

## Introduction

### *Public Factions and Organized Interests*

Depending on one's perspective, Washington, DC, either is overrun by special interest groups or features the world's most active civil society. Today, more than 1,600 organizations in Washington claim to speak on behalf of public groups or issue perspectives in national politics.<sup>1</sup> Some of these nongovernmental advocacy organizations are household names, such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the Sierra Club, but most represent small constituencies and are only peripheral participants in policymaking. Beyond the familiar faces at the NAACP<sup>2</sup> and the Christian Coalition, for example, more than 150 organizations represent ethnic and religious groups in the nation's capital. The advocacy community has been expanding dramatically for several decades (Berry 1989; Walker 1991).

The burgeoning of advocacy raises two fundamental questions of democratic politics that this book hopes to answer. First, what types of public groups generate extensive organized representation to speak on their behalf?<sup>3</sup> Second, how and why do some advocacy organizations become the most prominent in public debate and the most involved in policymaking?<sup>4</sup> In short, who is represented, and whose voice is heard?

Commentators frequently raise more sensationalized versions of these questions. For instance, the possibility that some Indian tribes bought their way to political influence through the disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff was a prominent concern of 2006. The alternative story, that Abramoff extorted millions of dollars without delivering the promised favors in return, seemed just

as abhorrent. If American Indians can have their voice heard in Washington only by hiring a lobbying firm and making campaign contributions, democracy seems worthy of indictment. In addition to worrying that some public groups and organizations lack a route to influence, Americans fear that powerful constituencies and organizations can wield a veto over government action. John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt (2007), for example, feign incredulity over the disproportionate influence of Washington organizations that seek to align American and Israeli foreign policy. Because these organizations seek to represent Jews in policy discussions, the authors were met with charges of anti-Semitism. The suspicion that some groups use interest groups to gain advantage over others stimulates robust and often vitriolic commentary, but these public debates also reflect the two important concerns that this book raises: How do some constituencies become better represented by interest groups than others, and why are some organizations much more successful in advocating on behalf of these groups?

Detached investigations of the implications of Washington's system of organized advocacy are not common. Both public intellectuals and political elites find it preferable to cry out against the unearned clout of the underspecified groups that they oppose. In each of the last ten sessions of Congress, for example, members have denounced the influence of "the special interests" in floor speeches at least fifty times. Opposition to these villains seems just as profitable for political candidates. In each of the last six presidential elections, candidates have vowed to oppose "the special interests" during nationally televised debates. Bills reforming lobbying, ethics, and campaign finance designed to cure undue interest-group influence are introduced in every session of Congress; reforms were passed in 1995, 2002, and 2006. On taking office, President Obama also implemented new restrictions on lobbyist participation in his administration. Each time, policymakers explain that they are finally putting an end to the poor practices of their predecessors, reducing the influence of interest groups. Meanwhile, the Washington interest-group community continues to expand, along with the amount of money spent to influence national policy.

Campaigning against interest groups and their lobbyists in Washington remains a winning political strategy, especially compared to parsing which interests are and should be well represented. During the campaign for the 2008 presidential primaries, for example, Hillary Clinton earned derision by

suggesting that some lobbyists represent “real Americans,” including nurses and social workers.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the primary process, both John Edwards and Barack Obama distinguished themselves from Clinton by stressing that they did not take money from special-interest political action committees (PACs) or lobbyists.

Popular commentators tend to position interest groups in opposition to an imagined public interest. Yet much organized advocacy is, at least in the view of the advocates, designed to advance public interests and ideas. Clinton was correct to claim that many organized advocates and lobbyists represent public groups, including broad occupations. Claims to represent public constituencies are now commonplace among professional activists. Organizations ostensibly acting on behalf of such broad social movements as environmentalism and feminism have taken up permanent residence in downtown Washington office buildings. They see themselves as exercising countervailing power against established interests.

These pretensions seem quaint in a city where billionaires fund networks of public-interest advocacy organizations, including some that have been active in policymaking for decades. Each new organization designed to plug a hole in the advocacy system seems less imaginative than the last; each new tactic deployed to bring a silent majority from the grassroots to the Capitol appears less innovative. Even the Tea Party protests of 2009 and 2010, touted as a new form of political mobilization against special-interest politics, were organized with support from Americans for Tax Reform and FreedomWorks, two of the nation’s most established conservative advocacy organizations.

