

Political Parties & Interest Groups

Ch. 6

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◇ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5nUREYjowc>

What are Political Parties

- ◆ Elections are a means to an end
- ◆ We have a 2 party system in America

Do you see this as a healthy aspect of our democracy?

Pol. Parties

- ◆ Attempt to control government
- ◆ Offer choice & alternatives to govt.
- ◆ Important to healthy democracies
- ◆ Promote pol participation
- ◆ America has weak pol parties

Outgrowths of the electoral process

- ◇ Grew along with suffrage movement
- ◇ A party unit exists in every electoral district
- ◇ Pol parties did not maintain units well

History of political parties

- ◆ Republicans failed to maintain theirs in the South between 1900- 1952
- ◆ American party system is one of the oldest institutions in history of democracy
- ◆ Compared to Europe, our party system is weak b/c no criteria for membership

Evolution of political parties

- ◆ Today's major parties evolved from early factional splits
- ◆ Factional Splits: Groups that struggle to control the message within a party eg., RNC chair –Trump - GOP

- ◇ Media bias
- ◇ Political (party) machines
- ◇ Patronage & political corruption
- ◇ Nonpartisan ballots
- ◇ Regulation
- ◇ Party conventions

2 Party System

- ◆ Democrats: trace history back to Thomas Jefferson & Andrew Jackson
- ◆ World's oldest pol party - came into being when Jeffersonian Party splintered- 1824
- ◆ Jackson broke away & in 1828 was elected president
- ◆ Democratic Party came into being & it dominated until 1860

Modern-day party politics

- ◆ **Candidate-centered politics:** candidates promote themselves & their own campaigns rather than relying on their party
- ◆ Donald Trump promotes himself over his party organization
- ◆ **Swing voters**
Truly independent voters, no loyalty to any one party

Contemporary party politics

- ◆ Changing role of state & local parties
- ◆ Consultant seen as having a bigger role
- ◆ Fundraising role
- ◆ Responsible party model: Parties should present clear policy options to voters

Democrats

- ◆ Presented itself as the common man's party
- ◆ Jackson supported lower prices for public lands & common person
- ◆ Between 1860 -1933 Democrats were split over slavery & lost their strength
- ◆ 1933 FDR & the Democrats won the White House & controlled Congress

- ◆ "New Deal" - coalition of Catholics, Jews, Blacks, farmers, intellectuals & labor
- ◆ Championed social causes & dominated the political scene until 1970's
- ◆ 1960's 1970's split in Democrats supported civil rights & many of its southern supporters joined the Republicans
- ◆ By 1980's Democratic coalition faced many challenges
- ◆ The once solid support of the South began cracking

