



10 Interest Groups

Chapter Outline

- Charting the Territory
- The Bias of the Interest-Group System
- Analytical Perspectives on Interest Groups
 - Pluralism Approach
 - Class Analysis Approach
 - Corporatism Model Approach
 - Neo-Institutionalism Approach
 - Economics
 - Organization Theory
 - Society-Centred Analysis
- The Ingredients of Interest-Group Success
 - Organization
 - Resources
 - Electoral Influence
 - Economic Coercion
 - Group Cohesion
- The Interest Group System
 - Safety in the Shadows

- Federalism and the Interest Group System
- Interest Group Strategies
 - Advocacy Advertising
 - Lobbying
- Summary

Learning Objectives

After reading Chapter 10 in *Canadian Democracy*, you should be able to do the following:

- Explain why some interest groups are more influential in politics than others.
- Identify the chief characteristics of the competing theoretical perspectives on interest groups.
- List and discuss the resources, in addition to money, that may translate into political influence for both economic and non-economic interest groups.
- Discuss the various ingredients that can help an interest group succeed in its goals.
- Discuss the impact of federalism on the organization and strategies of interest groups.
- List some of the reasons why an interest group might use the courts to influence policy.
- Compose one or two paragraphs that use as many key concepts (listed below) as possible.

Key Concepts

Advocacy advertising The purchase of newspaper/magazine space or broadcast time to convey a political message (p. 382)

Class analysis Theoretical approach that sees the state in capitalist societies as an instrument through which small minorities control wealth to maintain their social and economic dominance (p. 367)

Collective solidarity incentives Intangible rewards created by the act of associating together an organized group—a collective sense of group esteem or affirmation (p. 370)

Corporatism Political structure characterized by the direct participation of organizations representing business and labour in public policy making (p. 368)

Institutional groups Interests that possess the highest level of organization (p. 373)

Interest groups (or pressure groups) Private organizations that promote their interests by trying to influence government rather than seeking the election of candidates to manage it (p. 361)

Lobbying Any form of direct or indirect communication with government that is designed to influence public policy (p. 380)

Material incentives Money or other material benefits that have a monetary value (p. 370)

Multiple crack hypothesis The existence of two levels of government, each of which is equipped with a range of taxing, spending, and regulatory powers, enables interest groups to seek from one government what they cannot get from the other (p. 379)

Neo-institutionalism A perspective on policy making that emphasizes the impact of structures and rules, formal and informal, on political outcomes (p. 369)

Organization theory The study of how people act within an organization (p. 370)

Pluralism Society in which there are several centres of power; also a theoretical approach that sees politics as being fundamentally a competition between different interests (p. 367)

Policy community That set of state institutions and interest groups usually involved in making and implementing policy in some field (pp. 365)

Policy network The nature of the relationships between the key actors in a policy field (p. 370)

Political factions Groups of citizens whose goals and behaviour are contrary to those of other groups or to the interests of the community as a whole (p. 361)

Purposive incentives Intangible rewards derived from the satisfaction of a job well done (p. 370)

Specific solidarity incentives Intangible rewards like honours and recognition (p. 370)

Critical Thinking Questions

1. If you were the Director of Government Relations for a national environmental group, would it be easier for you if the country in which you were working was a country with a unitary type of government or a federal type of government?
2. Find a newspaper story on demonstration by an interest group. What was the name of the group? What type of message was it trying to convey? Why do you think it chose the course of action that it did? What other interest groups are likely also involved in this issue-area and what methods do you think they employ?
3. Should former politicians or bureaucrats be able to work for lobbying firms or interest groups when they leave the public sector? Examine the rules that apply to these circumstances at <http://ciec-ccie.gc.ca/Default.aspx?pid=21&lang=en>. Do you think that these regulations go far enough, too far, or are they just about right?
4. Compare and contrast the different strategies used by interest groups. Which issues or types of interest groups do you think will benefit from each strategy? Which strategy do you think is the best approach?
5. Examine the different analytical approaches to interest groups and determine which is the most applicable to the Canadian model of interest groups and movements. Does each approach apply to interest groups in Canada? If so how? Or is there one specific approach that stands out more than the rest? If so, which approach and why?

Additional Resources

Associations Canada

http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccc_bt-rec_ec.nsf/eng/h_00001.html

Canadian Political Parties and Interest Groups

<https://archive-it.org/collections/227>

Clément, D. (2008). *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937–82*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Coleman, W., & Skogstad, G. (1990). *Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada*. Mississauga, ON: Copp Clark Pitman.

Pross, P. (1992). *Group Politics and Public Policy* (2nd ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Young, L., & Everitt, J. (2004). *Advocacy Groups*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.