

Chapter 17: Elections and Voting

Essential idea: Examine the role of campaign financing and pp play in electing candidates

-national elections to select all reps and 1/3 of senators are every 2 years

-prez every 4 years

-need hundreds of millions of dollars to campaign

Electing the prez

- 1 yr before: organize campaign
 - spring: primaries narrow the field
 - summer: conventions
 - sept: campaign heats up
 - 1st Tuesday after 1st Monday of November: election day
 - candidates traverse US: long and exhausting
1. Electoral votes and the States
 - a. To be elected prez you need 270/538 electoral votes
 - b. Electoral votes: total # of representatives and senators from each state plus 3 for D.C
 - c. States electoral votes: total # of rep/sen
 - d. Candidate who wins popular vote in st usually gets all the states electoral votes
 - i. Pay attention to big states: Ca, TX, NY, FL
 - ii. If candidate won all 11 large states they would hit 270!
 - e. Candidate must come to middle and appeal to a broad range of peeps to get as many states as possible
 - i. Single issue parties usually cannot do this...works against third parties
 2. Campaign Strategy
 - a. Must plan how to capture key states
 - b. Ex: aggressive attack, low key, theme/slogan, key issues, \$ on media ads
 3. Campaign Organization
 - a. Strong campaign org is key
 - b. Campaign manager: plans strategy and planning
 - c. National level: tv, radio, print, media, financing, polls
 - d. State/local: state party chair coordinates
 - i. Rallies, volunteers, distribute literature
 4. Using TV
 - a. Most important communication tool
 - b. TV: way most citizens learn about campaign
 - c. Image: metal pictures of candidate is super important
 - d. Candidates are packaged for TV
 - e. Most common source of news
 - f. Debates: late and huge impact on undecided voters
 5. Internet
 - a. Becoming a key tool to raise \$

- b. Sites allow peeps to learn all aspects of candidates
- c. Newsletters
- d. Ex: ron paul

Financing Campaigns

- Very expensive to run
 - 2004 prez and congress spent 3.9 billion
 - what costs so much?
 - Staff salaries, pollsters, travel, ads
 - \$ s good and bad
 - gives chance to broadcast views
 - bad: possibility of special favors to contributors
1. Regulating Campaign Finance
 - a. Today: heavily regulated
 - b. FECA 1971: framework governing campaign financing
 - i. Requires disclosure of candidate spending
 - ii. Provides federal funding for prez elections
 - iii. Prohibit labor unions/business org from making direct contributions
 - iv. Limit amt individuals and groups can give
 - c. 1974 amendment to FECA created the Federal Election Commission
 - i. individual agency in executive branch to administer election law
 - ii. record campaign contribution, open to public inspection
 - d. 1976 SC: limiting individual contributions is constitutional (no violation of 1st amendment)
 - i. limiting total cost of campaign is unconstitutional
 2. Public funding
 - a. 1974 amendment est public funding for prez camp
 - b. candidate can accept federal funding for primaries and general election
 - c. must agree to limit total spending 1976-2004
 3. Private funding
 - a. Bulk of \$ comes privately: individuals, corp, special interests
 - b. FECA limits individual contributions to \$1000
 - c. Direct donations to candidate/pp may come from PACS
 - i. PACS: political action committee...est by interest groups to collect \$ and provide financial support
 - ii. FECA limits amt they can donate directly to a single candidate
 - d. PP find loopholes in FECA to make \$ and get edge
 - i. Issue advocacy advertising: ads by interest groups for an issue
 - ii. contain candidate image but DON'T ask peeps to vote for/against a candidate
 - e. 2002 McCain/Feingold sponsored bill to control campaign spending
 - i. Bipartisan Camp. Reform Act:
 1. Targeted issue advocacy ads
 2. Use of soft \$ to national PP

3. Soft \$: \$given directly to a PP by PACS for general purposes
4. Used by PP to benefit campaigns but no \$ directly to candidates
5. 2000 election: 250 million in soft money
6. BCRA
 - a. Banned all soft \$ to national PP
 - b. Raised individual donations to 2000
 - c. Prohibited issue advocacy ads within 30 days of primary, 60 days of a general election...unconstitutional?
4. Campaign Law and the Internet
 - a. FEC: sites must identify themselves
 - b. Individual sites must register with FEC if spend more than \$250

17.2 Expanding Voting Rights

- Voting vital to democracy
- Power to elect 500,000 officials
- “suffrage” : the right to vote
- right to vote not absolute
- today all over 18...hasn’t always been so!
- Historically laws, custom etc have prevented certain groups from voting