The Republicans: Grand Old Party

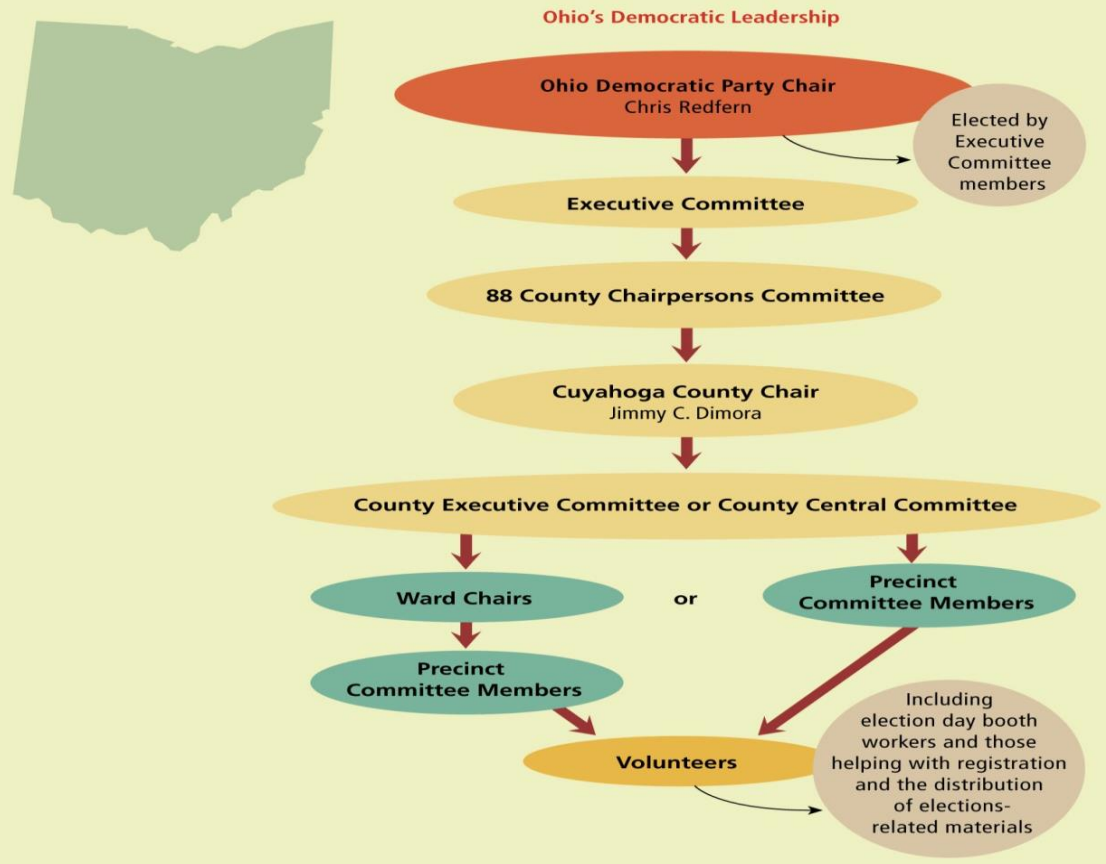
- ◆ Formed in 1850 as a coalition of antislavery & other forces
- ◆ 1860 Lincoln elected president which sparked southern secession & Civil War
- ◆ GOP dominated politics for 75 years after the victory of the North in the Civil War
- ◆ Reign ended with the Great Depression
- ◆ 1994 GOP took control of both Congressional houses for the first time in 4 decades
- ◆ Dominance continued into 2004 with Bush's victory

