Actors in the Policy-Making Process

Non-Governmental Actors

Voting Public
- expresses policy preferences through elections
- approves or rejects specific policy alternatives
- influences policy decisions through direct legislation (propositions and referendums)
- communicates with legislators and interest-group participation

Interest Groups
- advise legislators, especially key committee members, and executive agencies on key issues
- forge political alliances with other groups and policy actors to help build support for policies
- help shape public opinion through media campaigns
- influence voting patterns through voter appeals
- contribute to election campaigns of candidates who agree with their opinion on issues
- businesses, especially large ones, form influential interest groups

Mass Media
- disseminate information on candidates, elections, policies, and problems
- support candidates, issue positions, and programs through editorial endorsements
- help shape public opinion and agenda through editorial control of content

Political Parties
- sponsor candidates who represent the party’s ideology and stance on issues
- help define public debate on issues
- help shape public opinion and voting patterns through party platforms and voter appeals

Experts, Scientists, and Researchers
- advise government and non-government actors on effective policy options
- conduct research evaluating effectiveness of implemented policy

Government Actors

Executive Branch
- advocates or opposes policy in the form of legislative proposals and vetoes
- institutes executive orders that formulate and implement policy
- sets policy agendas through public communication
- implements policy through executive agencies

Legislative Branch
- enacts laws to institute new policy
- researches various policy initiatives through committee systems
- supervises the implementation and effectiveness of new policy programs

Judicial Branch
- oversees and interprets enacted laws and policies
- mediates disputes between policy actors, thereby helping to formulate policy

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