

The Flow of Power

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Important considerations

- These problems are culture-wide
- City, state, nation, culture
- I am describing a broken system
- Not describing individuals
- Here to explain, not offend

Of little concern

- Unconstitutional laws are not changed
- Rights of small merchants trampled
- Petitions don't matter
- “Public input” has little influence on decisions
- Requests for evidence-based policy not utilized
- Middle class property values unimportant
- No penalties for wayward police
- Lost internet neutrality, lost freedom of press

What is important

- Status quo critical
- Proposals from the administration
- Existing large businesses
- Minimize government transparency
- Maintain unconstitutional laws
- Lower taxes on the rich
- Extend government power, regulate everything
- Maintain police prestige

Ceremonial meetings

- Issues are discussed but ...
- Fiction presented as justification
- Obvious valid concerns irrelevant
- Decisions apparently made elsewhere

Neophyte to senior official

- Young people more often rebels
- Hard to fight an uphill battle forever
- People get worn out
- Repeated ideas become dogma
- Get flack for fighting dogma
- Consequently, most seniors promote status quo

One level deeper

- From full legislature to administrative cliques
- Cliques have executive, experienced legislators, department directors
- Form an organized cohesive group
- Vocal minority usually controls large groups
- Cliques guide full legislature
- Whoever controls clique controls legislature

One more level

- Directors work for mayor, governor, or president
- Chief executive sets policy
- Results of policy given to leadership committee

Back yet another level

- Elections are expensive
- Politicians get donations from rich, businesses
- Laws, policies, appointments serve campaign donors

The flow of power

- Campaign donors to
 - Politicians, especially mayor/governor/president to
 - Senior committee members to
 - Steering committee to
 - Full legislature
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- Campaign donors usually value their wealth
 - Common good not important

Journal article

- <https://scholar.princeton.edu>
- Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens
- “Multivariate analysis indicates that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence.”
- Oligarchy, not democracy

Reclaiming our government

- Promote real public service
- Public financing of elections
- Politicians must divest everything
- Term limits
- Committee leadership not based on seniority

- Think, dream, vote!
- Support honest candidates

Enjoy life & change our world

