
UNIT 6 POLITICAL PARTIES, PRESSURE GROUPS AND POLICY COMMUNITIES

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Evolution of Party System in Canada
- 6.3 Characteristics of the Canadian Party System
 - 6.3.1 Multi Party System
 - 6.3.2 Political Ideology – A Pragmatic Approach
 - 6.3.3 Leader – Oriented Parties
 - 6.3.4 Conciliatory Socio-Economic Base
 - 6.3.5 Partisan Turbulence
 - 6.3.6 Regionalisation of Politics and Fragmentation of Politics
 - 6.3.7 Well Organised and Well Funded Parties
- 6.4 Political Parties
 - 6.4.1 The Conservative Party (CP)
 - 6.4.2 The Liberal Party: Pragmatism and Reform
 - 6.4.3 The New Democratic Party
 - 6.4.4 The Bloc Quebecois
 - 6.4.5 The Reform Party – Reincarnated as Alliance
 - 6.4.6 Minor Parties
- 6.5 Pressure Groups in Canada
 - 6.5.1 evolution of Interests Groups
 - 6.5.2 Determinants Arena, and Strategy of Interest Groups
- 6.6 Typological and Functioning
- 6.7 *Summary*
- 6.8 Exercises

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Party system (PS) refers to the competitive relationship between two or more parties. A party is defined as any group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through election, candidates for public office. Thus political parties (PP) aim to acquire power and to retain such power organising both the electorate and the government in the process. The Canadian political life is also dominated by political parties like any other democratic country. The Canadian parliament has been divided along party lines, and except for brief interlude during the First World War (FWW), membership in every Canadian cabinet has been restricted to those who were members of the **dominant** political party at the time. It is worth noting, however, that the dominant role of Political Parties is not mandated by the Constitution. The Confederation Act, 1867 and 1982 do not mention Political Parties. The dominant role of the Political Parties in Canada is a matter of circumstance. Though originated as a matter of circumstance, the political parties are playing most crucial role as a mechanism for functioning of the democratic system in Canada by performing various functions such as interest aggregation, imparting political education, contesting elections, representing the public interests, balancing the **diverse** interests of **Canadians**, etc.

6.2 EVOLUTION OF PARTY SYSTEM IN CANADA

Viewed in the above mentioned background we find that the party competition in Canada has continually been evolved over the century. Even the politics of parties has also undergone tremendous change. For instance, the Liberal party in 21st century is not much like the patronage politics of Wilfrid Laurier's Liberalism, or the regional brokerage practiced by the earlier Liberals. In the Canadian political history, the year 1993 is called as a watershed year when it saw a political earthquake which set in the party system of 1960s and ushered in a new system which is marked by the new forms of party organisations and new patterns of political competition. This change has been seen by the observers as the collapse of the Canadian party politics or end of the party system. It is also observed that the Canadian Party System has undergone many changes even before 1993. The history of successive party systems reveals this fact – how the parties responded to the peculiar challenges of both the character and the demands of Canadian society, and response and activities of the state. The first party system collapse in the Canadian history occurred during and after the World War I when the era of the historic parties of Confederation ended and a new, more regionalised party politics emerged. This second system, known as Canada's regional brokerage system, lasted until about 1960, when it, in turn, collapsed and a new party system (third one), with parties promoting their own national agendas, arose. These were driven by existential and constitutional concerns while attempting to combine the Keynesian policies with the practices of executive federalism. It is this third, pan-Canadian system that has now reached the end of its natural life and has given way to the revival of regional brokerage. The 1990s demise of the party system constructed in the 1960s is obvious as three parties of this period – the Liberals, Conservatives, and the New Democrats combined had commanded more than 90 percent of votes for three decades, but their combined share fell just to two-third of the electorate. The two new parties – the Bloc Quebecois and Reform emerged as major electoral forces and competitive parliamentary players. These have not only taken away a major chunk of the votes of the older parties but succeeded in translating them into number of seats in the Parliament as well. This led to some speculations that Canada might end up with what is described as a "**pizza parliament**," where no party has a clear majority and instability is common. Certainly, there is a trend in this direction. This process of demise and **reshaping** is still on. The latest development in this contest is the assimilation of Progressive Conservative-whose share in the parliament once, was reduced to two seats **only**, – with reforms party. This brought down the number of major political parties to four.

Originating in the pre-Confederation period in the United province, the **Canadian** party system was shaped by two loose alignments – much unstable and amorphous to be defined as political parties in the contemporary sense of the term. These were the governing Liberals-Conservatives and a loose opposition alliance of Reformers. With the electoral **reforms** of the mid-1870s, these alignments slowly coalesced into the conservative and Liberal parties. Difference of principles did separate these two organisations. By and large, the Conservatives championed the British connection, the ideals of hierarchy and privileges and the virtue of political centralisation. They also advocated indigenous economic development behind a protective tariff barrier, an idea that was given concrete form in **Macdonald's** National Policy of 1879. For their part, the Liberals espoused an American-style republicanism, free trade, and provincial rights and defender of the interest of French Canada. Far **from** constituting rigorous and coherent ideologies used by each party to rally the supporters, these differences in principle were almost **always** subordinated to the central preoccupation

of Canadian politics: patronage. With the passage of time, other political parties came into existence but competition for power remained limited to these two. Hence, observers defined the system as two-party system. Recently, however, this has changed quite dramatically. Fourteen parties, for example, ran candidates in the 1993 election, though only two had candidates in every riding. After the 1993 election, five parties had seats in the House of Commons. These were the Liberal, Bloc Quebecois, Reform, New Democratic and Progressive Conservative parties. Of these, the most unusual and controversial is the Bloc, whose sole purpose is to work for the independence of Quebec. It was second only to the Liberals and became the leading opposition party. Of even more significance was the low Conservatives vote. The party won only two seats and ceased to exist, at least for some time, as a viable alternative to the **Liberals**.

The neighbouring United States, by comparison, has only two main parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. They are so powerful and well organised that other parties. Some European countries such as France and Italy have a much larger number of parties with elected representative. Italy, with its plethora of parties is a home to the original "pizza parliament." The **advantage** of having a number of parties is that it gives the electorate a broader choice. The disadvantages are that minority governments and coalitions often **become** often become necessary and parliaments are usually more unstable.

