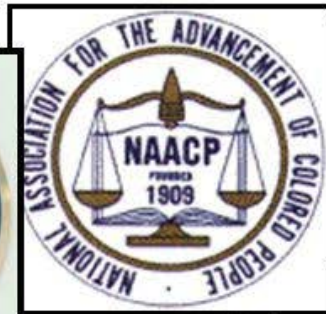
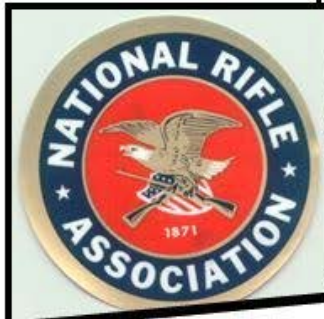


Interest Groups



American
Medical
Association

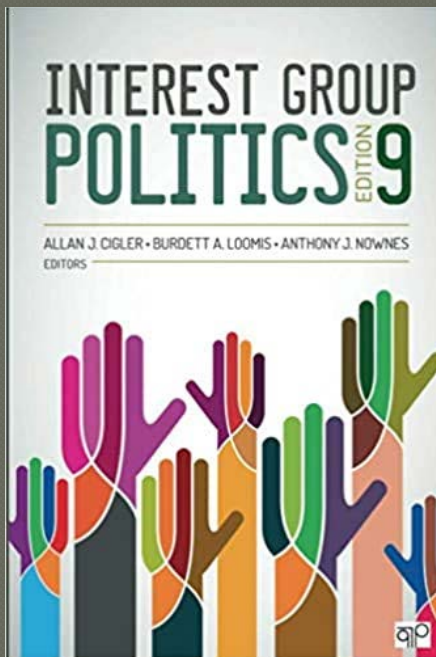


The power to make it better.™

Interest Groups

Interest Groups

The United States has the greatest number of political interest groups of any democracy.



Interest group: A collection of people who share certain views on public matters and work to shape public policy to their benefit

Which **INTEREST GROUPS** do you (or might you someday) belong to?

The complex block contains a definition of an interest group at the top. Below the definition is a collage of logos for several prominent interest groups: the National Rifle Association (NRA), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), AARP, the Portland Business Alliance, the Oregon Legislative Council on Education (OLCV), the Oregon State Bar, OSPIRG (Oregon State Political Interest Group), and the Oregon Medical Association (OMA). At the bottom of the block is a question in yellow and white text: 'Which INTEREST GROUPS do you (or might you someday) belong to?'

Interest Groups

Any group can become a political interest group.



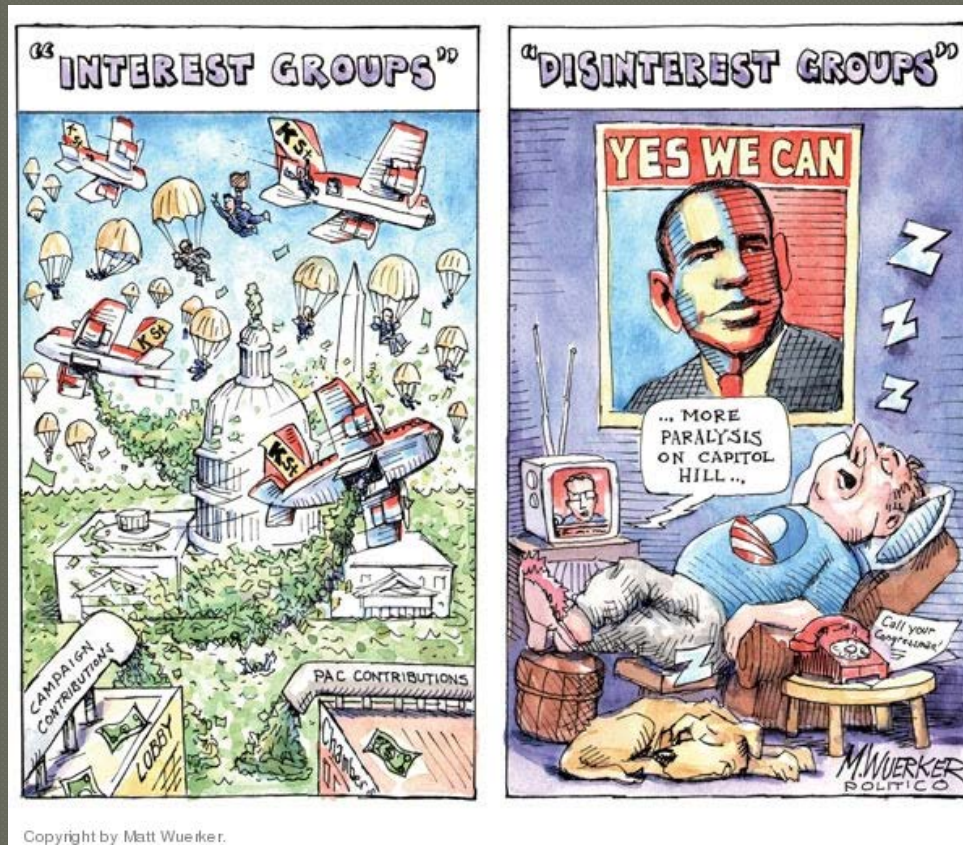
Interest Groups

Organized interests provide a linkage between public opinion and government policy.



