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### Homework Assignment #1

1. Political action committees, which are also known as PACs, are influential single-focus groups that use communication practices to pressure the political process. PACs have significantly contributed to the decline of parties.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974 changed ways campaigns are financed when the Supreme Court ruled that individuals could spend as much as they want for their candidates but only separate from donations tied to a campaign. However, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of unlimited contributions provided by corporations and PACs in 2010. This proves to show the power of PACs in elections as well as their vast influence.

The NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is an example of a PAC. They are a pressure group that works to aggregate individual opinions in to a group around a single issue; they also raise large funds quickly, in addition to the other functions of PACs.

PACs often make the difference in elections because of the many communication activity related functions they perform, including turning voters on to their “hot button” issues and the influence they have on officials using various communication channels. These functions are communication related activities because lobbyists employ use of social media, written fliers, emails, phone calls, pseudo-events for publicity and other methods to appeal to voters and officials.

2. Omitted

3. Deliberation entails careful inspection of a problem and varied viewpoints before arriving at a well-reasoned answer. This involves a solid information base so you can weigh the pros and cons after thinking about a broad range of solutions. To hear all sides it is important to engage in open dialogue when you speak with others as opposed to a monologue-style of communication, when you speak at others. Dialogic communication shows that you value and respect the other person's viewpoints, even if you don't agree. Communicating in an open dialogue shows that either party is willing to listen and potentially change their mind. The monologue-style of communication closes off, or shuts down, conversation. Some ways that the monologue communication style shuts down conversation are by: freezing participants, disqualifying other's points, naturalization, topic avoidance, subjectification of experience, meaning denial, and pacification.

I witnessed an example of poor communication the other day, specifically participant freezing. I was on the MAX train today when the conductor made everyone shuffle off the train. As it turns out, there were protestors blocking the tracks so our train could not pass. Thousands of people couldn't get to work on time because of these protestors. So it was no surprise to me that I heard an argument when I passed by the Black Lives Matter protestors camp. One man was telling a Black Lives Matter protester that he was selfish and disrespectful. He wouldn't listen to the protestor's points but instead kept insisting the protestor was rude for blocking everyone from commuting. The man was basically saying, "I know who you are," instead of listening to understand.

4. The “marketplace of ideas” refers to a metaphorical marketplace where there are ideas of every kind for a metaphorical shopper to experiment with. The marketplace is important because the shopper has virtually unrestricted access to billions of ideas so the shopper can make his or her own decisions. Having access to the marketplace of ideas is crucial to “significant choice,” which refers to the act of choosing as voluntary and free from coercion. Significant choice is based on all available information and includes knowledge of alternatives, including short and long term consequences associated with each potential choice. The shopper must also think about potential motivations of influencers as well as their own needs and motivations.

As Thomas R. Nilsen, author of *Ethics of Speech Communication*, writes, “freedom is proportional to the opportunity for significant choice,” and I believe he is correct. Nilsen means that a shopper is only as free as long as he or she has few limits on the information that they have access to. The less information a shopper has access to, the less informed that person can be and therefore there are fewer options available.

An example of a limited marketplace of ideas can be found at my previous university. I attended Brigham Young University in Provo, UT, which is a private Christian university that teaches a very religious-based curriculum. There was no access to information on democrat, liberal, or independent presidential candidates. In fact, there was a Young Republicans club on campus but that was the only political group at the school. This is an example of a limited marketplace of ideas because there was not enough access to information on a wide variety of topics for people to make informed decisions. BYU can expand to become a true marketplace of ideas by bringing in information from every angle.

## Works Cited

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