

Section #7

Interest groups and midterm review

What is an interest group?

- Any organized group apart from government or the public as a whole
- Engage in lobbying
 - Efforts to influence policymakers on an issue



Economic groups



Identity groups

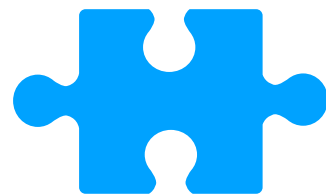


Political issue groups

Why are interest groups effective?

- Problem: hard to get the general public organized to push for a policy when everyone shares the benefits
- Why: benefits are low for any given individual relative to overall cost of the good (*i.e.*, $v_i < c$)
 - Individuals have incentive to “free ride” on efforts of others
- In contrast to the general public, interest groups have solved the *collective action problem* of organization.
 1. Individuals are motivated by highly salient common interests
 2. Benefits of policy are higher because excluded to people in interest group (*i.e.*, $v_i > c$)

**Why do presidents rely upon
some foreign policy instruments
over others? (Milner and Tingley)**



Domestic political constraints on the use of foreign policy instruments

1. Distributional politics

- Greater concentrated gains/losses incentivize contestation by *interest groups*

2. Ideological divisions

- Liberal-conservatism spectrum predicts different levels of support for policy instruments
- Policy instruments that provoke polarizing views are difficult to wield given opposition's resistance

Table 2.2. Predictions of Presidential Strength by Policy Instrument

	LOW IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS	HIGH IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS
LOW DISTRIBUTIVE POLITICS	Military deployment, Geopolitical aid, Sanctions	
HIGH DISTRIBUTIVE POLITICS	Immigration	Economic aid, Trade, Domestic military spending

Policy substitution

- Ability to switch between one foreign policy instrument and another
- Easiest to substitute between instruments president has most control over (e.g., geopolitical aid and military force)
- Harder to switch across policies with high distributional consequences/divides

Who do interest groups lobby?

- Economic interest groups typically lobby Congress, which is in charge of *domestic* budgetary decisions
- Religious/ethnic groups typically lobby the president/White House, who interfaces more with *foreign* effects

What makes an ethnic lobby influential? (LeoGrande)

1. Group characteristics

- Cohesion of community
- Electoral power
- Organizational strength

2. Relationship with political actors

- Congruence of strategic objectives
- No countervailing lobbies
- Public support

Midterm overview

- Presidents and Congress
- Bureaucratic politics
- Public opinion
- Media
- Interest groups

Kahoot

Single player:

<https://kahoot.it/challenge/?quiz-id=59995ad9-d872-4862-a672-e5acb112f372&single-player=true>