Interest Groups

Although they play a similar role to political parties, they do not try to capture elective offices.



Copyright by Matt Wuerker.

Interest Groups

Early Group Theories and Theorists (Famous Theorists)

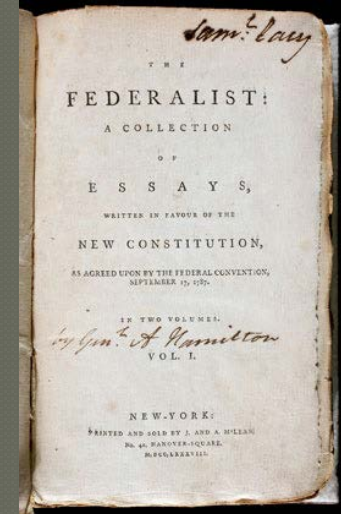
Interest Groups

1. James Madison

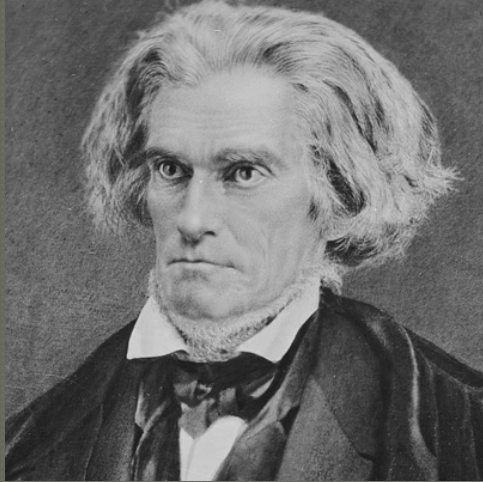
Recognized special interests as “factions” and believed that the Constitution and size of the expanding nation would keep them in check (a good thing!)



The Federalist,
1787

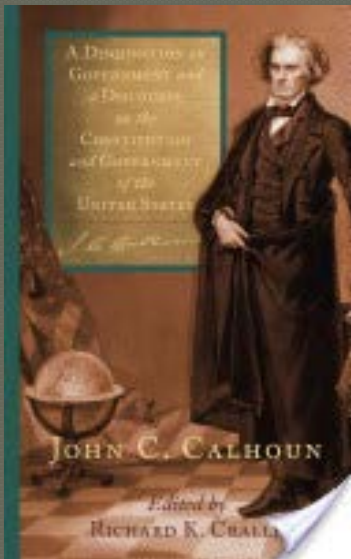


Interest Groups



2. John C. Calhoun

Against numerical majorities; proposed the theory of “concurrent majority.” A majority of each interest would have to approve a decision before it could take effect.

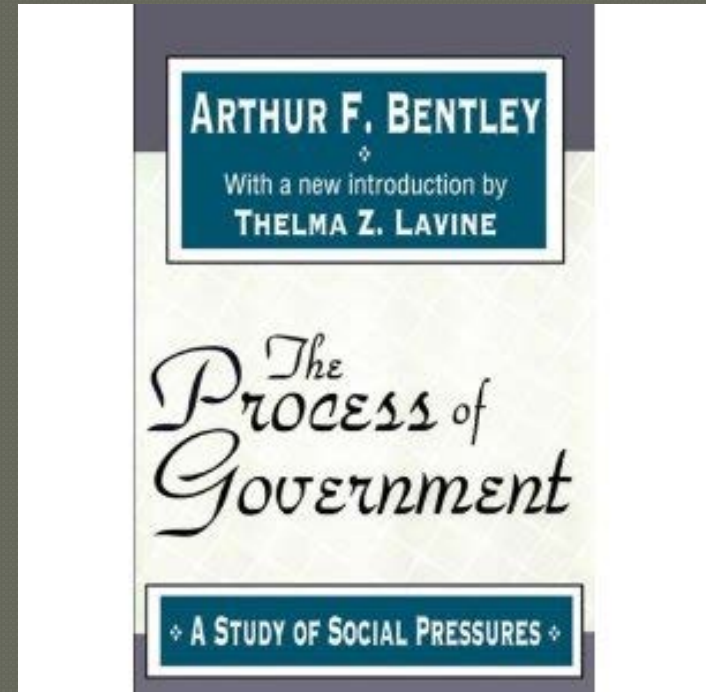


A Disquisition on Government,
1853

Interest Groups

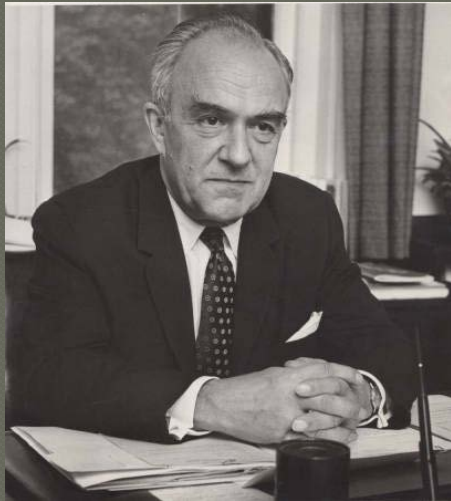
3. Arthur F. Bentley

Held an uncompromising belief that group behavior explains everything in political science.



