

Pre-chewed Politics

Pressure Groups: Key Words

Access points

Term used for the various people and places that pressure groups target to apply pressure for their desired changes

Cause / promotional groups

Term used for pressure groups that aim to promote issues and policies that do not exclusively benefit the group's members

Cheque book members

Term used to describe people who donate to pressure groups and charities, but do not take any further political action to further the group's aims

Clicktivism

Derisive term used to describe political action on social media that does not necessarily show genuine political engagement or awareness

Consultation

Where the government invites pressure groups to submit responses to proposed legislation, possibly after publishing a white or green paper

Core insiders

Pressure groups that work closely and regularly with the government across a broad range of issues

Corporatism

Broad term used when governments work closely with pressure group elites, particularly business groups, to make important decisions without the voters

Direct action

The use of violent or non-violent protest to immediately achieve political or social aims, rather than going through traditional, official channels

Elitism

The view that, despite the appearance of open competition, power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of powerful individuals and groups

Functional representation

Function provided by pressure groups when representing specific sections and social groups in society, not just set geographical constituencies

Hysteria

Term used when there are so many groups objecting to the government's plans that it struggles to function effectively

Ideological outsiders

Pressure groups with radical aims that reject the existing political system and refuse to limit themselves by working within its formal procedures

Insider groups

Term used for pressure groups that aim to promote issues and policies that do not exclusively benefit the group's members

Lobbyist

Someone who, for a fee, attempts to influence government policy and legislation on behalf of another individual or group

Outsider groups

Pressure groups that are unable or unwilling to work with the government or Parliament, and focus their efforts on influencing public opinion

Outsiders by necessity

Pressure groups that lack the skills and knowledge to act as an insider group

Peripheral insiders

Pressure groups that act as an insider group, operating within the formal, official channels, but with very little real influence

Pluralism

A view that power is, or should be, fragmented and dispersed. Open competition creates a degree of balance, preventing the emergence of a powerful elite

Pluralist democracy

A democracy in which power is fragmented and dispersed. There is open and fair competition between pressure groups, with equal opportunity to influence

Policy communities

Small, stable, elite groups of government officials and interest group leaders, who have a shared interest in a particular policy area

Policy networks

Loose and large groups of ministers, civil servants, pressure groups, academics and think tanks, who have a shared interest in a particular policy area

Potential insiders

Pressure groups that are working to become insiders groups, and just lack sufficient support and experience

Pressure group

A group of like-minded individuals who seek to influence the public and/or government policy and legislation for a particular cause or concern

Primary groups

Pressure groups that spend the majority of their time working to represent the interests and views of their members

Secondary groups

Pressure groups that occasionally take political action, but primarily offer services for members (that are likely to be many joined)

Sectional / interest groups

The term used for pressure groups that aim to protect the interests of their members - membership of these groups is usually exclusive

Social movement

Informal networks of people and organisations who support broadly similar goals that can often initially be seen as radical

Specialist insiders

Pressure groups that tend to be consulted on particular issues where their expertise is required

Tripartism

Where the government closely consults, negotiates and compromises with business leaders and trade unions to plan economic policy

Tyranny of the majority

The concern that, in a majoritarian democracy, the interests of the majority will inevitably be considered above the interests of the minority

Tyranny of the minority

The concern that self-interested minority groups can pressure the government to put their needs above the national interest

Umbrella groups

Organisations that represent the interests of a number of different pressure groups that share similar interests or causes

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