Week 10: Extra-electoral Participation & Interest Groups
Bashevkin, “Interest Groups & Social Movements,” in LNN

I. Organized groups:

A. At core of democratic debate:

1. Critics: attacked as selfish & destructive of democratic process
2. Supporters: celebrated as crucial, constructive actors in process [How?]

B. Synonyms:

1. Pressure groups, interest group, lobby, & organized interest
2. Social movement organization, social movement

C. [Definition (own terms)]
D. Definitions (academic lit):

1. Interest Groups (IG’s):
   a. *Bashevkin*:
      “what IG’s & social movements share is a set of norms, beliefs, or values that keep the ‘interest’ intact. These shared orientations are glue binding together the group constituency, leading it to act as a coherent entity...collectivities that have as their basis a shared outlook, identity, or framework of reference” (p. 135)
   b. *Truman (1951)*:
      ‘IG’ refers to any group that, on basis of 1 or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes... (pp. 135-6)
   c. *Wilson (1990)*:
      organizations, separate from govt though often in close partnership, which attempt to influence public policy
2. Social Movements (SM’s):
   a. Bashevkin:
      (1) Like IG’s except “more pro-change, more challenging, vis-à-vis institutional status quo” (138)
      (2) Protest groups that mobilize their adherents in more system-challenging ways than do IG’s or parties
   b. Kitschelt: SM’s tend to follow some experience [perception] of marginalization
   c. Blumer (1951): collective enterprise to establish new order of life, meaning a fundamental cultural shift either be pursued or opposed by SM adherents
   d. Bashevkin: Less formal than interest groups, more heterogeneity of views typically within SM’s than IG’s (b/c SM’s typically broader, less formal, vague)

3. Note: Substantive distinctions b/w party-IG-SM not always clear

II. [What are some functions of IG’s? What do they do in Democracy?]
III. Interest Group Functions:

A. Social roles of IG’s
   1. *Truman*: these [shared attitudes] afford participants frames of reference for interpretation & evaluation of events & behavior
   2. Like parties, often function as social networks as well as political organizations

B. Electoral roles of IG’s:
   1. Evaluate competing candidates
   2. Help fund candidates
   3. Mobilize voters

C. Policymaking roles of IG’s
   1. Influence or pressure govt decision-makers, but not seek office (distinguishes them from parties)
   2. Provide information to policymakers
      a. Where voters/citizens stand on issues
      b. Information (possibly biased) about issue itself

D. *Wilson*: IG’s provide institut’l linkages b/w govt (state) & major sectors society
IV. Substantive Q’s regarding interest groups & movements

A. Why some (potential) groups (with shared interests) more difficult to organize than others? [Paper Topic]

1. Members’ Hetero/homo-geneity: SE homogeneity & unity, coherence views
2. Size of the groups (Olson) [LoCA]
3. Coercion/suasion & Selective benefits (Olson)

B. What explains diff means & venues diff grps w/ shared interests use? [Pap Top]

1. Means & Venues:
   a. Some form parties [Green parties]; Others IG’s & lobbies [Sierra Club]; Others adopt “politics by other means” [Greenpeace].
   b. Some apply pressures, allocate efforts more to campaigns, some to policy-making, some more to legislature, exec, or courts. [See below]

2. Hypotheses:
   a. Bashevkin: groups form strategies based on their institutional & ideological settings [Such as?]
   b. History? “diffusion of innovation”
   c. Intensity of views?
   d. Power configuration of alternative & orthogonal views?
C. What explains general ↑ # & importance of I.G.’s? [Pap Top]

1. Decline of parties [elaborate]
2. Edu & afflu ⇒ ↑ resources & abilities ⇒ lower relative cost to mobilize groups?
3. Advances in communications & transportation tech ⇒ ↑ efficiency organizing

D. What explains var space & time in IG activities? (diff uses Voice?) [Pap Top]

1. Change over time in US
   a. Traditionally IG’s in US pol lobbied elected pols ntl & state capitals, but ↑’ly:
      (1) They work in coalitions to lobby bureaucrats
      (2) They present their arguments in court
      (3) They go directly to public via media interviews & ads
      (4) Try influence elections as well as traditional acts influence policy at leg stage
   b. What might explain these changing activities?
      (1) Increasing professionalization of interest groups
      (2) Societal changes? [Such as?]
      (3) Voting-behavior changes? [Such as? Other ideas?]
2. Why lobby bureaucrats rel’ly more prevalent FR than US? \(\text{Gen’lize } \Rightarrow \text{Pap}\)
   a. Differing nature of electoral competition?
   b. Size of role of bureaucratic implementation on net effect of policy?
   c. [Other ideas?]

