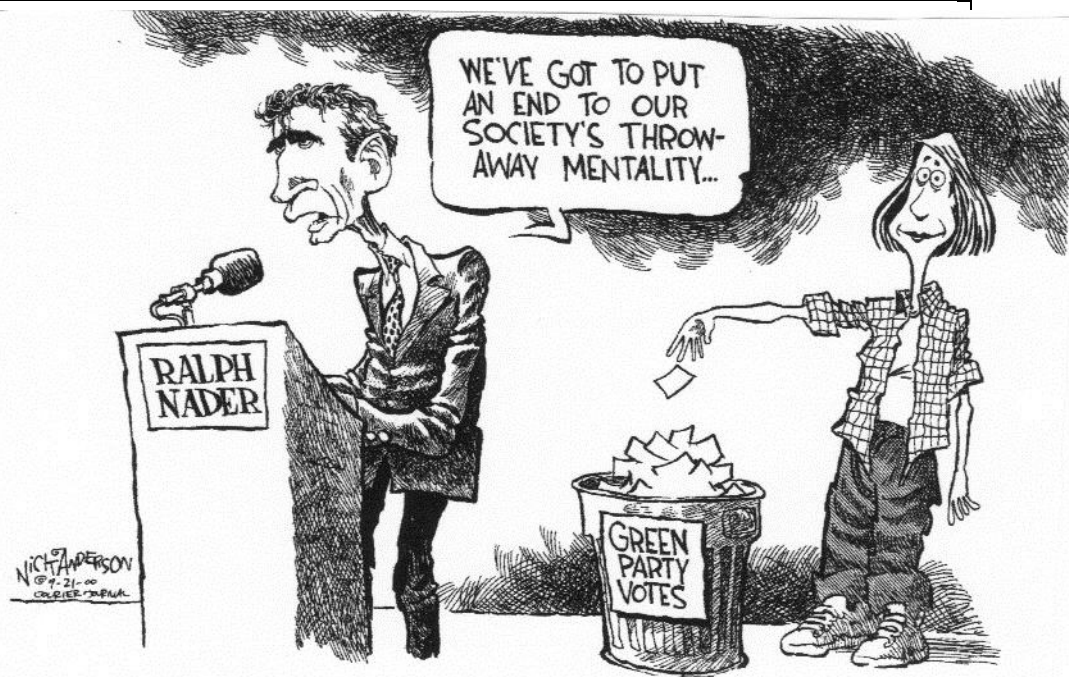


## I **Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media**

1. Individuals often form groups in order to promote their interests. The Constitution contains several provisions that protect the rights of individuals who try to promote their interests in a representative democracy.
  - a. Explain two provisions in the Bill of Rights that protect individuals who try to influence politics.
  - b. Interest groups engage in a variety of activities to affect public policy. Explain how each of the following is used by interest groups to exert influence over policy.
    - i. Grassroots mobilization
    - ii. Lobbying of government institutions
    - iii. Litigation
  - c. Describe one specific federal governmental regulation of interest groups.



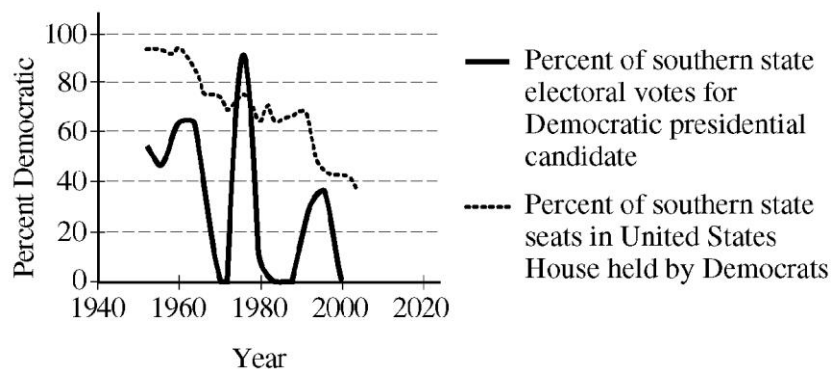
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2. Minor parties (third parties) have been a common feature of United States politics.
  - a. Describe the point of view expressed about minor parties in the political cartoon above.
  - b. Identify and explain how two rules of the United States electoral system act as obstacles to minor-party candidates winning elections.
  - c. Minor parties make important contributions to the United States political system in spite of the institutional obstacles to their candidates' success. Describe two of these contributions.
  
