Bashevkin, “Interest Groups & Social Movements,” in LNN

I. Organized groups:
A. At core of democratic debate:
   1. Critics: attacked as selfish & destructive of dem. process
   2. Supporters: celeb’d as crucial, constructive act’s in proc.
B. Synonyms:
   1. Pressure grps, interest grp, lobby, & organized interest
   2. Social movement organization, social movement
C. Definitions:
   1. Interest Groups (IG’s):
      a. B: “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” (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): org’s, sep. from govt though often in close partnership, which attempt to influence pub pol.
   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: social movements tend to follow experience of marginalization
      c. Blumer (1951): collective enterprise to estab new order of life, meaning a fundamental cultural shift that will either be pursued or opposed by SM adherents
      d. Bashevkin: Less formal than interest grps, more heterogeneity of views typically within SM’s than IG’s (largely because former are typically broader)
   3. Substantive distinct’s b/w party-IG-SM not always clear

II. Interest Group Functions:
A. Social roles of IG’s
   1. Truman: these [shared attitudes] afford participants frames of reference for interp. & eval. events & behave
   2. Like prtys, function as soc. networks as well as pol. org’s
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 institutional linkages b/w govt (state) & major sectors of society

III. Substantive Q’s regarding interest groups & movements
A. Why some grps more diff. to org than others? [Pap Top]
   1. Mem’s Hetero/homo-geneity: SE homog & unity views
   2. Size of the groups (Olson) [LoCA]
   3. Coercion/suasion & Selective benefits (Olson)

B. What explains difference in means employed by different groups with shared interests?
   1. Means: Some form parties [Green parties]; Others IG’s & lobbies [Sierra Club]; Others adopt “politics by other means” [Greenpeace]. [Pap Top]
   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 config. of alternative & orthogonal views?

C. What explains gen. # & importance of I.G.’s? [Pap]
   1. Decline of parties [elaborate]
   2. Education & affluence => greater resources & abilities => lower relative cost to mobilize groups
   3. Advances in communications & transportation tech=> increased efficiency in organizing

D. What explains variation across space & time in activities of I.G.’s? (differing uses of Voice?) [Paper Topic]
   1. Change over time in US
      a. Traditionally I.G.’s in US politics lobbied elected politicians in national & state capitals, ′ly they...
         (1) Work in coalitions to lobby bureaucrats
         (2) Present their arguments in court
         (3) Go directly to pub via media interviews & ads
         (4) Try to influence elections as well as traditional attempt to influence policy at legislative stage
      b. What might explain these changing activities?
         (1) Increasing professionalization of interest groups
         (2) Societal changes? [Such as...]
         (3) Voting-behavior changes?
         (4) [Other ideas?]
      a. Differing nature of electoral competition?
      b. Size of role of bureaucratic implementation on net effect of policy?
      c. [Other ideas?] 

E. Social Movements more willing to use extra-pol., even illegal, means than IG’s. Why? [tautological?] [Pap?]
   1. Do mobilization needs of IG’s & SM’s differ?
   2. Does nature of IG’s & SM’s goal differ?
   3. Differing opp’ s to achieve their ends? [see Kitschelt’s point above about SM’s resulting from marginalization]

F. What explains differing success of various grps of interests in achieving their ends? [Paper Topic]
   1. Tarrow (1983): brdth & flexbly grp’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...]

IV. “Models” of Group Activity
A. **Power-Elite Model**: Mills (1956), Hunter (1953)
   1. Small elite, sometimes covert, controls gt, limiting opp’s for “average” citizens’ political participation
   2. How does such a minority dominate majority in a dem?
      a. Size, homog, instr unity of grps serve their coherence
      b. Relative soc., pol., & econ. 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 maj role=estab & mntn orderly reltns among them
   2. “Vectors of pol. 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. What explains ° to which alter. collective demands met?
      a. Emphasis on (relative) internal group characteristics, especially organizational resources.
         (1) S-E status, media access or control, education, & skill of group leaders
         (2) Internal organizational cohesion
         (3) Strategic social position (in political issue-space rel. to other I.G.’s)
      b. Later work discerns **4 key variables determining policy success of a group**
         (1) **Group Resources**: financial & human resources positively related to policy influence
         (2) **Group Cohesion**: organizational control, unity, & discipline positively related to influence
         (3) **Leadership Expertise**: policy & administrative knowledge always helps
         (4) **Grp Representativeness**: favorable strategic position & /or comprehensive grp standing in policy domain
      c. **Basic Argument/Assumption Pluralist Model**: open, fair competition naturally favors groups w/ highest net “score” on these factors

C. **Plur. Critics**: Schattschneider; Bachrach & Baratz
   1. Non-decisions & agenda setting
   2. Govt & bureauc interested, *neutral, actors in process
   3. Insiders v. Outsiders: some groups excluded
   4. Basically 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 prefs, capacity, & auton**
   1. Policymakers can & do develop preferences that differ from those of constituent groups
   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 gov’t resources

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 than external influences on, govt activity
   b. State at apex of corp sys, 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. [Ex.: Tri-Partite Barg: Govt–uni. lab–uni. employer]

5. Contrast “liberal” or “societal” corporatism from “state” corporatism [“from below” v. “from above”]

F. All actual country-times could be characterized to some degree by each of these models of politics, but...
   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

V. Empirical “Findings”
   A. Bashevkin claims that business groups generally most influential in most systems
      1. Note the difficulty of establishing any such claim
      2. [If business groups most influential, why are they among the most critical of govt policies?]
   B. Most of work confirms importance of internal characteristics of grps to their success
   C. Most also find “political opportunity structure”—attitudinal or institutional environ w/in which groups operate—are key to strategies, success, etc. Thus, influence rests on combination of internal assets & external situation [a pretty banal conclusion at this level of generality]
   D. Groups adapt rapidly to their institutional circumstances: they seem to go where it matters in their system (e.g., Congress then courts in the US), subject to their abilities to go there. [Paper Topic]
   E. 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

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

VII.