

**INTEREST GROUP INVOLVEMENT IN
CONSTITUENCY ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

by

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Abstract

This study explores the range and variance of interest group activity in constituency campaigns in the 1988 federal election as reported in the Constituency Party Association data set created in 1991 for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing. SPSSPC+ was used to analyze the relationships between variables in four main areas: political party affiliation, geographic variables, constituency association characteristics, and the specific issues the interest groups were promoting or opposing.

The most significant finding was that interest groups were actively involved in half of the riding association election campaigns, either supporting or opposing local candidates. The cursory treatment of electoral involvement in the interest group literature provides an inadequate explanation for this widespread phenomena. This study provides an initial profile of interest group involvement in constituency campaigns. The exploration of the data revealed that interest groups were more likely to be involved in the local campaigns of candidates associated with the governing party. They were less likely to be involved in Quebec constituency campaigns, and more likely in wealthy competitive riding campaigns. The most frequently mentioned issues that motivated interest groups locally were abortion, followed by free trade.

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Chapter One: Current Explanations of Interest Group Election Campaign Involvement

With an election call required before the end of this year, and a new Canada Elections Act recently signed into law, questions concerning what exactly constitutes a "fair" election are currently being raised in Canada. One of the most controversial issues centres on the appropriate role of interest groups in election campaigns.¹ Advertising by groups and individuals other than political parties and election candidates during the 1988 federal election sparked much debate about who the participants in an election should be, and what restrictions, if any, should apply. The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, for example, devoted one volume of its research exclusively to the question of interest groups and elections. The Commission's Senior Research Coordinator, Leslie Seidle, referred directly to the free trade issue in outlining the importance of "independent expenditures" in elections and the prominence of this issue in the Commission's hearings (Seidle 1991).

The leading scholar on Canadian interest groups,² Paul Pross, has developed an analytical framework for understanding interest groups which takes very little account of interest group involvement in elections (1992, 1986). Basing much of his analysis on the degree of internal organization of interest groups, Pross constructed an organizational continuum designed to explain most interest group activity. In addition, he generated a

¹For example, the cover story of the February 22, 1993 *Western Report* focused on the implications of the changes to the Canada Elections Act for individual and group participation in elections.

²Pross' framework for understanding interest groups is frequently cited and described as the most comprehensive model of Canadian interest groups.(Stanbury 1993:133, Tanguay and Kay 1991:83 Jackson and Jackson 1990:543, Galipeau in Gagnon and Tanguay 1989:410, and Kernaghan and Siegel 1987:400).

policy development model based on the idea of a "policy community" which is an informal network of policy actors (Pross 1986). Interest group election tactics, on the other hand, are only briefly mentioned in the chapter which addressed atypical policy development, when "contentious issues" arise. In this context, Pross admitted that some interest group election campaign involvement occurred but he described it as a new tactic employed by interest groups that were marginalized in the regular policy development process yet desired to inject their concerns into the election debate. Pross was not convinced that an election campaign was the best environment for interest groups to influence public policy and he stressed the inappropriateness of riding campaign involvement by highlighting the many drawbacks of such activity.

In contrast to Pross' superficial treatment of interest group election involvement, the Constituency Party Association (CPA) study of local associations³ in all federal constituencies after the 1988 election showed that fifty percent of them had interest groups involved in their local campaigns, either promoting or opposing the association's candidate. Clearly, the level of interest group activity reported by the survey does not justify Pross' passing treatment of election involvement by interest groups. Because of the widespread acceptance of Pross' analytical framework concerning interest group activity in policy communities, and the apparent contradiction with the results of the CPA study, the new data provided in the CPA study needs to be explored. Is an election campaign an important

³The Constituency Party Association study surveyed the constituency associations of five political parties in the spring of 1991. As one of the last research projects commissioned by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing it sought not only to explore the range and variance of local association activity but to canvass the reactions of riding associations to various proposals for the reform the Canada's electoral law.

avenue for interest groups to influence public policy? If Pross' analysis of typical interest group activity is accurate, why would so many constituency associations report interest group activity?

In the rest of this chapter, I explore several notions central to the question of interest group involvement in local constituencies, including the efficiency of campaign involvement for influencing public policy; the search for legitimacy of interest group through participation in the political process; elections as a forum for the public discussion in which interest groups would like to participate; and the internal benefits to interest groups from constituency campaign involvement.

When is Election Involvement Efficient?

While efficiency is a concept usually employed in economic analyses, it can be helpful to analyze the efficiency of interest groups in order to ask what the rational, self-interested behaviour of an interest group would be given its policy agenda (Stanbury 1993).⁴ It may be difficult to view all interest groups, especially the altruistic ones, as seeking solely to maximize their resources. A list of resources available to interest groups includes the obvious factors such as money, staff time, and research capacity but it also includes more ambiguous "commodities" including the perceived legitimacy or status of the group's cause with the public, knowledge of a particular sector or client group, knowledge of the policy process, key contacts and members, and the personal efficacy of staff members in making a

⁴For a full discussion of political market theory see Reisman (1990), Landry (1987), and Hayes (1981).

contribution to a policy area (Reisman 1990, Pross, 1992). It is less than straight forward to efficiently allocate such diverse and often unquantifiable resources in an ever changing policy environment.

Pross (1986:3) described interest groups as, "adaptive instruments of political communication, equipped with sensitive antennae for locating power." He viewed the activities of interest groups as indications of the relative policy-making power of the various political institutions and claimed that as institutions gain or lose power, interest groups adjust their relationship with the institution either by expanding their contacts or letting their contacts die away. Thus, the task for an interest group is to find and influence the most important decision-maker(s) on each policy question. This is not a new idea; some of the earliest analyses of interest group behaviour came to the same conclusion. With reference to the western liberal democratic phenomena of interest groups, Ehrmann, in an early work on interest groups, commented, "...interest groups will concentrate their best efforts on those organs of government which are responsible for decisions affecting most directly their clientele" (Ehrmann 1958:6). And Truman claimed that, "...political interest groups will seek access to the key points of decision within these [political] institutions" (Truman *in* Luttbeg 1968:129-130). Presthus made a similar point when he argued that interest groups, "...seek access where the power and authority to shape policy reside" (Presthus 1974:3). In a more current and popular tone, Harrison concluded that,

To be successful, lobbyists must be familiar with the key figures in each of the power cliques and be able to make accurate predictions about future configurations of power. It is useless, from a business point of view, to be fast friends with a minister who doesn't have the power of decision in his department, or with a senior mandarin whose political sympathies are blatantly

at odds with the ruling government. On the other hand, everyone in a senior position in Ottawa is at least potentially powerful so cordial relations must be maintained (Harrison 1988:21).

Because of the importance of influencing key decision-makers, Pross (1992, 1986) argued that the regular interest groups activity does not take place in electoral politics. For example, a farmers' group seeks to influence the bureaucrats in the Department of Agriculture who are responsible for a pertinent regulatory decisions. If the person holding a position changes, the interest group will continue its lobbying efforts with the new office-holder.

When this same reasoning is applied to elected Members of Parliament or Cabinet Ministers, a representative is lobbied because he/she is the Minister responsible for a given portfolio, and not because of the particular constituency that he/she represents. It is difficult to apply the same argument to an electoral contest, where a candidate with an unknown future is lobbied (government or opposition, frontbench or backbench). Instead, interest groups seeking to influence those in decision-making positions should not include election contests because they would not have a preference for one candidate over another at that stage in the formation of a government.

Another argument, which supports an election strategy for interest groups suggests that election candidates are policy actors too important to ignore. This conclusion should not be lightly dismissed because interest groups, it is assumed, do not waste time or money on the uninfluential or the powerless. The local campaign involvement reported in the CPA study supports the idea of the adaptive nature of interest groups as they seek out the most important policy actors on a given policy question.

One assumption underlying the efficient power locating abilities of interest groups is that interest groups must make a judgement about who the influential and powerful decision-makers are. As Pross' (1992, 1986) organizational continuum suggests, some groups have a more sophisticated understanding of the political system than others, and thus would be better able to make such an analysis. The fact that a significant level of interest groups activity is reported by a given set of policy actors indicates, at best, that interest groups perceive them as powerful policy decision-makers.

Another assumption is that interest groups have access to any policy actor they consider powerful. It may be that an interest group spends its resources on the most influential decision-makers that it can influence rather than the decision-makers it would like to influence. An issue-oriented group, for example, may have limited access to key actors and its strategic lobbying choice may be to maximize the group's influence within its constrained range of policy actors. It is difficult to imagine how a rational resource allocation for many interest groups would include attempting to influence the campaigns of the multiple candidates in all two hundred and ninety-five federal constituencies. For interest groups whose interests are closely associated with one line department or contained within one policy community, it would seem inefficient to attempt to influence the many local contests in an election. Perhaps interest groups with more diffuse interests, whose policy interests do not fit conveniently into one or several policy communities, would be more likely to use the more general forum of an election campaign for influencing public policy.

It can be argued that most electors do not base their voting decision solely on policy considerations; many electors place party loyalty or party leadership ahead of policy

considerations. This makes an election campaign a much more difficult forum for policy focused groups to advance their causes and to make an impact on the electoral outcome. The atypical nature of the 1988 federal election, however, where one important policy question dominated much of the debate, may have prompted perceptive interest groups to become involved in the election campaign because it suddenly became possible to affect this policy question through electoral participation, a non-policy community mechanism.

During 1988, abortion groups witnessed a number of key events and decisions in their policy area. In January of that year, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the 1969 section 251 of the Criminal Code that addressed abortion, declaring it of no force or effect. This decision understandably provoked a response from both pro-life and pro-choice interest groups. The federal government promised to act quickly but it was not until July that an abortion resolution was before Parliament where eventually every proposal was defeated. Perhaps the absence of legislation and the frustration of both pro-life and pro-choice activists prompted their 1988 election involvement. No further litigation was possible and Parliament had not resolved the issue.

In addition, the abortion issue in Canada, particularly the pro-choice position, has been associated with feminism and women's issues.⁵ Collins (1985:25) described how since the 1970 'Caravan,' "...the abortion issue and feminism in this country have held to a strained but cheek-to-cheek course ever since." It is also unlikely for an interest group central to this policy community to become involved in a local constituency campaign

⁵There are also health (federal and provincial) and legal (criminal and civil) aspects to the issue which make the resolution of any abortion policy very complex.

because it would be taking a policy issue outside of the policy community and subjecting it to a much wider public debate. This policy community, which claims to incorporate the abortion issue, has failed to include a significant dissenting viewpoint, the pro-life interest groups (Tanguay and Kay 1991). If pro-life interest groups are marginal in the legitimate forum for policy development, this may have encouraged them to take the issue outside or beyond the policy community to the broader policy environment.

