





Interest Groups

Interest Groups



What is an Interest Group?

- An organization that attempts to influence public policy in a specific area of importance to its members (p. 165)
- Also known as special interests, lobbies, pressure groups, or advocacy groups



Ulysses S. Grant

Interest Groups



Types of Interest Groups

- Classified according to membership:
 - Labor Unions
 - Business Organizations
 - Gender, Religious, Ethnic, and Age Groups
 - Public Interest Groups
 - Professional Associations and Occupational Groups



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Types of Interest Groups

- Classified according to levels of organization:
 - Associational
 - Nonassociational
 - Institutional
 - Anomic



Interest Groups



Functions of Interest Groups:

- Lobbying
 - Direct Lobbying
 - Grassroots Lobbying
- Campaign Involvement
- Campaign Contributions
 - Direct Contributions
 - Independent Expenditures
- Judicial Involvement
 - *Amicus Curiae*
- Protest



Brown v. Board of Education

Interest Groups

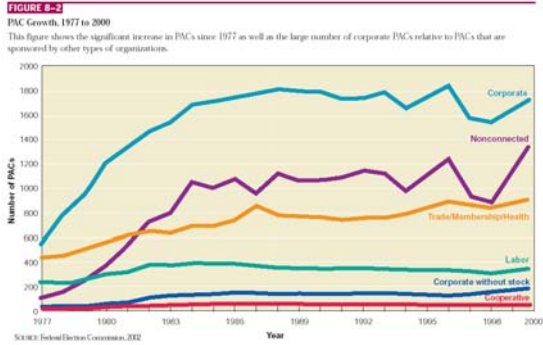


Interest Group Tactics

Tactic	Percentage
Testifying at hearings	99
Contacting government officials directly	98
Engaging in informal contacts with officials	95
Presenting research results or technical information	92
Sending letters to organization members	92
Entering into coalitions with other organizations	90
Attempting to shape the implementation of policies	89
Talking with people from the media	86
Consulting with government officials to plan legislative strategy	85
Helping to draft legislation	85
Inspiring letter-writing campaigns	84
Mounting grassroots lobbying efforts	80
Having influential constituents contact their congressman's office	89
Helping to draft regulations, rules, or guidelines	78
Serving on advisory commissions and boards	76
Making financial contributions to electoral campaigns	58
Doing favours for officials who need assistance	56
Attempting to influence appointments to public office	53

Source: Scholzman and Tierney, "More of the Same: Washington Pressure Group Activity in a Decade of Change," *Journal of Politics* 45, p. 357.

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Three Patterns in Democracies:

- Interest Group Pluralism
- Democratic Corporatism
- State Autonomy

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How Interest Groups are Formed:

- Pluralist View
- Elitist View
- Rational Choice View
- Social Movement View

