Competition, Cooperation, or Transformation?
Social Movements and Political Parties in Canada

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Introduction

There has been much discussion regarding the decline or changing role of political parties in established democracies (see, for example, Mair 1994). In this context, 'decline' refers to obsolescence of parties as important political actors, while 'changing role' points to their adaptation to embody principally an institutional arm of the state rather than an aggregator and representative of citizen interests. In both scenarios, social movements and interest groups are significant since they appear to be taking on more importance where parties are becoming less prevalent – in political activism, legitimacy, and representation.

According to Phillips (1996: 440-41), there have been three main approaches to understanding the relationship between parties and social movements or interest groups in Canada. The traditional view is that movements and groups compete with parties, limiting the latter's ability to organize and represent interests despite the fact that they constitute the only legitimate vehicle for carrying out these functions. Another approach sees a connection between the two sectors, in that parties often grow out of civil society groups. The final view, discussed by Phillips as the most appropriate, is one of complementarity. Social movements and interest groups offer alternative modes of political participation, expanding representation and improving the quality of Canadian democracy.

Phillips' typology is useful, but could be rearranged to make room for another perspective and more accurately represent the approaches existing among students of the party-civil society organizations dynamic. The three resulting categories could be labeled '*competitive*', '*parallel and complementary*', and '*transformative*'. The '*competitive*' grouping would match Phillips' traditional view and the '*parallel and complementary*' set would expand the position she considers most appropriate. Finally, the '*transformative*' class would refer to an approach that calls for the transformation of representation by including the knowledge of the people in party politics or even the formation of entirely different "forms of political unity" (see Wainwright 1994, Albo 2002). This sector would, thus, include cases of parties growing out of movements, but extend to cover changes to existing parties or the political system as a whole. Each of the categories is shaped by the researchers' ideological political positions, but may include a more or less extensive range of views.

Despite the differing views concerning what the relationships between groups and parties are or should be, the Canadian case shows that this is a

complex dynamic including competition, cooperation, *and* attempts at transformation. How movements and parties manage their strategies and position themselves vis-à-vis each other depends on the general context and the specific issue held to be most important at any one time. Breaking down the different views held by researchers and activists into ideal types according to ideological views is a useful exercise because it allows clarification of the thoughts regarding this issue. However, the resulting typology is only helpful in illuminating empirical observations if all of its aspects are, once again, considered as a whole – at least in the Canadian case. There remains an important discrepancy between the views of researchers and activists and the choices made by parties and movements attempting to reach their own goals.

This paper is divided into four subsections. The first provides basic definitions and the subsequent three discuss the competitive, parallel and complementary, and transformative categories, respectively. The fourth presents an empirical overview of the Canadian case.

Political Parties, Social Movements, and Interest Groups

Any discussion of the relationship between political parties and other modes of organizing interests requires a clear understanding of what is meant by these terms. Sartori (1976: 64) opts for a minimalist definition of party, "any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office." The key criterion identifying a party is its participation in elections, but it is frequently further characterized by its primary function, to contribute to the operationalization of a diverse, pluralistic polity by institutionalizing dissent (Sartori 1976: 65-6). This function is often subsequently broken down into various sub-functions: structuring the vote, integrating and mobilizing the public, recruiting political leaders, organizing government, making public policy, and aggregating interests (King 1969: 120).

Within the arena of civil society, interest groups have primarily been organized around issues of economic distribution such as wages, benefits, and subsidies, while social movements tend to focus on the distribution of intangible goods. Movements are concerned either with a "politics of space" - struggling against the predominant economic distribution of space that restricts physical and natural states of being, this aspect is often ecologically protectionist – or with a "politics of social identity" - attempting to alter existing socially constructed identities and relationships, this version is exemplified by women's and minority rights groups (Kitschelt 1993: 14). While interest groups and social movements are obviously distinct, they do sometimes overlap. Phillips (1996: 441-2) differentiates public interest groups ("those that promote public, nonpecuniary interests") that may be connected with social movements, from the larger mass of interest groups. The difference that public interest groups are organized entities seeking to directly influence

public policy, while social movements are loose networks attempting to change the sociopolitical context, remains. However, since these two types of groups both work to enhance collective public interests - as opposed to, for example, private business lobbies – Phillips' categorization of the two into one class will be maintained here. This serves the purpose of parsimony, especially since there appears to be some confusion and debate about a clear differentiation between the two even among experts.[1] For syntactic reasons, I will refer to these organized public interests interchangeably as groups, organizations, movements, and organized interests.

