

Interest Groups

- **Interest Group** – An organization that seeks to influence public policy.
- **Lobby** – A group that attempts to influence government decisions, especially legislation.
- **Lobbyist** – A person who engages in lobbying.

History of Interest Groups

- I. National Groups (1830 – 1889)
 - First national interest groups
 - Social Groups
 - Anti-slavery movement
 - Business Groups
 - Railroads
 - Oil Companies

History of Interest Groups, continued

- II. Progressive Era (1890-1920)
 - Organized Labor
 - AFL-CIO
 - Business Groups & Trade Associations
 - National Association of Manufactures
 - Chamber of Commerce
- III. Modern Groups (60s & 70s)
 - Centered around social concerns
 - Civil rights movement
 - Women's rights movement

Types of Interest Groups

- I. Institutional Interests
 - Business-oriented
 - Most interest groups are business-oriented
 - National Association of Manufactures
 - Trade Associations
 - Specialized groups
 - American Bankers Association
 - Individual Corporations
 - Microsoft

Types of Interest Groups, continued

- II. Membership Interests
 - Non-profit
 - Children's Defense Fund
 - Unions
 - AFL-CIO
 - Professional Associations
 - Skilled Workers
 - Engineers

Types of Interest Groups, continued

- III. Government Interests
 - Intergovernmental lobbies
 - Foreign Countries
 - States
 - Universities
 - Cities

Incentives to Join Interest Groups

- I. **Solidary Incentives** – The sense of companionship one receives from being in a group with others.
- II. **Material Incentive** – Something tangible, such as money or services, which attract people to join mass-membership organizations.
- III. **Purposive Incentive** – Individuals join because they agree with the stated goal or purpose of the group.

Interest Group Resources

- I. Numbers
 - Size of membership
 - Diversity of membership
- II. Expertise
 - Specialized knowledge on a specific topic
- III. Organizational Competence
 - Organizational skills
 - Ability to work with other groups

Interest Group Resources, continued

- IV. Access
 - Access to policy makers
 - Built on personal relationships
 - **Revolving Door** – The employment cycle in which individuals work for governmental agencies regulating one interest and then work for an interest group involved in the same issue.

Interest Group Resources, continued

- V. Moral Force
 - Moral correctness of the cause
 - Grassroots Base – spread the cause at the local levels
 - Dynamic Leader – A spiritual leader, Dr. Martin Luther King
- VI. Money
 - Money can essentially buy all the other resources.

Lobbying Strategies and Techniques

- I. Lobbying
 - Persuasion
 - Provide Services
 - Vacations, knowledge, money
 - Grassroots Lobbying
- II. Campaign Support
 - In-Kind-Support
 - Example: Stuff envelopes, handout fliers
 - Political Action Committees
 - Soft money
 - Most money goes to incumbents

Lobbying Strategies and Techniques, continued

- III. Publicity – dramatize an issue
 - Dramatic Event
 - Civil Rights March on Washington
 - Personality
 - Dr. Martin Luther King
- IV. Litigation
 - Sue the government or another institution
 - Sue as last resort
 - Sue to gain access