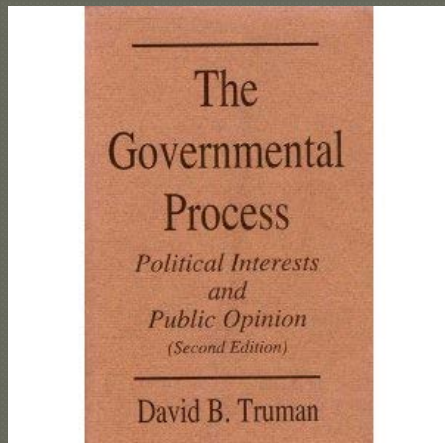
The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures, 1908

Interest Groups



4. David B. Truman

Similar to Bentley, added the idea of a “latent” group which will form in response to “offending” groups and the theory of “overlapping” group memberships.

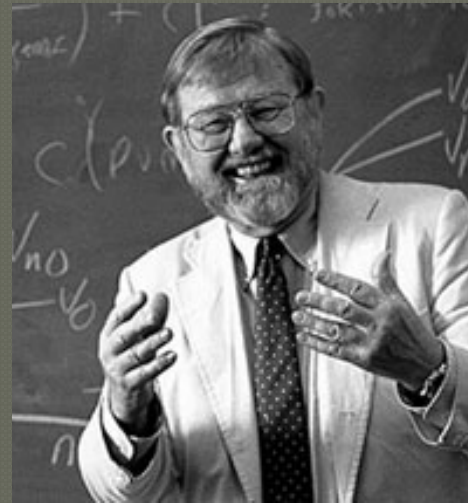


1951

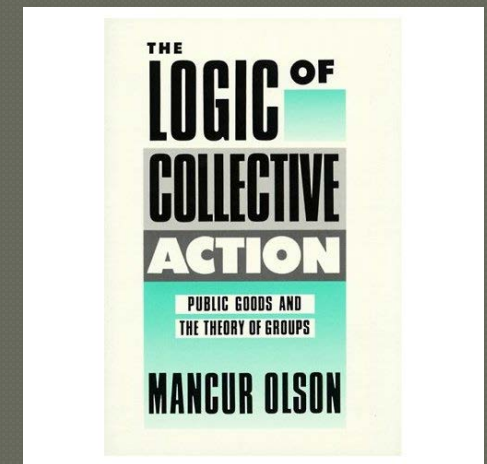
Interest Groups

5. Mancur Olson

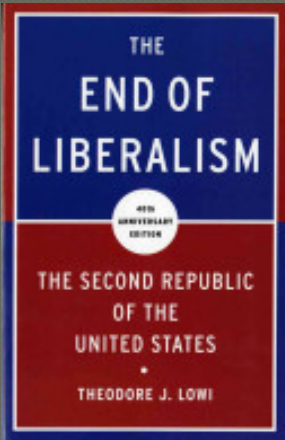
Approached the idea of interest groups from the rational self-interest perspective. He was more concerned with *why* individuals join groups and the “free rider” problem. Unlike Truman, who believed groups arise spontaneously, Olson suggests groups must attract members by providing tangible benefits.



1971



Interest Groups



1979



6. Theodore J. Lowi

Charged that the American government had become so intertwined with the influence of political interest groups, it could no longer assert its legitimacy as a government, and cannot provide guidance of impartial, authoritative laws or render final, definitive decisions.