3. National interest groups often target national level policymaking institutions to achieve their policy objectives.
  - a. Select one of the following national interest groups:
    - i. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
    - ii. American Medical Association (AMA)
    - iii. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
    - iv. National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
  - b. For the group you selected, do each of the following:
  - c. Identify one major national level policy making institution that this group targets.
  - d. Describe one resource or characteristic of the group you have chosen AND explain how it influences the choice of the target you have identified in (A).
  - e. Describe another resource or characteristic of the group you have chosen AND explain how it influences the choice of the target you have identified in (A).

4. Different interest groups will choose different techniques to achieve their objectives based on their resources, characteristics, and goals.
  - a. Describe each of the following techniques and explain why an interest group would choose each technique.
    - i. Litigation
    - ii. Campaign contributions
    - iii. Grassroots lobbying/ mass mobilization
  - b. Select one of the following groups and identify the primary technique it uses from the list in part (a).
  - c. Explain why the group you selected would employ that technique over the other two techniques.
    - i. American Medical Association (AMA)
    - ii. Sierra Club
    - iii. National Rifle Association (NRA)
    - iv. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
  
5. In the 1990s, presidential election campaigns have become more candidate centered and less focused on issues and party labels. This change has been attributed both to how the media cover presidential campaigns and to how candidates use the media.
  - a. Identify and explain two ways in which the media have contributed to candidate-centered presidential campaigns.
  - b. Identify and explain two ways in which presidential candidates' use of the media has contributed to candidate-centered campaigns.
  
6. The United States Congress has debated a variety of campaign finance reforms over the last decade. The proposals debated have included the following:
  - a. Eliminating soft money
  - b. Limiting independent expenditures
  - c. Raising limits on individual contributions
    - i. Select one of the listed proposals and do all of the following:
      - Define the proposal.
      - Describe an argument that proponents make in favor of the proposal.
      - Describe an argument that opponents make against the proposal.
    - ii. Select a different listed proposal and do all of the following:
      - Define the proposal.
      - Describe an argument that proponents make in favor of the proposal.
      - Describe an argument that opponents make against the proposal.

7. While interest groups and political parties each play a significant role in the United States political system, they differ in their fundamental goals.
- Identify the fundamental goal of interest groups in the political process.
  - Identify the fundamental goal of major political parties in the political process.
  - Describe two different ways by which interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties in the political process.
  - For one of the forms of support you described in (c), explain two different ways in which that form of support helps interest groups to achieve their fundamental goal in the political process.
8. Over the last several decades, the composition of the Democratic and Republican parties has changed in important ways. A major partisan shift has occurred in the South, but other demographic changes have also been identified. Changes in party composition are reflected at different rates in presidential elections than in congressional elections.
- Identify one specific trend evident in the figure below.
  - Choose two of the following and use each to explain why southern voters from 1948 to 2000 were electing Democratic candidates to Congress more frequently than choosing Democratic candidates for the presidency.
    - Incumbency advantage
    - Gerrymandering
    - Differences between state and national parties
  - Several other changes in party composition have emerged in the past few decades. Select three of the following groups and for each explain how parties have changed in composition with respect to that group.
    - Catholics
    - Labor union members
    - Women
    - Social conservatives

SOUTHERN STATE PARTISANSHIP IN UNITED STATES HOUSE AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS



9. One of the most important ways the news media influence politics is through agenda setting.
- a. Define policy agenda.
  - b. Explain how the national news media engage in agenda setting.
  - c. Explain the primary reason the president tends to have an advantage over Congress in gaining media attention.
  - d. Consider the table above.
    - i. Describe the difference in the viewing patterns of older and younger age-groups.
    - ii. Describe the change from 1974 to 2002 in viewing habits that exists for all age categories.
  - e. Given the information in the table, describe one implication for presidents in their use of the media to promote their political and policy objectives to the American public.

<b>Viewers' Ages and Frequency of Viewing of Network Nightly News: 1974 and 2002 Combined</b>		
1974	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	45	13
30–44	50	12
45–64	68	8
65 and older	71	5
2002	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	19	22
30–44	22	17
45–64	40	11
65 and older	53	8

Source: Martin Wattenberg, 2004. "The Changing Presidential Media Environment." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34(3):557–572. Originally taken from the 1974 National Election Study and the 2002 Pew Center Media Study.