



# Policy-Making Processes

## Chapter 17



# Pop Quiz 17

For each example, label as either majoritarian, interest group, client or entrepreneurial politics:

1. Social Security
2. Auto safety standards
3. The Superfund
4. Labor Disputes
5. Farm Subsidies
6. Military Spending



# Setting the Agenda

- **The political agenda:** deciding what to make policy about
- The current political agenda includes military, homeland security, taxes, energy, welfare, and civil rights
- Who sets? Business, media, interest groups, politicians with agendas?
- Shared beliefs determine what is legitimate for the government to do—Examples?



# Scope of Government Action

- Government always gets larger
- People generally believe that government should continue to do what it is doing now
- Changes in attitudes and events tend to increase government activities
  - War, crisis, natural disaster, recessions/depressions
- Government growth cannot be attributed to one political party



# The Influence of Institutions

- The courts make decisions that force action by other branches: e.g. school desegregation, abortion
- The bureaucracy is a source of innovation and forms alliances with senators and staff
- The Senate is a source of presidential candidates with new ideas
- The President will make appointments that determine the direction of the bureaucracy



# Other Influences

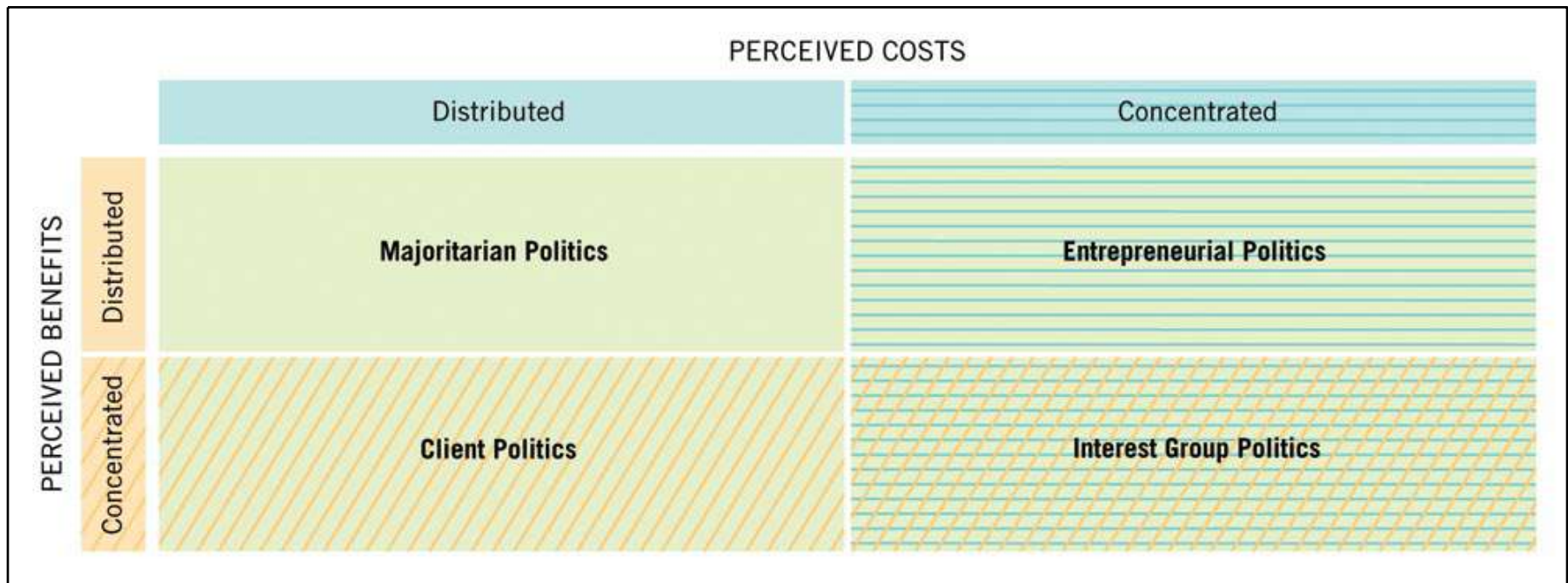
- Groups may react to a sense of relative deprivation
- The media helps place issues on the political agenda
- The national government may later adopt ideas pioneered by the states (Bottom up approach!)



# Costs, Benefits, and Policy

- **Cost:** any burden, monetary or non-monetary, that some people must, or expect, to bear from the policy
- **Benefit:** any satisfaction, monetary or non-monetary, that some people must, or expect, to receive from the policy
- Politics is a process of settling disputes over who benefits/pays and who ought to benefit/pay

# Figure 17.1: A Way of Classifying and Explaining the Politics of Different Policy Issues







# Kinds of Politics

- **Majoritarian politics:** distributed benefits, distributed costs
- **Interest group politics:** concentrated benefits, concentrated costs
- **Client politics:** concentrated benefits, distributed costs
- **Entrepreneurial politics:** distributed benefits, concentrated costs

# Majoritarian Politics

- Distributed costs & distributed benefits.
- Generally little opposition.
- Ex: Antitrust legislation
  - Sherman Act: Great idea, but no enforcement
  - Clayton & FTC Acts: Put teeth & enforcement in laws, led to hiring more attorneys to investigate & prosecute
  - Generally people only worry if it affects their bottom line; media vilifies corporation
- View examples of Microsoft
  - <http://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/myplaylistgroup>



# Interest Group Politics

- Concentrated costs & concentrated benefits...**Crossfire!**
- Ex: labor unions seek government protection of rights; businesses oppose to preserve competitiveness in market
- Dems. are pro-labor; Repubs. are pro-biz
- The party in power as well as crisis & events shape legislation.
- <http://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/myplaylistgroup>



# Client Politics

- Concentrated benefit & distributed costs
- Iron triangles are great examples
- Recipient must be seen as deserving or they lose legitimacy
- “Agency capture” is likely when benefits are focused and costs are dispersed—an agency is created to serve a group’s needs
- Exs: National regulation of milk industry, sugar production, natural disasters, tobacco farmers
- <http://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/myplaylistgroup>

# Entrepreneurial Politics

- Distributed benefits & concentrated costs
- Relies on entrepreneurs to galvanize public opinion and mobilize congressional support
  - Ralph Nader is the best example
  - Policy Entrepreneur versus Captain of Industry
- Ex: 1960s & 1970s consumer and environmental protection statutes (Clean Air Act, Toxic Substance Control Act)

<http://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/myplaylistgroup>



# Here & Now or Worry over Future?

- Policies are not made sometimes on actual costs, but perceived costs
- Values also affect perception—Doing the “right” thing
- These perceptions also come in 2 camps:
  - ☐ Here & now
  - ☐ Future quality of life
- Exs: Gas dependency, reforming Social Security, New drug treatments

<http://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/myplaylistgroup>



# Deregulation

- Example: airline fares, long distance telephoning, trucking & farm subsidies
- Deregulation is a challenge to iron triangles and client politics
- It is based on the idea that governmental regulation was bad in industries that could be competitive
- Lack of competition sometimes occurs when corporations cannot compete.
  - CAB abolition and the results
  - AT& T break-up and the results