

AP GOV INTRO TO GOVERNMENT REVIEWED!

Government in America (Pearson) Chapter 1
American Government: (Wilson) Chapter 1
Institutions & Policies

GOVERNMENT

• WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?:

Government is the institutions that make **public policy** decisions for a society.

– Different levels of government:

- Federal / National (Three branches)
- State
- Local



Types of Governments

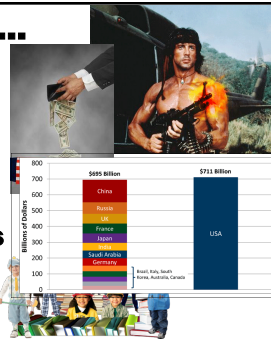
• QUESTIONS RAISED:

- How should we govern?
 - **Democratic republic**
- What should government do?

Government should...

(General agreement:)

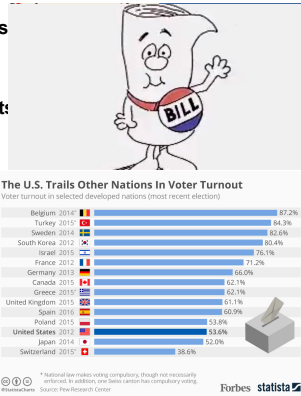
- **Collect taxes**
- **Provide for the national defense**
- **Preserve order**
- **Provide public goods and services**
- **Socialize the young**



How do we balance governmental power and individual rights?

POLITICS

- **Politics**
 - Determines who we select as our government leaders
 - and the **policies** the leaders pursue
- **Politics: struggle over “who gets what, when, and how.”:**
 - **WHAT:** policies passed (taxes, programs, etc.)
 - **WHO:** citizens, political parties, candidates, etc.
 - **HOW:** voting, lobbying, protesting, etc.
- **Political participation:** ways people get involved in politics
 - More than just voting
 - But voting is “HELLA” important:
- **Problem:** Voter apathy



POLITICS MATTER, BUT.....

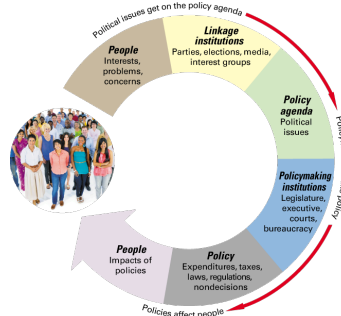


- **Voter apathy** amongst young people:
 - Huge disparity between those under 30 and those over 65 years old
 - Come on students....handle this
- **Why:**
 - Older voters mobilized around issues such as Social Security (1935/ New Deal, Medicare/Great Society) that directly impact them
- **Single-issue groups:** individuals who support a candidate due to their position on a particular issue.

THE POLICYMAKING SYSTEM

Process by which policy comes into being and evolves over time.

1. People
2. Linkage institutions
3. Policy agenda
4. Policymaking institutions
 - Congress
 - Presidency
 - Courts
5. Policy



THE POLICYMAKING SYSTEM

- 1) **People** shape policy → **Policies** impact people

- Citizens interests are expressed through political parties, elections, interests groups, and the media.
- Democracy in action
 - Voting, political parties, interest groups, protest, etc.



2) LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS: The way people get their concerns, problems, and interests transmitted to government policymakers

- Examples of **linkage institutions**:
 - Political parties, elections, interest groups, mass media

THE POLICYMAKING SYSTEM

1) People → 2) linkage institutions → 3) policy agenda

- Linkage institutions shape the government's **policy agenda**
 - 3) **Policy agenda**: The issues that attract the attention of public officials



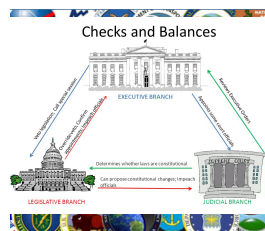
Prepare to have your mind blown!

- People do not always agree on what the government should do!
 - This becomes a political issue
 - Political issue** is the result of disagreement about a problem or about the public policy to fix it

1) People → 2) linkage institutions → 3) policy agenda

4) POLICYMAKING INSTITUTIONS

- U.S. Constitution created 3 **polymaking institutions**
 - Legislative**: Congress (Senate and House of Representatives)
 - Executive**: President
 - Judicial**: Courts
- As government has expanded, various federal agencies (bureaucracy)



- Very few policies are made by a single policymaking institution
- Goal of our system of **checks and balances**

PUBLIC POLICY

- 5) **Policies** impact people
 - Policies must have a goal to be effective
- Policies the government makes are **public policy**
- Forms of public policy:
 - Statutes or laws
 - Presidential actions
 - Court decisions
 - Budgetary choices
 - Regulations
- **Policy impacts** are the effects that a policy has on people and problems in society.