The Competitive View

Students of political parties appear to dominate the competitive category. Many of them recognize that parties, and their political contexts, are changing; yet they continue to believe that parties are important to democracy. These researchers see parties as the only political actors that have been able to adequately structure political behaviour and bring some sense of order to the range of institutions encompassed by the state. That is, groups may be expanding their activities and could even embody an important mode of communicating between citizens and parties, but they are certainly not a viable alternative to parties (Bartolini and Mair 2001: 339-42). However, a definite spectrum of views is discernible within this perspective, which encompasses adamant detractors from organized interests and moderates willing to admit to some degree of complementarity between parties and groups. Notwithstanding these differences, "competitivists" largely identify with the prevalent liberal democratic[2] political order, in which citizens are rational individuals who do not wish to be politically active and are content to delegate responsibility to candidates for elected office – the main competitors in a pluralist system – whose parties are active in aggregating interests shaped outside of the political arena (see Kitschelt 1993: 19-20). Given such an understanding of citizens' stance on their own interests as something that is bothersome to voice actively, it becomes clear why these researchers would regard citizens' organizations as competitors to parties. That is, since citizens are not particularly interested in participating in their own representation, it follows that groups must be competitors for the job of aggregation rather than presenting an alternative mode of political action.

Unwavering detractors are represented by Olson (1996). While Olson is not writing about the party-movement relationship per se, his arguments against collective action present a clear position on the nature of groups as competitive and detrimental to democracy. He argues that special interest groups representing relatively small sectors of citizens will lobby for special legislation, attempting to redistribute income disproportionately to themselves. This kind of uneven distribution is harmful to society at large because it decreases overall productivity: society shares the burden of the overall loss, but

does not benefit from the special legislation. However, Olson (1996: 85) finds that some "encompassing interests", such as large and disciplined political parties, are motivated to "provide socially optimal supplies of public goods" since their constituents will reap the benefits *and* bear the losses of redistribution.

Advocates for the restriction of spending by interest groups represent a similar position. According to Smith and Bakvis (2000), for example, the limitation of election spending by third parties would ensure equality in the electoral process. They maintain that, because different interest groups may have unequal financial resources, uncapped spending would allow the wealthier groups to unfairly impact elections through – for instance – favourable advertising for a particular candidate or an issue propounded by a certain party. Smith and Bakvis contend that this type of activity essentially bypasses the expenditure ceilings placed on parties themselves.

While framing their position in terms of equality and fairness, the authors in reality present a stance defending the encompassing interests – established political parties – that underwrite a relatively non-participatory liberal democratic political process. They do not discuss the inequalities created by extensive direct spending possibilities for individuals or corporations wishing to contribute to party campaigns,[3] such as, for example, those resulting from electoral funding laws in Ontario. MacDermid (2003) writes that the Ontario rules favour the Progressive Conservatives, whose contributions come mainly from corporations and wealthy individuals.

> The old limits of $14,000 dollars in an election year are just ridiculously large for the average citizen. Can anyone imagine a person earning an average income being able to give this much money to a political party in one year, even if they were passionately supportive of that party? An average citizen on an average salary does not even have a discretionary income of that size. If one thinks for a moment about how large an individual's income would have to be to even contemplate giving this amount of money, or even the newer election year limit of $25,000, one quickly sees that these limits, both old and new, are only constraints on the very richest citizens (MacDermid 2003: 7).

