

# Free report about growth- interest groups

[Finance](#), [Investment](#)



## **Abstract**

This paper is on the topic of Interest group and political parties. The first section of this paper will discuss the how interest groups and political parties influence the American political process. The second section will discuss the positive and negative influences they have on the democratic process. The third section of this paper will discuss the impact of interest groups and political parties on democratic elections and government operations. The fourth section will discuss if the interest groups are growing or if they are in decline. The fifth section will discuss the impact of fundraising and money on interest groups and political parties.

## **Interest Group's**

### Introduction

Interest groups are the organization in which members have the common concerns and they try to influence the government policies to affect these concerns. In some quarters, interest groups are known as lobbies; by lobbying the interest groups shape the legislation and bring views of their constituents to decision makers' attention. The AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) is the largest interest group with more than 32 million members. Some other influential groups are the NRA (National Rifle Association) with 1 million members, AFL-CIO with 14. 1 million members and the AMA (American Medical Association) with 300, 000 members (Csun.edu).

Interest groups might not seem very different from the political parties. As both are organizations comprising of individuals that share some common

opinions and attitudes, and they both plan to influence the elections, public policy choices and government officials. Interest groups do not explicitly sponsor their members for elected public office, though they seek to place their members in the appointed public office, especially where the economic regulations are concerned. Interest groups tend to be more narrowly focused on specific areas of public policy or the social concern than the political parties. Interest groups are formed around certain concerns such as the environment, tax reform, free speech, agricultural subsidies, school funding, free trade and labor standards among many others. Meanwhile, the political parties bring together these interest groups together under a single “big tent” (Texaspolitics. edu).

## **Influence of Interest Groups**

Interest groups tend to make-up for their systemic flaws within the modern-day representative democracy. In terms of their input, in political participation, one of the major flaws inherent in the representative democracy is its potential of creating an ‘elected dictatorship’. In between the elections, the public has some opportunities to respond to the government policies and get them involved in the policy decision making. This is the areas where the interest groups come in. These interest groups have positive impact on input that gets into the representative democracy by maintaining the population active in between the elections.

In terms of output, the interest groups can be seen as having positive influence on running of the representative democracy. They can be viewed as facilitating the policy decision-making with expertise provided. Politicians are not usually the policy specialists. At the time of making decisions,

interest groups usually rely on their stakeholders and advisers having more expert knowledge of the sector or policy area in question. These groups represent specific membership base in the society and they tend to form in and around the occupational lines.

These interest groups also have negative impact on the democracy it as it is naive to assert that the interest groups are always pitching perfect. There are certain short-comings that could see the interest groups undermine ideals of the representative democracy in few cases. Pressure groups tend to undermine the input that is participation, which after going into the democracies has arguably an unfavourable effect on the conventional participation. The trends in the Western democracies show that conventional participation that is political engagement through traditional means of belonging or voting to single political party, is quickly waning.

In terms of their output, or actual decision-making procedure of the democratic government, pressure groups can have negative influence when they over-represent the minority interests. The outsider/insider typology is one that describes unequal levels of access, which pressure groups have on the government. Insiders are often consulted by the government on issues that affect them, while the outsiders have no seat at table when any important discussions arise (Ogunlusi).

## **Influence of Political Parties**

The political parties are important for democracy as they simplify the voting choices, unify the electorate, organize the competition, bridges separation of powers and foster cooperation between all branches of the government, translating the public preferences into a policy, and providing a loyal

opposition. Political parties help to structure the voting choice by nomination of candidates running for office. Before advent of the direct primaries, where voters determine party nominees, parties used to have more control on who will run under their party label. Now, states determine the rules of nomination. While most of the states employ direct primary, some of them use mixed or caucus system where the committed partisans have larger role in choosing who will get nominated (Prentice Hall).

American parties these days are moderate. They bring interests and factions together, parties are broad enough for winning the presidency or other elections. Third parties have notably been less successful. One of the reasons for this is the single-member district and winner-takes-all rules of election. In systems having multimember districts or proportional representation, there is greater possibility for more parties and need of assembling governing alliances across the parties. American parties have in past experienced critical realignments and elections. Most of the political scientists agree that the last realignment happened in the year 1932. Lately, there has been a divided government and increase in number of people who brand themselves as Independents. This trend is called dealignment, but most of these Independents tend to be closet partisans who choose to vote for the party that they lean towards (Prentice Hall).

