

Interest Groups

Chapter 9

The Nature of Interest Groups

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Section 1

The Role of Interest Groups

- Attempt to influence the making and content of public policy
- Tend to operate in Washington, DC and the 50 State capitals
- Analyze this quote in relation to interest groups: “Where the body is, there will the vulture be gathered.”

Political Parties and Interest Groups

- Political Parties and Interest Groups are similar in that they are made of people who unite for some political purpose.
- Major differences are: In making nominations, their primary focus, and the scope of their interests

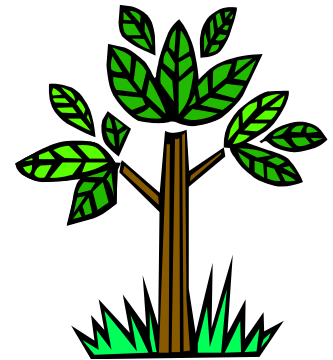
In Making Nominations

Political Parties

Nominate
candidates
for political
office

Interest Groups

Do not nominate
candidates



Primary Focus

Political Parties

Interested in
winning elections
& controlling
government

Interest Groups

Concerned with
controlling or
Influencing
policies
of government

Scope of Interests



Political Parties

Concerned with
whole range of
public affairs
With everything
of concern to
voters

Interest Groups

Concentrate only
on those matters
that affect the
interest of their
members

Interest Groups- Good or Bad?

- You must weight functions & criticisms
- Functions:
 - ~ stimulate interest in public affairs

- ~members represented on shared attitudes rather than where they live
- ~ provide helpful info to gov't
- ~ vehicle of voter participation

- Criticism:

- ~ push own interest which are not always in best interest of other Americans

- ~ its hard to tell how many people a group really represents

- ~ groups use under-handed tactics such as bribery or threats