Searching for Legitimacy

In 1967, John Meisel commented that interest groups',

...numbers and means permit them to become rivals of political parties. These rapidly proliferating groups and institutions can gain access to the decision-making process without having recourse to parties which thus become bypassed in the vital area of mediation between individual and group interests and the state (Meisel *in* Pross 1986:1).

The exclusion of the elected members in completely bureaucratic and interest group generated policy lacks legitimacy in Canada. A process that does not involve any elected representatives of Canadians discredits the policy output regardless of its contents. Members of Parliament, and consequently all election candidates, may have an important role in the policy process solely to provide the needed impression of public input, public debate and public approval for policy decisions (Pross 1992). A lack of legitimacy in a democratic society is very problematic because the free election of a government signifies the consent of the people to be governed. Without the responsibility to the electorate that comes with elected office, questions of public protection also arise. Interest groups, no matter how large their membership, do not have the same legitimacy as elected officials to make decisions on

behalf of the electorate. The activities of interest groups begin to threaten the state when they undermine the role of elected members.

One of the ways of achieving the "required" legitimacy would be to stimulate policy debate during an election campaign. When election candidates and political parties take a position on an issue and then are subsequently elected by voters, this provides at least a starting point for a connection between further policy development and the citizenry.

Citizen Participation

Having interest groups prompt candidates to take a distinct position on a policy issue also helps voters to distinguish one candidate from another during the election campaign should they wish to incorporate policy into their voting decision.

An election contest usually involves a wider group of citizens than are normally involved in local party affairs or political activities of any kind. A policy question that arouses strong and divergent opinions could motivate an even greater fraction of the electorate and involve otherwise non-political or apathetic citizens. While such an influx of new participants may upset the inter-election balance of party interests, it could hardly be suggested that the involvement of the greater portion of the electorate was somehow detrimental to the electoral process.

Given that both political parties and interest groups aggregate and articulate policy positions during an election, and that they can either work together or against each other, the distinction between the activities of an interest group and a political party can be difficult to make. An interest group can become a party, or it can operate within or outside of a political party in its attempts to influence the political party's policy position and alter the

electorate's response to the political party. The comparative cost for an interest group to launch a new political party may be very high, which might encourage an interest group to attempt to "takeover" a political party from within. A nomination contest, for example, is a vulnerable time for many political parties because their inter-election organization is usually weak and many riding associations can be manipulated with a limited number of people (Canadian Study of Parliament Group 1989, Tanguay and Kay 1991). The influx of new members for a nomination contest or the election itself can be positive for a local association because it encourages greater participation, it may produce a more representative caucus, and it encourages political parties to address the substantive issues important to interest groups which are presumably important to at least a significant portion of the electorate. Some of the disadvantages of constituency association infiltration is that Members of Parliament who owe their election to one interest group and are keenly focused on one policy area may be rigid and uncompromising in their views, proving themselves to be difficult colleagues either in government or opposition.

National Forum for Policy Debate

When an election is viewed as an opportunity for wide discussion of issues among all groups in society, the partisan nature of an election is diminished and the political parties are merely vehicles for the exchange of ideas. One interest group that held this view in 1988 was the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign. During the 1988 election campaign, a group spokesman claimed that, "...the electoral process does not belong solely to the political parties. We have important issues to discuss too" (Clark 1988:19). They believed that they had a place along side of political parties, and indeed, almost parity with them. In a similar

statement, the president of the National Citizens Coalition, referring to the Alberta ruling which struck down a law prohibiting any group other than political parties from spending money in an election said that, "...the parties have had their stranglehold broken on the political process" (Clark 1988:19). These groups suggested that it may not be the political parties who should determine key election issues or even the parameters of an election debate. Kernaghan and Siegel suggest that, "...the growth in the number and apparent influence of pressure groups has raised concern that they rival and even threaten to supplant political parties as the primary channel of communication between citizens and their governments" (Kernaghan and Siegel 1988:415). They argued that collectively, interest groups decrease the role of political parties as intermediaries between the citizen and the state. This shift away from parties and elected Members of Parliament can be partially explained as the rational and self-interested action of citizens who will choose whichever channel of communication best enables them to influence public policy (Kernaghan and Siegel 1988, Archibald and Paquet *in* Gagnon and Tanguay 1989).

Tom Kent, in a article which called for renewed citizen participation in all parties, claimed, "...in our representative democracy, the responsibility for deciding public policy lies almost entirely with politicians; that is, with the leading members of political parties" (Kent 1988:3). While this view excludes the central role of the bureaucracy, the executive, the judiciary and other groups that influence the policy process, it does highlight the role of the people who join political parties and especially those who let their names stand for nomination.

Kent suggested that the parties have failed to keep the confidence of Canadians because they have lost their policy making role and their platforms are hollow. The parties are, "...putting presentation before performance, the packaging before the product" (Kent 198:3).

Hiebert (1991) claimed that the increased activity of interest groups in elections has added a new dynamic to election contests where a general election becomes one of the main opportunities for the electorate to participate in the political system. Because interest groups question the ability of parties to adequately represent all of the interests in society, they are becoming increasingly involved in election contests. A more cynical view of interest group involvement in election campaigns suggests that their participation is merely a cheaper way to access the political agenda.

Internal Benefits to Interest Groups

From the perspective of a local interest group, an election contest may be an important public venue to demonstrate to its own membership that it is actively involved on their behalf (Stanbury 1993). In addition, participation in the electoral process may provide group members with a sense of efficacy. Because of activities associated with the election, the local membership could be galvanized to recruit new members and thus increase their profile in the community. The resulting solidarity and increased local strength of the group may increase the group's resources providing further momentum. The larger and more active the local membership, the more legitimacy the group's representative would have in any other policy forum such as public hearings, or advisory boards.

The CPA data set provides an opportunity to study the Canadian federal riding associations on a system-wide basis and to explore what evidence, if any, exists for the ideas found in the literature about interest groups and their electoral involvement. The next chapter addresses the limitations and strengths of this data set and of the central survey questions about interest groups.

The subsequent four chapters explore the occurrence of interest group involvement in constituency association campaigns as reported in the CPA study data. Specifically, Chapter Three focuses on the political parties and asks whether or not the different parties had similar experiences with interest groups in the 1988 federal election campaign. The principal idea investigated is the government challenge notion where election involvement is primarily viewed as an occasion for interest groups to question government candidates on the policy record of their most recent term. Chapter Four searches for geographic variation in interest group election involvement employing primarily provincial and regional comparisons. Chapter Five examines various characteristics of the associations to test for significant relationships with interest group involvement. These include the relative competitiveness of the association, the type of campaign staged in the 1988 federal election, the association's financial resources, and the number of local association members. Chapter Six considers only the associations where interest group activity was reported, concentrating on the issue that motivated the interest group's involvement. The final chapter concludes by summarizing the findings from the CPA study that relate to interest group activity and speculating about futures levels of interest group riding campaign involvement.

Chapter Two: The Constituency Party Association Study

In this chapter I will highlight the most important methodological issues that relate to the Constituency Party Association (CPA) survey data which was the principal data set⁶ for this thesis. The data for the CPA survey was collected for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing in the spring of 1991.

The CPA data set was chosen because it was the first system-wide study of the constituency associations of Canadian political parties. Numerous studies have been conducted on individual voters (such as the National Election Studies undertaken for each election), political activists, and convention delegates (Perlin 1988, Archer 1991); the CPA study shifted the focus of analysis from the individual participants to the constituency associations. In his volume for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, Carty stated the threefold objective in the Constituency Party Association study as seeking a) to fill the gap in the political science literature regarding local associations, b) to assess the current rules and process of local associations, and c) to obtain grassroots reaction to a number of reforms to the electoral system suggested through the Royal Commission process (Carty 1991). Currently only Carty's volume for the Royal Commission has made extensive use of this data set, leaving many areas of local experience open for further exploration.

⁶Two additional data sets, created from information from the Chief Electoral Officer, were joined to the Constituency Party Association data set to expand the analysis. One set of data included the 1988 federal election results for each constituency (number of votes for each candidate, party affiliation, and rank in the final results). The second data set included financial information for each riding by candidate (contributions and spending).

The type of questions contained in the CPA survey indicate that the unit of analysis is the constituency association. Many of the survey's questions address issues that are not applicable to individuals. For example, questions about membership numbers, association income, or association activities were included. The central questions to this thesis regarding interest group involvement in local association campaigns would be categorized in this way.

Because the riding associations are the vehicles through which many of the tasks prescribed by election law are carried out, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing sought to understand in a comprehensive way the practical experience of the local associations. The experience of all of the constituency associations was requested to explore the previously unknown range and variance of constituency association activities.

The Royal Commission surveyed the entire local association population in Canada during the spring of 1991 which included the local associations of the three major parties (the Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, and the New Democratic Party) and two minor parties (the Reform Party and the Christian Heritage Party).

Each of the parties provided its most comprehensive list of constituency associations and their presidents. There were some constituencies where no address was available or the survey was returned as undeliverable but no attempt was made to select certain associations or to choose a sample of the ridings. Rather, the effort was made to include the entire population of constituency associations of five parties from as many of the two hundred ninety-five constituencies as possible. The survey was sent in the mail with three follow-up

efforts, including two reminder cards sent to constituencies that had not responded, and finally telephone follow-up used to allow constituency associations to request another copy of the survey.

The final survey response rate was fifty-four percent of the constituency association population. To ensure that this subset of the population was representative of all local associations, two key characteristics of the responding associations were noted. The first important characteristic was political party affiliation. In order for the Royal Commission to make the best decisions about the electoral process, all parties should be allowed a chance to respond and indeed, all five of the parties included did respond to the survey in sufficient numbers⁷ (Carty 1991). All of the political parties included in the survey were aware of the mandate of the Royal Commission to make recommendations to Parliament regarding changes to the electoral laws that govern their activities. There was, therefore, a strong incentive for each constituency association to ensure that its experience and particularly its reactions to the "Options for Reform" questions were considered. The second important characteristic was province. Quebec and New Brunswick had lower response rates than the other provinces but all provinces had an acceptable quantity of surveys returned.⁸

⁷The lowest response rate by party was from the Liberals at forty-seven percent. All of the other parties had over fifty percent of their constituency associations respond to the survey. The NDP had fifty-three, the Progressive Conservatives had fifty-seven percent, the Reform Party had fifty-nine and the CHP had the highest response rate of seventy-nine percent. The response rate for the CHP was quite a bit higher than the other parties, however, the total number of CHP cases is only forty-eight or 9 % of the 522 case total which was not enough to significantly skew the results.