Social scientists usually study advocacy organizations as nongovernmental civil society actors. Nevertheless, they are now an important component of national political institutions rather than outsiders to American governance. As such, they raise important concerns for public representation and American democracy. Behind the fearmongering about the Israel lobby, for example, is a legitimate concern that some constituencies may use interest groups to become substantially more influential than their opponents. Likewise, the Abramoff affair was scandalous because it raised the concern that constituencies such as American Indians may have to resort to sordid methods of buying influence due to their lack of representation. Despite the heightened public rhetoric, most assertions of undue influence involve unproven assumptions and shaky empirical foundations. To move past polemics and toward credible

evaluations of democratic government, Americans must return to fundamental empirical questions about political representation and governance.

## The Big Questions

In seeking to understand the types of public groups that generate extensive organized representation to speak on their behalf, I ask whether the characteristics of the individuals in a public group are related to how well that group is represented by political organizations. For example, how do the attributes of doctors and Jews in the American population relate to the extent to which these groups have organizations representing their interests in Washington? Answering this question helps citizens understand one important aspect of the broader question of who is represented in the political system.

In seeking to understand how and why some advocacy organizations become the most prominent in public debate and the most involved in policy-making, I ask how the characteristics of organizations affect their ability to draw attention from the media and gain a hearing in the branches of the federal government. For example, why are organizations like the NAACP and the NRA successful? How do their organizational attributes affect their prominence in print, television, and online news as well as their involvement in congressional, administrative, and judicial politics? Answering this question should illuminate an important facet of the wider question of whose voice is heard in American governance.

These two research questions relate to the perennial questions of political science: Whose interests and ideas are represented by political leaders, articulated in political debate, and incorporated in policymaking? These questions, although formulated in distinct terms, have long been at the heart of the discipline.<sup>6</sup> Harold Lasswell (1958) famously asked: “Who gets what, when, and how?” He saw politics as a competition over goods obtained from government. Some interests were more equipped to win these battles, and the results would likely reveal evidence of their disproportionate influence. E. E. Schattschneider (1960) was similarly interested in the “mobilization of bias” in the political system. He believed that all political institutions advanced some interests at the expense of others and sought to explain the interests that gain from each stage in the process of mobilization and influence. Robert Dahl (1961) asked simply: “Who governs?” He was not convinced that the beneficiaries of government action were always its proponents; he directed attention

to the processes of decision making and the visible actions and stated motivations of decision makers. In theory and in practice, political scientists have long endeavored to find out why some political factions succeed whereas others fail and in what way public groups are represented in political institutions.

Advocacy organizations are now central actors in both processes. The organization of factions takes place in the advocacy system. Public political interests and ideas are articulated by sectors of advocacy organizations. These organizations are included in public debate and policymaking as the presumed representatives of public constituencies. Understanding “who governs” requires an investigation of which groups are best represented in the advocacy system and which organizations are included in the policymaking process. Not every route to policy influence runs through the advocacy system; politicians also represent public ideas and interests. Yet we cannot understand “who gets what” without considering the “mobilization of bias” in this important arena.

Two large tasks are involved in this consideration. First, to find out who develops the most representation in the advocacy system, this study connects organized leaders to their claimed public constituencies. Different ethnic, religious, occupational, and ideological groups have generated dramatically different levels of organized representation. The differential mobilization of some public groups over others in the advocacy system likely affects who wins and loses in the American political system. Asking the question of which constituencies are represented by advocacy organizations will answer several important related questions: Do only small and financially affluent groups develop extensive representation? Do groups with extreme views generate more organized representation than groups with ideological moderates? Do public groups need to be interested in politics and attentive to current events to generate and support organized leaders? Are some categories of groups inherently excluded from political representation by advocacy organizations? Each of these questions can be assessed with a broader investigation of which public constituencies are best represented by advocacy organizations.