6.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CANADIAN PARTY SYSTEM

While the party system in Canada has undergone a process of making and remaking, one can identify certain features which make the **present** Canadian Party System a distinctive one. These are as follows:

6.3.1 Multi-Party System

The most important attribute of the **Canadian** Party System is the fact that it is a competitive one, although it has not been an equally balanced pattern of interaction. Historically, one party has tended to dominate national politics, with the Conservatives monopolising that role from Confederation until 1896 and the Liberals enjoying the mantle of power for most years since 1921 (approximately 80% of time). This pattern has led to the suggestion that the **national** party system contains the normal government party (the Liberals), the normal opposition party (the Conservatives) and the normal minor party (the NDP). Such a system rarely produces party turnover in government: "instead the important alternation is not between different parties in **office** but between majority and minority Liberal **governments**." So far as vote-sharing is concerned, three major parties had been sharing more than **two-thirds** of **the** vote since 1930s but the real competition for the power sharing remained confined to the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives. Thus, the system has been more **often** described as Bi-party system with domination of one ruling party. This configuration, however, underwent change in 1993 when more parties emerged out of breakdown of the coalition formed by Brian Mulroney's Conservative Party in 1984. Substantial portions of the electorate in Alberta and British Columbia abandoned the Tories for Reform, while in Quebec nationalists moved to the Bloc. This affected adversely the popularity of both the Conservatives in Western Canada and NDP in British Columbia. This remaking of the system paved way for a variegated five-party system. This also is now changed to four party system with the merger of Reform and PC in November 2003.

6.3.2 Political Ideology – A Pragmatic Approach

It is the party's ideology – beliefs and values, that makes one political party different from another. In Canada, it often appears as if the ideology of the major political parties, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, is the same. These parties have been electorally focused organisations whose primary goal has been winning power and the spoils of office. With such an aim, the Canadian parties have been characterised as “practical, flexible, and manipulative”. An NDP supporter in 1963, Trudeau viciously attacked Prime Minister **Pearson** for his decision to accept nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. However, practical politics resulted in similar behaviour after Trudeau became the leader of the Liberal party in 1968.

The ideological stand of these parties can be described as flexible-ideology as it is not a matter of strict principle with them and they can change it to suit the political necessities of the day and politicians are hardly notable for their consistency. The major Political Parties had vaguely defined their programmes if at all they had any. Neither of the parties hesitated to steal planks from the other's platforms; both made the same promises to the voters, each party loudly proclaiming that it was the team most capable of implementing a common objective. The parties tended to behave in much the same way since they were in office. The tendency on the part of the two major parties in Canada to pick and choose among contending ideological principles to suit their electoral purposes has prompted a number of theorists to label the Canadian political system as a *brokerage* system.

However, the flexibility of the Liberals and Conservatives contrasts quite noticeably with the somewhat more rigid ideology of the **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, Canada's third largest party until 1993 since 1961. Though committed to the values of a liberal democracy, it supports the view that the state should interfere vigorously in the Canadian society to correct what it considers to be the evils of the capitalist economic system. Unlike the two pragmatic parties, the New Democrats are considered as an idealistic party for which principle is more important than electoral victory. **The Reform Party (RP)**, founded in 1987, is also an idealistic party. Its beliefs can best be described as conservative. The party wants an end to bilingualism, a reduction in unemployment and a government that balances its budget and reduces its deficit. **The Bloc Quebecois (BQ)** is unlike any other party. It does not want to govern and therefore does not have to be flexible. It really has no policies in the conventional sense. Its sole purpose is to achieve independence for Quebec. It is difficult to describe it as pragmatic or idealistic. If and when this happens, the party will cease to exist; its members of the federal Parliament will return to Quebec and presumably help in the running of the new republic.

Politics in Canada has traditionally been the moderate “middle of the road” variety. The international extremes of communism and fascism have only touched Canada as imported fringe elements, never able to enter the mainstream of political activity. Most Canadian political parties have more moderate views than either of the extreme left-or right wing parties and can be placed near the middle of the line. The older parties – the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives – have been closest to the centre. They often have a pro-business outlook and strong support from the business community. Of the two, the Liberals are usually considered to be left of centre and more progressive than the more right wing Conservatives. The main reason for this is that it seems to be easier to win elections in Canada with a slightly left-of-centre approach. Realising this, the liberals have tended to carve out this section of the spectrum as their own.

When using this left-right continuum, one needs to be aware of the specific context. Sometimes the exception proves the rule. For example, after the 1984 election, the Conservative party shifted sharply to the right. It advocated a reduction in the role of government and reduction in spending similar to the governments of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States. Crown corporations such as Air Canada and Petro-Canada were sold, or privatised and government programmes cut; the Liberals were pushed by forces of new liberalism to forego various welfare programmes. This new conservative view also implied a greater reliance on the individual. Further, the federal elections results after 1993 have blurred the distinction between the right and left by a new axis of political conflict which Panebianco labels a division between the establishment and the anti-establishment. The Reform Party belongs to the latter category.

6.3.3 Leader – Oriented Parties

The Canadian Parties are peculiarly leader-centred parties. The party leader usually plays the key role in providing the campaign platform, choosing the campaign strategy, and setting the party's course for the election campaign. The consequence of the brokerage system is the dominant role played by the party leader in politics: the key to success for a Canadian political party is that it be led by someone who inspires confidence, and whose mere name is a programme in itself. Siegfried claimed, "Canadians attach themselves rather to the concrete, a reality than to the abstract principle. They vote as much for the man who symbolises the policy as they for the policy itself". Although the nature of the leadership has certainly changed since the days of Macdonald and Laurier, when they virtually embodied their respective parties, the significance has not diminished in contemporary political life even. In the era of new campaign, technologies – television in particular, are revolutionising the voter and the party leader is increasingly important in determining electoral outcomes. It was acknowledged even by the newly formed Reform Party which initially kept the leader in an inconspicuous spot in an attempt to do politics differently. By the time the 1997 election was called, the Reform Party had hired an image consultant to help its performance in the House of Commons. Preston Manning himself had an image makeover, complete with new wardrobe and hairstyle, laser surgery to eliminate the eye glasses, and voice training to soften his western slang. The party leaders are mostly selected through party leadership convention and the role of the party caucus has greatly diminished in this connection. selection by a national party convention has enhanced the power of the leader over his or her party caucus, since leaders now argue that they can be removed only by such a convention. The main criterion for the selection of the leader has usually been how far he can enhance the party's electoral victory. The *leadership review process* also provides opportunity to those members who are not satisfied with the performance of the leader to change the leadership.