⁸The response rates by province were: Newfoundland 63 %, Nova Scotia, 61 %, Prince Edward Island 54 %, New Brunswick 43 %, Quebec 39 %, Ontario 60 %, Manitoba, 60 %, Saskatchewan 57 %, Alberta 60 %, British Columbia 53 %, and the North 63 %.

Questions Pertaining to Interest Groups

Two of the questions in the CPA survey specifically addressed interest group involvement in constituency campaigns.⁹ Because much of the present study's analysis utilized these two questions, it is important to address their limitations. The first question asked, "Did any single-issue interest group play an active role in the local campaign in an attempt to support or oppose your candidate?" This was followed by the second question, "If so, what issue were they promoting or opposing?"

The survey asked about "single-issue" interest groups which may have influenced a respondent's answer depending on whether or not he/she viewed the interest groups that were active in their local campaign as having only one issue. This introduces some uncertainty. A group formed solely to fight the free trade issue, for example, would clearly be considered a single-issue group. However, would a business or labour group that focused all of its election activities on the free trade issue be reported as a "single-issue" interest group? How each respondent would decide such a question is unknown and is likely unknowable. It may be that the survey captures only the subset of local interest groups viewed as "single-issue" groups.

It is also possible for respondents to interpret the activity of interest groups in a variety of ways. For instance, what does it mean for an interest group to be "actively involved"? Does this include the participation of regular party members who were also interest group members? Does the interest group activity have to be official or institutional

⁹There were a number of questions which deal with groups that have interest group expression in the political process such as women, youth, or aboriginal peoples but these questions did not address interest groups in general.

for the respondent to attribute the activity to the interest group? Because the participation of individuals may be ambiguous, it is impossible to know how each respondent defined "interest group activity."

Another problem with the "single-issue interest group" question is that it is limited to either the presence or absence of such groups; no attempt is made to explore the frequency, intensity, or scope of the interest groups activities. Any further work in the area of interest group involvement in constituency campaigns should consider investigating these factors. The implications are quite different if interest groups are making occasional contact with a constituency associations during an election campaign, versus their direct involvement in the ongoing work of the association such as policy development or the election of constituency association executives. A further question might have been to ask what changes, if any, a local association would undertake in future election campaigns as a result of the experience of interest group activity in the 1988 election.

Finally, it may be important to ask not only the issue that an interest group was promoting or opposing, but the name of the specific group involved. For example, in the case of the abortion issue, it might be important to determine whether pro-life or pro-choice groups were more often using local constituency associations in their election strategy. It might be revealing to know which issues prompted which interest groups to undertake local campaign involvement; it is possible that the policy issues pursued during an election campaign may or may not be the same as non-election issues pursued by the same group.

Any differences would be intriguing and would further nuance the information about interest groups and their activities.¹⁰

What the two questions in the CPA survey do provide is the first system-wide attempt to explore interest group involvement in local campaigns. The responses suggest a general level of interest group activity in local associations and provide some indication of which issues prompted such action in 1988. Because the whole area of interest group involvement in elections is a relatively recent phenomena, there is a need for the basic patterns to be established before the understanding can be expanded.

The questions regarding interest groups in the CPA survey provide a profile of the local constituencies across Canada at one particular time. The survey was administered in the spring of 1991 and many of the questions refer to the local associations experience in the 1988 federal election. The particular political dynamics of that time will be reflected in the survey results. For example, the Reform Party was experiencing incredible growth and the Liberal Party had recently chosen a new leader at its 1990 leadership convention in Calgary. Given that political fortunes and parties' experiences are in constant flux, a series of glimpses over time is probably the best reflection of the changes that can be expected. The CPA data provides one such glimpse.

Carty's analysis of the CPA data set highlights the most important overall findings regarding constituency association experience. In the following chapters I will build upon his analysis by focusing exclusively on the local campaign activity of interest groups. Any

¹⁰Some of these questions could be answered by a detailed analysis of selected cases. The range of parties, regions, constituency association characteristics, and motivating issues should be balanced when selecting case studies.

significant relationship will be reported and discussed with reference to any predictions about interest group campaign activity found in the literature.

Specifically, I will explore interest group activity in two of the most enduring areas of political differences in Canadian politics, political party affiliation and geography.¹¹ How the phenomena of single-issue interest groups occurs in these two contexts is important because it builds on much of the existing understanding of Canadian politics. If interest group involvement in local campaigns occurs evenly in all geographic areas and in all parties,¹² then other factor(s) must be encouraging their involvement.

I will also explore whether or not the characteristics of the local associations were associated with different levels of interest group involvement. Finally, I will examine the issues that motivated interest groups to become involved in riding association campaigns, searching for significant associations and trends.

Whatever relationship are found between these four areas and interest group campaign involvement will provide the first national profile of the interaction between interest groups and the local associations of Canadian political parties. At the present time, no comparisons can be made but future studies of the constituency based activities of interest groups might use this analysis as a point of reference to indicate how local interest group activity has changed since 1988.

¹¹Courtney and Perlin claimed that, "...no set of cleavages has been more central to the political life of Canada than those related to the country's regional diversity" (Courtney and Perlin *in* Perlin 1988:124).

¹²This is the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between interest group activity and geographic or political party characteristics.

Chapter Three: Calling the Government to Account

Political parties are the central actors when the electorate is required to choose who will govern the nation, making the necessary public decisions on behalf of all citizens. Because of this, the attentions of those interested in the political process are focused on the political parties during an election. In the context of the present study, the central question concerning the partisan affiliation of local associations is whether or not interest groups focus their attention equally on all parties.

One reason interest groups attempt to influence the political parties during an election is that they view an election as an appropriate method for challenging the current government and putting their issue onto the public agenda. They believe that their issue is important, and inadequately or inappropriately addressed by the current government to that point in time. The intense media coverage of an election campaign, and the heightened interest of the electorate in public policy, provides an opportunity for interest groups to gain a greater audience for their policy concerns.

Incumbents and other candidates associated with the governing party are attractive targets for local campaign involvement because they are in the position of having to defend the government's prior action or inaction on an issue. For example, Every Voice Counts, "a women's guide to personal and political action" prepared by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, suggests a number of strategies for local women's groups to use in influencing public policy. Under the heading of "election time tactics," the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Kome 1989:44) advised local groups not to, "...let an election go by without raising women's issues during the campaign...This is the

time that people who have power or who want power are most accessible." The first action suggested is that local groups target the incumbent on the basis of an inadequate track record on the group's central issue, followed by increasing the awareness of all candidates on the issue.

If interest groups perceive an election as an occasion for easier access to government Members of Parliament, I expect that in local campaigns, interest groups would be more likely to be involved in Progressive Conservative party campaigns. As a corollary, I expect that interest groups should then seek an audience with the other candidates, based on their willingness to join the interest group in challenging the candidate associated with the government's previous record. The other two major parties, the Liberals and the NDP would be logical choices because of their relative electoral strength compared to the minor parties. I expect that interest group campaign activity would be lower for the minor parties because of their more limited electoral support, and therefore limited capacity to mount a serious challenge to either an incumbent or candidate associated with the governing party.

A second reason for interest group involvement in local campaigns is that some interest groups have pre-existing alliances with some parties over others. The labour movement, for example, is believed to be a "natural" ally of the New Democratic Party. While Archer (1990) argued that the official link between the NDP and trade union locals is weaker and of less significance than is popularly believed, it could be that labour interest groups are more likely to be involved in local NDP campaigns, presumably supporting the local candidate. The Progressive Conservative associations might also experience labour interest group campaign involvement but opposing their candidates. The centrality of the

issue of free trade with the United States in the 1988 election campaign, where labour groups were clearly opposed to the position taken by the Conservatives (Campbell and Pal 1991), also suggests that they might actively oppose Conservative candidates and support NDP candidates.

The CPA data does show a significant association between the political party affiliation of a constituency association and whether or not interest group activity was reported during the association election campaign ($V = .22$ and $p < .01$).¹³ The five parties surveyed showed as much as thirty-eight percentage points variation (Figure 3.1).

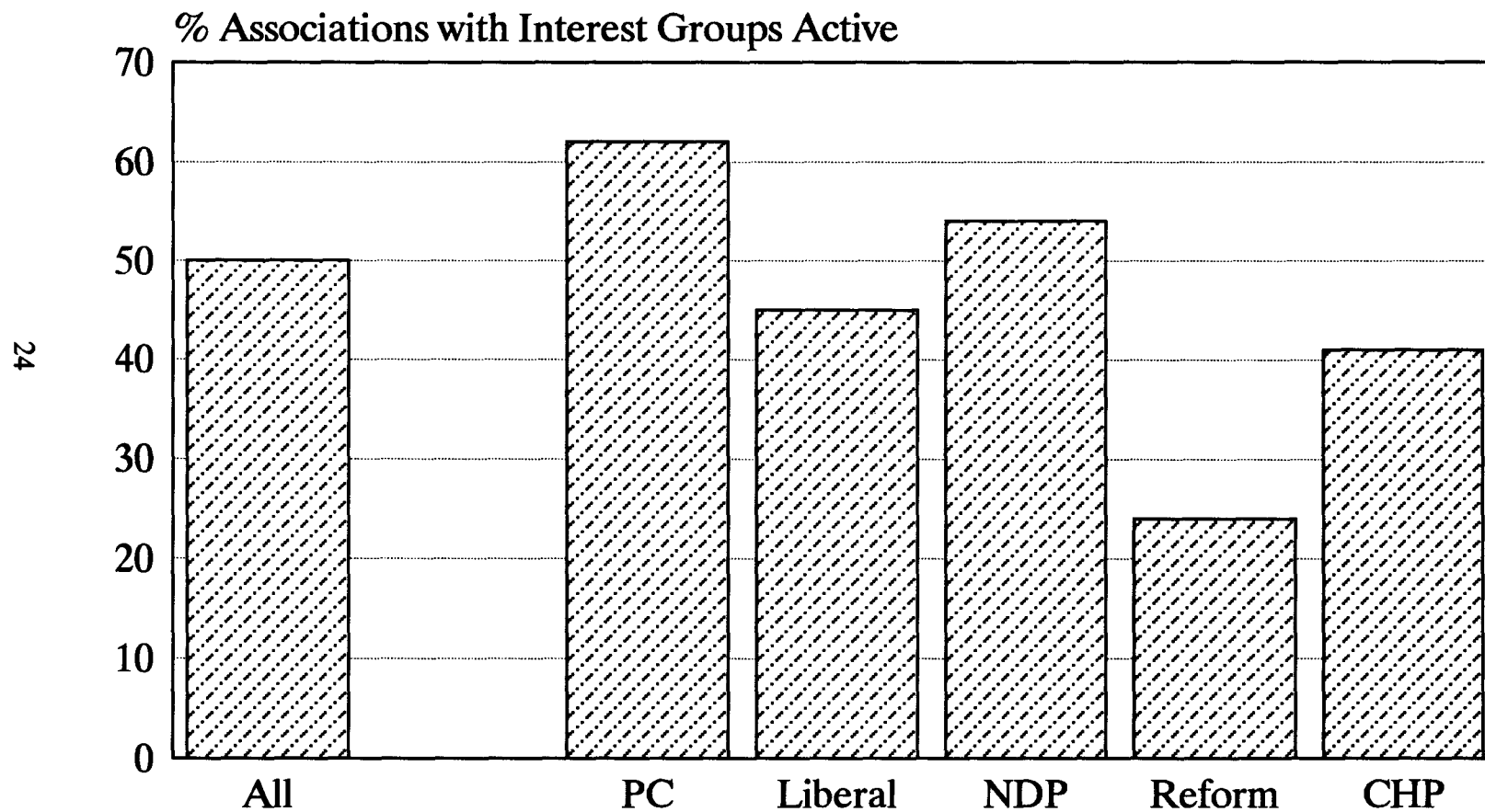
The Progressive Conservative associations reported the highest level of interest group campaign involvement, with sixty-two percent of Conservative associations reporting such activity. This result provides some evidence for the first expectation, that interest groups would be more likely to involve themselves in the local campaigns of candidates affiliated with the most recent government, using the election as an opportunity to challenge the government's record.