In addition, this type of funding regime is disadvantageous to parties who advocate more participatory democracy and whose contributions emanate largely from average individuals since corporations and the wealthy are unlikely to support such a program. If the amount spent by groups or individuals in directly supporting a party is not subject to strict limits, why

should groups' ability to independently put forward their own messages be curtailed? Justice Conrad of the Alberta Court of Appeal argued in a 1996 ruling that the reason for wanting to restrict third-party spending may be to maintain a system where parties and candidates have a privileged voice and the issues on the political agenda are limited. However, Smith and Bakvis (2000: 18) dismiss this evaluation as radical.

Despite the attacks on organized civil society groups, some advocates of the liberal democratic system - and the importance of parties in upholding this - posit that parties could co-exist with movements. For instance, Bartolini and Mair (2000: 334-5) find that movements challenge parties' monopoly on communicating popular interests to the state, but that parties may actually be benefited by this extra source for information on citizen interests, which have become much more diverse in the post-materialist era.

The Parallel and Complementary View

The Parallel and Complementary perspective is popular primarily among students of social movements. They tend toward a more reformist view of representation, according to which parties may be important in democracies, but organized civil society groups are necessary to pressure parties, ensuring that the latter will meet citizens' demands, and to offer alternative modes of participation.

According to Kitschelt (1993), parties and movements have different functions that can be complementary in a modern democracy. Using Hirshman's analysis of "shifting involvements", Kitschelt explains that citizens sometimes desire individual choices in a liberal democratic, representative system, and at other times wish to participate in collective decision-making in a more direct democratic system.[4] Citizens alternately become frustrated with the disappointments of both systems. Material needs having been met in a market-centered and individualist system, their demands shift to encompass a variety of concerns – such as environmentalism or feminism – and they wish to participate in decision-making processes so as to change the world. Yet, activism may also result in disappointment as collective consensus is difficult to reach, extensive time must be invested, and the results may be limited. Given citizens' improved material resources and the proliferation of policy issues that may be challenged by movements in advanced capitalist democracies, Kitschelt concludes that there has been a necessary shift in the pattern of democratic politics. Organizations and parties are complementary because an approach to doing politics that accommodates both spontaneous collective action and individuality in a "bureaucratic and commodified society" is necessary (Kitschelt 1993: 28-9).

Dryzek (1996) reaches a similar outcome, though for different reasons. While Kitschelt bases his analysis on the motivation driving individuals and organizations, Dryzek formulates his question according to the best conditions for continually enhanced democracy. He makes the case that non-state groups have historically provided the impetus for greater democratization and continue to be vital. When such actors become part of the state, which, the author explains, could occur through forming or joining a party, "dominant classes and public officials have less to fear in the way of public protest" (Dryzek 1996: 476). That is, entering formal political activity through party membership may result in a group's absorption and co-optation without adequately responding to the concerns that led to the formation of the group in the first place. However, non-state organized action may result in governmental response due to fear of political instability. Dryzek concludes that a vital oppositional civil society is thus crucial to the expansion of democracy.

Goldstone (2003) explains that it is impossible to understand '*any*' aspect of modern democracy without taking into consideration the activities of social movements. Drawing on Tilly, Goldstone describes the interaction of social protest and institutional politics as a well-established process that emerged alongside methods for influencing elections to Parliament in late 18th Century England. Today, courts, legislatures, executives, and parties are all shaped and influenced by citizens' groups and the global diffusion of democracy is a result of movement demands. In addition, those active in movements are very often also active in political parties. At times groups engage in protests to demonstrate their opposition to state policies, and at other times they work in parallel to parties by providing them with information, advice, or even electoral support. Having identified the interactivity between groups and parties, Goldstone argues that the tendency to regard the two as competitors and to consider only parties as legitimate political actors is misguided.

In sum, the "complementarists" recognize that a strictly representative liberal democracy is inadequate to meet citizens' preferences and ensure democratic quality. They argue that organized civil society groups are parallel and complementary to parties in that they broaden the arena of political action, allowing citizens to participate in various ways and ensuring active opposition to the state. In established democracies, both aspects enhance democracy without inherently altering the currently dominant liberal approach.