TABLE 1.1 TYPES OF PUBLIC POLICIES

Type	Definition	Example
Congressional statute	Law passed by Congress	The \$107 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is enacted.
Presidential action	Decision by president	American-led troops kill 155 targets in Syria.
Court decision	Opinion by Supreme Court or other court	Supreme Court rules that individuals have a constitutional right to own a gun.
Budgetary choices	Legislative enactment of taxes and expenditures	The federal budget resolution is enacted.
Regulation	Agency adoption of regulation	The Department of Education issues guidelines for qualifying for the federal student loan forgiveness program.

DEMOCRACY

„OF THE PEOPLE,
„BY THE PEOPLE,
„FOR THE PEOPLE



- ✓ Government by the people
- ✓ It is the system we use to select policymakers and the way of organizing the government
- ✓ U.S. is a **representative democracy**: we elect representatives to vote on policy issues
- ✓ People select policymakers and organize a government to reflect policy preferences of the citizenry

DEMOCRACY



- Key principles of the democratic process:
 - **Effective participation**: everyone has equal chance to influence policy agenda
 - **Enlightened understanding**: Free speech and freedom of press
 - **Equality in voting**: one person, one vote
 - **Citizen control of the agenda**: no one group should control the policy agenda
 - **Inclusion**: access to citizenship for all residents of a democratic nation
- **Majority rule**:
 - U.S. is a **representative democracy**: we elect representatives to vote on policy issues
- **Minority Rights**:
 - Democracies reflect **majority rule**, but the basic rights and liberties of **minorities** must also be protected





Theories / Forms of representative democracies

- **Participatory democracy:** emphasizes broad participation in politics
- **Pluralist democracy:** various groups strive to impact political decision making
 - Interest groups shape and influence public policy.
 - Competition among many organized groups means that the public interest becomes public policy.
- **Hyper-pluralist theory** claims excessive influence of many competing groups leads to muddled policy or/and inaction
 - Government can't function.
- **Elite democracy:** decisions are made by elected representatives that acts as trustees of the public good
 - Elitist theory states that the powerful few dominate politics
 - Class theory contends upper class elites control the government





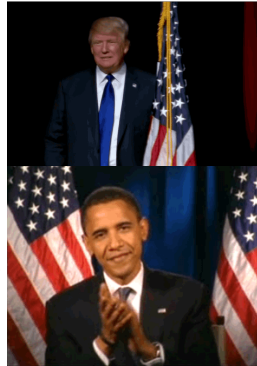
ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE & DEMOCRACY

- **Liberty: freedom / limited government**
 - huge emphasis on American values
 - Complexity: How much freedom?
- **Egalitarianism: equality of opportunity**
 - No formal class structure (nobility)
 - Complexity: Americans have never been equal in terms of condition
- **Individualism: Everybody can get ahead on their own**
 - History of internal migration (western expansion) and external migration (immigration)
- **Laissez-faire (free enterprise): support for free markets and limited (weak) federal government**
 - Complexity: Support for entitlement programs, regulations
- **Rule of law: all people and institutions are subject to laws that are fairly applied and equally enforced**
- **Populism: supporting the rights of average citizens against privileged elites.**



GOVERNMENT LIFE

- Continued debate about the proper **scope** and **role of government** in modern America
 - Balance between governmental power and individual rights
- Government does play a huge role in modern society
 - Government spends 1/3 of **GDP gross domestic product**
 - Employees millions of people
 - Issues addressed by the government: terrorism, immigration, energy, education, environment, unemployment, health care, etc.



Challenges to Democracy

- Lack of civic participation
 - Come on young people
- Complexity of issues
 - terrorism, immigration, energy, education, environment, etc.
- Impact of money on politics
 - **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)**: political spending by corporations, unions, and other associations is a form of protected political speech
- Diverse political interests leads to **policy gridlock**
- Sharp polarization of American politics
 - Liberal vs. Conservatives, “culture wars”
- **Mass Media:**
 - Proliferation of ideologically oriented programming
 - “Fake news” websites