Fig. 6-1. Governing States & Localities: Smith & Greenblatt

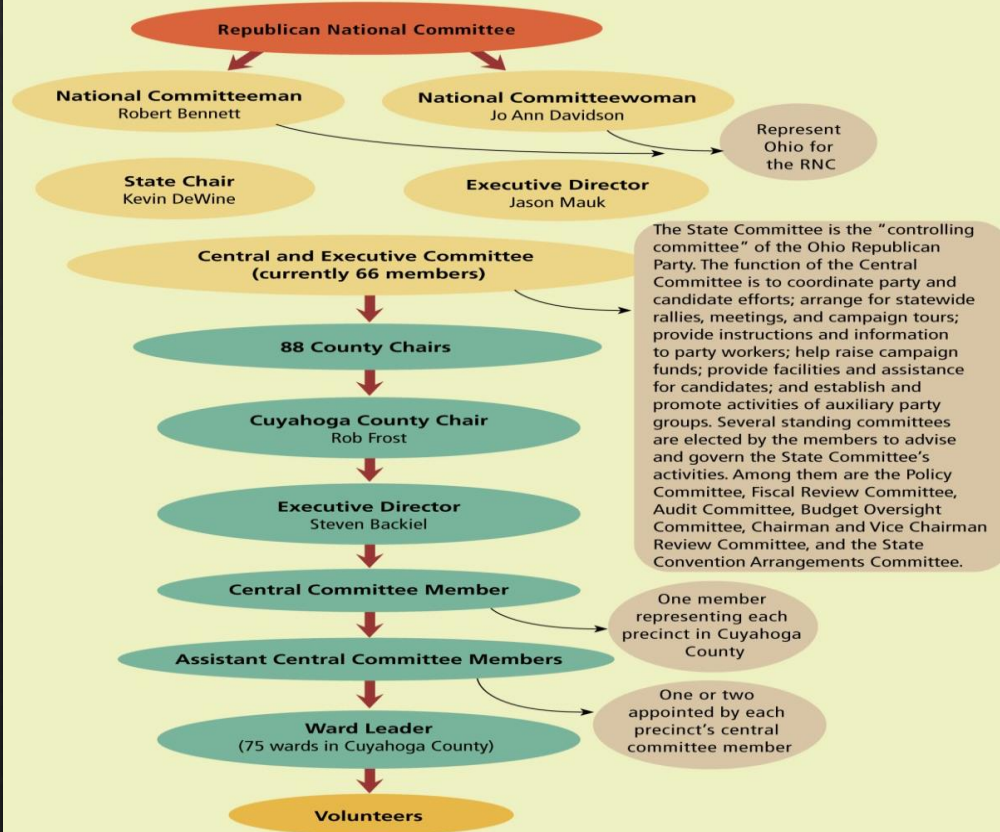
FIGURE 6-1

HOW IT WORKS

Democratic and Republican Party Organization in Ohio and Cuyahoga County



Ohio's Republican Leadership



Party Systems

- ◆ Our political parties compete with one another over offices, policies & power
- ◆ Mostly a 2 party system in modern times
- ◆ Historically 6 distinctive political parties

Alignment & Realignment

- ◆ Electoral alignment results when one party supplants the ruling party & becomes the dominant party
- ◆ Divided gov. = President belongs to one party while opposing party controls one or both of the houses
- ◆ De alignment: absence of one party dominating nationwide

Elections

- ◇ General elections
- ◇ Primary elections

- ◇ Closed primaries vs. Open primaries
- ◇ Crossover voting (some states permit primary voters to vote in a party they are not registered in)
- ◇ Blanket primaries
- ◇ Run-off primaries

◆ Blanket Primaries

Voters not required to belong to a single party in order to vote for candidates in primaries

Top 2 candidates with the most votes move ahead

• Open Primaries

Some states allow voters to wait until the day of the primary to decide which party they will choose to enroll in to select candidates for the general election

• Closed Primaries

In other states only registered members of a political party may vote in a primary election to select party's candidates

Third Parties

- ◆ Currently a 2 party system
- ◆ Several third parties existed historically
 - ◆ Eg. Populists, Progressives, Independents like Ross Perot, Ralph Nader
- ◆ Some like the Progressives gained significant influence & eventually was absorbed into the Democrats
- ◆ Witness the resistance of the Tea Party to being absorbed within the GOP

Third parties & independents

Our Single-member-district hinders 3rd parties from making it to the national stage Limited success

- ◆ Institutional disadvantages
- ◆ Name recognition
- ◆ Funding
- ◆ Co-opting by major parties
- ◆ Straight ticket voting vs. split ticket voting

State Electoral Policies

- ◆ Varies from state to state
- ◆ Several states have introduced formal barriers to voting
- ◆ Restrictions around voter registrations, ID's ,etc. – Arizona, Texas, Alabama
- ◆ These are states with prolonged history of voter rights restrictions: Restrict early voting, Refuse ex felons from voting, Purging voter's list immediately before voting starts

Factors associated with party identification

- ◆ Race & Ethnicity
 - ◆ African Americans are considered a monolithic block that supports Democrats
 - ◆ Concept being challenged in 2016 presidential election
 - ◆ Latinos & Asians are not so monolithic either

- ◇ Gender
 - ◇ Women are more likely to support Democrats. Uneducated White men tend to support Republicans
- ◇ Religion
 - ◇ Jews tend to support Democrats
 - ◇ Catholics, traditionally Democratic, have been shifting to Republicans based on moral issues such as abortion
 - ◇ Protestants traditionally support Republicans based on shared conservative values

◆ Class

- ◆ Higher income tend to support Republicans
- ◆ Democrats gain the support of lower income Americans

◆ Ideology

- ◆ Conservatives identify with Republicans. Liberals identify with Democrats

◆ Region

- ◆ South, South west more likely Republicans
- ◆ Northeast & West likely to support Democrats

◆ Age

- ◆ 29 & younger tend to vote Democrats; those between 30 -49 years tend support Republicans

Campaign regulation & finance reform

- ◆ Supreme Court Cases:

- ◆ 2010: Citizens United

- ◆ 2012: States cannot ban monies from Corporations

Regulations

- ◆ Registration & regulation of elections
- ◆ Campaign finance reform
- ◆ Independent expenditures
- ◆ Political action committees
- ◆ Soft money: money intended to support party buildings

Role of the Party

- ◆ Recruiting candidates at local, state & national levels
- ◆ Nominations: how party selects a single candidate to run for office
- ◆ Restrictions for presidential candidate : US citizenship by birth & at least 35 years old
- ◆ Getting out the Vote
- ◆ Election period begins immediately after the primaries & nominations
- ◆ Involves voter registration