The Transformative View

The transformative approach appears to be the perspective of political economists and activists who take a decidedly different view of representation from those who do not take issue with liberal democracy as such. Adherents to this perspective favour direct democracy (or even socialism) in which: citizens, activists, and political leaders are not clearly differentiated; constituencies are organized on an ad hoc, issue specific basis rather than according to partisan ties; citizens are other-regarding and consider political involvement to be an opportunity instead of a burden; institutions are based on council democracy,

referenda, and randomly chosen representatives; and, the formation of interests is a successive process shaped by political action, communication, and deliberation (Kitschelt 1993: 20). From this standpoint, movements are the critical element that can bring about change in the existing political system, including through influencing existing, or forming new, parties.

In this vein, Wainwright (1994: xii) challenges existing conceptions of expert knowledge. She explains that the state cannot know what citizens need or desire, simply by virtue of being expert, but that the experiential knowledge of citizens must be taken into consideration in a truly democratic state. Citizens must participate in defining their own needs and deciding how public resources will be distributed '*and*' the state must be publicly accountable for ensuring that political institutions foster such participation. Wainwright suggests that democratic movements may be crucial to the construction of a participatory democracy, since their own organizational structures often reflect these principles. She thus takes a grassroots approach to political change, but also cautions that movements require state support in order to succeed (1994: 190-98). It is difficult for groups to maintain the pace of the type of activism that puts issues on the political agenda and they may become marginalized if they do not form an enduring relationship with state institutions. Movement militants must partake in political action while also working to feed themselves and their families, while those acting on behalf of the state and its institutions are paid for their efforts. Long-term, effective presence in the public arena requires resources generally only available to political parties, which is why movements tend eventually to either form parties or attempt to influence existing ones. However, their approach to these institutional links is one of continually challenging the party to support autonomous action by citizens.

Albo (2002) also calls for a transformation of politics from the grassroots. He criticizes left-wing political parties for altering their ideology and accepting neoliberal policy programs rather than continuing to promote social democracy. It is no longer possible to expect change as a result of policy tweaking or alternation in government, as leftist parties would have their constituents believe. Voter apathy shows that the working class has recognized the left's abandonment of true alternatives to neoliberal policy, but the swelling ranks of movements opposing such policies demonstrates that the issues have not disappeared. Rather, opposition is no longer being fought out in the Parliamentary arena. However, the ex-Parliamentary groups are too often pursuing their goals in isolation from each other; the next imperative is to form new organizations within which to unite the various anti-capitalist struggles. The goal of unity is "ending exploitation and oppression for a society in which the freely associated producers themselves democratically govern as social equals in an ecologically responsible system of production" (Albo 2002: 54). Referring specifically to the Canadian case, Albo writes that there have been calls from movements for radical democrats within the New Democratic Party

(NDP) to clearly promote social democracy. Presumably, then, the organization for political unity he discusses could come in the guise of a transformed NDP as well as in the shape of new types of formal inter-group links.

The "transformers" thus see the necessity for fundamental changes in existing, liberal democratic institutions in order to establish real democracy. Wainwright (1994: 282) argues that institutions should be organized in a participatory manner and the law developed by a group of citizens working with the knowledge of the people's real-life experience and needs. The critical innovators and stimulators here are thus not political parties, but rather civil society organizations. Parties themselves have little potential for meaningfully representing citizens' interests without the input of movements – parties and movements are not only complementary, but the latter can, and must, transform the former in order to build a better political system.

The Canadian Case

The above has outlined three categories of views on the roles of political parties and civil society organizations in advanced capitalist democracies, competitive, parallel and complementary, and transformative. This section will briefly examine Canada as a case study in order to determine how movements and parties interact or compete in actuality.

