



# **Pressure Groups and Lobbying**

## **Chapter 10**

## **Pressure or Interest Group**

- **Seeks to influence government policy without contesting elections.**
- **Interest group becomes a pressure group when it actively pursues an objective with government.**
- **Lobbying is any organized attempt to influence the authorities.**

## **Different Types of Interest Groups**

- **Business**

- Most industries organize a common pressure group to promote the interests of the industry at large.
- Usually they try to protect their industry against competition from others.
  - Cable industry
  - Telephones
  - Airlines, etc.

- **Nonbusiness**

## **Non-business**

- **Special Interest Groups:**
  - economic in nature, business, farm, labour, professional.
  - Canadian Taxpayer's Association, CAW, CMA.
- **Public Interest:**
  - general interest or public interest.
  - Greenpeace, NAC
- **Single-issue:**
  - Concerned with a single issue such as abortion, capital punishment, gay rights, etc.

## **Institutionalized pressure groups**

- **Have permanent, well-established formal organizations**
- **Full time staffs in Ottawa.**
- **Issue oriented groups tend not have the same resources.**
- **Other groups such as the Council of Canadians and unions provide lobbying for their public-oriented causes.**

## **Pressure Group Structures**

- **Large pressure groups organize themselves both federally and provincially.**
- **Some are more strongly organized at the provincial level because that's where the power lies.**

## Functions Of Interest Groups

- **Representation:** They help represent people before the government. Remember, these are specialized groups that are being represented.
- **Participation:** A channel for people with similar interests to work together.
- **Education:** They educate their members; they educate the public; they educate government officials.
- **Agenda Building:** Bring new issues to the attention of the public and of government.
- **Program Monitoring:** Keep track of government programs that are important to **their constituents.**

## How do Interest groups form?

- Truman: When individuals sense a common threat or problem, they will band together to work within the political process.
  - Organizations form naturally, through “spontaneous generation.”
  - These formations occur in “waves” as individuals confront “disturbances” in society.

## **Olson's view**

- **Looked at the individual level. An individual weighs his/her individual "costs" against his/her share of the collective benefit.**
  - **As groups increase in size, the individual benefit from the collective good shrinks.**
  - **It becomes less likely that any one individual will be willing to pay for even a fraction of the cost of the good.**

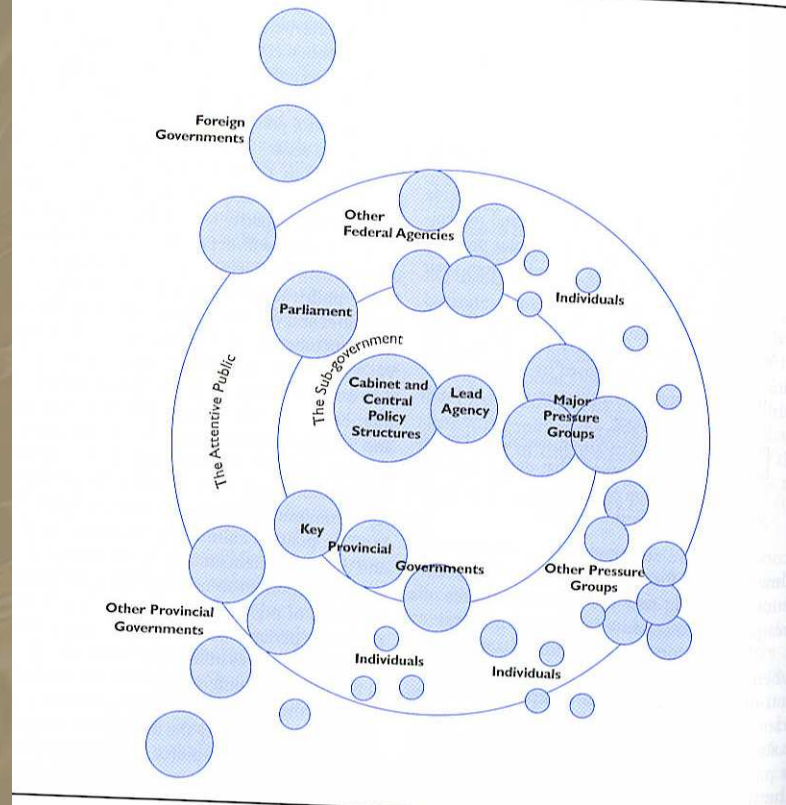
## **Free-riding occurs...**

- So, we have to have other incentives for large groups to “mobilize” (things like a sense of duty; material benefits like free calendars, etc.; doing things as a group).
- The crux – smaller groups have an easier time forming than larger groups, under Olson’s argument.
- Olson concludes that in order to avoid the free-rider, you must have forced membership.

# Policy Communities

- Each field of public policy is discrete and specialized.
- Each consists of government agencies, pressure groups, corporations, institutions, media people and individuals who have an interest in the policy outcome.

Figure 10.1 Policy Community 'Bubble Diagram'



## Which of the following is an interest group?

- Atlantic Institute for Market Studies
- The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- C.D. Howe Institute
- Fraser Institute
- National Citizens' Coalition

## **The Bureaucracy**

- **Advises the prime minister and the cabinet on decisions.**
- **Drafts legislation and regulation, according to cabinet's general direction.**
- **Proposes budgets and spends money.**
- **Many pressure groups gear their messages to the bureaucracy.**
- **Clientele relationship exists when the pressure group and department ties are so close that you can't tell them apart.**

## **Prime Minister and Cabinet**

- **Elite accommodation – most public decisions in Canada emerge from the interaction of:**
  - **Cabinet,**
  - **Senior public service**
  - **Pressure groups.**
- **Common backgrounds and interest of these groups facilitates agreement among them.**

## **Group Resources and Success**

- **Success depends on a number of factors:**
  - **Members**
  - **Cohesion**
  - **Money**
  - **Information**
  - **Leaders and prestige**
  - **Tenor of message**
  - **Financial position of government**
  - **Absence of opposition**

## Why does the government fund some interest group?

- In *Interests of State*, Les Pal argues that the state has its own priorities.
- If there is a lack of public interest groups seeking those policy changes, they fund groups to lobby government to act in a specific direction.
- That is why, for example, they fund the NAC, or LEAF, but not REAL Women.