Scholars already know much about the most obvious bias in the interest-mobilization process: the overrepresentation of business interests and government entities (Salisbury 1984). According to some scholars, representation of public constituencies by advocacy groups is an important countervailing force against the strength of business representation (Berry 1999). Nevertheless, one cannot assume that every public group benefits equally from the mobilization

of advocacy organizations. Why, for example, do gun-control opponents have better representation than proponents? Why are Jews better represented than Catholics?<sup>7</sup> Substantial differences among groups are apparent in their levels of organizational mobilization, their participation in public political debate, and their involvement in the policymaking process. To examine the reasons particular public groups benefit from interest-group representation, this study identifies groups in American society and asks how their characteristics affect the extent of their organized representation and its inclusion in media debates and policymaking institutions.

People may naturally disagree about what constitutes “better” representation of one group over another. Representation, in its fullest sense, incorporates the content of advocacy as well as the pretense to stand in for others. Jews have many organizations claiming to represent them but may still be dissatisfied with the actions of their leaders. This study assesses which groups have organizations claiming to represent them and the way these organizations act in the political arena. One can view the prominence of Jewish organizations in Washington as evidence that Jews as a public group have mobilized in the advocacy community. The study does not imply, however, that every organization claiming to represent a constituency does so effectively or even honestly. Organizations refine constituent complaints, aggregate their demands, and relate them to the policy agenda (Hansen 1991, 229). Whatever the content of their advocacy, however, organized representatives may be dependent on the character of the public constituencies they claim to represent.

The second key question moves from the public groups to the organizations: How and why do some advocacy organizations become prominent voices in the news media and frequent participants in policymaking institutions? It is not obvious why any nongovernmental leaders should be brought into the policymaking process or why Washington organizations should be sought to speak on behalf of whole categories of people or widely held issue positions. Their involvement raises several questions: Why do the official public servants, policymakers, bring advocacy organizations into governing for this purpose? Why do journalists call someone in Washington to find out what social groups like evangelicals or doctors think about policy proposals? How do some organizations gain representative status? An organization like the NAACP, for example, can become so prominently associated with representation of African Americans that observers view political candidates’ decisions to skip its convention as an affront to an entire racial group. Similarly,

an organization like the American Bar Association (ABA) is so deeply associated with the representation of lawyers that it has obtained an official role in evaluating federal court nominees.

Even if some organizations are invited to be regular participants in policymaking, it is not clear who will be sought after. Given the ubiquity of organized representation in Washington, relatively few of the more than 1,600 advocacy organizations become prominent players in national politics. AARP<sup>8</sup> and the American Medical Association (AMA), to use two successful examples, are unquestionably important actors in national politics. To quantify their prominence and involvement, this study observes that both organizations frequently appear at public congressional hearings, in Washington newspapers, in behind-the-scenes administrative rulemaking procedures, and in televised newscasts. Many other organizations, however, make the same representative claims, derive their support from similar constituencies, and compete for attention from the same set of policymakers. Yet reporters and policymakers do not regularly seek out their views. Advocacy groups are available to speak on many different sides of most policy issues, but not all gain a hearing. Scholars have only limited knowledge of the determinants of their success or failure. By asking which factors determine advocacy organization prominence and involvement, one can reach conclusions about related questions: Do organizations need to mobilize public supporters to succeed? Do they need to hire lobbyists and provide campaign contributions? Do they need to specialize in only a few issue areas? To understand the influence of each of these factors, this study characterizes advocacy organizations and investigates why a select few become the most prominent and involved.

## The Argument

Advocates for many different types of social groups and political perspectives have mobilized in organizations designed to influence national political decisions, but some groups and perspectives are much better represented than others, and some organizations are much more prominent and involved than others. To explain the relative representation of public groups, this book uses a new theory called Behavioral Pluralism. To explain why some organizations representing these groups are more successful than others, it uses a new theory called Institutionalized Pluralism.<sup>9</sup> Table I.1 outlines the concepts used in each theory and their components.

