

Interest groups beyond the Global North

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Short abstract: A lecture/seminar series on interest groups and their population characteristics and lobbying activities in various political systems. This series combines analysis of various key regions and offers a comparative examination (concentrated on existing research and deployed methodologies) of organized interests and their activities in the EU, India, and Central and Eastern European Countries.

Sessions' plan: To make sure that the series is an interactive experience for the students, the 1h lectures will be followed with seminar sessions encouraging students to develop their own national case studies. The seminars will be organized around set of questions and small tasks for students that will encourage their individual/group thinking about organized interests and lobbying activities and their impact on policy-making.

Tentative sessions' breakdown:

(1) Interest groups in the Global North and South (research agenda).

Interest groups play major roles in national policy-making. A variety of organizations, such as trade unions, trade associations, NGOs, and citizens' groups try to advance their interests and the interests of those they represent by getting involved in public policy making. Examining the mechanisms of interest representation is thus important for a good understanding of contemporary public policy making. The purpose of this session is to get acquainted with significant themes, research approaches and questions addressed in recent and classic studies of interest group politics. The seminar covers different topics including concepts of interest groups population ecology, lobbying activities, and finally, whether we can measure groups influence with available data?

Readings:

- Beyers, J., R. Eising and W. Maloney (2008) 'Much we study, little we know? The study of Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere', *West European Politics* 31(6): 1103-1128.

- Lowery, D. and V. Gray. 1995. The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in American States. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(10): 1-29.

Seminar's questions:

- How many interest groups there are?
- Your case: What groups you already see?
- Can you classify them?
- Why do you think they mobilized on this case?

(2) Interest groups and their characteristics: India.

Studies of interest groups have historically been heavily weighted toward Western democracies. Despite being one of the world's largest country and democracy, India remains relatively elusive in this field of research. Although, interest groups are recognized elsewhere as an important voice on socio-political matters, our knowledge of interest groups system in India, groups' number and activities, is quite limited. Whilst there are individual analyses (e.g. on controversial coal projects and groups participation), their narrative approach to studying advocacy limits the reliability of the results. Specifically, a failure to put interest groups' activity as the point of focus reduces the potential for broader international comparisons. This session will address this problem by consolidating population data on interest groups in India in order to better understand the actors, the dynamics of groups' activities and the interactions between interest groups and the state. To do so, we will look at environmental interest groups across three neighboring states within India (Chhattisgarh, Odisha & West Bengal) and establish a formal framework to analyze the activities and relations of these groups and provide a foundation for future research of environmental advocacy in India and other countries.

Readings:

- Rozbicka, P., Patel, A. (2023). Population ecology of interest groups in India: a basis for comparative framework. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 153-171. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00184-5>.

Seminar's questions:

- What actors did interest groups address?
- What strategies did they use?

(3) Interest groups and their characteristics: Central and Easter European countries.

The session will focus on the discussion of a link between interest representation and its importance for democracy and factors influencing interest groups' numbers and organizational behavior. After a look at the pluralist, corporatist and neo-pluralist approaches, we will focus in particular on the role for interest groups in associational, deliberative and participatory democracy. We will debate whether or not interest

representation is a necessary element of democracy and can the theoretical background help us in grasping it across all political systems. We will address this question in the context of young, post-Communist democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), where we will use Western European democracies as a benchmark. We will explore the argument that that in the CEE countries, when studying interest groups' populations and organizational behavior, we have to take into consideration a number of internal and external factors. The lecture will conclude with a discussion on future trends in researching none-state actors in the CEE countries and beyond.

Readings:

- Rozbicka, P., Kaminski, P., Novak, M., Jankauskaitė, V. (2021) Achieving Democracy Through Interest Representation: Interest Groups in Central and Eastern Europe in a Comparative Perspective. In: Rozbicka et al (2012) Achieving democracy through interest representation. Interest groups in Central and Eastern Europe in a comparative perspective. Palgrave Macmillan (monograph, principal author), 1-23.
- Rozbicka, P., Kaminski, P., Novak, M., Jankauskaitė, V. (2021) Interest Organizations in Central and Eastern Europe: Evaluating Population Ecology. In: Rozbicka et al (2012) Achieving democracy through interest representation. Interest groups in Central and Eastern Europe in a comparative perspective. Palgrave Macmillan (monograph, principal author), 25-58.

Seminar's questions:

- Impact of the political system in which your case study took place?
- Inside and outside (direct and indirect) lobbying, which one is better?
- Lobbying elected-none-elected officials or the public?

(4) Lessons learned from large comparative interest groups project (North and South)

Understanding interest group systems is crucial to understanding the functioning of advanced democracies, but can it also be a tool for understanding developing and nascent democracies? While study of interest groups in Global North democracies have gone through a blooming stage since late 1990s, exploration of organized interest activities in the Global South remains a niche topic and proves illusive for comparative analysis. Nevertheless, there is an academic interest in the topic and comparative reflections are encouraged. In the session, we will discuss the themes and findings from a series of case studies from the Global South: Brazil, India, Mexico, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. The focus will be on methodological diversity, nuanced lobbying strategies, and similarities between North and South. The main objective is to reflect upon potential future research avenues.

Readings:

- Rozbicka, P., Mahrenbach, L.C. (2023). Beyond the usual suspects: interest groups in the Global South. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 115–131. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00187-2>.

- Dendere, C., Taodzera, S. Zimbabwean civil society survival in the post-coup environment: a political settlements analysis. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 132–152 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00186-3>.
- Irwin, D. Business interest groups in a one-party state: the case of Vietnam. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 172–191 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00188-1>.
- Mancuso, W.P., Prado, J.F.V. & dos Santos, A.L.O.A. Business interests and parliamentary behavior in Brazil. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 192–215 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00185-4>
- Alba, C. Long-term relationships between business interests and the state in Mexico. *Int Groups Adv* 12, 216–234 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-023-00190-7>.

Seminar's questions:

- How to measure interest groups influence: a golden method?
- How influential/powerful were interest groups in your case?
- What method did you use to measure the influence?