

Unit 5 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes

Room 2B HIVE
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ESSENTIALS

Single-issue groups, ideological/social movements, and protest movements form with the goal of impacting society and policy making.

Competing actors such as interest groups, professional organizations, social movements, the military, and bureaucratic agencies influence policy-making, such as the federal budget process, at key stages and to varying degrees.

Elections and political parties are related to major policy shifts or initiatives, occasionally leading to political realignments of voting constituencies.

1. What is the underlying idea of this cartoon? [Write your response like a claim statement]
2. Write a claim statement (including substantive support) for a large defense budget. Write a claim statement (including substantive support) for a smaller defense budget.

Getting to know various political actors:

Research each of the following actors. Tell their story. How do they best impact the policy-making process?

Green Peace

NAACP

Tea Party

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

Becoming a SCHOLAR: Using an online source review C. Wright Mills iconic essay entitled “The Power Elite” and complete the questions below:

1. Provide a brief biographical sketch of C. Wright Mills. When was this essay written?
2. Who makes up Mills’ “power elite”? Explain.
3. What does C. Wright Mills say? Is his warning still relevant? Explain.
4. Find a contemporary critic of Mills. Cite source and record a criticism.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used, or more unsparingly applied to a multitude of different objects, than in America. Besides the permanent associations which are established by law under the names of townships, cities, and counties, a vast number of others are formed and maintained by the agency of private individuals...

In America the citizens who form the minority associate, in order, in the first place, to show their numerical strength, and so to diminish the moral authority of the majority; and, in the second place, to stimulate competition, and to discover those arguments which are most fitted to act upon the majority; for they always entertain hopes of drawing over their opponents to their own side, and of afterwards disposing of the supreme power in their name. Political associations in the United States are therefore peaceable in their intentions, and strictly legal in the means which they employ; and they assert with perfect truth that they only aim at success by lawful expedients...

But perhaps the most powerful of the causes which tend to mitigate the excesses of political association in the United States is Universal Suffrage. In countries in which universal suffrage exists the majority is never doubtful, because neither party can pretend to represent that portion of the community which has not voted...

Excerpted from *Democracy in America* (1835), Alexis de Tocqueville

After reading the scenario, respond to A, B, and C below:

- A. Describe a political association in the United States that affects majority opinion.
- B. In the context of the scenario, explain how the response in part A is affected by legal protections found in U.S. Constitution.
- C. In the context of the scenario, explain how political associations can influence public policy outcomes.