Interest Groups

Newer Theories

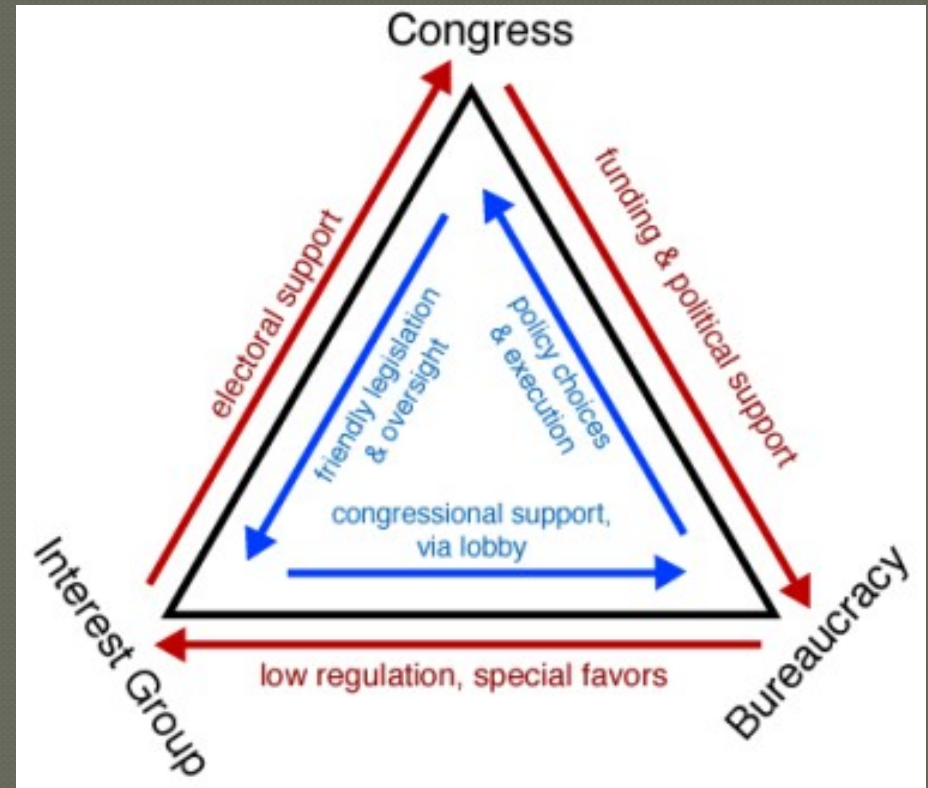
TRUMP HAS ONE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

YOU! THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Interest Groups

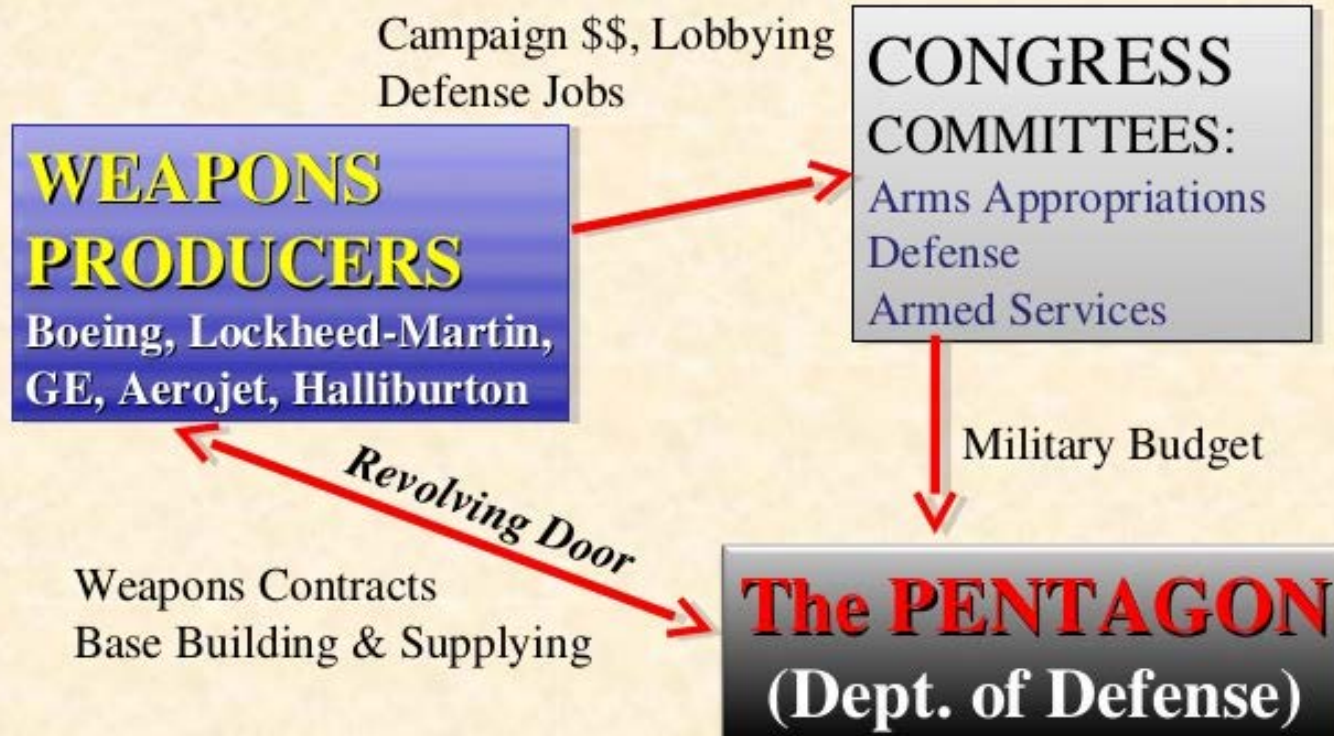
1. Subgovernments

A.K.A “iron triangles”: or “cozy triangles.” This occurs when interest groups form alliances with legislative committees and agencies that deal with the issues of importance to them. These triangular relationships have become subgovernments in which all parties work to protect each other.



Interest Groups

The **DEFENSE IRON TRIANGLE** The Military-Industrial Complex



Interest Groups

2. New Politics

Tends to be working away from the notion of explaining American politics by looking at self-interested groups. Fragmentation of government institutions has made it possible for *policy entrepreneurs* to free themselves from the interest group struggle and to activate wider (or narrower) public interest.