Of late, in the drive for democratisation of the parties the focus has been on making the party leaders more responsive; now they are managing a primary style of leadership politics.

6.3.4 Conciliatory Socio-Economic Base

The brokerage character of the parties can be ascribed to the socio ethnic character of the Canadian society rather than the choice of the parties themselves. It is argued that the primary task of the political leadership in Canada was to conciliate the various social groups – Catholics and Protestants, French and English, urban population and farmers, employers and labourers, central Canadians and those living in the peripheries – that made

up a fragmented electorate. All the three parties responded to incoming immigrants after Second World War – most diverse in ethnic terms belonging to Southern Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. This inclusion took place in consonance with their stand on multiculturalism. Among the parties, the LP was considered as more open to new immigrants. Due to the diverse nature of their supporters, each of the major parties was virtually compelled to obfuscate its position on major issues.

According to Broodie and Jenson, political parties do not act as mere transmission belts for the demands of variety of social groups; they actually shape the definition of politics that prevails in a society at a given time, how politics be conducted and which kinds of conflicts can be resolved through the political process. They have described the LP and CP as bourgeois parties. Historically, the major parties have sought to define politics in cultural terms, as division between the dominant ethnic and linguistic groups in Canada. Since both the parties draw their electoral support from broadly similar coalitions or classes, the cultural definition of politics is much more congruent with their organisational interests than a definition based on class. Whenever issues based on class conflicts threaten to erupt into the political agenda, the bourgeois parties seek to recast the debate in a more familiar and comfortable language of regional and cultural differences. The NDP which was considered as class-based party has increasingly come to accept the prevailing definition of politics and to compete with the bourgeois parties on their own terms. Consequently, this tendency of the parties has manipulated the political discourse of religion, regionalism, and biculturalism to prevent the emergence of a class-based definition of politics. This feature – the religion, ethnicity, and territory based character of the parties in Canada differentiates it from its European cousins where the politics of class had gradually displaced these divisive bases of the parties.

6.3.5 Partisan Turbulence

The parties in Canada have been usually disciplined. The members follow the party line at the time of voting in Parliament or provincial legislatures. The democratic character of parties give them enough opportunity to express their mind during party conventions. They can even review the functioning of their leader. However, the two major parties emerged out of the breakdown of the coalition fashioned by Brian Mulroney's Conservative party in 1984. Substantial portions of the electorate in Alberta and British Columbia abandoned the Tories for reform, while in Quebec nationalists moved to the Bloc. Similarly, the NDP also had to pay price which got weakened in British Columbia, a province it had mastered in 1988. The impact of the multi-party system can be seen in the form of partisan turbulence in the House of Commons as well. The last session of Parliament before the turn of the century and even the current one saw the Conservative MPs crossing to both the Liberals and Reform, NDP MPs switch to the Conservatives and Liberals. and both Bloc and Reform MPs leave their caucuses to sit as independents. This suggests that the new party system is not only in flux but also is beset by the malaise of indiscipline within the party. The MPs now are demanding the right to vote according to their consciousness. The dwindling character of the parties have forced the Canadians to turn away from party politics and choosing their representational goals through alternate channels, notably interests groups.

6.3.6 Regionalisation of Politics – Fragmentation of Politics

More parties have provided more choices. The regional character of Reform/Alliance and the Bloc has produced a greater regionalisation of party competition. The Canadian voters in each of the country's traditional regions now face different choices; elections have lost their capacity to function as instruments of collective public decision-making. The November, 2000 poll showed the following regional contests: Atlantic Canadians had a realistic choice between liberals and conservatives; Quebecers chose between the Bloc and Liberals; Ontarians selected between Liberals and the Alliance; voters in Manitoba and Saskatchewan could choose among the Alliance and Liberals; and in British Columbia the voters selected among the Alliance, Liberals and New Democrats. Moreover, the parties have been differentially successful in these various political contests. For example, while the LP may be the governing party in Ottawa, in recent years it has become either the opposition party in provinces like Quebec and Ontario, or has been, for all practical purposes, eliminated from the partisan battle, as in Alberta and British Columbia. By contrast, the conservatives who have been the opposition party in Ottawa, have become the most successful party in provincial politics. Likewise, the NDP registered its success in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and had become official opposition in Ontario. Parti Quebecois is a dominant force in Quebec. The immediate consequence of this new reality is that the parties now run different, and sometimes contradictory, campaigns in different regions of the country depending on the structure and strength of the competition they face in each of the constituencies. This regionalisation of the parties has paved the way for regionalisation and fragmentation of the politics as well. Both the Reform and Bloc parties are actively articulating regional grievances and rejecting pail – Canadianism and executive federalism as the dominant modes of Canadian politics. The parties are also engaging in specialised and segmented appeals in an effort to engage the fragmented electorate.

6.3.7 Well Organised and Well Funded Parties

So far as the organisation of the parties is concerned, these are organised hierarchically following the federal pattern of the governmental structure. Since the parties are electoral groups, the primary unit of each major party exists at the constituency levels for the purpose of attracting members in the party; raising money for the next election; choosing a candidate to contest in the riding; and sending members to the provincial and national conventions to debate policy ideas, elect party officials, and choose the party leader. Each constituency, thus, has its own party association with a constitution and an executive charged with responsibility for the association's on going business. Full members of the association may meet once or twice a year but its executive remains active throughout the year. This pattern also exists at the provincial and national levels. The parties have also separate wings for women and youth.

It is a well known fact that the elections are not won by prayers alone, and thus the importance of the finances for the success of the parties is acknowledged for carrying out party's organisational and election liabilities. The parties have specific party organisers for fund-raising activities. They are known as "bagmen", who are often appointed to patronage positions such as the Senate. The major national parties are basically dependent on large corporate donations.

