

Schlozman, Verba and Brady – The Unheavenly Chorus

Voice → Groups

Bias: Corporations/Business Orgs More

Member orgs less

Creative Engagement: No

Discursive Engagement: No

Bartels 2008: Senators ignore the poor, vote with elites

BLUF: Three ways we can feel happy with the system:

If voice was representative (it's not)

If they aren't solely persuaded by what they do hear (they are)

If they make efforts to learn about what the disadvantaged need (they don't)

Therefore democracy is problematic

Skocpol – The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism

3 Forces:

Grassroots activism

National funders and free market groups trying to remake GOP

Conservative Media Hosts

More educated than expected...smart about procedure, dumb about substance

Lessig – Republic Lost

“Why So Damn Much Money”

Democracy has become more competitive

Campaigning more expensive

Candidates have become junkies!

Lobbyists are the dealers

Adding fuel to the fire, extremist positions earn more money, meaning even more partisanship!

GIFTS versus EXCHANGES

Lobbyists want earmarks

Impossible to value

Anonymous gifts: GOOD

PAC gifts: POOR (manipulate policy)

Lobbyist gifts: TERRIBLE (regularity and not transparent)

Also changes political incentives: politicians want to be lobbyists

“What So Damn Much Money Does”

Distraction

Distortion

Trust

Levinson – Our Undemocratic Constitution

Chapter 3

Constitution is an “Iron Cage” blocking change

Electoral College

States Vote as a Block

Seats poorly allocated

Belated Inauguration Day

President chooses officers

Office of President Larger than Constitution

Emergency Powers: “Necessity knows no law”

Pardon

No way to remove poor presidents

Vice President

Chapter 4

Life Tenure for Justices

Corruption: Money for private gain as opposed to public good

Earmark: Congressional provision to spend money on a specific project

1) Skocpol says that Tea Partiers are easily misinformed; is this an argument against citizen participation? Is this what the founders feared? The same is true for liberal elites about process

2) Should we limit the amount of campaign donations to candidates? Schlozman, Verba and Brady suggest that campaign donations are just one form of political "voice." Should any of the others be limited, such as protesting, campaign work, contacting politicians, preparing amicus briefs, testifying to congress, PAC donations or lobbying? Which should be limited and why? Consider Lessig.

3) Is the Tea Party a good indicator of democracy in America? Consider other 3rd parties like the Green Party or the Libertarian Party.

4) Theda Skocpol claims that the biggest problem with money in politics is access. This limits the voice of those who can lobby. Do you think that lobbying by lot (i.e. everyone has a chance to lobby) is a good solution to this problem? Why or why not? Consider EVERYTHING we have read up to this point.

5) We've seen time and time again that poor and uneducated people are less likely to participate in politics, such as being active members of political parties. Political parties select candidates to run in elections, that's their primary reason for existing (with the implication that they want them to win the elections). But this leads to what Lawrence Lessig calls Tweedism, or in other words, even if we had full participation in an election, you still have a select few people setting the agenda. Resolve this dilemma (or explain why it isn't a dilemma).

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

You will now participate in a constitutional convention. Most issues are up to your discretion, but there are some major concerns from my faction, and I represent enough influence to veto the entire process, or in other words, to move us back to the status quo. Fortunately for you, I only have two items I am adamant about.

We need a check on the emergency powers of the president. I don't care if it's an incentive based "check," or an actual legal blockage, but I am uncomfortable with the ability of one person essentially being responsible for the deaths of potentially billions of people. At the same time, I need a society that can react to an emergency in a timely fashion (ICBMs can reach the United States from pretty much anywhere in the world in approximately 30 minutes).

I am also concerned about the Electoral College. I found Sanford Levinson extremely convincing here, and as such I would like a completely revamped method for selecting the president and the vice president, including what to do when there is a tie.

The other issues up for change are completely up to you and follow. Each of these issues requires that at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of you agree to the change, or else we will retain the status quo:

- 1: Describe how constitutional amendments can be made.
- 2: Describe a method of campaign finance such that you find agreeable. Who gets access to politicians? Can campaigns be privately financed, and if so, are there limits? Can organizations spend money, and if so, can they be limited?
- 3: Determine how long we should wait between when the president is elected and when they take office.
- 4: Decide how officers in the executive department are selected. Currently the president does so, occasionally with congressional approval.
- 5: Determine the appropriate length of tenure for members of the Supreme Court