The Liberal party seems to have used social movements as a tool for legitimation. It has included some of the goals and methods of groups in its own platform, while simultaneously inhibiting their ability to proliferate. The 1997 "Red Book II" describes civil society organizations as a pillar of Canadian society and economy and promises that the Liberal Party will work to develop this sector. Subsequent to the 1997 election, a task force was established to study how movements could best be supported. Then, in 1998, funding to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) was eliminated, a move compared by one journalist as "feeding it [NAC] to the barracudas" (quoted in Phillips 1999: 387). Similarly, Pelletier and Guérin (1998: 336) indicate that the Liberal Party of Québec (PLQ) was relatively quick to incorporate the concerns of environmental and women's groups, yet "this does not mean that their programmatic engagement has been translated into public policy". This sequence of events certainly points toward party strategists who, 1) recognize that their constituents are increasingly interested and active in social movements that offer organizational benefits where parties are in decline, 2) feel the party must respond to this in order to maintain legitimacy, and 3) fear competition and would rather ensure the survival of their organizational status quo than truly embrace the interests and values promoted by movements.

In certain respects, parties of the left have not been much more amenable to change. The Parti québécois (PQ), like the PLQ, rapidly

integrated some aspects of environmentalism and feminism in the 1970s, but did not implement policy extensive enough to approach satisfaction of the movements' demands. However, as a sovereigntist party espousing a form of social democracy, the values of PQ militants are naturally much closer to the postmaterialism[5] of movement activists than are those of the federalist and neoliberal PLQ (Pelletier and Guérin 1998). Civilian activists may thus hope that the PQ could provide an opening for movements to ally with a like-minded state institution, enabling them to influence the existing system.

However, organizations that have held the same hope for the NDP have been increasingly disappointed. In 1986, Judy Rebick and a group of like-minded promoters of participatory democracy organized the Campaign for an Activist Party (CAP) with the intent of rebuilding the NDP to reflect the stress on activism and values of equality, justice, solidarity, and peace promoted by social movements. CAP ran a number of candidates for the party executive – including the position of president – and had more than enough support from members and political leaders to win its bid. However, the existing party leadership feared change and felt pressure to move the NDP toward the political center in order to ensure electoral gains; it successfully maneuvered to ensure a CAP loss (Rebick 2000: 195-97, 211).

Nonetheless, Carty, Cross, and Young (2000: 94-8) argue that the NDP has been more open to cooperation with progressive movements than have the Liberals or the Progressive Conservatives (PC). They find that the Liberals attempt to accommodate a diverse coalition of interests – but, as explained above, this does not necessarily translate into progressive policy - while the PC no longer undertake any special measures to reconcile the party's program with various movements' interests. More radically, the Reform/Alliance Party explicitly distances itself from what it refers to as "special interest groups". Following an Olsonian logic, this party's leaders maintain that feminists, environmentalists, homosexuals, and other such groups exercise more influence in Canadian politics than is warranted by the size of their memberships. Despite this rhetoric, Reform/Alliance has actively courted ethnic minority communities through meetings with their leaders and by running visible minority candidates.

Regarding the genesis of parties out of movements, the only Canadian attempts have been relatively fruitless. The Feminist Party disbanded in 1981 after only two years in existence, plagued by internal divisions, first over whether to establish a party and then over how to structure it internally. It was finally decided to organize it using non-hierarchical committees with open membership, but this proved inimical to resolving dissent and resulted in strong personalities dominating discussions. Perhaps most importantly, party members were unable to convince women partisans of the established parties to change their allegiance. The Green Party has survived since 1983, but has been unable to attract many voters due to internal organizational problems, the

obstacle posed by the Canadian first-past-the-post electoral system that complicates new party entry, and the difficulty of attracting voters with a postmaterial platform when other parties have managed to convince the electorate that debt reduction and inflation control are the key issues on the agenda (Phillips 1996: 451-54).

In sum, in Canada, there does not seem to be a definitive type of relationship between parties and civil society groups in terms of the typology presented above. Rather, each case appears to be based on a complex dynamic of factors, so that competition, complementarity, and attempts at transformation all occur, depending on the particular issue and cos between interest groups and social movements on the one hand, and political parties on the other, in order to more accurately represent existing discussions on this topic. The three categories presented here – competitive, parallel and complementary, and transformative – are loosely based on the political ideologies of the researchers and activists within them, trying to explain how the different approaches may have come about.