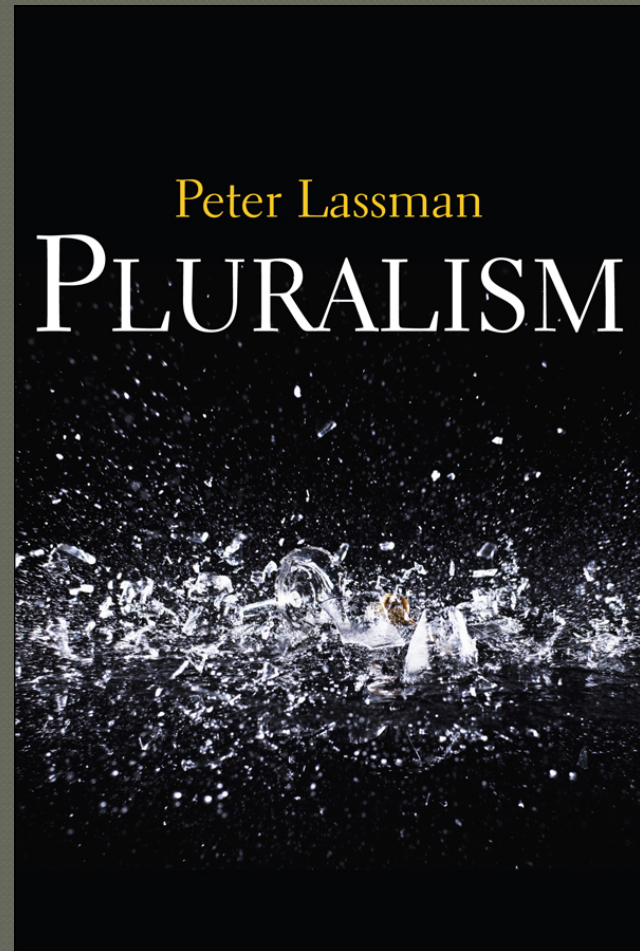
Interest Groups

Interpretations of the Political System

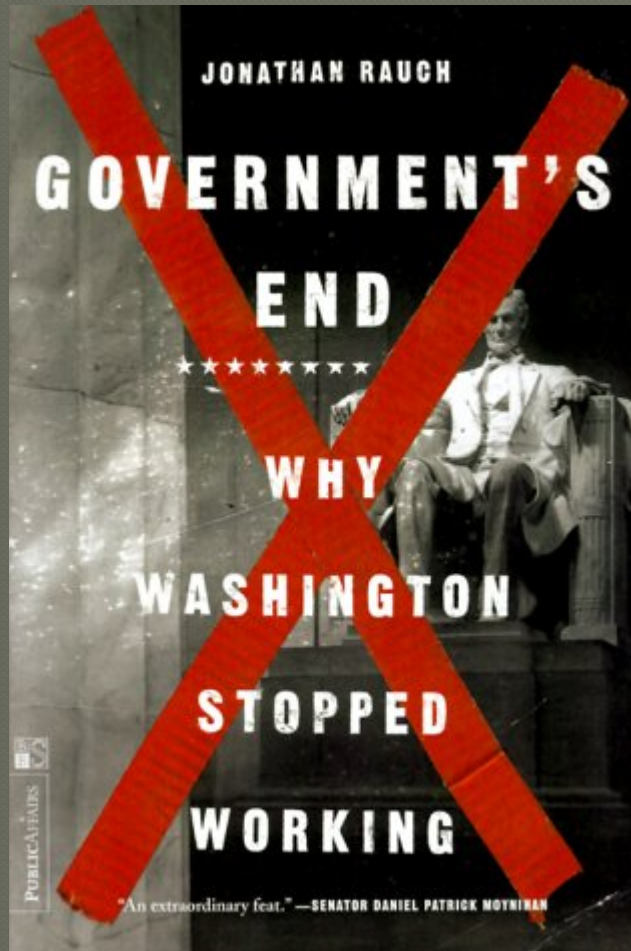
Interest Groups

1. Pluralism

Many interests are active politically and compromise between them leads to policy decisions.



Interest Groups



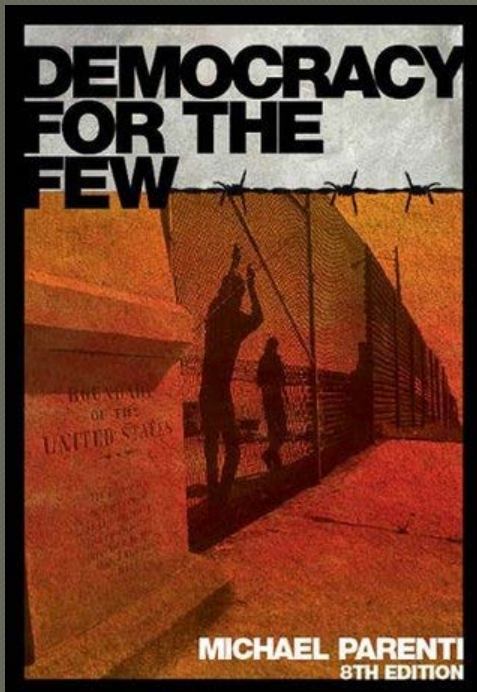
2. Hyperpluralism

What happens when these same interests become politically powerful and unwilling to compromise.