6.4 POLITICAL PARTIES

The following major and minor parties are participating in the political process in Canada:

6.4.1 The Conservative Party (CP)

Since the time of Sir John A Macdonald, the Conservative party has believed in order, tradition, and stability. He was able to build party out of a coalition of Liberal-Conservatives from Upper Canada and Bleu politicians from Quebec. Under Macdonald and his French-Canadian lieutenant George Etienne Cartier, the Conservative party dominated the Canadian politics for the first thirty years after Confederation. The Conservatives put in place a "national policy" of protectionism against the United States, Western expansion via the Canadian Pacific Railway and strong central government. The party was not opposed to state intervention in the economy. In accordance with pragmatism, the party considered such intervention necessary for the development of Canada, and the party has therefore traditionally favoured state enterprises. In the 1940s, the conservatives absorbed the remnants of the Progressive Party and adopted the somewhat paradoxical name, the Progressive Conservative Party (PCP). In recent years, the PCP has come to stand for less government control, more decentralised federation giving more responsibility to the provinces, a stronger free market economy, and smaller government.

The party remained in power from 1873 till 1930s with a short interlude between 1896-1911 when it got its first severe setback by losing power to its opponent. In the 1935 election, the party had only 40 elected MPs against the Liberals' 173. In 1940, the results were worse. The liberals won 181 seats while the conservatives remained at 40. It was so weak that it ceased to function as an effective opposition. In desperation, the party held a conference at Port Hope, Ontario, in 1942, where it changed its name and moved ideologically to the left. The party became known as Progressive Conservative and adopted such left leaning policies as medicare, low-cost housing, and a minimum wage. The term "progressive" was meant to imply a willingness to change.

Since 1935 the Progressive Conservatives remained as the opposition party most of the time. The exceptions, until it won in 1984, were the governments of John Diefenbaker (1957-1963) and Joe Clark (June 1979-March 1980). This shows that the Conservative party had failed to meet the primary objective of a political party – gaining and maintaining power- for almost half a century from 1935 to 1984. As a result, many Conservatives were frustrated and yearned for power. The success of the Liberals had even convinced some Liberals that the party was "the natural governing party."

6.4.2 The Liberal Party: Pragmatism and Reform

The Liberal Party (LP) is Canada's other pragmatic political party existing since the Confederation era. It emerged out of a coalition of Upper Canadian Reformers and the Rouge politicians of Quebec. During the first year of Confederation, the Liberal Party was united mainly by its opposition to the Macdonald Conservatives. It was not until Wilfred Laurier, Canada's first French-Canadian PM, that the LP developed a coherent set of political ideas based on free trade and provincial rights. The party has long been the national representative of the rights of French – Canadians, and therefore developed the tradition of alternating its leadership between Anglophones and Francophones. The view that Canada

was a compact between two nations – English and French – is one that has had far greater influence within the LP than the Conservative. The policies of official bilingualism and multiculturalism were instituted under the Liberal governments. In recent years, the LP has come to stand for the maintenance of a strong national government and welfare state. Like the CP, it also favours global free trade and a strong free-market economy. It has been more successful than its Conservative rival because of its ideals and policies and pragmatism. Pierre Trudeau, former Liberal Prime Minister, once said, when he was not himself a Liberal that “ the Libral Party will say anything and do anything to win power.” Though, this is a perfect definition of a pragmatic political party, later on Trudeau himself proved that the party stood for principles as well. The party had Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1896-1911), Mackenzie King, John Turner (June 1984-September 1984), and Jean Chretien (twentieth PM), as PMs who have been men of principles.

The leadership of the party also tends to alternate between market liberalism and welfare liberalism. Laurier, for example, believed in the market as the means for improving Canada. He wanted a free trade agreement with the United States as did many Liberals earlier in the twentieth century. His successor, Mackenzie King, had the government interfere in the economy on a scale never seen before in Canada. His government introduced unemployment insurance and family allowances, both being considered left-wing policies in the Canada of the 1940s. As a result, the threat from the left wing CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) never materialised during King's administration. Under Luis St. Laurent, who followed King, the Liberals again established strong ties with the business community. During St. Laurent's leadership, the administration business investment increased and Canada prospered. However, Lester Pearson, the next Liberal Leader, was another "welfare liberal" and more left-wing than St. Laurent. The present Liberal leadership was compelled by both internal and external forces to accept the revival of the market forces, downsizing the government and minimising its role.

As seen above, the LP ruled most of the time from 1935-1984 and it has been in power uninterruptedly since 1993, though its percentage of votes and seats in the Parliament has been lowered considerably.

6.4.3 The New Democratic Party

In contrast to their pragmatic counterparts, the idealistic politicians do not change their policies to suit the mood of public opinion. Since 1930s, Canada's best known idealistic party has been the New Democratic Party (NDP). It was formed by men and women with strong beliefs and principles. The party's third leader, Tomy Douglas, for example, had been a Baptist minister before entering politics. Originally called the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the party was formed in 1933 during the worst years of the Great Depression. Symbolic of the party's ideals was the Regina Manifesto, passed at the party's founding convention in Regina, which was the CCF's statement of principles, the basis of its political philosophy. Its major goal was the elimination of the capitalist system which it considered the cause of all social and economic problems. Its goal was to ensure a proper wage and have a fair share of the economic pie. Its dislike of capitalism and the free enterprise system meant that the CCF was a socialist party, on the left of the political spectrum.

The party was primarily a western Canadian party with regional interests. In the election of 1945, it won 28 seats but 13 of these were in Saskatchewan. No party can hope to form a

government if it does not have broad national representation. Even if the party won all of the seats in the West, it would not have had a majority in Parliament.

Even earlier, party leaders realised the need to broaden the CCF's electoral support. At the party's convention in Winnipeg in 1956, in a move that some supporters viewed as a step to the right, the party conceded that capitalism could make a "useful contribution to the development of our economy." While some socialists objected to this statement, it was a necessary move if the party was to have greater credibility and the ability to attract more voters. It was also the party's first step towards political pragmatism. Capitalism was still considered as a fundamentally flawed system but the party admitted that it did have some good points and that the bad ones could be eliminated by strong government.

While various parties to the left of the NDP have run candidates in the Canadian elections, these parties have not been very successful in winning seats. In the 1940s, the Labour Progressive Party Candidate Fred Rose won a bi-election in Montreal in 1943 and was re-elected in 1945. However, Rose was later arrested as a Russian spy and sent to prison.