In the last 50 years, having a divided government has been routine, with one party having control over the presidency and the other party having control of houses of Congress. After the partisan shift in South towards the Republicans, Republicans started winning control of the White House, with the Democrats controlling either one or both the houses of Congress.

Successful presidents have managed to find ways of coping with the divided government and enacting the important parts in their agenda (Prentice Hall).

The United States has managed to witness considerable increase in number of interest groups, this growth accelerated in the 1960s. Increased number of citizens started to take up interest group membership, particularly in the single issue groups. Moreover, changes in the campaign finance laws are also responsible for growing number of PAC (Political action groups) and their increasing influence in the electoral developments. Also, several large institutions that include churches, universities, government agencies, thinktanks and foundations formed their organizations for representing them politically. Another phenomena which was visible in the 1960s and 1970s, was the increasing number of interest groups which were establishing their headquarters in the capital Washington DC. By the year 1990, Washington had several diverse lobbying communities that ranged from lobbyists and lawyers to several public relations firms.

Many factors can help in determining the interest group proliferation in the U. S. The United States is a country, which is heterogeneous in several respects: there is difference in the geography, culture, climate, economic potential, ethnicity and religion. This diversity produces cleavages such as political, socioeconomic and cultural that leads to emergence of several associations and movements, each having their personal objectives.

Constitutional principles of freedom of speech, right of petitioning the government and separation of powers in the judiciary, the legislative and executive branches are relevant factors in the facilitation of interest group. Federalism is also an essential aspect in the group proliferation, as it allows

the interest groups in influencing the policy on federal, local and state levels. For example, the United States Chamber of Commerce, one of the federal organizations, has many subnational affiliates that operate independently from main body and interacts with the local and state governments. In the United States, group proliferation also results from the ideological and emotional factors. The American values of individualism and pursuit of happiness motivates the Americans to join or form groups with sole purpose of bringing their desires and interests to the government's attention (virginia. edu).

## **Decline- Political Parties**

All American political parties need to operate within their diverse society and the federal government system; therefore they tend to be vast alliances of interests that are organised in a decentralised way rather than in a rigidly disciplined hierarchical structure. Organisation of the American parties has lacked for a strong, responsible and central authority. In America, politics is based on the personalities rather than the policies and unity of the party. This was proven in the 2000 campaign, as the Republican Party started to play on with the surname of democratic candidate Al Gore, by tagging him as " Al Bore". Likewise, Democrats responded by digging political dirt on past businesses life of George W Bush on the fact by questioning whether a person with alleged background of Bush in business and his lifestyle problems would make him trusted as a national leader.

Argument in the favour of supporting view that parties tend to remain important is that the political recruitment of potential government leaders takes place through political parties. Close ties or long history with party

connections are needed to become candidate for leading the party. Vast majority of political elite have come through the party systems. In the U. S., national parties play relatively specific role in the electoral politics as over the recent years, most of the election campaigns have been more candidate orientated and less party-orientated. Voter loyalty used to be high and most parties concentrated to get their votes out. Nowadays, campaigns are more candidate-centred; as activists prefer working on the behalf of individual women and men and are concerned with their victories rather than success of their party ticket on the whole. Often, the party workers at the local and state levels distance themselves from unpopular presidential candidates (historylearningsite. co. uk).

## **Fundraising Impact**

Mostly termed as donor cultivation, building relationships is the foundation for most of the fundraising is conducted by the political parties. Most of the development strategies divide donors into categories, which are based on the annual gifts. For instance, major donors give at highest level of the fundraising scale of organization and the mid-level donors are in middle. The political parties, called factions by few, especially those in governmental apparatus, get lobbied vigorously by the organizations, special interest groups and businesses such as the trade unions. Gift-in-kind and money are offered to a party or their leading members. The fund raised by political from their supporters helps them to facilitate their actions to reach the maximum number of citizens and request them to support the candidate, representative or leader of the political party. These funds help fuel the promotional program for the political parties and their leaders.



## Conclusion

Interest group is one organization where members have common concerns, and they try to influence the government policies which impact those concerns. The ultimate goal of these interest groups is protecting their members' and clients' economic well-being. Interest groups tend to work closely with the Congress members and administration for drafting the legislation and their policy initiatives, providing information to both government and public on vast range of the topical issues and contribute significantly to their political campaigns. Interest groups have grown significantly in past few years, and nowadays every segment of the American society is represented by one or another interest group. As an organization of people sharing common interests, interest groups work together for promoting and protecting their interests by pressurizing the government.

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