Beyond pluralism and elitism: How much influence do special interests have on the content of congressional legislation?

By: Kyle Johnson
Introduction

Interest groups in society
How is power exercised?
Why it matters?

Democracy

Individual voice
Previous Research (classics)

Pluralism
- Robert Dahl *Who Governs: Democracy and power in an American City*
- David Truman *The Governmental process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*
- Seymour Lipset *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*

Elitism
- C Wright Mills *The Power Elite*
- E E Schattschneider *The Semisovereign People: A realist’s view of democracy in America*
- G William Domhoff *Who Rules America Now?*
Previous Research (recent)

Contributions matter
- Legislative involvement and committee. Hall, R., & Wayman, F. (1990)

Contributions do not matter
- Tenuous link between contributions and votes. Milyo, J. (1997)

Money matters, not contributions
Case studies

- Remove provision from Dodd-Frank
- Energy Task Force sponsored by fossil fuel industry
- Exempted from new regulations for coal power plants
Results and implications

Disproportionate influence among interest group.

Understanding interest group’s complex nature
Thanks for listening!

Any questions?