The Final Move in the transformation of the party from its rural Western roots came in 1961 when it joined with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to form the New Democratic Party. The CLC was a lobby group which represented the interests of organised labour. Its membership was largely based in the unions representing the factory workers of Central Canada and, it was thought that the merger would give added muscle to the party. This was the second move towards becoming a more pragmatic party. Working people make up the majority of the population. Even with good leaders and good issues, the party has never managed to get more than 20% of the vote.

In spite of its poor performance at the federal level, the NDP has done better provincially; in the past, it has formed government in four provinces and was the official opposition in others.

6.4.4 The Bloc Quebecois

The most unusual party in the 1993 election was the Bloc Quebecois (BQ). After the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990, the Bloc was formed under the leadership of Lucien Bouchard when nine Quebec Liberal and Conservative members of Parliament left their parties to protest against Quebec's treatment at the hands of the rest of Canada. Since there were less than twelve MPs, they did not meet the minimum standards to qualify as a party in the House of Commons. In 1993, the Bloc ran candidates in Quebec and won in 54 of the province's 75 ridings. This result was a major disappointment for anyone in Quebec who believed in a strong federal system because the Bloc's main purpose was to work for a sovereign Quebec. The Bloc's only purpose is to aid in the separation of Quebec from Canada. Once this is achieved, then the Bloc will dissolve. It is notable that it is Quebec nationalism rather than ideology that unites the members of the Bloc into a political party. While some of its members are socialists and others are pro-business, nationalist sentiment overrides the ordinary political divisions within the BQ caucus.

6.4.5 The Reform Party – Reincarnated as Alliance

Another successful new party is the Reform Party (RP). It won no seats in the general election of 1988 but did elect a candidate later in a by-election in Alberta. In 1993, it

elected 52 members in Parliament. All of **these** seats, except for one in Ontario, are in Western Canada. It is therefore very much a western protest party in the tradition of Social Credit and the Progressives. According to its leader, Preston Manning, the problems of Canada are the "**widespread regional alienation**, growing disenchantment, impending fiscal crisis" not being dealt with by the other parties (Liberal, Conservative or NDP). The party is of the view that the leaders of these above parties spend all of their time debating flawed and obsolete policies, resulting in Canada's stagnation. The Reform Party rejects both the control of the country by Central Canada and the concept that Canada has two founding nations. In the 1995 Quebec Referendum debate and its aftermath, the Reform Party under Manning did not give up its own campaign in the defence of abstract notions of national unity. The Reform response to Quebec centred on more and more decentralisation of powers to the provinces **and** a list of conditions under which any future referendum on sovereignty would be accepted by the rest of Canada. Clearly, this does not go over well with those who advocate sovereignty for Quebec.

Reform Party also wants to change the way the Canadian government works. It wants a "**Triple-E**" Senate (elected, equal and effective), binding referendums if 3% of the people make such a request, and the right of constituents to recall their MPs. These suggestions are far-reaching and would seriously change Canada's political system if they were adopted. In addition, the party is opposed to the cherished federal policies such as **official** bilingualism and multiculturalism.

The Reform is very much a party of Western Canada. It is rooted in Alberta. The party, leadership seems determined to expand beyond a Western protest movement to become the governing alternative. For this it has presented a different face to the electorate in successive elections. In 1988, it presented itself as a party of the West, in 1993 a party of right, in 1997 a party of English Canadians, and in 2000, having transformed itself into the Canadian Alliance, the alternate to the Liberals. The decision by its leaders to abandon Reform and create the alliance was a tacit admission that the Reform could not win an election and so, had failed. This again merged with Progressive Conservative party in November, 2003 to form Conservative Party of Canada to stretch itself beyond the West of Canada. Only the future will reveal its strength to provide challenge to the ruling Liberals.

6.4.6 Minor Parties

In addition to the above mentioned main parties Canada has also seen the rise of a series of minor parties. These new parties typically illustrate the opposite attributes from those identified for the Liberals and Conservatives. for the simple reason that their origins, structures, and functions are different. Parties such as the Progressives and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation which later became the NDP – and Social Credit are extra parliamentary in origin and ideologically based: Some of the doctrines of the Social Credit Party of the 1930s are based on the platform of the Abolitionist Party. Contesting the election in 1993, the party wanted to abolish interest rates, interest free loans, income tax and the GST. In addition, it would give every person a free chequing **account plus \$100.00** per month. "Less government for a better Canada" is the goal of the Libertarian Party. It believes that government is too big and too expensive to be truly effective. Big **governments** are bad, the party feels, because they restrict the freedom of the individual.

The Natural Law Party is another new party **that** had 231 candidates in 1993, even more than the Reform. This was quite remarkable when one realises that its only solution to

Canada's problems was to solve them through meditation. It had no concrete political proposal. Canada would be governed by the natural laws that govern the universe. Party leader Neil Paterson claimed that he "would abolish the GST, create new jobs, and wipe out the deficit," while creating "a perfect government and a problem-free nation," though how this was to be achieved was not really clear. Other parties include Canada Party, Christian Party of Canada, and The Green Party of Canada.

The externally created parties have often been outgrowths from social movements that have sought extensive changes in the political structure of Canada. Membership in such an organisation entails acceptance of the party's ideology and platform, with enduring organisation between election campaigns. Thus the combination of cadre and mass parties has helped to produce a unique party system in the Canadian context.

The Canadian party system appears to have predictable pattern. with the prospects of future elections repeating the divisions of the most recent elections. Nevertheless, the political analysts are facing the problem to answer some of the pertinent questions: Will the parties be able to retain consensual politics? Can the New Democrats or some other new party represent a left wing vote? Will Quebec nationalists continue to participate in federal politics, keeping the bloc alive, and if not, how will Quebec's place in the system be organised and represented? Can the Alliance succeed in escaping the regional inheritance of Reform? Though these questions are yet to be answered, it seems clear that the electoral competition at least in the early years of this century will be more regionalised and diverse; that the electorate will find itself more fragmented and responding to narrower representational promises. Thus the parties will strive to make themselves more responsive to a national membership while being forced to offer contrary faces to distinct constituencies.

