

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 grp 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? [**Gen'lize** ⇒ **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.?] [**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? [**Paper Topic**]
 1. *Tarrow (1983)*: breadth & flexibility group's *tactical repertory*
 2. History, 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*.
 - b. In democracy, *L'Etat: c'est nous*.

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?