On a regional basis, the Progressive Conservative associations in Atlantic Canada had the highest level of interest groups involvement in their campaigns, greater than any other region (77%) (Figure 3.2). Conservative associations in Western Canada also had a high level of interest group campaign involvement (70%). Progressive Conservative associations in Ontario reported an incidence of interest group activity similar to the overall level for the

¹³Cramer's V, a chi-based measure, measures the strength of association between nominal variables. It varies between 0 and 1 where 0 indicates no association and 1 indicates complete or perfect association. To test if a result is significant, only cases where $p < .05$ or $p < .01$ will be reported and described as significant. Generally, an association of .00 to .19 will be considered weak, .20 to .29 will be considered moderate, .30 and greater will be considered strong.

Figure 3.1

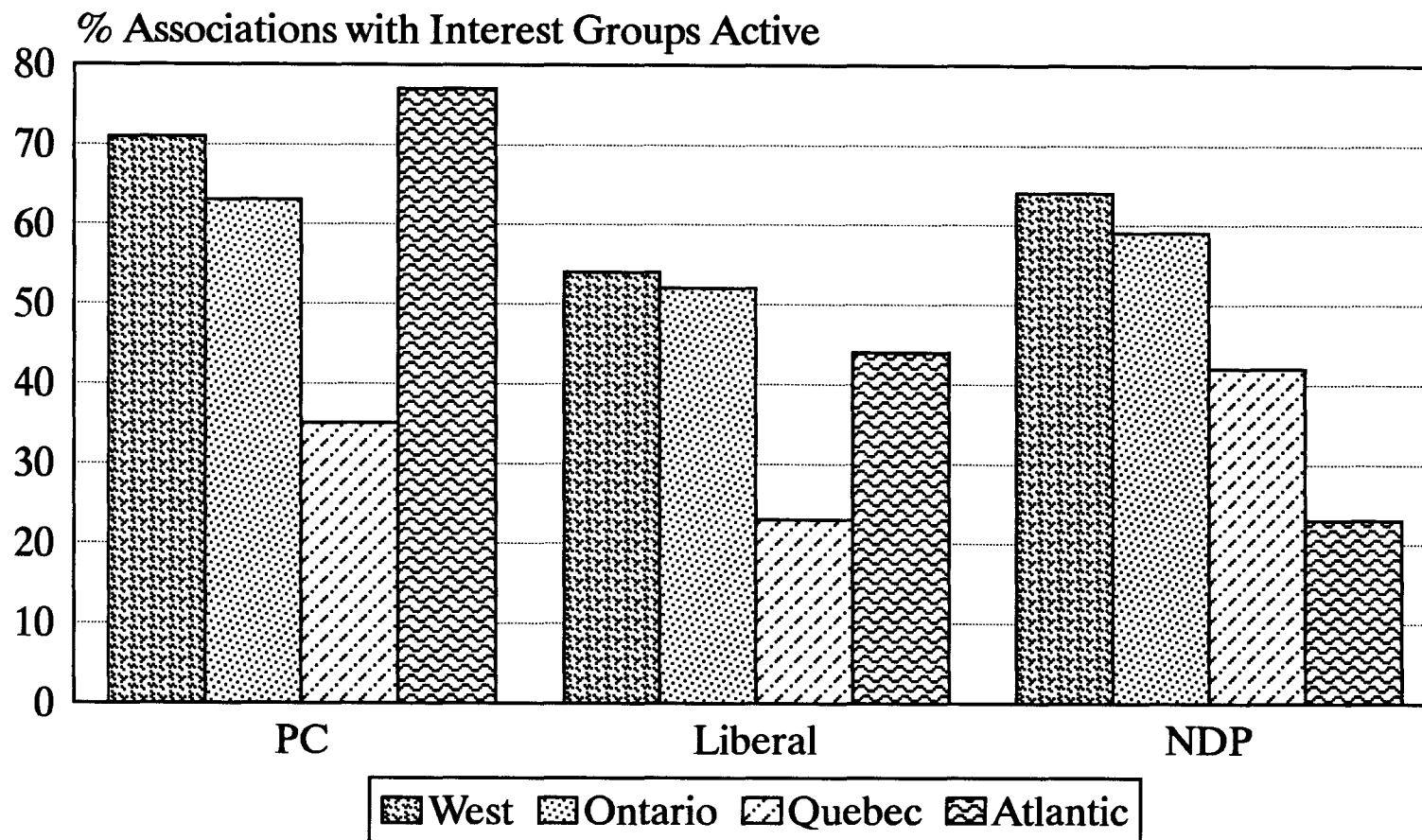
Interest Group Activity by Party



(Cramer's V=.22 and $p < .01$)

Figure 3.2

Interest Group Activity by Party and Region



party (63%). Quebec was much lower than any other region, with only thirty-five percent of the Progressive Conservative constituency associations experiencing single-issue interest group involvement which reflects a pattern very similar to the overall regional trend of interest group involvement.¹⁴

The Liberal constituency associations reported an overall level of interest group activity of forty-five percent, slightly lower than for all parties. On a regional basis, involvement in local Liberal campaigns remained fairly close to the overall Liberal level except in Quebec, where significantly fewer constituency associations (23%) reported interest group activity.

The NDP reported the second highest level of interest group activity in its local campaigns. Fifty-four percent of the responding NDP constituency associations had single-issue interest groups active. On a regional basis, the NDP displayed a statistically significant east-west trend in interest group involvement, where it was increasingly more likely for interest groups to be involved in local NDP campaigns, progressing westward from Atlantic to Western Canada ($\tau\text{-}c = -.26$ and $T = -2.72$).¹⁵ This pattern parallels the strength of the NDP in the different regions of Canada. Historically, the party has been much more successful in Ontario and in Western Canada than Quebec or Atlantic Canada.

¹⁴A more in-depth discussion of the geographic basis for interest group involvement is found in the next chapter.

¹⁵ $\tau\text{-}c$ will be used to capture not only the strength of the association but also the direction. Kendall's τ varies between -1 and +1 where an absolute value of .00 to .19 was considered weak, .20 to .30 was considered moderate and values greater than .30 was considered strong. Usually party and region will be analyzed as nominal variables unless some reasonable ranking such as an east-west or left-right scale can be justified.

Unlike the Conservatives and Liberals, NDP associations in Atlantic Canada were not likely to have interest groups active in their local campaigns. This result provides further support for the notion that interest groups choose to influence the campaigns of candidates associated with the government and perhaps the opposition but parties with little electoral support, such as the NDP in Atlantic Canada, are less likely to receive interest group attention.

The second reason for interest group partisanship, that certain interest groups have natural connections to some parties, (and in particular the question of a labour-NDP relationship) is a more complicated issue. In a cross-tabulation of political party affiliation, region, and labour interest group activity, most of the labour group activity was reported by non-NDP associations. In accordance with the suggestion that interest groups challenge candidates associated with the most recent government, fifty-five percent of all labour interest group activity occurred in Progressive Conservative campaigns. The remaining labour group activity was equally split between the Liberal and NDP local campaigns. This further suggests that labour groups act in a manner similar to other interest groups by choosing government candidates first, and then focusing remaining resources on opposition party candidates. No labour groups were reported to have been involved in either Reform or CHP riding campaigns.

A regional analysis supports this conclusion. Among the regions, labour interest group activity was evenly distributed, but there was a strong partisan element. In Atlantic Canada, labour interest group involvement was almost exclusively associated with Progressive Conservative campaigns (80%) and none was reported in NDP riding

associations, again supporting the "governmental challenge" theory of interest group involvement. In Quebec labour groups were reported in all three major parties with the NDP the most likely party for labour interest group activity. In Ontario, Progressive Conservative riding associations were again the target of most of the labour interest group activity (67%). New Democratic campaigns in Ontario received only seventeen percent of the labour interest group campaign activity in Ontario. In Western Canada, labour interest groups were less likely in NDP campaigns than in the Liberal or Conservative riding association campaigns. This focused analysis of the labour-NDP relationship provides no direct evidence that labour groups are more likely to support NDP candidates in local campaigns but contributes empirical evidence for the "governmental challenge" idea.

An alternate explanation of the low level of labour interest group campaign involvement reported in NDP constituency campaigns is that NDP associations do not perceive labour groups as "single-issue interest groups." It could be that NDP associations view labour groups as providing a broad and multi-faceted critique of the Canadian economy and society. As result, they would not classify labour groups as "single-issue" interest groups. In a similar way, the involvement of labour group members in NDP associations might be so integrated with regular association activity that they are not viewed as external to the association or promoting or opposing an external policy agenda.