6.5 PRESSURE GROUPS IN CANADA

The relationship between non-governmental interests and the state is a central preoccupation of Political Science. It has been recognised since the modern discipline's early days that identifies as to which societal interests are able to influence government decision-making, and ascertaining how they do this, unravels the realities underlying the governing process. Over the last thirty years, there has, nevertheless, been substantial change in how this relationship is understood. Parties are not the only institutions in the political system that aggregate and articulate social interests. The groups are considered the main vehicles through which individuals exercised power because, it was argued, that the most effective activity brings together the resources of many individuals if it is organised. The concept of the interest group or pressure group (PG) therefore emerged as central. The PGs are defined as "organisations whose members act together to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest". Their role is to "aggregate individual preferences and values into political demands, which are presented to agencies of government". In its simplest form, the interest group theory concentrated almost entirely on societal (non government) influences on what the government does. Policy outcomes are thought to reflect the balance of power among various interest groups that mobilised themselves to influence that outcome. They are also concerned about the excessive concentration of power in the hands of privileged economic groups. Therefore, they worked to create a situation where power was more evenly distributed among the highly diverse group interests. These groups evolved from the influencing mechanisms to claimant of power sharing as was contended by David Truman and V.O. Key.

6.5.1 Evolution of Interest Groups

The evolution of interest groups (IGs) based on the notion of dispersion of power and their influence was much slower in Canada. The leading textbooks on the Canadian politics paid little attention to these groups. Schwartz, an American political scientist, while working on Canadian Politics observed that there were no notable followers of Bentley (writer of *The Process of Government*) in Canada and the political scientists still have considerable reservations about the effectiveness of the group approach, and its application to Canada. Similar view was held by Paul Pross in 1986 that though the research on the interest groups has taken off political science curriculum has been slow to accord pressure group studies. The reason assigned for this is the parliamentary system in which the power is more concentrated in the executive-bureaucratic arena where the exercise of influence is more secretive in comparison to the United States of America which offers more fragmented system due to separation of powers.

Nevertheless, in Canada, the interest groups had become prominent by the mid - 1980s. The process of their growth was set in' 1960s when the era of open policy-making was heralded with the advent of central agencies, the reform of the parliamentary committee system, and the increased use of task forces' reports. Undoubtedly, the interest groups which came into being at this stage were poor both in terms of organisation and finances. At this stage, instead of sectoral or occupational groups, the "non-occupational citizen's groups" have constituted a significant part of this growth. Since the early 1960s, various social movements have come to support Quebec nationalism, multiculturalism, native peoples, women, consumers, international peace, and a cleaner and more humane environment, to name but a few. Some of these movements have become institutionalised and formed powerful interest groups, such as the National Action committee on the Status of Women. The state has often responded by creating client relations with these groups through advocacy portfolios. This has been the case for native, women, consumer, and multicultural groups. Another form of response is that of nominating group representatives to regulatory commissions and panels of inquiry. In Ontario, the ecological group, Pollution Probe, has been included in many such efforts at consultation. Other groups have been less successful either in their process of institutionalisation or in becoming effective actors in public policy making. In addition, this process of institutionalisation has created tensions between the well-paid professional lobbyists and grass roots militants. Certain spokespersons have begun to wonder if the state's efforts at consultation amount to little more than attempts to domesticate groups and constrain their activities.

Furthermore, their increased role is linked to the presence of new social movements. Today, national organisations lead public debate on many issues and are involved on a daily basis with the refinement and implementation of the public policy. It will not be wrong to say that these have emerged as central players in the Canadian political life. With respect to the shifting bases of representation in groups and parties, undoubtedly, it is admitted that there exists a tension between sectoral representation of interests through pressure groups and the spatial representation of interests through legislatures and political parties.

The demands of some of these new social movements, however, are not single issues. For example, ecologists are not just concerned with the dangerous by-products of particular industries. The scope of their analyses is generally broader. Ecological groups often arise in response to the destruction of a local environment, but their demands usually occur in the context of a generalised critique of what Charles Taylor has called the dominant

"economic self-image of modern society". For example, the "*Manifeste ecologique*" of Les Amis de la Terre de Quebec, denounces the generalised fetish of commodities and technology, as well as the private and public technocracies that exist to deliver these cherished fruits of progress. As an answer to "productivism and technocratic power," this group seeks the implementation of the so-called soft technologies, decentralised and deconcentrated forms of social and economic power, the construction of institutions based on greater popular democratic participation in decision making, an elimination of class inequalities, and a more equitable sharing of social wealth between the First and the Third Worlds. While not all ecological groups hold out for the **same** mixture of goals, they are often **characterised** by such global or general demands. Like the feminists, as well as other social movements, the ecologists are concerned with enlarging the parameters of what is considered political.

6.5.2 Determinants, Arena and Strategy of Interest Groups

Like their counterparts in other democratic countries, the IGs in Canada also cast pressure on the formulation of policy. However, one needs to understand the basic difference between the arena of their activities in a system like that of Canada where the legislature does not have a large say in policy making. Therefore, an interplay between the cabinet and bureaucracy in Canada is natural to get measure in their favour. To cast an influence on the institutionalised governmental structure the success of the IGs depends on their **organised character and influencing skill**. For a successful IG, it is pertinent to know where within the executive-bureaucratic arena, the key decision makers relevant to its interests can be found, and what those decision-makers are thinking. Where possible, it is then essential to develop these key decision makers the kind of discrete, **non-conflictual, ongoing, and expertise based relationships** that they are accustomed to and prefer. This can be accomplished largely on the IG's **capacity in terms of resources – financial**, on the basis of which it can hire an expert staff, entertain the decision-makers. The other IGs which are non-institutionalised and lack resources, harp on the more confrontational methods and publicly lobby with the members of Parliament and the press (media) regarding their cause. The latter strategy is not always key to success. The **nascent or issue-oriented** mostly adopts this approach.

Another conditioning factor of the IG's activity is the **federal character** of the Canadian political system. The IGs which are working for the issues pertaining to provincial jurisdiction do not become as centralised force at the national levels as the labour unions working for workers interests.

The interest group behaviour and their institutional setting is moulded by the changes occurring in the power echelons. This is visible in the context of interest groups in Canada lately. While the cabinet and the senior bureaucracy still dominate Canada's system of government, many observers detected a challenge to **their preeminence** during the 1980s and 1990s. Parliament, specially through its committees, has been able to launch policy reviews independently of executive oversight; the bureaucracy has itself become more fragmented; and the media is not more aggressive in their relationship with government.

