

Unit 5: Political Participation

Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making.

Factors associated with political ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation.

Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation and be able to explain how this increased voter participation.

15th Amendment

17th Amendment

19th Amendment

24th Amendment

26th Amendment

Discuss how structural barriers, political efficacy, and demographics can predict differences in voter turnout in the U.S., and the following can influence voter turnout among democracies worldwide:

Define political efficacy

National versus state-controlled elections

Voter registration laws and procedures

Voting incentives or penalties or fines

Election type (mid-term or presidential)

Discuss the demographic characteristics and political efficacy or engagement are used to predict the likelihood of whether an individual will vote.

Discuss the factors influencing voter choice include:

Party identification and ideological orientation

Candidate characteristics

Contemporary political issues

Religious beliefs or affiliation, gender, race and ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics

Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers.

Linkage institutions are channels that allow individuals to communicate their preferences to policy-makers.

Identify the four linkage institutions and provide an example for each one.

Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government.

The functions and impact of political parties on the electorate and government are represented by:

- **Mobilization and education of voters**

- **Party platforms**

- **Candidate recruitment**

- **Campaign management, including fundraising and media strategy**

Explain how these functions impact political parties.

Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.

Parties have adapted to candidate-centered campaigns, and their role in nominating candidates has been weakened.

Explain how the structure of parties has been influenced by:

Regional realignments

Campaign finance law

Changes in communication and data-management technology

Citizens United

Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent-candidate success.



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In comparison to proportional systems, winner-take-all voting districts serve as a structural barrier to third-party and independent candidate success. Explain

Discuss the role Interest groups play in policy making.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

- Attempting to influence the decisions of policymakers
- Interest group lobbying is generally most effective on narrow technical issues that are not well publicized (nobody has expertise on the issue except for the lobbyist)

WHO ARE LOBBYISTS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

- A person who is employed by and acts for an organized interest group or corporation to try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive branch (bureaucratic agency) and legislative branch (congressional committee)
 - Influence governmental decisions, especially legislation
 - Provide information to government (lobbyist = policy specialist, congressman = policy generalist)
 - Testify at hearings
 - Help write legislation
- Revolving door – the employment cycle from government to interest group
 - Government employee to lobby the agency they came from is illegal – conflict of interest
 - Congress to lobbyist is legal (with a “cooling off” period)
 - Iron triangles (issue networks) are mutually supporting relationships among
 - Interest groups
 - Congressional committees and subcommittees
 - Government agencies

In addition to working within party coalitions, interest groups exert influence through long-standing relationships with bureaucratic agencies, Congressional committees, and other interest groups; such relationships are described as “iron triangles” and issue networks and they help interest groups exert influence across political party coalitions.

Discuss the role of an iron triangle in policy making.

Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making.

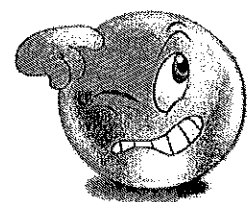
Discuss how Interest group influence may be impacted by:

- **Inequality of resources**
- **Unequal access to decision makers**
- **“Free rider” problem**

Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.

Provide an examples of Single-issue groups, ideological/social movements, and protest movements form with the goal of impacting society and policy making.

Be sure to know the difference between monetary policy and fiscal policy. Monetary policy refers to the money supply and interest rates. Fiscal policy refers to taxing and spending policies. Both the executive and legislative branches share responsibility for fiscal policies.



The impact of federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules continues to be contested by both sides of the political spectrum.

Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election. The process and outcomes in U.S. presidential elections are impacted by:

Incumbency advantage phenomenon

Open primaries

Closed primaries

Caucuses

Party conventions

General (presidential) elections

The Electoral College

Evaluate the extent to which the Electoral College facilitates or impedes democracy.

Explain how the winner-take-all allocation of votes per state (except Maine and Nebraska) under the setup of the Electoral College compared with the national popular vote for president raises questions about whether the Electoral College facilitates or impedes democracy.

Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. Congressional election.

Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.

Federal legislation and case law pertaining to campaign finance demonstrate the ongoing debate over the role of money in political and free speech, as set forth in:

Buckley v. Valeo

Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (McCain Feingold Act)

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission

Discuss the debates have increased over free speech and competitive and fair elections related to money and campaign funding (including contributions from individuals, PACs and political parties).

The various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which they participate politically.

Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.

<p>Discuss the media's use of polling results to convey popular levels of trust and confidence in government can impact elections by turning such events into "horse races" based more on popularity and factors other than qualifications and platforms of candidates.</p>	
<p>Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.</p>	