Facilitating Voter Choice

- ◇ Parties & campaigns help voters by providing info re: obscure candidates & unclear referenda

Differences between Democratic & Republican parties

- ◇ Republicans
 - ◇ Support military support
 - ◇ Tax cuts for middle & upper class
 - ◇ Social program cuts
 - ◇ Moral regulations supported by religious conservatives
- ◇ Democrats
 - ◇ Support expanded social programs
 - ◇ Cuts in military spending
 - ◇ Consumer & environmental regulatory policies
- ◇ Sometimes party positions do not follow public opinions, but instead try to lead public opinions

Interest groups & lobbies

- ◆ Political activity
- ◆ Increasing political power
- ◆ Incumbent support
- ◆ Contract lobbyist: works for different clients & causes, vs.
- ◆ Cause lobbyist: works for a group that promotes specific cause
- ◆ Direct lobbying vs. indirect

Definitions of Interest Group

- ◆ Organized groups of individuals whose purpose is to influence the gov. programs & policies (Ginsberg)
- ◆ Organizations that try to achieve at least some of their goals with gov. assistance are interest groups (Welch)

Pluralism

- ◆ Theory that all interests should be free to compete for influence of gov. & that this competition leads to compromise & moderation (Ginsberg)
- ◆ In practice do you believe that everyone has access to law makers?
- ◆ How much do money & social, political influence & connections have ?

Lobbying

- ◆ Effort of an interest group to influence legislation by exerting pressure on lawmakers
- ◆ Petition legislators
- ◆ Registered with the legislature

Why do we need Interest Groups?

- ◆ Organize in order to influence gov. programs & policies
- ◆ Represent interests of their supporters
- ◆ Encourage political participation
- ◆ Enhance democracy
- ◆ Educate & mobilize voters
- ◆ Monitor gov. activity
- ◆ Good for democracy?

Reasons why Interest Groups are formed

- ◆ Social & economic factors
- ◆ Industrialization, urbanization & immigration led to labor unions & business associations
- ◆ 1900-1920 saw Chamber of Commerce, American Farm Bureau Federation, NAACP
- ◆ 1960-1970 we witnessed another kind of surge in interest groups

What was happening our history at that time?

- ◆ Eg., Civil Rights- minorities, women, elderly, poor
- ◆ Anti -war movements
- ◆ Technological changes also contributed
- ◆ 1970's consumer & environmental causes came to the front-green movements

Memberships in interest groups are on the decline across America

- ◆ Family structure has changed; more women in the work force, role of TV
- ◆ Church memberships & participation are down
- ◆ Bowling leagues memberships are down
- ◆ Labor union memberships are down

Interest Groups represent

- ◆ Business & Agriculture: Oil refiners, pharmaceuticals
- ◆ Labor Groups: Organize labor
- ◆ Consumer Interest Group -Ralph Nader in 70's
- ◆ Environmental Interest Groups
- ◆ Professional Assoc: Legal, Medical professions
- ◆ Public Interest Groups: Sierra Club

Who does Interest Groups represent?

- ◆ Ideological & Religious Groups: Philosophical perspectives- Christian Coalition, Jewish groups lobbying for Israel, or Muslim groups lobbying for Palestinian rights
- ◆ Racial & Ethnic Equality Groups: NAACP
- ◆ Gays & Lesbians: Human Rights Campaign & advocacy groups
- ◆ Public Sector Groups: University research lobby
- ◆ Single Interest Groups: NRA, Right to life groups

Fig 6-1 Governing States & Localities

TABLE 6-1

Top Ten Most Influential Interests in the States, 2007

Ranking	Organization
1	General business organizations
2	Schoolteacher organizations (National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers)
3	Utility companies and associations (electric, gas, water, telephone/telecommunications)
4	Manufacturers (companies and associations)
5	Hospital/nursing home associations
6	Insurance: general and medical (companies and associations)
7	Physicians/state medical associations
8	Contractors, builders, developers
9	General local government organizations (municipal leagues, county associations, elected officials)
10	Lawyers (predominantly trial lawyers, state bar associations)

Source: Data compiled from Anthony J. Nownes, Clive S. Thomas, and Ronald J. Hrebentar, "Interest Groups in the States," in *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 9th ed., eds. Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008), 117.