While a direct measure of incumbency was not available, interest group activity was no more likely in the riding campaigns of winning or losing candidates.¹⁶ While the

¹⁶For the Progressive Conservative riding associations $V=.15$ and $p>.05$, for the Liberal riding associations $V=.06$ and $p>.05$, and for the NDP associations $V=.08$ and $p>.05$. No statistics are available for either the Reform or CHP riding associations because none of their candidates won their local contest.

different parties experienced different levels of interest group activity, individual candidates within each party were not supported or opposed at significantly different levels. This result also supports the government challenge idea where interest group involvement is more likely in the campaigns of candidates affiliated with the governing party.

The CHP had fewer interest groups either promoting or opposing its candidates (41%) than the three major parties, as did the Reform Party constituency associations, which reported that only twenty-four percent (24%) of their local associations had interest groups active in their 1988 federal election campaigns. The Reform Party, which did not run any candidates in Quebec, had a rate of interest group involvement even lower than Quebec's (24%). Because there was no Quebec component to this low result, it is in a sense "doubly" low.

Neither the CHP or the Reform Party ran a full slate of two hundred ninety-five candidates and so a regional analysis is not revealing. The CHP candidates were scattered across all the regions, excluding Quebec, with an equal level of interest group activity in all regions. The Reform candidates ran exclusively in Western Canada. The generally lower level of interest group campaign involvement in both the CHP and Reform Party is consistent with the notion that interest groups are more likely to choose local campaigns that are affiliated with the most recent government, and less likely to choose the local campaigns of parties that are electorally marginal.

In summary, the involvement of interest groups in constituency campaigns was significantly related to the political party affiliation of the local association. The Progressive Conservatives consistently had a higher level of interest groups involvement in their local

campaigns, even across regions, which supports the idea that interest groups might be involved in local campaign contests to call the government, or its representative candidates, to account for their actions during the last term. The idea of an NDP-labour link is not supported by the CPA data because no evidence was found to suggest that labour interest groups are more likely to be active in NDP riding campaigns, however, this may be partially a result of the wording of the survey question and the type of relationship the NDP has with labour groups. The two minor parties, particularly the Reform Party, experienced much less interest group involvement in their local campaigns in the 1988 federal election than did the major parties.

Chapter Four: Geographic Variation

The physical, social and political geography of Canada are factors that must be taken into account by any interest group that is attempting to make a national impact via electoral politics because the current system of representation in Canada is based on geographic constituencies. One of the most enduring problems for political parties has been the challenge of electing a federal government which reflects a national mandate or national consensus. Confederation itself can be viewed not as a move toward unity but as a system of compensation for existing regional diversity (Muir 1975). When interest groups become involved in electoral contests they also encounter many of the same challenges in organizing across diverse economies, cultures, religions, languages and levels of urbanization, factors with which Canadian political parties have always struggled (Thorburn 1985, Curtis and Tepperman 1988).

It may be that interest group involvement in local constituency campaigns also reflects some of the same geographic variables that have defined so much of Canadian politics. Pross argued that interest groups are organized and activated on a basis other than geography and constructed much of his analysis of interest groups on the distinction between spatial and sectoral interests (Pross 1992). Spatial interests are geographically based interests such as the relative importance of a natural resource to a local economy. Sectoral interests which are generally related to economic variables, are not necessarily the same as spatial interests. For example, all of the grocery store owners across Canada, regardless of location, have a sectoral interest in legislation that affects retailers regardless of their geographic location.

Thorburn (1985) also raised the question of the incompatibility of territorial and sectoral interests, however, he believed that geographic variables, such as provincial boundaries, have had a significant impact on interest groups. Pross (1992, 1986) held a contrary position and argued that geographic variables, while historically important, have been superseded by sectoral variables. Pross argued that the rise of interest groups is a reflection of the public realization that the most efficacious way to influence public policy is not through geographic representatives, such as Members of Parliament, but through interest groups organized along sectoral lines.

The CPA data set includes a number of geographic variables such as province, constituency, and level of urbanization and, therefore, it is possible to explore whether or not interest group local campaign involvement is related to, or independent of, these geographic variables. Because there is no clear consensus in the interest group literature regarding the role of geographic factors on interest groups, the results of this analysis provide some direction to the understanding of the geographic dimension of interest group involvement in constituency electoral politics.

Province and Region

Thorburn (1985) centred his analysis of interest groups on the dynamics of government-interest group relations in a federal state. Throughout his study, Thorburn focused on the tension between national and provincial jurisdictions in Canada and how this influences interest groups. He believed that the structure and function of interest groups are shaped by the federal nature of the Canadian system. The expectation for province and region, according to Thorburn, would be little variation between provinces because all

interest groups are subject to the same conditions and limitations of federalism and any variation would be explained as due to differences in provincial political culture. For example, Thorburn (1985) suggests that Atlantic Canada should have a low rate of interest group involvement because of the strength of political patronage in the region and the ability of the two traditional parties to include most interests.¹⁷

As mentioned in Chapter One, the rate of interest group campaign activity for all constituency associations was fifty percent. There was a similar level of single-issue interest group involvement in most of the provinces and territories except Quebec (Table 4.1).¹⁸ Considering each province individually, Newfoundland was exactly on the average, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were slightly lower, and Prince Edward Island was slightly higher. Each of the Atlantic provinces had less than twenty cases and because the provincial results were so similar, these four provinces were grouped together as the "Atlantic" region. As a region, the Atlantic provinces reported that forty-nine percent of the local constituency associations had interest groups involved in their campaigns.

¹⁷Thorburn is also concerned with the systemic imperatives that federalism places on interest groups which he believes that unduly impede smaller, recently formed or less wealthy interest groups. He argued that, "...by imposing one form of collective action (based on territory) upon another (based on functional, pluralist competition), federalism increases the external and internal tensions that would be much less for interest groups in a unitary system" (Thorburn 1985:56). In addition, "...since groups must be prepared to respond to either level of government, they must maintain well-staffed offices at two levels or risk losing influence" (Thorburn 1985:58). While posing organizational barriers to interest groups, Thorburn does not suggest that federalism is not a good system for Canada, rather he views it as the necessary price of union.

¹⁸There is an unavoidable dilemma in isolating groups of respondents based on province because of the widely uneven sizes of the populations designated as provinces and territories. Separating Prince Edward Island and the two northern territories into discrete groups does not provide an adequate number of cases for statistical analysis. Much of the present study relies on statistical indicators and when so few cases exist, even with a high response rate, the conventional tests are not reliable.

Table 4.1
Interest Group Electoral Involvement by Province and Region

Percent of Constituency Associations Reporting Interest Group Campaign Activity	
All	50%
Atlantic Canada	49
Newfoundland	50
Nova Scotia	47
Prince Edward Island	57
New Brunswick	46
Quebec	33
Ontario	57
Western Canada	51
Manitoba	41
Saskatchewan	54
Alberta	54
British Columbia	53
Yukon/Northwest Territories	50

(Cramer's $V = .16$ and $p < .01$)

Quebec was the one province that differed significantly from the other regions in the rate of interest group involvement. Quebec constituency associations reported interest group activity of only thirty-three percent, which was seventeen percentage points lower than the national rate.

Ontario was not dramatically different from the national results and over half (57%) of its constituency associations reported interest groups actively supporting or opposing local candidates. I grouped the four western provinces and the two territories together as the "Western Canadian" region because the overall level of interest group involvement was very similar between these provinces. Manitoba reported a result nine percent lower than the national rate at forty-one percent but Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories had rates of interest group involvement within four percentage points of each other.

Regional differences in the occurrence of interest group involvement in constituency campaigns clearly did exist in the 1988 federal election. Quebec stands out from all of the other provinces and regions because it had a significantly lower level of interest group involvement ($V = .16$ and $p < .01$).

A number of explanations in the interest group literature suggest why Quebec's rate of interest group electoral involvement would be lower than that in the other regions. The most frequently cited explanation is that the Quebec electorate has a fundamentally dissimilar and negative view of interest groups (Tanguay and Kay 1991, Boivin 1984). The 1977 Quebec election finance law, *La Loi sur le financement de partis politiques*, is viewed as the provincial expression of this disapproving attitude. Boivin (1984), for example, pointed to

this legislation as an indication of Quebec's distinctiveness in its view of lobbying and interest group activity in general. The legislation allows only individual electors to make donations to political parties or election candidates and excludes groups of any kind. Tanguay and Kay described Quebec's attitude as a, "...suspicion that any form of third-party spending is vaguely illicit" (Tanguay and Kay 1991:97), and a fear of even the possibility of corruption and influence peddling. In their study of interest group activity in the 1988 federal election, which included a survey of the interest groups, Tanguay and Kay found that, "...groups in Quebec were overwhelmingly opposed to third-party spending during elections, with almost 90 percent supporting a ban on this activity" (Tanguay and Kay 1991:96). These suggestions point to a unique provincial attitude toward election financing which may have a "spill-over" effect, causing a lower rate of interest group campaign involvement in the federal election context.

Another explanation of the significantly lower level of interest group involvement in Quebec relates to the specific issues that interest groups were promoting or opposing in the 1988 federal election. Most of the interest group activity in the other regions of Canada was motivated by two issues, abortion and free trade with the United States. Quebec is dramatically different from the other regions because abortion groups were insignificant in Quebec local contests. The Quebec electors' views on abortion¹⁹ are different from the other regions because support for abortion on demand is higher in Quebec, but so is support for a complete ban on abortions under any circumstances. Of the Canadian regions, Quebec

¹⁹A more thorough discussion of the issues that motivated interest groups to become involved in local electoral contests is in a later section of this study.

had the most polarized views on the issue and the lowest proportion of respondents choosing the middle category of abortion under certain circumstances (Jenish 1989:16).

Because Quebec is the only region that had a notably different level of interest group activity in constituency campaigns, the question of language must also be addressed. At issue is whether or not the level of interest group activity reported in Bilingual Quebec ridings (generally those with an important anglophone component) was different from that in the French ridings.²⁰ If interest group activity in constituency campaigns was related to language, the Bilingual Quebec ridings²¹ would be expected to have a higher level of interest group involvement than the French ridings because all of the other provinces and regions which are primarily anglophone, had a higher rate of interest group involvement. The data shows that there was no significant difference in the reporting of interest group campaign involvement associated with language. The Bilingual ridings reported a rate three percent lower and the French ridings reported four percent higher than the rate for all of Quebec ($V=.08$ and $p>.05$).

