

## Chapter One



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### Government

- **Definition**  
The institutions and processes through which public policy is made.
  
- The definition leads to two questions.
- How shall we govern?
- What should government do?

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### Politics

- Definition**  
The process by which we select our governmental leaders and what policies these leaders pursue.
- Also consider Lasswell's definition  
Who gets what, when and how

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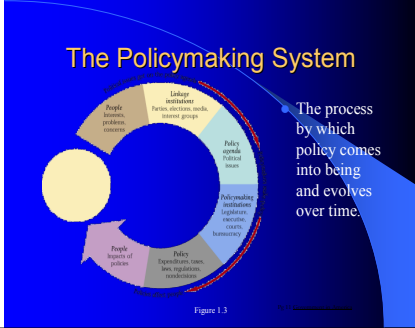
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**The process by which policy comes into being and evolves over time.**



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**People**

- Interests
- Problems
- Concerns

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**Linkage Institutions**

- Political Parties
- Elections
- News and Entertainment Media
- Interest Groups

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### **Policy Agenda**

#### **Political Issues**

These are the wants that the various people want taken care of.

Items at the top of the policy agenda are taken care of first.

It may take years to get an item on the policy agenda and several more years to get acted on.

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### **Policymaking Institution**

- Legislature (Congress)
- Executive (President)
- Courts (Federal and State)
- Bureaucracies (Federal and State)

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### **Policy**

- Expenditure of money
- Raising and lowering of taxes
- New laws or regulations
- Non-decisions (gridlock)

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### **Policies Impact People**

Does it solve the problem?

Does it create more problems?

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### **Democracy**

#### **Definition**

A system of selecting policymakers and of organizing government so that policy represents and responds to the people.

- Equality in voting
- Effective participation
- Enlightened understanding
- Citizens control the agenda
- Inclusion

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### **Theories of US Democracy**

- Pluralism- politics is competition between interest groups and public interest will prevail
- Hyperpluralism- Groups are so strong that government is weakened. It is extreme, perverted form of pluralism.
- Elitism- Not all groups are equal and the strong are wealthy. Policies benefit those with money.

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### Challenges to Democracy

- Increase technical expertise
  - Advantage of the elite
- Limited participation in government
  - No one votes ☹
- Escalating campaign costs
  - House campaign cost: ~ \$1 million & Senate higher!
- Diverse political interest
  - Policy gridlock

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**YOUR input now**



**I WANT YOU**

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### Questions about Democracy

- Are the people knowledgeable and do they apply what they have learned?
- Do interest groups help the process or do they get in the way?
- Do political parties offer clear and concise choices for voters?
- Do the President and Congress work in the best interest of all people?

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**Questions about the Scope of Government**

- How big of a role does the Constitution say should be played by the federal government?
- Does a bigger more active government limit the people's freedom?
- Do we need a bigger more involved government to protect our freedoms?
- Do competitive political parties make for better policies?

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**Questions about the scope of government (continued)**

- Do more interest groups create a bigger government?
- Does the media help control the size and policies of the government?
- Can a President control the government?
- Can Congress represent the needs of the people or just interest group?
- Do members of Congress expand government by seeking reelection?

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**Questions about the scope of government (continued)**

- Do federal courts overstep their boundaries and usurp the powers of the elected branches?
- Are federal agencies too large and unresponsive to the public that they are suppose to serve?

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