

Interest groups and political parties

[History](#)



Are interest groups and political parties conducive to the common good?

Why or why not? Interest groups are those groups of individuals which strive for the attainment of a common goal. Interest groups can be defined in political terms as a collection of individuals which pursue a political motive or an ideology or strive to support or go against any particular issue. These groups can be of several types; they may be working for the welfare of the masses i. e. “ positive interest groups” or may be pursuing their vested interests i. e. “ negative interest groups” (Lane and Ersson). On the other hand, a political party or a political association primarily suggest an amalgamation of people aiming to influence policy making by occupying such offices which are authorized to make policies. These offices are occupied by going through electoral process. Tansey explains a political party as “ a group seeking to wholly or partly take over the government of a country by contesting in elections” (Tansey). Another definition suggests these parties are “ organized groups aiming to manipulate policy making” (Daver).

Common good can be referred to as the goodness of an event or a phenomenon that is shared by all communities of a given society. Thus, keeping in view the roles played by interest groups and political parties, it can be stated that both the groups are conducive in working towards common good of a particular society and those elements which make up that society. However, this statement holds certain pre conditions, i. e. the interest groups are not self centered and political parties do not strive for gaining power only over all others. In other words, it is the intent behind the formation of these groups which comes into play and is considered extremely important. Motives, actions and desires yield goodness as long as <https://assignbuster.com/interest-groups-and-political-parties/>

the driving force behind them remains noble. Same is the case with interest groups and political parties.

The reason of stating that the two set of groups are conducive in attaining or working towards the common good is that these groups provide a platform to the general public around through which people can raise their voices, share their opinions, take part in decision making process, highlight their concerns and problems and reach such decisions which are acceptable and beneficial for all (Cohen and Fermon). In this regard, work of Rousseau (1712-1778) holds a special place. According to him, people should be "sovereign" and the government should only be there to implement laws. He believed that laws shall be enacted by direct democracy, which followed that each person should directly be involved in law making through a platform. However, he was not supportive of political parties as such platforms (Rousseau). On the other hand, James Madison (1751-1836) who was an American Politician and the fourth President of the United States considered political parties as imperative and unavoidable. He propounded that a difference of interest paves the way for the growth of political parties and is fruitful. However, he asserted that the basic aim should remain to attain common good (Madison).

According to Raadschelders, people living in a society participate in decision making and sharing their likes and dislikes publicly through direct and indirect platforms. In direct participations they participate in elections, referendum, polls, surveys, etc. On the other hand, in case of indirect participation they tend to get associated with political parties, interest groups and other groups which signify them some possibility of being heard (Roskin). According to Lane and Ersson, the participation of people in <https://assignbuster.com/interest-groups-and-political-parties/>

societies has inclined towards indirect platforms (Lane and Ersson).

It can therefore be concluded that interest groups and political parties are both conducive to common good provided that they are not self centered and strive to achieve their objectives without pursuing any vested interests which are targeted at attaining some personal objectives a particular group of people.

Works Cited

Cohen, Mitchell and Nicole Fermon. Princeton readings in political thought: essential texts since Plato. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Daver, B. Siyaset bilimine giris [Introduction to political science]. Ankara: Siyasal Press., 1993.

Lane, J and S Ersson. Politics and society in western Europe. London: Sage, 1987.

Madison, James. The Federalist # 14. New York: J. McLean and A. McLean, 1788.

Raadschelders, Jos C N. Government: A Public Administration Perspective. M. E. Sharpe, 2003.

Roskin, Michael G. Political Science: An Introduction. 11th Edition. Boston: Longman, 2010.

Rousseau. Book III. Geneva, 1770.

Tansey, Stephen D. and Nigel A. Jackson. Politics: the basics. London: Routledge, 1995.