A similar result was found when considering the language of the survey the respondent chose to return. If Quebec's lower level of interest group activity was related to language and the anglophones in Quebec more closely resembled their anglophone counterparts in the rest of Canada than did the francophones in Quebec, those respondents who chose to respond in English (21% of the Quebec group) would have reported a different

²⁰The Chief Electoral Officer classifies each federal constituency as either English, French or Bilingual. All of the ridings in Quebec were categorized as either French or Bilingual and all of the Bilingual ridings were in Montreal (Every constituency association in Quebec received a French and an English copy of the survey).

²¹Among the Bilingual constituencies across Canada, ninety-seven percent of all of the French responses came from Quebec (1 from New Brunswick, 1 from Ontario and 58 from Quebec).

and higher level of interest group involvement than those who responded in French. Again, the data show that this was not the case; the French and English respondents had equal proportions of interest group involvement in local constituency campaigns ($V = .02$ and $p > .05$). Quebec had a lower level of interest group activity which was unrelated to language. The factor(s) which produced the difference in Quebec affected all constituency associations regardless of language.

Region was an important geographic variable with regard to interest group campaign involvement because Quebec had a rate of such activity significantly lower than any other region. The evidence provided by the CPA data suggest that Pross' analysis of the relative unimportance of geographic variables and interest group activity be reconsidered with respect to interest group electoral participation.

Urbanization

Despite Canada's vast land area, the country's population is concentrated in a few urban areas. According to Curtis and Tepperman (1988), Canada is seventy-five percent urban and sixty percent of the total population lives within the Quebec City - Windsor corridor. The median urbanization rate for the responding constituency associations in the CPA study was quite similar to the level found by Curtis and Tepperman (72%).

Urbanization is a geographic variable to consider with regard to interest group involvement in electoral politics because rural constituency associations may have had a different experience with interest groups than urban associations. The simple reason being that the proximity of urban ridings may make the organization of electoral participation easier in urban areas.

The number of urban and rural electors in each constituency as defined by the Chief Electoral Officer was used to create a measure of the degree of urbanization which expressed urbanization as urban electors as a proportion of all electors. For example, if a riding is completely rural, none of its electors are in urban polls, and it would be described as zero percent urban.

For all cases, a higher level of urbanization was related to interest group activity in local campaigns but the association was not significant ($\tau\text{-}c = -.08$ and $T = -1.67$). This was true for all of the regions and all of the political parties. While an acceptable significance level was not obtained, this relationship was stronger in Atlantic Canada where constituency associations with a higher level of urbanization also were more likely to report interest group activity ($\tau\text{-}c = -.19$ and $T = -1.51$). Western Canada also had a similar association between higher levels of urbanization and interest group election involvement ($\tau\text{-}c = -.14$ and $T = -1.84$).²² There was no difference in interest group campaign involvement associated with the level of urbanization in Ontario or Quebec.

Although the direction of the relationship for all parties was in the expected direction, the association between level of urbanization and interest group campaign involvement was not significantly associated with the different political parties. The Progressive Conservative, New Democrat, Reform and CHP associations had little difference in the occurrence of interest group campaign activity that was related to level of

²²While the significance level was insufficient for either the Atlantic or Western regions alone, when the two regions are combined, the association between level of urbanization and interest group campaign involvement is significant and of approximately the same strength which seems to indicate that the significance level was insufficient due to a the small number of cases ($\tau\text{-}c = -.15$ and $T = -2.24$).

urbanization. The Liberals, however, had interest group activity associated with more urban ridings but, again, the significance level was insufficient ($\tau\text{-c} = -.11$ and $T = -1.22$).

In summary, interest group campaign activity was not clearly associated with a higher level of urbanization. While the results indicated a tendency toward more interest group involvement in urban constituencies, the relationship was not strong or significant. The expected direction was found but a higher level of urbanization was not unambiguously associated more interest group campaign involvement.

Chapter Five: Constituency Association Characteristics

Carty's (1991) volume for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing explored the range of variation among constituency associations on a number of attributes. He found that the membership size, the type of organization, and the financial resources of constituency associations varied greatly. However, the basis upon which interest groups target specific of ridings when they choose to become involved in electoral contests is largely an unknown in electoral politics.

An important contribution of the present study to the understanding of interest group election activity centres on the question of whether or not any of the characteristics of local associations themselves are identified with interest group campaign involvement. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between local associations' characteristics and the involvement of interest groups, or that each interest group's decision to be involved in a local campaign is based on factors other than the characteristics of the association. The constituency association characteristics which were considered to be potentially associated with different levels of interest group involvement across all parties and regions included association competitiveness, campaign type, and financial indicators.

Local Competitiveness

The competitiveness of one association in relation to the others in a riding is a plausible association characteristic that might disproportionately attract interest groups. One reason for interest group campaign involvement might be to influence the outcome of the electoral contest. In this case, interest groups might employ a strategy of supporting the candidate with the best chance of winning, hoping that when issues related to the interest

group's area(s) of interest are on the political agenda, the local representative will be mindful of the interest group's role in their election. In a very competitive riding, where the support of an interest group alters the vote distribution enough to change the order of the first and second place candidates, interest group involvement could be very significant.²³ This approach assumes that interest groups perceive the outcome of an election as its central purpose in campaign involvement. In addition, an interest group would have to identify which associations were competitive to ensure that they maximized their impact by concentrating their support or opposition in constituencies that would make a difference to the electoral outcome. If interest groups meet these two conditions (seeking to influence the outcome of a local contest identified as very competitive), then it would be expected that their involvement would be disproportionately found in the most competitive contests.

To explore this question, I created a variable which orders respondents according to the margin between the winning candidate and the responding association's candidate. The difference between these two proportions of the total vote was used as an indication of the competitiveness of the local contest for the respondent's association in 1988. In the case of respondents from winning constituency associations, the second place candidate's proportion of the vote was subtracted from the winner's to give the competitiveness margin. A low result reflected a small difference or a close race and, therefore, a more competitive riding (see Appendix 2 for the derivation of the variable "margin2").

²³ Another interesting but instable strategy would be for an interest group to oppose a front-running candidate in a close race by bolstering a third place or worse campaign, drawing away enough support from one candidate to ensure the election of the other less offensive candidate.

Respondents were then divided into the following four categories: "very high" competition (10 percentage points difference or less), "high" competition (between 11 and 25 percentage points difference), "moderate" competition (between 26 and 40 percentage points difference), and "low" competition (over 40 percentage points difference between the winner and the respondent's candidate). These categories were chosen so that approximately one quarter of the respondents would be in each category.²⁴ The data reveals that there was an association between the competitiveness of the local association and the occurrence of interest group campaign activity. A higher level of interest group campaign activity was associated with more competitive contests (Table 5.1).

Earlier in this chapter, the geographic variables of province and region were discussed in the context of interest group campaign activity. The Atlantic provinces were grouped together and the Western provinces and territories were grouped together. With respect to competitiveness, a regional analysis was less appropriate because there was a significant provincial variation within the regions. For example, unlike other Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia had over half of its responding constituencies (53%) in the most competitive category of ten or fewer percentage points difference between the winner and the respondent. In Western Canada, Alberta stood out from the other western provinces and territories because very few of its local contests were determined to be "highly" or "very highly" competitive. In fact, only nine percent of the local contests had the winner and respondent within ten percentage points of each other. The other provinces in the Western Canadian region were

²⁴I tested the competitiveness level of the group of constituency associations that responded to the CPA survey to ensure that it was similar to the whole population of constituency associations. Each of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth place margins of competitiveness were checked and an almost identical distribution resulted in each case.

Table 5.1
Constituency Competitiveness and Interest Group Activity
(horizontal percent)

Percentage Points Difference between Winner and Respondent	Interest Groups active in local campaign	No Interest Group campaign activity reported
10 or less	32	22
11 to 25	26	26
26 to 40	28	29
Over 41	15	24

(tau-c=.15 and T=3.11)

much more evenly distributed among the levels of competitiveness. There was no consistent direction to the provincial variations ($\tau\text{-}c=.02$ and $T=.62$), but if each province was considered an unordered nominal variable, there was a significant relationship between the provinces and the competitiveness of their constituency associations ($V=.24$ and $p<.01$).

There were differences among the five parties considered in the CPA study in their interest group campaign involvement. Recall that the Conservative and the New Democratic associations had a higher level of interest group involvement, followed by the Liberals, CHP and the Reform Party. In the competitive environment of an election, the parties were, of course, unequally distributed among the different categories of competitiveness. The question for this study is whether or not interest group activity occurred evenly across these different levels of competitiveness. Among Conservative and Liberal campaigns, interest group activity occurred at equal rates among all campaigns whether or not they were "very highly" competition or "low" competition (Conservative riding associations: $\tau\text{-}c=.07$ and $T=.78$; Liberal riding associations: $\tau\text{-}c=.04$ and $T=.42$). In NDP riding associations, on the other hand, interest groups were concentrated in the most competitive campaigns but the relationship was not significant ($\tau\text{-}c=.16$ and $T=1.63$).

Neither the Reform Party nor the CHP had riding associations that were in the most competitive category of less than ten percentage points from the winner. The CHP had all of its respondents in the two lowest categories so it was not meaningful to make any comparisons between the competitiveness of these two parties and interest group involvement.

A less precise measure of local association competitiveness involves considering winning and losing candidates as distinct groups. Because of the number of candidates contesting most of the seats in the 1988 federal election, a majority of the candidates lost. The election results from all constituencies in conjunction with the CPA study data revealed that seventy-three percent of respondents were from constituency associations where the candidate had lost, and twenty-seven percent were from constituency associations where the candidate won, a result very similar to the entire population of election candidates. Interest groups promoting or opposing an issue in local campaigns were not associated with either winners or losers ($V=.06$ and $p>.05$).

In conclusion, there was a positive association between interest group campaign involvement and more competitive local campaigns. The CPA data set does provide evidence to support the theory that interest groups are concerned with the outcome of electoral contests and do seek the more competitive ridings where their influence on the outcome would be maximized. The relationship is weak, however, which may be attributed to the difficulty in the task of predicting which local contests will be the most competitive. In addition, it is likely that the competitiveness of the riding is only one of many factors considered by interest groups when they make the decision to become involved in electoral politics.