E. SM’s more willing use extra-pol, even illegal, than IG’s. Why? [tautol.?] \(\text{Pap?}\)
   1. Do mobilization needs of IG’s & SM’s differ?
   2. Does nature of IG’s & SM’s goal differ?
   3. Differing opportunities to achieve their ends politically, legally? [see Kitschelt’s point above about SM’s resulting from marginalization]

F. What explains diff success grps interests in achieve their ends? [\text{Paper Topic}]
   1. \text{Tarrow (1983)}: breadth & flexibility group’s \text{tactical repertory}
   2. History, \text{e.g.,} novelty of SM’s or IG’s aims or tactics?
   3. Institutional differences in political process? [Such as...]
V. “Models” of Group Activity

A. **Power-Elite Model**: Mills (1956), Hunter (1953)

1. Small elite, even covert, controls grps & gov, limiting opps avg cits’ pol partic
2. How does such a minority dominate majority in a dem?
   a. Size, homogeneity interests, unity of grps serve their coherence
   b. Relative social, political, & economic power of elites enables them to dominate uninformed, excluded masses

B. **Pluralist Model**: Truman (1951), Dahl (1961)

1. Struggles among competing grps=essence dem pol; govt major role=establish & maintain orderly relations among them
2. “Vectors of political inputs” image: multiple (vector) forces push govt; resultant (vector) of those forces=>policy
3. Multiple points of access for diverse interests => group participation in public policymaking is virtually assured
4. From this perspective, major research agenda, core positive question is: What explains degree to which alternative collective demands met?
5. From this perspective, major research agenda, core positive question is: What explains degree to which alternative collective demands met?
   
a. Emphasis (relative) internal grp characteristics, esp. organizational resources
   (1) Socioec. status, media access or control, education, & skill of grp & leaders
   (2) Internal organizational cohesion
   (3) Strategic social position (in political issue-space relative to other IG’s)

b. Later work discerns **4 key variables determining policy success of grp**
   (1) **Group Resources**: financial & human resources relate pos’ly to policy influ.
   (2) **Group Cohesion**: org’l control, unity, & discipline relate pos’ly to influence
   (3) **Leadership Expertise**: policy & administrative knowledge always helps
   (4) **Group Representativeness**:
      (a) favorable strategic position, &/or
      (b) comprehensive group standing in policy domain [?], &/or
      (c) breadth & depth support in broader polity.

c. **Basic Argument/Assumption Pluralist Model**: open, fair competition naturally favors groups w/ highest net “score” on these factors
C. **Pluralist Critics**: Schattschneider; Bachrach & Baratz

1. Importance of non-decisions & agenda setting **[explain]**
2. Govt & bureauc = interested, ≠ neutral, actors in process
3. Insiders v. Outsiders: some groups excluded.
4. ⇒ reject image of govt as neutral arena in which grp interests fairly compete & policies neutrally emerge.

D. **State- & Institution-Centric** (Katzenstein; Krasner; Evans; Skocpol): **3 key vars:**

- **state preferences, capacity, & autonomy**
  1. Policymakers can & do develop **preferences** that differ from constituent grps
  2. Relative degree of **autonomy** of state from societal groups determines degree to which they may differ
  3. **Capacity** = ability of bureaucratic state to execute its actions & so logically depends on ability to concentrate, coordinate, & exploit govt’l resources
  4. [Criticisms of State-Centric Vision:
     a. *State* not more than a set of (key) institutions; not separate actor. I.e., not valid anthropomorphize *state*.
E. Corporatist Model: (Schmitter, Lijphart)

1. “‘system of interest rep in which constituent units org’d into limited # singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered & functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (sometimes created) by state & granted deliberate representational monop. w/in respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls leader selection, demand articulation, & [supporting activities]’ Schmitter (1979)” (149).

2. Core Characteristics:
   a. IG’s operate as integral parts of, rather external influences on, govt activity
   b. State at apex of corporate system, org’s a hierarchy w/in which interests operate regarding govt & other interests

3. Important Aspects:
   a. Incorporation of insider groups (with perhaps some exclusion implied) so that favored groups play a structured & significant role in policymaking
   b. Competition among grps much more limited than in pluralist sys; state’s role is more assertive & sustained

4. [Example: Tri-Partite Bargain: Govt–peak labor ass’n–peak employer ass’n]

5. Literature usually contrast “liberal” or “societal” corporatism from “state” corporatism [essentially, “from below” v. “from above”] [note: history in fascist states part why emphasize this contrast].
F. All actual country-times could be characterized to some degree by each of these models of politics, but... [& so what?]

1. US most nearly pluralist?  
2. Britain bit more statist?  
3. France lot more statist?  
4. Jap hybrid statist & corp?  
5. Germ more purely corp?  
6. Swe& Austria most corp?

VI. Empirical “Findings” [review of large numbers small case studies, gen’ly]

A. Bashevkin claims that business grps generally most influential in most systems

1. Note the difficulty of establishing any such claim
2. [If business grps most influential, why they among most critical govt policies?]

B. Keys to success:

1. Most work confirms importance internal characteristics of grps to their success
2. Most also find “political opportunity structure”–interest &/or inst’l struct w/in which grps operate–key to strategies, success, etc.
3. So influence rests combination of internal assets & external situation [banal?]

C. Means & Venues: Grps adapt to inst’l setting: seem go where matters in their sys (e.g., Congress then courts in US), subject to abilities to go there. [PapTop]
D. Evidence from transitional democracies indicates that democratic group competition does not emerge simply from establishment of rules allowing it
   1. Pre-transition traditions are key
   2. Pre-transition group organization also central

VII. Discussions:

A. How could we evaluate common claim that “special interests” as opposed to avg citizens &/or their elected representatives hold power?

B. Seems this much root *politikverdrossenheit*, “Washington is Nuts”, Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, etc. (Or maybe I’m wrong about that?) What exactly are folks so agitated about? What exactly do they/we want?