index=9&list=PLE7BA4D521708F298>
 - Interest groups: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDeBuhIQdYk&spfreload=10>