Campaign Type

The CPA study provides a basic point of comparison for the different types of campaigns that local riding associations staged in the 1988 federal election. Because all local associations have many of the same tasks to perform during an election, the similarities

among all association campaigns are strong regardless of party or region. Campaign characteristics warrant consideration with regard to interest group involvement because it is at this time in the electoral cycle that the constituency associations are reporting interest group activity. The CPA study provides a measure of the involvement of single-issue interest groups at this particular time, during an election campaign. Therefore, the variables that distinguish campaign types may provide clues to the rationale for interest group involvement.

Carty (1991) found campaign patterns related to the timing of the campaign team's establishment, the control of the campaign, the campaign manager's appointment, and whether or not the campaign manager was a local party member. The differences he found were associated with the party affiliation of the constituency association and were incorporated into his cadre/mass party thesis. He suggested that while many of the responsibilities are similar across all local associations, the Liberals and Conservatives stage a different style of campaign which he described as candidate-centred. The NDP, on the other hand, is viewed as having a more bureaucratic campaign style where the ongoing organization of the party plays a larger role in many aspects of the electoral cycle, particularly election campaigns.

It could be argued that an interest group's choice to become involved in a particular local contests was in part based on the type of campaign that the local riding association staged. In such a case, it would be expected that a candidate-centred campaign would facilitate interest group influence because a more autonomous candidate would be more able to accommodate or incorporate the policy demands of a local interest group during an

election. This reasoning suggests that interest groups would be found disproportionately in the candidate-centred campaigns. The more bureaucratic campaigns would have less policy flexibility and less autonomy to respond to interest group challenges based on policy issues. If interest group campaign activities were not welcomed by the riding association, the more bureaucratic campaign would be more difficult for interest groups to penetrate and less likely to give policy concessions.

Respondents were asked who had control of the direction of the election campaign, whether the riding association executive maintained control, the control was delegated to the campaign team, or a balance was sought between the two groups. Very few associations (8%) left complete control of the campaign with the association executive and many associations indicated that a balance of control was the best description of the campaign's organization (40%). About half of the riding associations (52%) completely delegated the direction of the local campaign to the election campaign team. Complete delegation of campaign control would indicate a more candidate-centred campaign and the retention of control by the local executive would indicate a less candidate-centred campaign, therefore, it would be expected that interest groups would be more likely to be active in the campaigns where control was delegated to the campaign team and less likely where the executive retained control.

The CPA data did show that there was a relationship between interest group campaign involvement and campaign control (see Table 5.2). Where control of the campaign was delegated completely to the campaign team, interest groups were more likely to be involved in the campaign. Interest groups were slightly less likely when a balance of control between

Table 5.2
Campaign Control and Interest Group Activity
(horizontal percent)

	Interest Group Activity	No Interest Group Activity
Campaign Team in complete control	57	47
Balance	38	43
Association Executive retains control	5	11

(V=.13 and $p < .05$)

the campaign team and the association executive was pursued. In the most bureaucratic campaigns, where control of the campaign was retained by the association executive, interest group activity was less likely.

Carty (1991) found that Quebec had more associations that maintained executive control of the local campaign (15%), almost twice the proportion of the total sample (8%). In keeping with the expectation that interest groups would be less likely to be involved in these types of campaigns, ninety percent of these more bureaucratic associations did not report interest group involvement. The scenarios of complete campaign team control delegation showed the same pattern as the other regions of more interest group campaign involvement in candidate-centred campaigns ($V=.22$ and $p=.17$). Of all of the parties, only the Conservative associations had a significant relationship between campaign control and interest group involvement which showed a similar but more intense pattern as the overall results ($V=.22$ and $p<.05$).

Some associations organized the local campaign teams before the association has nominated a candidate while others waited until the candidate was chosen before launching the election organization. Carty (1991) found that in keeping with the cadre/mass party analysis, the Liberals and Conservatives were more likely to wait to establish their campaign teams, presumably to allow candidates more autonomy in choosing the campaign team members. Whereas the NDP associations, viewed as having many mass party characteristics, were more likely to establish their campaign teams prior to the nomination of the local candidate because of the stronger internal organizational dynamics which characterize the bureaucratic style and which mute the autonomy of individual candidates. It would be more

likely for interest groups to be involved in candidate-centred campaigns which allow individual candidates to consider their cause.

The data, however, do not show any association between interest group campaign activity and the timing of the campaign team organization. Interest groups were equally likely to be active in campaigns where the campaign team was set up before or after the nomination of the candidate ($V=.01$ and $p>.05$).²⁵

Another indicator that Carty found to support the cadre/mass party idea concerned the appointment of the campaign manager. The candidate-centred campaigns of the cadre parties were more likely to have the candidate appoint the campaign manager which Carty interpreted as a reflection of the autonomy of the candidate. With regard to interest groups, however, there was no relationship between interest group involvement and whether the candidate, constituency association executive or any other group made the campaign manager's appointment ($V=.10$ and $p>.05$). The most probable explanation for this outcome is that the campaign manager's appointment reflects an internal association decision which would not be generally known or viewed as significant by interest groups.

Carty suggests that non-local campaign managers are brought in to manage constituency campaigns when the local race is very close and the expertise of a professional campaign manager may make the difference between winning and losing, or when the association is so desperate for help that there are no local party members willing to accept

²⁵There was no relationship between having a paid campaign manager in the 1988 federal election ($V=.07$ and $p>.05$). This did not change for party or region. Carty found that NDP had more paid managers but this was not related to interest group involvement ($V=.01$ and $p>.05$). The number of paid staff was also not a factor.

the job. For all respondents, there was no relationship between interest group involvement and whether or not the campaign manager was a local party member.²⁶ To ensure that the two scenarios for bringing in a non-local campaign managers were not cancelling each other, I controlled for winners and losers. Interest group involvement was not at all related to whether the campaign manager was a local party member in losing associations ($V = .00$ and $p > .05$). Although the significance level was inadequate, winning campaigns with non-local campaign managers were more likely than other winning campaigns to have interest group campaign involvement ($V = .13$ and $p = .13$).

Of the factors which Carty found to be important in distinguishing one type of campaign from another, only campaign control seemed to be significantly related to interest group involvement. Alone this result provides only minimal support for the idea that the campaign type was an important consideration for interest groups in their decision to become involved in local constituency campaigns.

Financial Indicators

The CPA data set indicated a clear disparity in financial resources between Canadian political parties. For example, the Reform Party and the CHP constituency associations did not have the same level of resources available to them in the 1988 election campaigns as the three older parties did. In addition, regional variation in financial resources within parties was also apparent, particularly in the NDP.

²⁶In the Progressive Conservative riding associations, interest groups were more likely to be involved in the campaigns run by local members than those run by outsiders ($V = .17$ and $p < .05$). None of the other parties had any significant association. Ontario had a weak association between interest group involvement and local campaign managers where interest group activity was also more likely if the local campaign was run by a local party member ($V = .16$ and $p < .05$). No other regions had any significant association.

With regard to interest group campaign involvement in the 1988 federal election, an interesting question is whether or not interest groups were disproportionately involved in wealthy local campaigns. One could hypothesize that interest groups contribute to the wealth of a local campaign by providing a significant portion of election financing, as in American elections. Campaign funding might be viewed by interest groups as an important avenue of influence. In such a case, I expect that there would be a positive association between adequate, or even surplus, campaign funds and interest group local campaign involvement, and a negative relationship with campaign deficits.

Constituency association presidents were asked in the CPA study whether or not their association had a campaign surplus in the 1988 federal election. The expected relationship was found: there was a positive association between a campaign surplus and interest group activity in the local campaign ($\tau\text{-}b=.13$ and $T=2.78$).

Another way I tested the expected relationship was to explore the official election spending reported by each local association to the Chief Electoral Officer.²⁷ This constituency-specific information was merged with the CPA survey data to further investigate campaign financing in relation to interest group involvement.

In order to make a comparison between the riding association's ability to finance its local campaign and interest group activity, I added together the two sources of funds reported to the Chief Electoral Officer, local contributions and the candidate's personal expenses. Official election expenses were then subtracted, and this new total considered the campaign

²⁷This data set included the spending limit for the constituency, the number of contributors to the local campaign, the total amount of contributions, election expenses, the percent of the limit spent, the candidate's personal expenses, and the amount of any reimbursed election expenses.

surplus. While this assessment does not take into account the funds available to a local constituencies from other sources, such as fundraising prior to the campaign, it does indicate whether or not the amount of money raised during the campaign from contributions was adequate to cover campaign costs.

On this basis, more than one third (38%) of the respondents had a campaign deficit. Fifty-three percent of this deficit group reported interest group involvement which was very similar to the overall rate of fifty-one percent. The constituency associations that had a campaign surplus were further divided into two groups, those with a "modest" surplus (\$3500 or less), and those with a "large" surplus (over \$3500). The group with the "modest" campaign surplus was slightly less likely than the deficit group to have interest groups active, but this was not a significant difference. The group with a "large" campaign surplus was as likely as the deficit group to have interest groups active (54%). Based on this indicator of campaign financing, there is no evidence to suggest that interest groups are disproportionately associated with wealthy local campaigns ($\tau\text{-c} = .00$ and $T = .02$).

Instead of grouping the data into deficit and surplus contributions in relation to election expenses, the "raw" calculated campaign surplus can also be used to show a similar result. The mean campaign surplus is almost identical with or without interest group involvement (\$3397 with interest groups active, and \$3315 with no interest group activity reported). It is clear that a surplus of campaign contributions over election expenses is independent of interest group involvement. Interest group are not disproportionately choosing to involve themselves in local campaigns on the basis of campaign-generated money.

This does not provide a straightforward answer to the question of whether or not interest groups are using campaign contributions as a significant method of influencing political parties. I suggest that direct campaign funding of election candidates by interest groups is generally less likely in Canada because election spending by political parties is regulated and limited by the Canada Elections Act. While fundraising is unlimited, spending is limited and based on the number of electors in each riding. It is important to be mindful that a deficit campaign may resemble a surplus campaign if both have spent an equal amount, as a percent of the allowable limit. During a campaign, voters do not know the source of local financing (campaign contributions, pre-campaign fundraising, or loans from the national party), but it is possible for them to discern which candidates and campaigns are spending significantly more or less than others.

The amount of the allowable limit spent by a local constituency association is a good indicator of the profile of the local campaign because the constituency-specific limit is the same for all parties in the riding. While spending close to the limit does not guarantee success in the campaign, the limit does set the parameters for the local competition by providing a general spending boundary.²⁸ Spending a very small portion of the allowable limit is associated with receiving fewer votes on election day. The most competitive campaigns, where the winner and his/her opponent(s) are less than ten percentage points apart, are strongly associated with campaign spending very close to the legal limit ($\tau = .47$ and $T = 16.03$).