Early Limitations

- prior to American revolution only white males could vote: no women or AA
- only 5-6% of population!
- Why? Many didn’t believe in mass democracy
- Most believed only educated should vote
- By mid 1800’s universal white adult male suffrage

Woman Suffrage

- by 1914 the right to vote in 11 states
- 1919 amendment after WWI ratified

AA suffrage

- at the time of constitution, 20% of US population was Aa
- enslaved AA got no votes

1. 15th Amendment
 - a. 1870 after CW
 - b. right to vote for all
 - c. 1st time nat’l govt set rules for voting
2. Grandfather Clause
 - a. 15th didn’t give full rights to AA
 - b. southerners set up road blocks

- c. GC: only voters whose grandfathers had voted before 1867 were eligible to vote without poll tax or literacy test
 - d. Problem: most of grandfathers had been enslaved
3. Literacy Test
 - a. Often peeps had to take to vote
 - b. Used against AA
 - c. Had to answer different constitutional questions while whites just had to write their name
 - d. Voting rights act of 1965 outlawed this practice
 4. Poll Tax
 - a. Amt of \$ (1-2 bucks) they had to pay to vote
 - b. Not just current year but previous unpaid years
 - c. Difficult financial burden
 - d. Had to keep receipts
 - e. 24th amendment outlawed
 5. Voting Rights Act
 - a. Even after much discrimination was barred in the 1960's, AA voting still limited in South
 - b. 1965 Voting Rights Act
 - c. empowered federal govt to regulate elections if less than 50% of AA were registered in a district
 - d. literacy tests out, bilingual ballots
 - e. increased AA voting 1960: 29% 2000: 64%
 - f. led to AA in political office

26th Amendment

- minimum age to vote used to be 21
- 1960's: Vietnam: movement to 18 began
- increased registration by 10 million voters

17.3 Influences on Voters

- many factors influence voters decisions
- personal backgrounds affect

Backgrounds

1. Age
 - a. 68: concerned over issues of Social Security
 - b. 23: might resent more \$ taken out of paycheck for SS payments
2. Other background influences
 - a. Edu, religion, race/ethnicity
 - b. Ex: AA supports candidates that focuses on antidiscrimination, Jews support a candidate who supports Israel
 - c. Backgrounds influence in particular ways but don't always force them to vote in particular ways
3. Cross Pressured Voter

- a. Backgrounds don't forecast how they will vote due to the fact that many voters are cross pressured voters: caught in conflicting elements in own life: religion, income, peers
- b. Ex: Catholics are more inclined to vote Dem, yet what if the Catholic is a wealthy business owner...will usually vote Rep
 - i. But what if friends are Dems?
 - ii. So how will they vote?...depends on campaign issues, personalities

Loyalty to PP

1. Strong versus weak party voters
 - a. Strong party voters select parties candidate election after election
 - b. Usually vote a straight party ticket: only vote for candidate in their party
 - c. Weak party voters: switch up votes
 - i. More influenced by issues than loyalty
2. Independent voters
 - a. Neither Rep or Dem, loyalty is weak
 - b. #s' have increased in elections
 - c. ex: 1996 Clinton v Dole both adjusted message to appeal to Perot's voters
 - d. experts believe # of weak party voters will continue to rise
 - e. issues and images will be more important

Issues in Election Campaigns

- many voters not well informed
- still more informed than before...why?
- TV brings issues into homes
- Voters more educated than in past
- Issues have greater impact on personal lives more than ever before...like in 1930's
 - Ex: SS, healthcare, taxes, etc
 - Prez election that demonstrated issues was election of 1980
 - Many blamed Carter for specific economic probs "wear a sweater"
 - Reagan: are you better off than you were 4 years ago?

Candidates Image

- issues important but how voters perceive them is important too
- peeps want prez who appears a natural leader
- try to convey right image
- ex: Ford: well meaning but dull
- many will select a candidate on image alone
- ex: 1964 LBJ image of peacemaker vs Goldwater....warmaker with daisy commercial

Propaganda

- PP's, interest groups etc nee to convince peeps of their candidate, ideas, etc
- Some messages are classified as propaganda: ideas, info, rumors, to influence opinion
 - Not lying but not objective

- Many propaganda tech...pg 496
- Prop can backfire if it seems misleading

Profile of Registered Voters

- Citizens who vote regularly: positive attitudes towards govt
- Edu, age, income are good predictors of who will vote
- The more edu, mid age, and higher the income the more likely they will vote