**TABLE 1.1.** Concepts in the analysis.

	<i>Units of interest</i>	<i>Significant characteristics</i>	<i>Relevant process</i>	<i>Important outcome</i>
<b>Behavioral Pluralism</b>	Public groups (constituencies of advocacy organizations)	Civic and political capacity (community involvement, political interest, efficacy)	Development of organized representation	Better representation (more organizations and staff representing interests in D.C.)
<b>Institutionalized Pluralism</b>	Advocacy organizations (representatives of social groups and issue perspectives)	Structural attributes (size, longevity, membership, issue agenda)	Institutionalization as public representatives and policy debate participants	Success (prominence in media and involvement in policymaking)

Behavioral Pluralism suggests that advocacy organizations represent the distinct interests and ideas of public groups in proportion to the civic and political capacity of those groups. Certain public groups, such as Jews, lawyers, and gun owners, develop substantially more representation than others; more spokespersons for these groups appear in the advocacy community. The development of sectors of organized representatives that claim to speak for these public groups is dependent on the characteristics of their public constituencies. In other words, groups in the American public consisting of civically and politically engaged constituents are more likely to develop an extensive organized leadership to speak on their behalf. The average characteristics of public constituencies influence their level of organized political mobilization through multiple mechanisms: Constituencies with more civic and political capacity are more likely to produce stronger leaders, more extensive support networks, and a group-level reputation for political interest and involvement. As a result, the advantages of extensive organized representation accrue to those public groups that are involved in their communities, interested in politics, and efficacious about their participation.<sup>10</sup>

To explain the reasons some advocacy organizations representing these groups succeed, Institutionalized Pluralism suggests that certain organizations become the presumed representatives of public groups in all types of media and all branches of government. Some advocacy organizations are taken for granted as surrogates for public groups and perspectives. Their structural attributes enable them to play these legitimized roles in public representation and policy deliberation. Advocacy organizations succeed if they possess attributes that match these roles: They mobilize members, create a lasting and



large presence in Washington, and articulate many policy positions. Organizations with these features become prominent in public debate and involved in policymaking institutions because reporters and policymakers see them as public representatives and expert policy proponents. As government officials and the media take the roles of these organizations as public spokespersons and issue advocates for granted, the groups become institutionalized participants in political debate and policymaking. As a result, policymakers see the same advocacy organizations repeatedly, and Americans find the usual suspects in all media outlets and policy venues.<sup>11</sup>

These theories are meant to provide the context for understanding public group representation and advocacy organization involvement in American governance, but they do not attempt to exhaust all of the factors that influence the success of individual constituencies and organizations. Like studies of electoral politics, interest-group research should strive to explain the big picture determinants of who wins and loses while investigating the strategies and histories of individual organizations. Electoral politics research has successfully shown that election outcomes are predictable based on economic conditions, party strength, and basic candidate attributes like experience, even though some candidates underperform and outperform their expectations based on strategic decisions and historical contingencies. In comparison, interest-group research is far too concentrated on the microlevel concerns of organizational history and strategy, without fully exploring the macrolevel context that makes some political factions and organizations much more likely to succeed. Just as the United States produces many more candidates than elected officials, it has a broad array of interest groups but a smaller subset of regular participants in governance. Just as only a few of the many potential electoral constituencies can swing election outcomes, a minority of political factions produces substantial organized representation. The key hindrance to macrolevel understanding has been the insistence on using rational choice models of microlevel exchanges designed to predict organizational mobilization and influence. Neither of this book's theories relies predominantly on exchange. Instead, both return to the original pluralist formulation of interest-group theory, adding ideas from the literatures on mass political behavior and organizational sociology to produce a macrolevel view of how public factions organize and succeed in political advocacy.

The American advocacy system empowers a few unelected leaders to speak repeatedly on behalf of some public constituencies. The advocacy system is premised on the democratic expectations of bringing everyone into the

process and giving all views a fair hearing. The vague allegiance to these political values is widespread in the political system, giving advocacy-organization leaders an important space to fill in the political process. The system establishes some organizations as intermediaries between public groups and policymakers, serving as permanent surrogates for public subpopulations. It also gives some societal groups a louder voice in national politics by allowing their leadership a more prominent role in policy debate. Reliance on advocacy organizations by the American government thus advances some ideas and interests much more than others.

### Returning to the Problem of Factions

The proliferation of advocacy organizations in Washington may be relatively new, but the questions raised by their activities are not. Questions about which interests benefit from the political process and which actors gain positions of power in governance are at least as old as the American system of government. Empirical observations of the relative influence of some groups over others can be retraced to the founding era. Normative criticisms leveled at inequalities among citizens have typically accompanied these observations of disproportionate influence. Americans' shared faith in the functioning of democracy and popular governance seems to depend, in part, on the way they see group influence operating in government. As a result, the answers to narrower questions about public group representation by advocacy organizations and their role in government have important implications for some long-standing empirical and normative concerns about democratic government.

