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.
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.