1. **Interest Groups**
2. **Special Interest Groups & their Purpose**
3. **Interest Groups: are a *linkage institution* that connects people to the political process (also called FACTIONS)**
4. **Interest Groups: aim to *influence all three branches of gov’t* in**

 **order to impact the policy-making process**

1. ***Pluralism* occurs when interest groups are vying for power & influence in gov’t**
2. **Interest Groups can create *iron triangles* and/or**

 ***issue networks***

1. **Iron Triangles**
2. **Iron Triangles: The relationship between *Congressional Committees*, *Government agencies (Bureaucracy) & Interest Groups* (long lasting relationship):**

 **i. Interest Groups – provide electoral support**

 **ii. Committees- make favorable legislation**

 **iii. Bureaucratic Agencies - receive funding from Congress & implement policy as Congress intends**

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**Issue Networks**

1. **Issue Networks: Larger, Looser (more informal),**

**More Temporary Coalition (compared to iron triangles)**

1. **Issue Networks are an alliance of various interest groups and individuals who unite in order to promote a single issue in government policy.**

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**Issue networks coordinate efforts until issue is resolved despite possible conflicts in other policy areas**

1. **Types of Interest Groups**
2. **Single Issue Groups**
3. **Professional Groups**
4. **Social+Ideological Groups**

**D. Interest Group Influence is Impacted by…**

1. **Inequality of Political & Economic Resources**
2. **Unequal Access to Decision Makers**
3. **Free Rider Problem**
4. **/F Benefits & Costs of Interest Groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefits**  | **Costs**  |
| **Interest groups create competition for influence that helps ensure a more equal distribution of power (i.e. all power does not belong to elites)** | **Interest groups tactics can be aggressive & overwhelming & by definition, interest groups promote their groups’ interest over the interest of others** |
| **Interest groups engage in lobbying to apply pressure to gov’t officials to support or halt policies** | **Lack of resources for smaller, less well financed groups results in some interest groups being more powerful than others** |
| **Interest groups can represent very broad issues, such as economic reform, or very specific issues, such as eliminating drunk driving****Our representative republic & system of federalism prevent the dominance of factions (Federalist # 10)** | **Hyper pluralism → when multiple competing interests develop; can result in gridlock****Free-rider problem → when individuals benefit from interest group influence w/o directly supporting group** |