In the most famous text written in support of the American constitution, James Madison articulated an empirical theory of politics to justify his analysis of the purpose of government. The cause of political conflict, he argued, is the human tendency to form factions; the proper role of government is to channel factional mobilization into competition within public institutions:

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes

have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good . . . The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government. (*Federalist 10*)

Madison's characterization of the political process remains pertinent; he identifies several basic features of democratic politics. First, differences of interest, social allegiance, and opinion in a society produce multiple and conflicting groups to compete over collective decision making. Second, new interests and new conflicts among groups arise as a society matures. Third, the operation of government necessarily involves cooperation and competition among these groups. This conception of politics as factional competition has been an enduring foundation of the popular and scholarly understanding of government. In the group theory of politics, Bentley (1935) and Truman (1951) later extended these ideas and explored their implications for the governing process.

Madison's normative concerns have also continued to play an important role in attitudes toward the limitations and potential of American government. A recurrent debate addresses whether the constitutional system succeeds in controlling the effects of faction. Distress about the differential influence of some interests over others has been a chief mark of political critique in every period. This concern about interest groups, for example, served as the underpinning for many of the reforms of the Progressive Era, including moves toward direct democracy. A similar concern continues to animate modern movements for reform of political campaigns and the legislative process.

Nevertheless, political factions do not always garner such an adverse name. In the most cited analysis of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) celebrated the tendency of Americans to form associations to advance their interests. The process of developing shared ideas and the motivation to combine actions to achieve collective goals is, for de Tocqueville, the essence of democracy in practice. Many contemporary critics agree that, for democracy to succeed, citizens must actively engage in political decision making through associations (Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003). In contemporary parlance, the impulse to form factions also produces "civic engagement."

Scholars and public intellectuals all seem to resist accepting the basic trade-off involved in political mobilization: People generally cooperate in

order to compete. They mobilize to pursue shared interests and ideas when those interests or ideas are thought to be different from those of other groups. The organization of civil society that Americans admire is dependent on the impulse to mobilize into interest groups that Americans detest. Citizens, scholars, and popular commentators often insist that some qualitative difference separates interest groups that they admire from those they detest. In practice, these normative distinctions among groups rarely conform to actual groups' formation or behavior (James 2004; Mathiowetz 2008). Groups of all kinds, for example, involve fluid boundaries among members, combinations of motivations involving both ideas and interests, and particularistic claims that conflict with the ideas and interests of others (Mansbridge 1992; Post and Rosenblum 2002). Even in cases where popular participation and influence expand dramatically across constituencies, people are often dissatisfied with the results (Fiorina 1999).

The problem of factions, including their inevitability and consequences, constitutes a foundational dilemma of democracy. Interest mobilization, the process by which factions come to be represented in the political system, is a fundamental element of democratic participation. Interest aggregation, the process by which the ideas and concerns of factions are integrated in political institutions and policies, is a basic feature of democratic governance. The description of these processes and the explanation of why they unfold as they do should be a primary curiosity for all observers of democracy.

### What's New Here?

This book revisits the problem of factions with a fresh theoretical perspective and new empirical data. The focus is on national advocacy organizations and the constituencies they represent. Rather than merely isolating and analyzing one set of actors, however, the study of these organizations is designed to be a lens for understanding the means by which public factions involve themselves in political decision making. As a result, the book blends the analysis of political competition within institutions with the analysis of public political behavior. The analysis centers on the intermediaries, the organizations that stand between public groups and government, and connects their behavior to the characteristics of the public subpopulations that they represent, as well as the many targets of their advocacy.

### *A New Approach*

The book's focus on the role of the advocacy system in interest aggregation is inspired by a recent turn in political science literature that emphasizes the connections among group mobilization, interest representation, and governance. Scholars of legislative politics (Sulkin 2005; Bishin 2009) now contend that policymaker actions are impossible to understand without connecting investigations of government institutions and public political behavior. They seek macropolitical theories, accounting for congressional behavior by incorporating the ideas and interests of public constituencies. Scholars studying interest groups have likewise argued that their subfield can return to high status in political science by updating its foundations in pluralist theory. Virginia Gray and David Lowery (2004) and Andrew McFarland (2004) label this suggested reformulation "neopluralism." This book extends the neopluralist perspective by introducing two theories with the marks of both traditional pluralist assumptions and recent scholarly innovations. First, Behavioral Pluralism combines the original ideas of group theory with contemporary analysis of individual political behavior to predict which public groups will be best represented in Washington. Second, Institutionalized Pluralism combines pluralist ideas about the way interest groups serve as intermediaries in democratic politics with contemporary ideas borrowed from organizational theory to predict which organized leaders' voices will be heard in national political debates.<sup>12</sup>