Successful groups are now less dependent on the bureaucracy and more capable of engaging in open and public debate than in the past. The IGs are now more institutionalised. The institutionalised IGs like Green peace, whose occasional confrontational style would not

have been fruitful 25 years ago, now experience frequent success. Another major **change** in Canada's government institutions in the 1980s – the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms – also encouraged a shift **away** from an exclusive reliance on cooperative and discrete lobbying. IGs as diverse as pro-abortion activists and the National Citizen's Coalition have been able to use the charter to obtain important victories in courts in face of resistance **from** the executive institutions of government. Nevertheless, the institutional Canadian interest groups have diversified their approach to exercising influence during the past two decades.

However, many social movements are either unable or unwilling to meet these bureaucratic norms. They often lack the **organisational** continuity and resources to enter **the** established policy community. In accordance with Pross's (1975) cybernetic theory of group **politics**, the most effective groups are those that "adapt" to specific set of policy-making institutions; if that be so, then many social movements must be considered failures. Some movements and popular groups refuse to institutionalise. It is not surprising that the groups desiring non-bureaucratic forms of decision making refuse to play the policy game. Such an ideological contestation of interest group behaviour in its bureaucratic form is **common** amongst peace groups in Canada and the United States. For example, a spokesperson for the Cruise Missile Conversion Project (Toronto), writes that:

The group is serious about the need to develop non authoritarian means to achieve non authoritarian ends. At the most obvious level, this means that there is no hierarchical division of labour everyone licks envelopes and everyone does public speaking. Public speaking is done in pairs, and at least one speaker is a **woman** (Wells, 1982; 30).

Yet, in order to remain viable and retain credibility, pressure groups must make **the** transition "from the placard carrying stage to the collegial and consultative relationship favoured by government." Thus, those groups which will not pay this price (for ideological reasons) or who cannot pay this price (for lack of **funds**) will exist only as long as there are issues to mobilise volunteers. Further, the intention and the spirit **of their action** bring **them** credibility or incredibility. The shock tactics of these groups have done more **than** show the tenacity and **nerve** of their members; they have focused public attention on the ecological effects of **human** exploitation of particular species, if not **the** ecosystem itself.

Nonetheless, their views are **often** derogated as "single-issues." This common tag for the **views** of ecologists **and** animal-rights groups obscures the general nature of their critiques of our inter-change with nature. political parties can easily skirt "radical?" and **new** issues by merely asserting that such **concerns** are "particular" ones. As **ostensible** representatives of the general and national interests, political **parties** are in a **privileged** position to delegitimise certain critical **assessments** of **social** and economic organisation: They can do **this** easily **with** demands and critiques **emanating from groups** using unorthodox tactics.

A policy community (PC) includes all **the** **societal** interests and government bureaucracies **that are** active within a public sector. The PC in turn, is divided between its **sub-government** and its **attentive public**. The **sub-government** includes the policy **community** members who are involved in the **policy making in the given** field. The attentive public includes the less powerful groups and **bureaucracies**, as well as interested media representatives, **academia**, etc. It **attempts** to influence **policy**, but **does not** participate in the policy-making on a regular basis. **A policy network** is **a** policy community; in action, it includes the

specific lines of co-operation and conflict that emerge among entities within a community as it deals with a particular concern. The concept of PC has evolved with this new line of thinking that much interaction between non-governmental interests and the state regarding policy-making takes place within distinctive **sectors**. The term connotes a more or less discrete area of policy-making, where various relevant non-governmental interests and government bureaucracies share a concern with a specific set of policy issues and where these issues are noticeable, distinct from others that concern other interests and different bureaucracies. A 1990 volume of sector case studies identified the following examples: the east coast fishery, agriculture in two provinces, banking, forestry and forest products, the (provincial) environment, **official-language** groups, women's issues, property and occupational health.

The composition of a community, and the network within it, can change significantly over time. For instance, the study of the **banking** PC found that its membership had expanded considerably **between** 1945 and 1987. In the former years, it included only three government bureaucracies, led by the Department of Finance, and among non governmental interests, the **charter** banks and the Canadian Bankers' Association. In 1987, the sub government included four key bureaus at the federal level as well as the provincial governments, though Finance remained the lead actor; on the non governmental side, it included interest groups representing trust companies, cooperatives and credit unions, as well as the banks and the CBA. Now, there is also an extensive attentive public, who did not belong to the policy community four decades later.

Policy communities and networks are also highly variable in other respects: some are dominated by the government bureaucracies within them, while non governmental interests are hegemonic in others; in some cases, the community experiences a relative balance of power, sometimes cooperative and sometimes uneasy, between the societal and governmental interests. Moreover, a number of networks focused on different issues that exist simultaneously within a community, and the balance of forces may be quite different in these different areas.

The policy **communities/networks** framework is also referred to as a "structural approach", a crucial determinant of who exercises power in a PC – whether governmental or societal actors are dominant, or whether there is some more complete sharing of power between these actors – is **organisation**. Societal actors will be most effective when they possess a "well differentiated system" of organisations to represent their interests. This **means** that, on the one hand some of these should be narrowly representative of functional or territorial components within the sector, so that each important interest has a voice. On the other hand, societal actors should also possess more inclusive organisations that can integrate diverse and narrow interests. For instance, in the agriculture sector, one might expect to find a plethora of interest groups to represent producers in particular specialties, such as dairy, grain, livestock, and horticulture; but farmers would also be well served if these diverse interests could effectively mediate their differences through an umbrella organisation, such as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which attempts to speak for them all. A similar logic applies on the governmental side of the **society-state** relationship; where one bureaucratic agency is able to monopolise policy making within government or where interdepartmental coordination is done effectively, the state is more likely to **dominate** policy making in the policy issues when interdepartmental coordination is done effectively. However, the state capacity will be weakened if it faces well differentiated societal interests.

