

Fadi antoine nesbey: government and politics home work:

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Fadi Antoine Nesbey: Government and politics home work: Distinguish between elitism and pluralism

Elitism: is the belief or attitude that some individuals, who form an elite or a select group of people with intellect, wealth, specialized training or experience, or other distinctive attributes and are those whose views on a matter are to be taken the most seriously or carry the most weight, whose views and/or actions are most likely to be constructive to society as a whole or whose extraordinary skills, abilities or wisdom render them especially fit to govern.

Pluralism: is, in the general sense, the acknowledgment of diversity. The concept is used, often in different ways, in a wide range of issues. In politics, pluralism is often considered by proponents of modern democracy to be in the interests of its citizens, and so political pluralism is one of its most important features. The term pluralism is also used to denote a theoretical standpoint on state and power - which to varying degrees suggest that pluralism is an adequate model of how power is distributed in societies.

Explain three political functions of pressure groups - A political function of a pressure group would be to promote discussion and debate and mobilise public opinion on key issues, this function is mainly to increase main stream democracy amongst the people and ensure that people are not only heard by each other but by the government as well, this in turn could allow the pressure group to influence key policy decisions so that they favour the public and to also allow everybody who supports there cause to educate each other one way or another. - One other political function of a pressure group would be to represent different groups in society this is an important function of pressure groups. They represent different groups in society or people's views over a

particular issue. These ideas get transmitted to government, in the hope that decisions will be made which take account of the public's view. Government can benefit from this by learning, if it chooses to listen to what pressure groups have to say. And the public too may learn something from what pressure groups have to tell them. For example just think how well educated most people are regarding the environment, which must have something to do with groups like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. - Another political function of pressure groups is enhancing democratic participation, pluralism and diversity. In the eyes of pluralists, they have a belief that pressure groups certainly do overcome the democratic problems in the UK such as, low voter turn outs for example. This is simply because if they feel like that their voice able to somehow influence the government or a political party they would be more likely to vote because what they wanted would have most likely been taken in to account. To what extent do pressure groups undermine democracy? Supporters of pressure groups claim that they enhance pluralism in our democracy and make our democratic system much more effective as a result. However some political scientists claim that many organized groups can undermine the policy making process since they are dominated by people with vested interests concerned only to improve the relative position of certain groups within society. Therefore, pressure groups are needed for the representation of citizens' views on particular issues relating to their own personal well-being or their beliefs. As a result of the resources at their disposal, pressure groups can represent individuals more effectively than they could do themselves, a point which may be especially relevant to more disadvantaged individuals such as the poor or the disabled

and to minority groupings such as immigrants. In this way this does not entirely undermine democratic since everybody has the right to representation in the UK but at the same time this representations can cause antisocial behaviour. It is possible that pressure groups can address controversial issues which political parties might initially seek to avoid and likely also that as new issues reach the political agenda new pressure groups can be formed to address these issues. Pressure groups enable their members and supporters to participate more fully in the political process on a continuing basis between general elections and this is likely to enhance political understanding and thereby to strengthen support for the UKs governmental system as a whole. The existence of rival pressure groups for example supporting or opposing the increased use of nuclear power or the war in Iraq will help to ensure that both sides of these controversial issues can be fully debated. Pressure groups may also sometimes be able to provide governments with important information not otherwise available to them thereby improving government decision making. For example governments may be aided in the development of health or education policy by information provided for example by the Royal College of Nursing, the British Medical Association and the various teaching unions. Once policy has been decided relevant pressure groups may also encourage their members to carry out government policy and may also scrutinize government performance to assess whether policies are being implemented effectively. In summary pressure groups may contribute to government effectiveness by stimulating debate. This in no way should undermine democracy at all. Another reason for why pressure groups could undermine democracy relates

to the unequal distribution of resources and influence amongst groups. This could mean several things, one of which is that those groups with more money and resources have a better chance of becoming successful as they have 'more' to actually be able to promote their cause. Similarly, pressure groups appear to be primarily concerned with their own well-being and often ignore what is good and beneficial for the country as a whole. These are often very powerful insider groups who can take away power from governments who have been elected democratically as they strive to pursue their own specific cause. An excellent example of this includes the TUs on strike, public transport, fuel strike 2001). As well as insider groups, many outsider pressure groups often operate illegally, meaning they can undermine the government and may even attack it as well as political and democratic authority which the government possesses. Conclusively pressure groups can both undermine and enhance democracy in many ways with cons being that they do at some point promote antisocial behaviour via riots and other ways and also they do disturb the daily process of business at certain points in time but on the other hand they do bring many issues to light along with increasing knowledge and political participation as a whole. So over all pressure are a bit of both.