Interest Groups

3. Elitism

Political systems are actually dominated by only a powerful few...



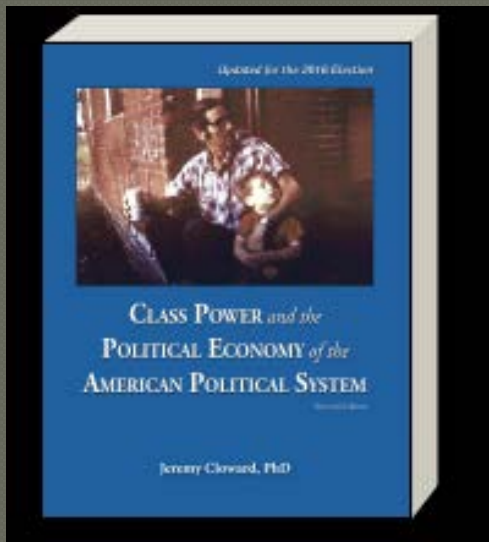
a. Pareto – non-governing elites fighting with governing elites.

b. Mills – elite class comprised of three institutional orders: government, military and business. Criticized for not defining or identifying the ruling elite.

c. Parenti – solved the above problem with his 1995 book, *Democracy for the Few*.

Interest Groups

4. Elitism



Another excellent source for examining elitism is Jeremy Cloward's study, *Class Power and the Political Economy of the American Political System*. (Professor of Political Science, DVC!)

Interest Groups

5. Corporatism

Describes a system of formal relationships that have developed between economic organizations and government agencies.



Interest Groups

Internal Group Dynamics

Interest Groups

1. Leadership

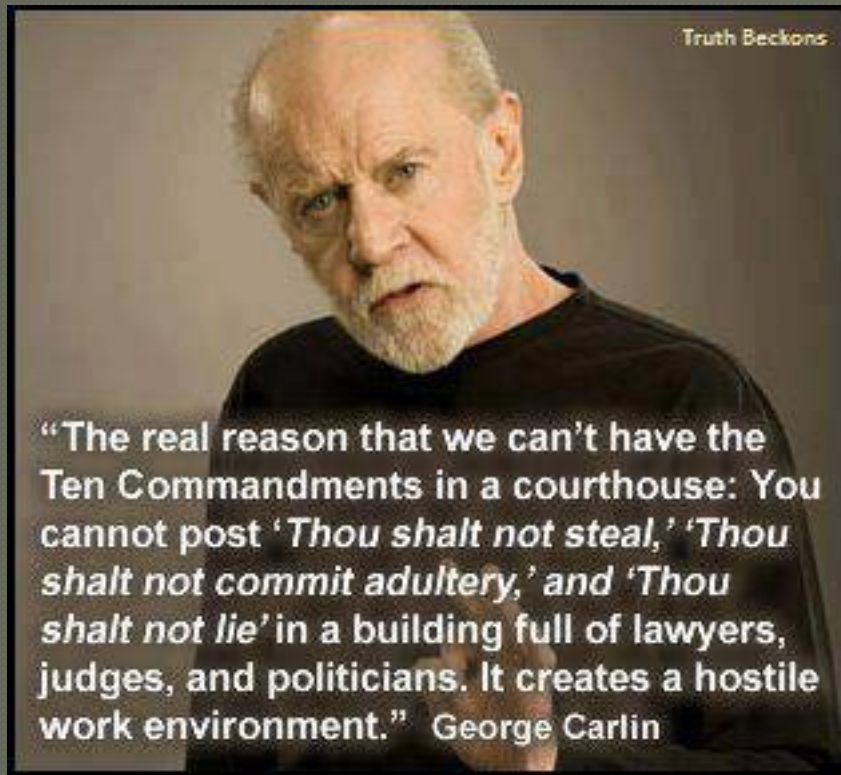
In-sync with the rest of the group? Too many mavericks?