In the final analysis, such a categorization may have limited value. While it allows some clarification of the varying views on how parties and organizations do and should act vis-à-vis each other, any one category in isolation from the others provides only a piece of the empirical puzzle. Only the Canadian case has been reviewed here, and even this only briefly, yet it shows that the strategies and actions of parties and groups are complex. At times there is competition, at others cooperation, and at still others there are attempts at transformation. None of these dynamics fit neatly into the views held by researchers attempting to establish what roles parties and movements should ideally play.
ntext at hand. As Goldstone concludes, movements are part of a "multisided strategic action of state leaders, parties, countermovements, and the public at large, each seeking to use or hinder the others to seek its own ends" (2003: 24).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to reorganize and expand Phillips' (1996) typology of relationships between interest groups and social movements on the one hand, and political parties on the other, in order to more accurately represent existing discussions on this topic. The three categories presented here – competitive, parallel and complementary, and transformative – are loosely based on the political ideologies of the researchers and activists within them, trying to explain how the different approaches may have come about.

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Endnotes:

1 For example, the entire discussion surrounding the competition between social movements and political parties as representational agents is rendered irrelevant by Magnusson (1993: 123), who claims, "social movements are new ways of being, thinking, and acting" that are *not* organized. They therefore cannot represent; they just *are*.
2 Liberal democracy can be defined in terms of Dahl's (1971: 2-3) polyarchy, which includes the following elements: freedom to form and join organizations, freedom of expression, right to vote, eligibility for public office, right of political leaders to compete for support and to compete for votes, alternative sources of information, free and fair elections, and institutions for making government policies depend on citizens' preference.
3 Smith and Bakvis' article was published in 2000 – prior to the passing of Bill C-24 limiting individual contributions to a greater extent and prohibiting corporate contributions.
4 Putnam (2000: 336) defines direct democracy as "participatory democracy" – self-government by actively engaged citizens.
5 Phillips (1996: 454) defines postmaterial values as prioritizing self-expression and quality of life over economic and physical security.

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Electronic Panopticon or Techno-fetishism?

A Critical Look at Panoptic Theories of Policing.

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Introduction

Often tied to a discourse on "law and order", a heightened importance given to policing has become a marked political feature of advanced capitalist states over the last couple of decades. This is the case not simply in response to political protest, but also in the day-to-day experiences of many people in these countries, for whom policing is an all too common - and negative - feature in their lives. But while efforts have been made within the scholarly literature to examine contemporary policing from a critical perspective, most of the more critical-minded literature is severely hampered by a costly over-emphasis on the importance of what is sometimes referred to as at-a-distance forms of policing. This panoptic theory of policing, which is indebted to the notions of power, control and subjectification developed by Foucault in works like *Discipline and Punish*[1], whether or not its advocates openly declare their work to be carrying on the tradition of Foucault and poststructuralism, is situated prominently within the critical literature on contemporary policing. This has had serious consequences for the development of more meaningful analysis of this issue. For despite the extent of the panoptic writings, there nonetheless exists a considerable gap between the reality of contemporary policing and its portrayal in this literature. As a result, most critical evaluations of policing's goals, and the techniques used to pursue them, are severely limited in their insights, often glossing over if not downright ignoring many of its harsh realities.

It is incumbent upon scholars to challenge the panoptic view head-on. The absence of such a systematic dissection of panoptic policing theory has meant that, while some non-panoptic critical interrogations of contemporary policing have been advanced, often focusing on one particular city or one particular aspect of policing policy, panoptic theory is still a central, if not *the* central framework for understanding policing today. Even Neocleous's recent and very useful Marxian contribution to the theory of policing focuses on the historical development of modern policing rather than its contemporary manifestations[2], while Parenti's insightful analysis of policing in America engages the theoretical presuppositions of poststructuralism and panoptic theories of power in only a limited way, and even then does not focus so much on their expression in the literature on contemporary policing[4]. In an effort to advance our critical understanding of contemporary policing, then, this essay will engage head-on the central themes on the subject raised in the panoptic literature. It will measure the strength of panoptic policing analysis by situating that analysis alongside an exploration of some of the more salient features of policing today in Canada, Britain and the United States. Such a