These macropolitical theories are used to understand how public political factions organize for involvement in American national politics. Scholars of particular social groups, policy areas, and political institutions could all benefit from a better understanding of the way public constituencies are represented by organized advocates in political debates. If interest-group research regains this breadth, it can become useful to scholars throughout the discipline.

### *New Evidence*

The research program here begins with original data on the activities and characteristics of organizations that claim to speak for public constituencies along with data on the characteristics of public groups they claim to represent. First, the study identifies more than 1,600 advocacy organizations with a presence in Washington and categorizes them based on the people or perspective they claim to represent. Second, it identifies hundreds of public constituencies that have generated some level of organized representation in

Washington. Third, it measures the prominence of each organization and each sector of representative organizations in the print, television, and online media and the involvement of each organization and sector in congressional testimony, presidential directives, administrative rulemaking, and federal litigation. Fourth, the study compiles aggregate public-opinion-survey data to measure the characteristics of public constituencies (such as Jews, physicians, and environmentalists) that may influence the extent of their organized representation, including their demographic traits and levels of public engagement, civic involvement, and political participation. Fifth, the study uses new data on dozens of factors that might influence each organization's prominence or involvement, including measures of its structure and issue agenda and its ties to public membership, financial contributions, and issue expertise. Sixth, qualitative material from interviews with policymakers and organizational leaders helps flesh out the mechanisms by which some advocacy organizations become institutionalized participants in policymaking.

### *New Implications*

Beyond the specific results of this analysis, the findings point toward an important new perspective on the advocacy system in American government. The underlying processes of public-group mobilization and interest representation appear to be uniform across the political spectrum. Organizational leaders are unable to succeed independently of the characteristics of their constituency and their organization, regardless of their political views or tactics. Similarly, public groups do not generate extensive representation unless they have the civic and political capacity, no matter the ideas or group interests they share.

To understand the way some groups or perspectives gain advantage in political debate, scholars often examine the biases of policymakers or media outlets. This study, however, finds few differences in which voices are heard across media outlets or policy venues and few differences in success between conservative and liberal advocacy groups. Rather than assume that who gets a seat at the table is a function of the political biases of the news media or the differences in policymaking across the branches of government, scholars should acknowledge an alternative: The relative mobilization of different public groups in the advocacy system may be reflected in all arenas. The same groups gain advantage in all outlets and venues for the same underlying reasons.

The analysis also has important implications for public representation. It suggests that Americans have created a system that relies on organizations seen

as public representatives to serve as surrogates for important constituencies and perspectives in political discussions. When political elites speak of the opinions of the “black community,” for example, they often refer to the expressed opinions of organized leaders. This mode of public-group representation through organizational sectors may be as important to the political process as the traditional idea that policymakers respond to public opinion as a whole or the notion that public opinion influences government through its expression in elections. Group opinions may find their way into the governing process through organized advocates as often as aggregate public opinion influences policy decisions and as often as individual opinions influence election results.

From a normative standpoint, the analysis suggests that recent anxieties about special-interest politics are mere restatements of old concerns about the role of factions in democratic government. Americans remain uneasy about whether organized leaders can properly represent public groups and whether the conflicting ideas and interests of the public can be incorporated into policy-making. The role of the organizations that claim to speak on behalf of public groups or perspectives reinforces these two concerns. Advocacy organizations are taken as surrogates for broad constituencies, even though they may have only tenuous connections to their supporters. Policymakers and media elites take it for granted that they incorporate multiple public ideas and interests by listening to competing voices from this set of organizations, which represent heavily mobilized groups. The organization of factions predictably reinforces inequalities among public groups and among their presumed leaders.