Profile of the non-Voter

- Don't meet requirements: citizenship, residency
 - When peeps move they need to register with local boards....often forget to register
1. Voter participation
 - a. Been declining
 - b. 1960: 62%
 - c. 2000: 50%
 - d. 2004: 60%
 - e. even fewer participate in congressional elections
 - f. in Bush vs Kerry there were more votes than ever casted before
 - g. still millions of eligible voters didn't vote
 2. ways of increasing turnout
 - a. shift election day from tue to sun so peeps don't have to leave work
 - b. allow peeps to register on election day

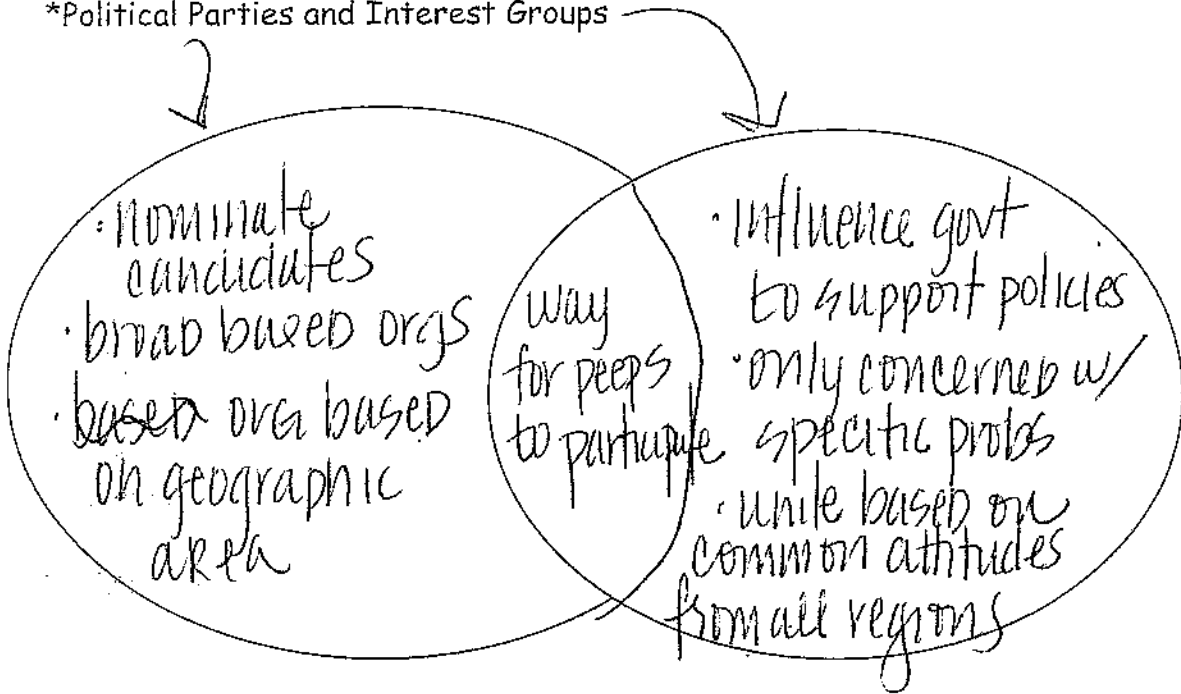
18.1 : 18.2

Interest Group & Lobbying Notes

ANOTHER way to participate in the political process is through INTEREST GROUPS. . .

*Interest group: group of people who share common goals & organize to influence govt

*Political Parties and Interest Groups



*The purpose of interest groups is to bridge the gap between citizens & govt, communicate wants to leaders

*Why are interest groups more effective in influencing the government than are individual citizens?

- Strength in numbers, stronger bargaining position, more financial resources

How do interest groups affect public policy?

The Work of Lobbyists

- Most interest groups try to influence government policy by making direct contact with lawmakers~called lobbying

18.3 Shaping Public Opinion

- Essential idea

- Investigate how public opinion is formed in the United States

Lots of Opinions!

- Many citizens opinions don't influence government

- Public opinion: ideas & attitudes a significant # of Americans hold about govt and political issues

- Public opinion has and enormous influence on govt!

Characteristics of Public Opinion

- Diversity

- Vast nation, unlikely all citizens will have same opinions

- Communication

- Peoples ideas must be communicated to gov't

- Done through interest groups, opinion polls

- Significant Numbers

- Enough peeps need to hold a particular opinion for govt to listen

Political Socialization

- Background and life experiences influence peoples' opinions

- Learn political beliefs from fam, school, friends, and coworkers in a process called *political socialization*

Factors of Socialization!

- Family

- Schools

- Peer Groups

- Close friends, clubs, and work groups

- Social Characteristics

- Economic and social status

- Mass Media

- Tv, radio, newspapers, movies, books

- President, members of Congress, interest groups

I don't care...