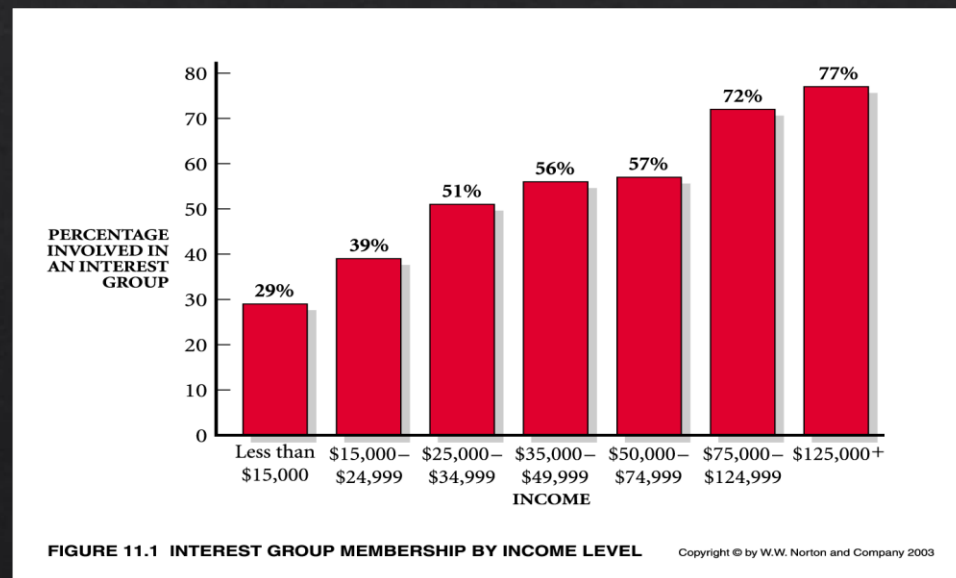
PAC's: check book members

- ◆ **Political Action Committee**

- ◆ They raise money thru direct mails, internet & their members do not really have a say in the groups' decisions, etc.
- ◆ Moveon.org. , 527 organizations- basically run ads against political candidates

Socioeconomic bias

- ◇ Interest groups favor those with higher incomes & education
- ◇ Who doesn't get represented?
 - ◇ The marginalized, the unorganized



Money & Influence

- ◆ PAC's are required to keep records of donors in excess of \$200.00 per person
- ◆ Private groups, businesses, unions & other can also form interest groups

Strategies used by Interest Groups

- ◆ Direct Lobbying:
 - ◆ Lobbying Gov. officials
 - ◆ Lobbying legislatures: First Amendment provides “*right to petition gov. for redress of grievances*”
 - ◆ Lobbying the Executive Branch
- ◆ Using the Courts to litigate
 - ◆ Groups can turn to litigation if they feel that they lack access

Mobilizing Public Opinion

Going public, is a strategy of mobilizing wide support through:

- ◇ Institutional Advertising
- ◇ Protests & Demonstrations
- ◇ Grassroots Mobilizations: eg religious right

Initiative

- ◆ Ballot initiatives at state level that are presented directly to voters

Incentives to participate in Interest Groups

- ◆ Solidarity
 - ◆ Feelings of belonging
 - ◆ Friendship
 - ◆ Companionship
 - ◆ Satisfaction from that association
- ◆ Based on one's belief & ideology & how they align with particular interest groups
- ◆ Economic incentives
 - ◆ Perception that there may be material benefits

Additional points

- ◇ Interest groups are pervasive in America
- ◇ Groups need leadership, financial base & active members
- ◇ *Free-rider* factor affects recruiting of new members
- ◇ Groups counter this by offering membership privileges, material benefits
- ◇ Interest groups expanded as gov. expanded
- ◇ Groups pursue economic & non-economic benefits- public interests

Key Points

- ◇ Candidate Centered Politics
- ◇ Closed /Open/Blanket Primaries
- ◇ Interest Groups
- ◇ Realignment
- ◇ super PAC
- ◇ Swing Voters
- ◇ Direct Lobbying
- ◇ Cause Lobbyist
- ◇ Pluralism