Interest Groups

2. Cohesion

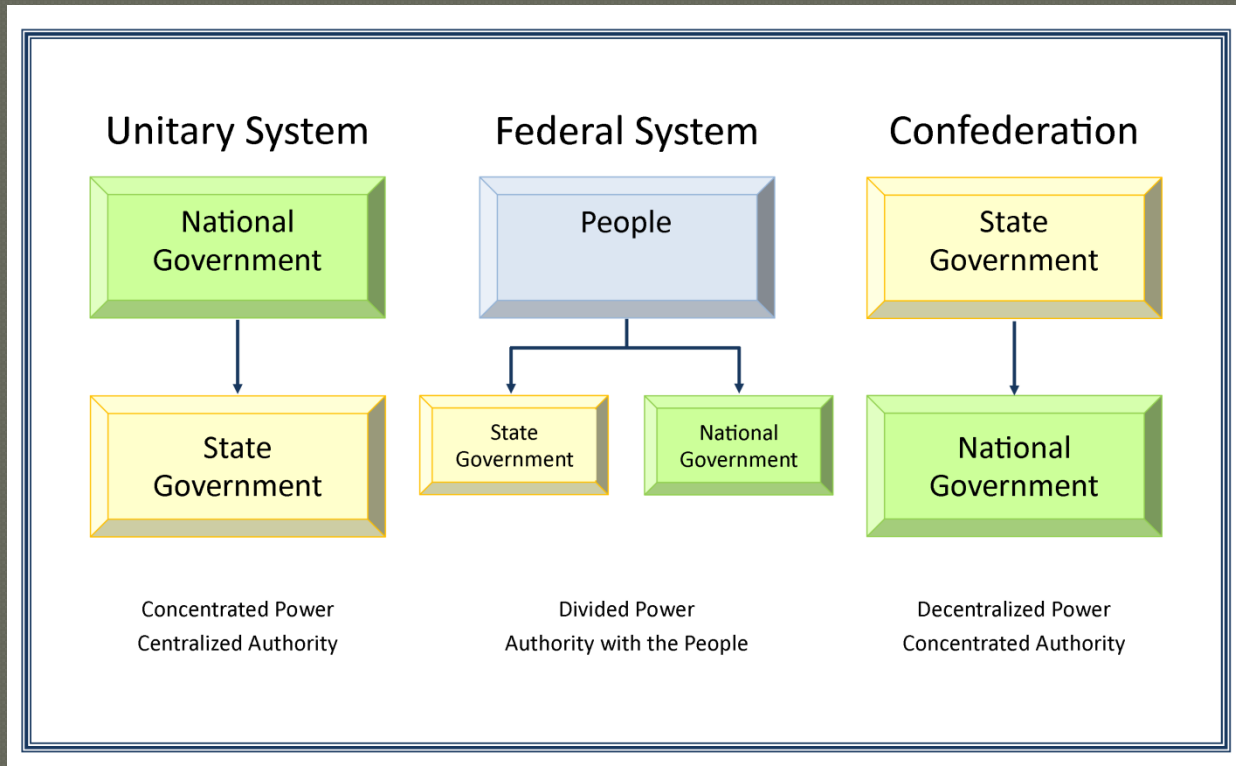
Leadership avoids “group dividing” positions; the dangers of moving too close to political parties.



Interest Groups

3. Structure

Unitary, federal or confederal?



Interest Groups

Group Tactics



Interest Groups

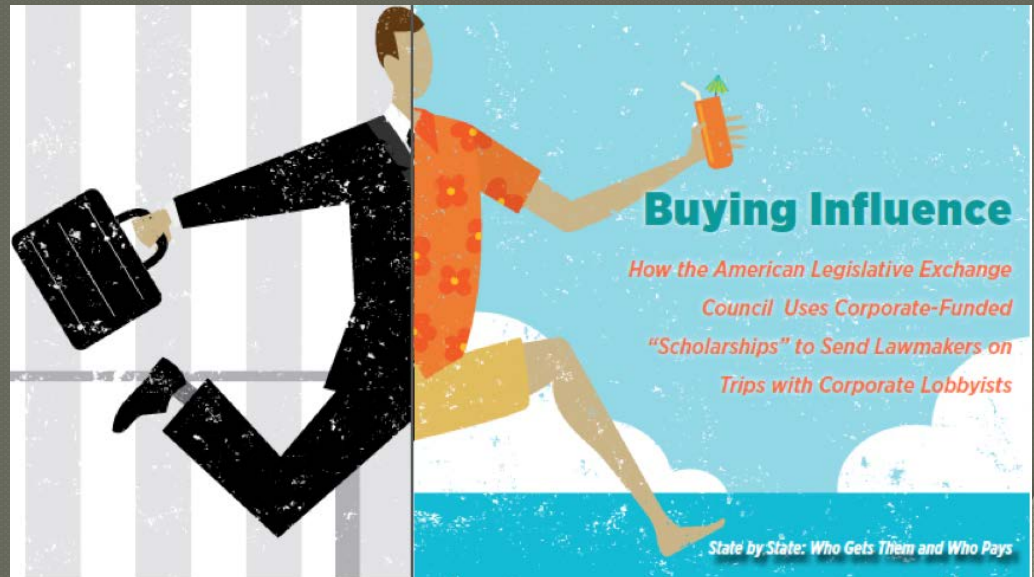
1. Access

Primary goal is to obtain access to those who make policy decisions affecting them by:

a. locating the decision point for an issue

b. making contact

c. trying to influence the decision-maker



Interest Groups

2. Grass-Roots Activity

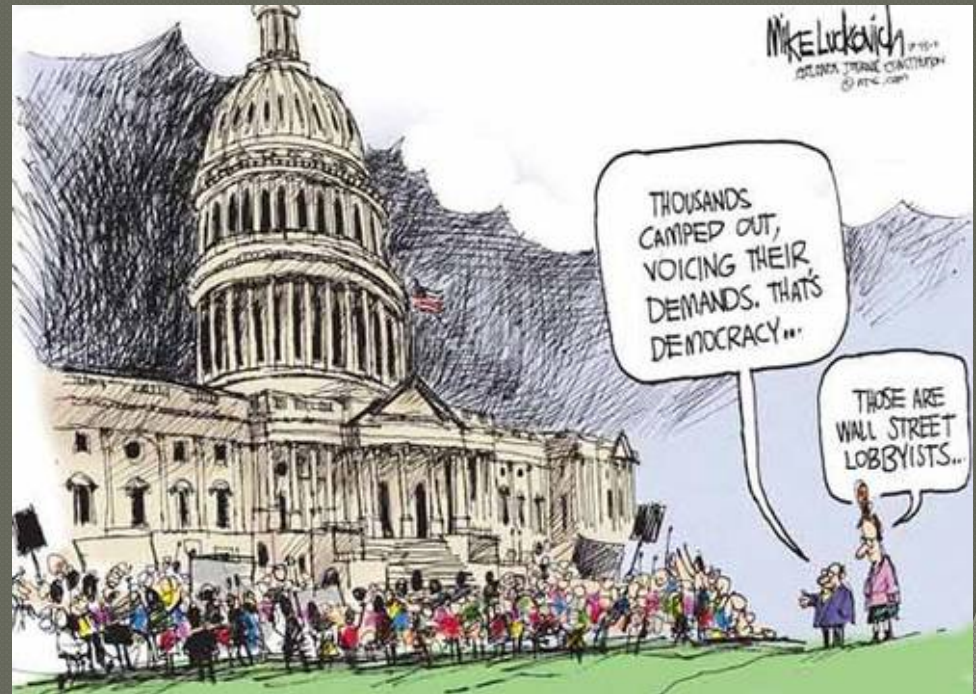


Large established political institutions may not be able to meet the needs of a certain group which creates “grass-roots” activism.

Interest Groups

3. Working With Political Institutions

Group efforts ideally begin early on; *lobbying* is the preferred method.



Interest Groups

4. Direct Action



A “newer” tactic for influencing public opinion and affecting government action; tactics range from peaceful demonstration to terrorism.

Interest Groups

A Typology Of

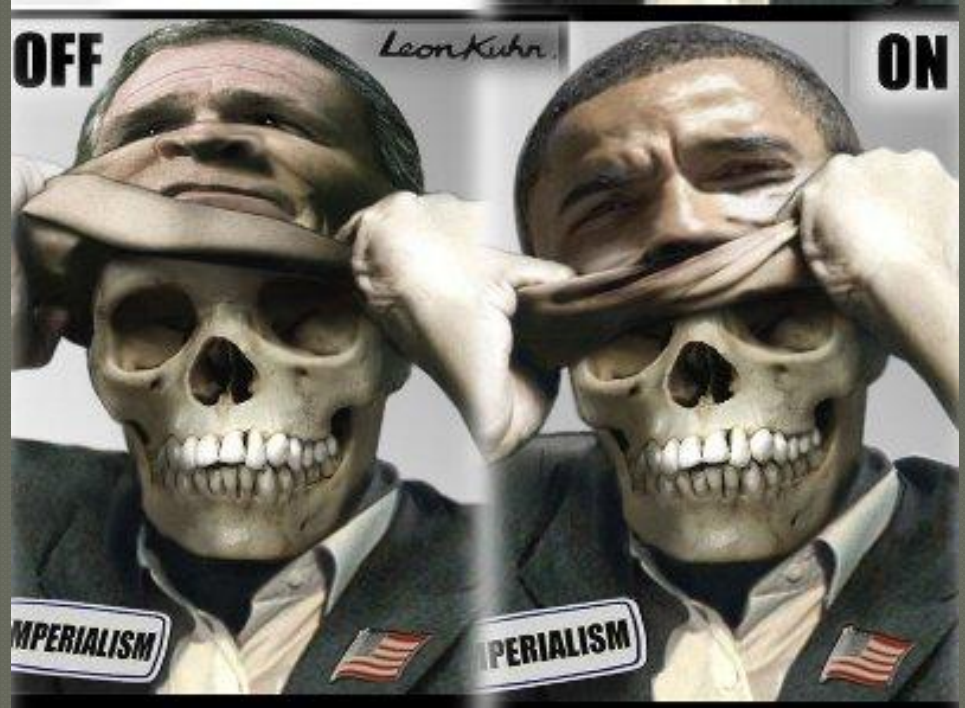
Interest Groups

Interest Groups

1. Self-Interested Groups

These groups represent predominately *economic* interests

- a. Business
- b. Labor
(through unions)



Interest Groups

2. Altruistic or Attitudinal Groups

Promote goals that do not directly benefit their members (except maybe in terms of psychic satisfaction); they may promote the interests of the less fortunate, general public issues, such as the environment or peace, political reform, or a specific cause like capital punishment.

