

I. Official and Unofficial Actors

A. Announcements

- 1. Midterm is being distributed now; will also be posted on line**

B. Objectives for this section

- 1. Understand official and unofficial actors in the policy process.**
- 2. Understand the difference between official and unofficial actors.**
- 3. Understand the role of interest groups and power in policy making.**

C. Official and Unofficial Actors in Public Policy

- 1. What are official actors? [Hint: look in the constitution].**
- 2. What are unofficial actors?**
- 3. What is the difference between official and unofficial actors?**
- 4. Are one set of actors more “legitimate” than another?**

D. Official Actors

- 1. Legislative branch**
- 2. Executive branch (president, governor)**
- 3. Judicial branch (courts)**

E. Legislative Branch (Congress, Legislature)

- 1. Make laws**
 - a) Lots of laws introduced, few pass (p. 51)
 - b) Has a large staff to lighten workload
- 2. Hold hearings**
 - a) For lawmaking
 - b) For other reasons
- 3. Do casework for constituents.**
- 4. Perform oversight**

F. Organization of the Legislature

- 1. Parties**
 - a) Elect the presiding officer or speaker
 - b) Determine who sits on committees
- 2. Committees**
 - a) Screen bills
 - b) Set the legislative agenda
 - c) Chairs are very powerful

G. Public Policy and Critiques of the Legislature

- 1. Are legislatures out of touch with the people?**
- 2. Are legislatures too slow? Do they suffer from gridlock?**
- 3. Members and reelection**
- 4. Congress as a decentralized institution**

H. Implications

- 1. “Gridlock,” or deliberation, is designed into the legislative process.**
- 2. It’s unlikely that Congress will make big sweeping policy changes.**
- 3. Congress may focus on politically safe casework, oversight, and distributive spending.**

I. The Executive Branch

- 1. Chief Executive (President, Governor)**
- 2. Staff (about 3000 appointed officials)**
- 3. We consider the civil service (“bureaucracy”) separately**

J. Presidential Advantages Over Congress

- 1. The veto power**
- 2. The head of a unitary branch**
- 3. Attracts a lot of media and public attention—can “go public”**

K. Constraints on the President’s Power

- 1. Inability to force action.**
- 2. Sheer size of his staff.**
- 3. The will of the other branches.**
- 4. The permanent bureaucracy.**
- 5. Result: the president may be more involved in agenda setting than in selecting alternative policies.**

L. Agencies and Bureaucrats

- 1. What is a bureaucracy?**
 - a) Division of labor
 - b) Impersonal, unbiased rules
 - c) Staff expertise
 - d) Obvious hierarchy
- 2. What is a civil servant?**

M. What Do Government Agencies Do?

1. Provide public goods

- a) What is a public good?

2. Provide services that people may not want provided by the private sector

- a) Electricity
- b) Phone
- c) Water

N. Is the Bureaucracy too Big?

1. 1999:

- a) 2.8 civilian employees
- b) \$1.8 trillion budget.
- c) 14% of Americans work for government

2. Shrunk slightly in terms of

- a) Budget compared with GDP
- b) Staffing

O. Bureaucracy and Accountability

- 1. Bureaucrats are not elected, yet they make policy.**
- 2. Yet, bureaucrats are supposed to act in the “public interest.”**
- 3. The problem: what is the “public interest”?**
- 4. Bureaucrats are given more or less discretion based on how sensitive an issue is.**
- 5. The problem of agency “capture”**

P. The Courts

- 1. Hamilton: “The least Dangerous Branch”**
- 2. The courts are neither impotent nor all powerful.**
- 3. The Courts do make policy.**
- 4. Rely on enforcement by other actors—executive and legislative branches, private actors.**

Q. Unofficial Actors:

R. Interest Groups

1. Why are groups so important?

- a) Can individuals make change acting alone?
- b) Aggregation of resources
- c) Aggregation of members=power
- d) Forming “advocacy coalitions”
- e) Groups or “special interest groups” are sometimes viewed as a bad thing. Why?

S. Interest Groups: Background

1. Have been around a long time

- a) Madison mentions them in *Federalist 10*

2. A relatively small number of groups until the 1960s

3. Major growth in interest groups in the 1960s. Any ideas why?

4. Kinds of Interest Groups

5. Types of Membership Groups

6. Reasons for Rapid Interest Group Growth

7. Why Do People Join Groups?

8. What Do Groups Do?

T. Groups and Power

1. Three Levels of Power

2. The Third Face of Power

3. Differences in Group Power

U. Political Parties

1. At Least 152 Political Parties in America

2. What Does the Party System Mean?

V. Think Tanks

1. Research organizations that provide information on public policy.

2. Their goals.

- a) To influence public policy, often in a way consistent with their ideological perspective.

(1) Examples: Urban Institute tends to be liberal; American Enterprise Institute, conservative.

- b) To serve the public interest with sound research and information for policy makers.

3. Their numbers have grown—why?

- a) Desire for influence in politics
- b) Ideological sponsorship
- c) The proliferation of particular interests

4. What's the difference between think tanks and interest groups

- a) Organization
- b) Goals
- c) Techniques for asserting influence

W. The News Media

1. Serve as “watch dogs” that keep track of government

- a) This is the role assumed in the first amendment
- b) This is sometimes referred to as “muckraking” or investigative journalism

2. How Effective Are the Media As Watch Dogs?

- a) Very little news (<1%) is the result of investigative journalism.
- b) Most news in an average news paper is wire service copy, press releases, etc.
- c) Much of what is printed or aired is because of the beat system and personal relationships with sources.

3. What does the news emphasize?

- a) Personalized news
- b) Dramatized news
- c) Fragmented news
- d) Normalized news
- e) How do news biases influence public policy?

(1) Distorted agendas

(2) Distorted “facts”

(3) This is not about ideological bias