6.6 TYPOLOGICAL AND FUNCTIONING

The following typology of policy networks, as stated by Rodney Haddow, emerges in the wake of power dynamics which might exist around any issue:

- 1) **Pressure pluralist and clientele pluralist networks** – In this network several key societal interests and governmental bureaus are involved with the policy issues. Pressure pluralism denotes a network whose uncoordinated societal actors are so fractious, and possess such limited resources for exercising influence, that the state actors dominate policy making even though they experience considerable friction among themselves. Where the fragmented societal interests have more resources, or their equally fragmented governmental partners have fewer, the former are able to establish an important role in policy making alongside the latter; this is **clientele pluralism**. Examples of pressure pluralism are found in the areas of fisheries stock development where a number of bureaus from federal and provincial governments have taken the lead in the face of fragmented societal actors, and the international nature of fisheries and banking policy community before 1980 as clientele pluralism.
- 2) **State-directed network** – In this, a cohesive and well endowed state faces a fragmented array of competing societal interests. In this the government interests dominate policy-making. Official-language minorities policy during the 1960s was promoted by a unified and determined state agency in the context of fragmented and poorly endowed non governmental interests.
- 3) **Concentration network** – This refers to a network in which a cohesive state faces equally cohesive and single minded societal interest, represented by one peak association. The agricultural policy of Quebec where a well organised farm community faces an equally cohesive state is an example of this network.
- 4) **Corporatist network** – Where a very limited number of potentially antagonistic societal interests, usually business and organised labour, each with its own peak association, co-operate with each other with a cohesive state actor. Occupational health and safety in Quebec, in which decision making power was shared among business and labour interests, willing and able to cooperate in this area, and a cohesive state;
- 5) **Society-directed network** – In this case well differentiated and cohesive societal interests face a fragmented state. Here, societal interest will dominate policy making. There are innumerable examples of this network, an important one to mention, is the policy of generous exemptions from prevailing corporate tax rates and from existing labour standards and environmental regulation for attracting the investors by various provinces in a federal state of Canada. In a unitary state, government might control economic development policy, government policy, and maintain a consistent regime of taxation and regulatory arrangements.

Thus, the policy communities provide an organisational frame or matrix, which powerfully condition the chances that "particular values and beliefs" reflected in interest groups – the individual-level focus of pluralist thinking – will prevail in policy-making". "Policy communities" and networks are now central to the mainstream vocabulary for studying interest representation in Canada. However, the number of macro-level phenomena have considerable potential to constrain the self-sufficiency of these communities in different sectors. These are degrees of **stateness** – whether the state is strong or weak; the kind of

relation between societal interests and public authorities that generally prevails; the pervasive **privileged position of business interests** in a market economy of Canada; and the impact of **globalisation**. The problem of applying **sectoral** concept also becomes complicated due to the inter connection of one sector with the other. This is revealed in the case of the health policy, **which** is tied up with broader trends in the Canadian economy, public attitude of **welfare/state**, business pressure to lower taxation level in the face of globalisation, etc. The dominant role of business interest groups appears to have a higher level of development than other societal groups which at times result in foregoing the decisions that can endanger the interests of the privileged class.

Likewise, the impact of the globalisation also can be seen in the significant change in the **structural** parameters of the organisational dynamics in the form of broadening of issues around which networks are formed. This has bridged up the boundaries of various **PCs**. The networks that deal with human rights **issues** are now more closely associated with those that address national security questions. There has also been corresponding expansion in the number of non-governmental interests involved in many networks. For example, the key actors in diverse parts of **the** banking **PC** previously were quite different and relatively separate from each other (**e.g.** charter banks from insurance and trust companies). These have come much closer and interacting freely with each other. Moreover, new players from international non-governmental organisations (**I-NGOs**) have also **emerged** as crucial members of the sub-government in many sectors that previously contained only domestic actors. "This is especially true in the environmental sector. This trend may cast impact on the **PCs** which can either strengthen or weaken them. **There** exists the skepticism for the latter as these can take away the initiative of policy-making **from** the domestic societal interests groups and at times from the **governmental** authorities as well.

Several studies have documented the dangerous impact of pressure of the market forces and globalisation which are more oriented to fostering competition rather **than** oriented to social objectives. At times these **PCs** have worked as conduit that mediates the impact of these forces. Nevertheless, **various** studies underline the threat of the erosion of collective sense of community. It calls for **strengthening** the organisational efforts to counter negative forces.

6.7 SUMMARY

The evolution of the **Canadian party system** reveals that the parties have played an **important** role in the politics of Canada since **the formation of Confederation**. However **the party system has undergone** changes various times. In this process of change, **the current multi-party system** has developed after **the** dismantling of bi-party system. **Here**, one needs to **remember** that though there had **been** more than two **parties** since 1930s, only the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties remained as the main contestants for power. The change in **the party system** has taken place according to the changing needs and **demands** of the country. The **salient** features of the present party system which has been **built up** since 1993 are: **multi-party system**, **ideologically** pragmatic, **leader** oriented, organised and well funded, brokerage on the **basis** of their **socio-ethnic base**, **regionalised** in operation. The system is heading towards **partisan turbulence** that was the result of growing regionalisation and **parochial** interests resulting in the reduced chances for a majority party. Due to multi party system the Parliament of Canada is heading towards "**pizza-parliament**".

The Liberals, somehow, for some time have managed to get majority so far, but reduced in successive elections, to form the single party **government**. However the future prospects of the single party government are not very **bright** because of the sharing of seats in the Parliament by **more contending** parties. These developments in the party system are indicators of the coalitional governments,

In Canada, the vacuum created by the decline of both the parties and Parliament has been filled up by the pressure groups. Social movements have formed to support Quebec nationalism, multiculturalism, native peoples, women, consumers, international peace, and a cleaner and more humane environment, to name but a few. Some of these movements have become institutionalised and formed powerful interest groups, such as the **National Action Committee on the Status of Women**.

6.8 EXERCISES

- 1) Trace the evolution of Canadian Party System. In what **form** has the changing nature of party system **affected** the politics of Canada?
- 2) Describe the distinctive features of Canadian Party System. Do **you think** that emerging party system is conducive for the functioning of Parliamentary System in Canada?
- 3) Describe the nature, programme and social basis of Liberal and Progressive Conservative Parties.
- 4) What do you understand by the pressure groups? Analyse their role in Canada.
- 5) What are the arena, role, and strategies of the pressure groups in Canada? Which factors determine their impact on the policies?
- 6) Define **Policy Communities** in the context of Canada. Which factors do influence their functioning?