## The Structure of the Book

This analysis proceeds in two parts. Part I investigates who is represented; it analyzes the public constituencies of national advocacy organizations. It begins by cataloging the breadth of interest representation in Washington in Chapter 1. A wide range of public groups associated with a great diversity of interests and ideas mobilize to influence national politics. This public-group representation does not necessarily involve membership organizations; many organizations claim to represent public groups without having members. Although hundreds of public groups have some representatives, enormous differences appear in levels of representation. Some public groups generate substantially more organizations, staff, and lobbyists to speak on their behalf. The most highly represented groups do not fall easily into any one category; a few ideological, occupational,

and ethnic groups have a great deal of political representation, but most public groups in each of these categories have minimal representation.

Chapter 2 explains differences in representation across public groups by articulating and testing a theory called “Behavioral Pluralism.” To explain why some groups generate more representation than others, it aggregates the analysis of individual political participation to the group level. From this perspective, socially engaged, politically efficacious, and civically involved constituencies are likely to generate the most extensive representation to speak on their behalf, no matter the size of the group and no matter the views they espouse. The explanation for which groups are best represented relies on describing the social and political behavior of constituencies in the mass public, rather than by categorizing types of interests. To test these ideas, the study merges data on the prominence of over 100 sectors of organizations with data on the aggregate demographics, levels of social and political engagement, and political views of their constituencies. The chapter offers some of the first tests of whether larger constituencies, those of higher socioeconomic status, or those with extreme views generate more organized representation in Washington. The evidence suggests that political attentiveness and civic involvement among constituencies explain more than any of these factors.

Chapter 3 moves the focus to the characteristics of the organizations that claim to represent public groups in national politics. It demonstrates that the organizations representing these constituencies differ dramatically in their scale, scope, and behavior, even among those representing the same constituency. The findings consistently illustrate skewed distributions of resources, prominence, and involvement that imply that a small number of organizations achieve disproportionate success. Among the resourceful and successful subset, however, there is a stunning diversity of types of interests.

Part II of the book focuses on the factors that influence the success of advocacy organizations. Chapter 4 begins by introducing a theory of how and why particular advocacy organizations succeed, called “Institutionalized Pluralism.” Organizations with specified structural features manage to be seen by political elites as representatives of public constituencies and spokespersons for issue perspectives. Organizations that become institutionalized into these two roles become the obvious sources in media coverage and the obvious participants in policymaking arenas. AARP serves as a case study; the chapter concludes that AARP succeeds by serving as the assumed representative of older Americans.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that the media amplify the voices of advocacy organizations that become recognized constituency representatives. The



structural characteristics of organizations, rather than their ideological orientations, determine whether they gain attention from the Washington print media, the television news media, and World Wide Web publishers. Differences in the supply of organized spokespersons, not internal biases in the news media, explain the pattern of interest group source usage.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that policymakers respond to the same types of institutionalized leaders. Using data on organizational involvement in legislative hearings, regulatory agency rulemaking, federal court cases, and presidential announcements, the chapter reveals that the same organizational characteristics predict which organizations are most involved in all venues. One can explain whose voices are heard in political institutions by noting the structural characteristics of organizations rather than the particular strategies of policymakers or organized leaders. The community of participants in policymaking in Congress and the White House, however, is more representative of the broad range of interests mobilized in Washington than the same communities in administrative agencies and courts because Congress and the president act as seekers of an assembly of different advocates, rather than passive receivers of advocacy.

The conclusion explores the implications of the research for scholars' general understanding of interest mobilization and aggregation in American democracy. The tendency of all branches of government and the media to empower organized representatives to speak on behalf of public constituencies opens most policy arenas to similar casts of participants. These tendencies suggest that most normative critiques of democratic decision making are subsumed within the fundamental problems associated with political factions: whether leaders can represent broad collective interests and whether conflicting ideas and interests can be incorporated into political outcomes.

The analysis offers a revised perspective on these recurring questions, focusing on the organized representation afforded to different public groups. The book describes and analyzes a key aspect of interest mobilization and aggregation: the organization of public constituency representation in the advocacy system. This approach can focus attention on the way political factions are reflected in contemporary civil society. If the causes of faction are "sown in the nature of man" and the effects are seen in the "necessary and ordinary operations of the government," as Madison argued, an understanding of factional mobilization, as well as the associated organized competition for political influence, is essential for a coherent view of democratic government.