- Political efficacy

- Refers to an individuals feelings of effectiveness in politics

- Some socialized to believe they can't impact the system

- Others are socialized to believe their actions can lead to changes

Political Culture

- Set of basic values and beliefs about a nation and its government that most citizens share
 - US: liberty, freedom, equality, etc
 - Helps citizens set boundaries for opinions
 - Impacts the way we interpret events around us

Ideology & Public Policy

- Ideology: set of basic beliefs about life, culture, govt, and society
- Provides context for looking at govt
- Most people determine opinions issue by issue rather than follow a strict ideology

Conservative

- Believes in
 - Limiting govt
 - Supporting moral values
 - Private individuals should solve social problems
 - Oppose govt limitations on business

Liberal

- Believes
 - Govt should promote health, edu, justice
 - Willing to limit economic freedom to increase equality
 - Social freedoms should not be restricted by govt

Moderates & Libertarians

- Moderates
 - Fall between liberals & conservatives
- Libertarians
 - Support economic and social freedoms
 - Free markets and unrestricted speech

18.4 Measuring Public Opinion

- Essential idea
 - Evaluate the methods used to measure public opinion

Methods of gauging P.O

- Political Party Org.
- Interest groups
 - Share info with officials but usually not good measure of broad p.o
- Mass Media

- Measure program ratings to gauge p.o
- Letter Writing
- Electronic Access
 - Quick responses to speeches
- Straw Polls
 - Unscientific attempts to measure p.o
 - Always a biased sample: peeps who respond to them are self-selected

Scientific Polling

- 3 scientific steps
 - Selecting a sample of the group to be questioned
 - Presenting carefully worded questions to individuals in sample
 - Interpreting the results

Sample Populations

- Group of people to studied: *universe*
- Pollsters question a *representative sample*: small group of people typical of universe...usually 1500
- Need a *random sample*: everyone in the universe has an equal chance of being selected

Sample Error

- Measurement of how much the sample results may differ from the sample universe
- Error decreases as sample size increases
 - Ex: 65% of Americans favor tougher gun control laws, with 3% sampling error, btwn 63-68% of population favor such laws

Sampling Procedures

- How do pollsters draw random samples of the whole nation?
 - Use *cluster samples*: organizes, or clusters peeps by geographical divisions

Poll Questions

- The way a ? Is phrased can influence peeps responses
 - Do you favor a proposal to bring home all US troops from Vietnam before the end of the year?
 - Do you agree or disagree with a proposal to withdraw all US troops by the end of the year regardless of what happens in Vietnam after US troops leave?

Interpreting Results

- Never completely accurate
- Usually major org. have learned how to take polls and be within a few % points
 - Ex: VNS exit polling in 2000 election

Chapter 19: The Mass Media

19.1 How Media Impact Govt

Essential idea

Discuss the role of mass media in US politics

What is mass media?

All means for communicating info to the general public: print, broadcast, internet

Vital to democracy: citizens can't get info on their own

Relationship between media & govt officials often adversarial

Prez & the Media

Prez uses media to sell his policies

80% of TV time goes to him!

Informs media through news releases, briefings, press conferences, media events

Yikes...leaks: release of secret info by an anonymous source!

Media & Prez Campaigns

TV identifies candidates

need to be telegenic

Media impacts prez primaries

Nominees clear before convention

Conventions are media events

Campaign ads done through TV...expensive

Congress & the Media

Less coverage than prez

Slow process isn't for TV!

Media often covers

Confirmation hearings

Oversight activities

Personal business of politicians

Court & the Media

Least media coverage

Due to remoteness of judges & technical nature

Other Media Functions

Role of media is to bring issues to attention

Since TV tries to gain audience it often leads to sensationalized broadcasting

Plays a role in your political socialization

19.2 Protecting the Media

Essential idea

Evaluate the role govt plays in regulating the mass media

Protecting the Media

1st Amend. Guarantees a free press

Media free from prior restraint: govt censorship of info before publishing

Us media has more freedom than anywhere in the world

Freedom not absolute...

Media cannot commit libel: false statements intended to damage a reputation

Almost impossible to win a libel suit

I can't reveal my source...

Often the press needs secret info to get a story

Over 1/2 states have passed shield laws: protect reporters from having to reveal sources

Regulating Broadcast Media

Federal Communications Commission: makes rules that are best for public interest

Can't censor but can levy major fines

19.3 Internet & Democracy

Essential idea

Analyze the impact of the Internet of government in the US

Internets key features

Widespread

Interactive

Global scope

Impact on Citizen Participation

Internet a tool for citizen activism

Allows for

Communication with officials

Grassroots websites

Quick circulation of petitions

Volunteering info

Electronic voting?