17.20 Introduction to the American Political Process

Recitation: the Presidency
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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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