

speak, are characterized by low interest group participation and producer group dominance.

The issue areas having restricted interest group participation conform to Gray and Lowery's observations about the tendency to create policy niches. Niche behavior is likely to be explained by derivations from multiple-elite theory. Producer groups are likely to dominate. Olson's logic of collective action is likely to apply as a few producer groups organize, while a much broader constituency fails to organize. The interest group sustainers—policy networks, patrons, and social movements—would tend to be inactive in forming groups. There would certainly be a role in democratic representation for professionalized agencies of the state to enforce laws and rules in the general interest, but one might be pessimistic about the degree of agency independence from producer groups that were not offset by advocacy coalitions representing broader interests. Still, there might be punctuated change at a more specific level of policy formation than envisioned by the earlier publication of Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Nevertheless, policy niches are probably rife with subgovernmental control, accounting for the widespread intuition that multiple-elite theory is still relevant, in spite of case studies showing neopluralism.

Berry (1999) showed a high degree of political success by environmental groups and other citizens groups in lobbying Congress in recent years (see also Shaiko, 1999). But one limitation of such success is that citizens groups are not likely to be active in niche politics. Preliminary evidence indicates that business groups and other producer groups (professions, agriculture) dominate the limited organization of groups in policy niches. Although more research is needed, it is likely that the sum total of such policy niches, characterized by a low level of group organization, may represent a great proportion of public policy. Schattschneider (1960) and Schlozman and Tierney (1983, 1986), among others, argued that business groups dominate the "pluralist heaven" of group organization, and this may be true for policy niches, the "business group heaven" (Berry, 1999; Baumgartner and Leech, 2000, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Neopluralism builds on multiple elitism by adding four elements. The first is neopluralist findings: observing numerous competing interest groups in policy processes. However, such findings and the existence of some countervailing power are not equated with justice in public policy; nor does the existence of a multiplicity of groups mean that all interests are adequately represented. Neopluralism does not necessarily imply policy justice.

A second new element is the observation of interest group sustainers—policy networks, entrepreneurs, and patrons. Social movements, a third element added to political process theory, are also sustainers of interest groups, and they

affect the political process in other ways (see chapter 5). Because there is often a multiplicity of interest groups in a policy area, they sometimes provide countervailing power to the producer groups. Groups on both sides of an issue provide leeway for governmental agency autonomy or "statism," a fourth contribution of neopluralist studies.

Neopluralism supersedes multiple elitism. Nevertheless, the multiple-elite theories provide the best interpretation of some policy situations, whether existing at present or before 1975, when such elitism seems to have been more common. In particular, multiple-elite theory may better describe policy niches, which are just now being analyzed and may be rather common.

Neopluralism finds that the concepts of islands of oligarchy and the logic of collective action are superseded in observations of policy processes. Neopluralists observe a plethora of organized groups. Power triads are observed, consisting of producer groups, countervailing power groups, and agencies with some autonomy. Policy networks provide an important check on policy elites. Neopluralists sometimes observe a reform cycle, in which subgovernmental control during routine politics is altered by countervailing power coalitions during times of high politics some issue area. However, the power of producer groups tends to be reasserted, leading to a shift in control of the policy area, according to the reform cycle. Other neopluralists subscribe to the punctuated equilibrium theory, in which periods of high politics lead to a qualitative change, based on new institutions and policies, so that the area does not revert to its former condition.

Neopluralism incorporates concepts such as the advocacy coalition, spanning the boundaries of groups and institutions. Advocacy coalitions that are active in implementation politics can act as a brake on the reform cycle. Further attention is likely to be paid to network theory and its applications to politics and policy, such as delineating the meaning of planning in complex, pluralist politics or understanding the signaling of information by groups active in lobbying. The delineation of policy niches in the 1990s indicates a limitation of the neopluralist model.