



PRINCIPLE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Vocabulary Set 3

Name:

Political Landscape and Interest Groups

Section:

The American Political Landscape

Ethnocentrism – Belief in the superiority of one's nation or ethnic group.

Political socialization – The process by which we develop our political attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Demographics – The study of the characteristics of populations.

Reinforcing cleavages – Divisions within society that reinforce one another, making groups more homogenous or similar.

Cross-cutting cleavages – Divisions within society that cut across demographic categories to produce groups that are more heterogeneous or different.

Manifest destiny – A notion held by a nineteenth-century Americans that the United States was destined to rule the continent, from the Atlantic the Pacific.

Race - A grouping of human beings with distinctive characteristics determined by genetic inheritance.

Ethnicity – A social division based on national origin, religion, language, and often race.

Gender gap – The difference between the political opinions or political behavior of men and of women.

Fundamentalists – Conservative Christians who (as a group) have become more active in politics in the last two decades and were especially influential in the 2000 presidential election.

Gross domestic product (GDP) – The total output of all economic activity in the nation, including goods and services.

Socioeconomic status (SES) – A division of population based on occupation, income, and education.

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Interest Groups

Faction – A term the founders used to refer to political parties and special interests or interest groups.

Pluralism – A theory of government that holds that open, multiple, and competing groups can check the asserted power by any one group.

Interest group – A collection of people who share a common interest or attitude and seek to influence government for specific ends. Interest groups usually work within the framework of government and try to achieve their goals through tactics such as lobbying.

Movement – A large body of people interested in a common issue, idea, or concern that is of continuing significance and who are willing to take action. Movements seek to change attitudes or institutions, not just policies.

Open shop – A company with a labor agreement under which union membership cannot be required as a condition of employment.

Closed shop – A company with a labor agreement under which union membership can be a condition of employment.

Free rider – An individual who does not join a group representing his or her interests yet receives the benefit of the group's influence.

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) – A nonprofit association or group operating outside of government that advocates and pursues policy objectives.

Collective action – How groups form and organize to pursue their goals or objectives, including how to get individuals and groups to participate and to cooperate. The term has many applications in the various social sciences such as political science, sociology, and economics.

Public choice – Synonymous with “collective action,” it specifically studies how government officials, politicians, and voters respond to positive and negative incentives.

Federal Register – An official document, published every weekday, which lists the new and proposed regulations of executive departments and regulatory agencies.

amicus curiae brief – Literally, a “friend of the court” brief, filed by an individual or organization to present arguments in addition to those presented by the immediate parties to a case.

Lobbyist – A person who is employed by and acts for an organized interest group or corporation to try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive and legislative branches.

Lobbying – Engaging in activities aimed at influencing public officials, especially legislators, and the policies they enact.

Revolving door – Employment cycle in which individuals who work for governmental agencies that regulate interests eventually end up working for interest groups or businesses with the same policy concern.

Issue network – Relationships among interest groups, congressional committees and subcommittees, and the government agencies that share a common policy concern.

Political action committee (PAC) – The political arm of an interest group that is legally entitled to raise funds on a voluntary basis from members, stockholders, or employees to contribute funds to candidates or political parties.

Leadership PAC – A PAC formed by an officeholder that collects contributions from individuals and other PACs and then makes contributions to other candidates and political parties.

Bundling – A tactic in which PACs collect contributions from like-minded individuals (each limited to \$2000) and present them to a candidate or political party as a “bundle,” thus increasing the PAC's influence.

Soft money – Unlimited amounts of money that political parties previously could raise for party-building purposes. Now largely illegal except for limited contributions to state and local parties for voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts.

Quid pro quo – Something given with the expectation of receiving something in return.

Independent expenditures – The Supreme Court has ruled that individuals, groups, and parties can spend unlimited amounts in campaigns for or against candidates as long as they operate independently from the candidates. When an individual, group, or party does so, they are making an independent expenditure.

Issue advocacy – Unlimited and undisclosed spending by an individual or group on communications that do not use words like “vote for” or “vote against,” although much of this activity is actually about electing or defeating candidates.

527 organization – A political group organized under section 527 of the IRS code that may accept and spend unlimited amounts of money on election activities so long as they are not spent on broadcast ads run in the last 30 days before a primary or 60 days before a general election in which clearly identified candidate is referred to and a relevant electorate is targeted.

Aboukhadijeh, Feross. "Chapter 6: Interest Groups" StudyNotes.org. Study Notes, LLC., 17 Nov. 2012. Web. 30 Jan. 2018. <<https://www.apstudynotes.org/us-government/vocabulary/chapter-6-interest-groups/>>.