

17.20 Introduction to the American Political Process

Recitation: the Presidency

Table of contents

1. [Going Public as Presidents' Communication Strategy](#)
2. [The Rise of Going Public](#)

Going Public as Presidents' Communication Strategy

- Definition: presidents make *direct* appeals to ordinary voters in order to *confront* the Congress.
- Argue against the “bargaining thesis”
 - Rarely includes any kind of exchange.
 - No rewards for compliance: No carrots only sticks
 - Involves public posturing: makes compromise even more difficult, once the public know about your position
 - A way to challenge the legitimacy of legislators

The Rise of Going Public

Before: Institutionalized Pluralism

- Marked by institutionalized political exchanges (e.g., reciprocity and seniority)
- Institutions serve to reduce uncertainty
- Aversion to unilateral actions such as executive orders
- Presidents were the most prominent member in the bargaining community (e.g., FDR)
- Occasionally used appeal to strengthen their positions, but not often.
- Going public was almost identical to the use of unilateral actions

Now: Individualized Pluralism

- Contributing Factors:
 - Expansion of the federal government and the rise of modern welfare state → Nationalized politics
 - Technological advancements in communication and transportation
 - Political campaign became more personal and individualized
- Consequences:
 - Legislators needed to find new financial sources from interest groups
 - Rise of the Political Action Committee (PAC)

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