²⁸If all of the competitors have access to financing that equals the constituency limit, the influence of money is substantially decreased and competition is based on other factors.

Assuming that interest groups are employing a strategy of influencing the outcome of local election contests in pursuing campaign involvement, I expect that campaign spending close to the allowable limit would be disproportionately associated with interest group involvement while low levels of campaign spending would have the opposite association.

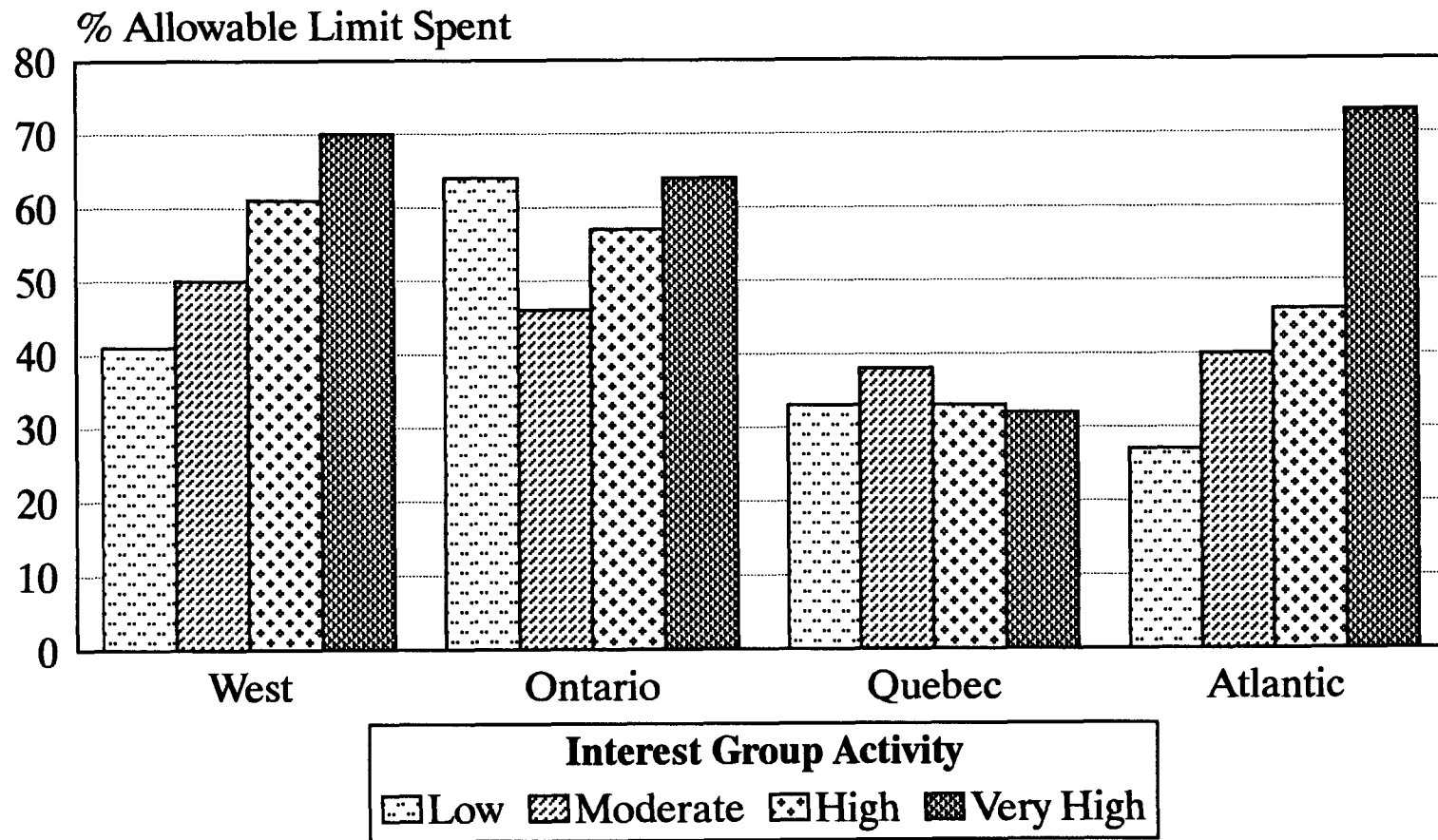
The expected association between campaign spending and interest group involvement was found: interest groups were positively associated with local campaigns where the association spent a higher percent of the allowable limit. For all associations the mean percent of limit spent was sixty-four percent. Associations which reported interest group activity spent an average of sixty-eight percent of the limit but those associations which did not report interest group activity spent only sixty percent (Correlation=.12). I collapsed the raw percentages into four classes: 40% or less of the allowable limit, 41% to 70%, 71% to 90%, and over 90% of the allowable limit. In the cross-tabulation table of the above classes and interest group campaign involvement, associations spending a smaller percent of the limit were associated with less interest group involvement, and associations spending a greater percent of the limit were associated with more interest group involvement (tau-c=-.13 and T=-2.62).

To further explore this relationship, the spending limit was tested by region, which indicated some regional association (Correlation=.18). Because spending was uneven across the regions, it was important to ensure that the relationship between the percent of the limit spent and interest group involvement could not be explained as a regional effect (Figure 5.1).

In Atlantic Canada, the relationship between the percent of the limit spent and interest group activity was much stronger than the overall relationship (tau-c=-.38 and T=-2.61).

Figure 5.1

Election Spending Limit and Interest Group Activity



Only twenty-seven percent of the local campaigns in the lowest class (40% or less of the allowable limit) had interest groups involved in their campaigns. Almost three quarters (73%) of the campaign associations that spent as much as the limit allowed (over ninety percent of the limit) reported interest group activity. In Atlantic Canada, the percent of the limit a constituency association spent was strongly associated with interest group local involvement. Riding associations which reported interest group activity in their campaigns spent, on average, seventy-six percent of the allowable limit. The average spending was almost twenty percentage points lower in constituency associations that did not report interest group activity (57%).

By contrast, there was no association between the amount of constituency association spending and interest group activity in Quebec ($\tau\text{-}c = .02$ and $T = .16$) or Ontario ($\tau\text{-}c = -.07$ and $T = -.81$). The mean percent of the spending limit for both Ontario and Quebec did not vary significantly on the basis of interest group involvement.

In Western Canada there was a positive relationship between the percent of the limit a constituency association spent and interest group campaign activity ($\tau\text{-}c = -.24$ and $T = -3.18$). The constituency associations spending forty percent or less of the allowable limit had interest groups involved in forty-one percent of their campaigns; the campaigns closest to the limit, those spending over ninety percent of the allowable limit, had interest groups involved in seventy percent of their campaigns. The mean of the ungrouped data shows a similar relationship where interest group activity and a higher percent of the allowable spending limit were positively and significantly related.

The percent of the constituency spending limit used has a strong correlation with the political party affiliation of the riding association (Correlation=.63). It is clear from the data that the spending of the parties corresponds to the number of seats that each won in the election. The Progressive Conservative associations spent an average of eighty-six percent of the constituency spending limit. Liberal and New Democratic associations had a mean of sixty-nine and fifty-six percent of the spending limit. The two newer parties spent significantly less; the Reform Party and the CHP spent an average of twenty-eight and thirty-one percent, respectively, of the constituency spending limit.

The differences between the parties are much more significant than any differences within parties related to interest group involvement in the local campaigns. There was no significant variation in any of the parties spending associated with interest group involvement.²⁹

Association Membership

One suggested understanding of interest group - political party interaction is that interest groups use political parties, and local associations in particular, as vehicles to further their policy objectives. Instead of, or in addition to, independent electoral action, an interest group could influence the local association(s) of existing parties either through regular lobbying techniques focused on the riding association, or through aggressive participation in the internal activity of the riding association. The second approach, sometimes described as infiltration or "take-over," would be manifest in greater local party membership where

²⁹For the five parties the associations were: PC associations (tau-c=-.02 and T=-.19), Liberal associations (tau-c=.02 and T=.19), NDP associations (tau-c=-.13 and T=-1.31), and Reform associations (tau-c=.08 and T=.70), and CHP associations (tau-c=.13 and T=.95).

interest groups were involved in the local campaign than the association where they were not active.

The 1988 association membership figures reveal that the mean membership for all local associations was seven hundred sixty individuals (Table 5.3). Local associations that had interest groups active had a higher mean membership (848 individuals) than those that did not (664 individuals).³⁰

Examining each party individually shows that the Conservative and NDP riding association had higher memberships identified with interest group involvement, while the Liberal, Reform and CHP membership numbers were not significantly related to interest group campaign involvement. Conservative associations with interest group involvement in their local campaign had a mean membership of one thousand forty-two individuals, compared to nine hundred sixty-four individuals in associations which reported no interest group campaign involvement. The mean membership in NDP associations was seven hundred thirty-four individuals when interest group activity was reported, compared to a mean of five hundred sixty-one individuals when interest groups were not involved in the riding campaign.

³⁰ An often made argument regarding 'instant' members is that they are drawn disproportionately from one ethnic group or another in a particular riding. To test this notion I considered the percentage of an association's membership described as members of a visible minority, however, the median percent was five percent with or without interest group campaign involvement. Nor was there any relationship between associations that had made special efforts to involve members of visible minorities and interest group campaign activity. A weak relationship between having a significant proportion of electors in the riding who were members of a visible minorities and interest group involvement did exist ($V=.11$ and $p<.05$). Yet when asked whether the visible minorities in the constituency had become a factor in the association's politics, there was again no relationship at all with interest group activity ($V=.01$ and $p>.01$). These results do not support the idea that the recruitment of visible minorities to swell local party membership is a widespread tactic or even a discernible trend associated with interest group campaign involvement.

Table 5.3
Association Membership and Interest Group Activity
 (Number of individuals, mean)

	Interest Groups active in local campaign	No Interest Group campaign activity reported
All	848	664
Party		
PC	1086	964
Liberal	935	921
NDP	734	560
Reform	256	265
CHP	218	181
Region		
Atlantic	1195	621
Quebec	832	781
Ontario	705	631
West	957	634

The regional breakdown of constituency associations reveals an even stronger association between membership and interest group involvement. The Atlantic region had a much higher mean membership associated with interest groups involvement where the mean membership was almost twice as high as the mean for associations that reported no interest group activity. The other regions had similar but more moderate relationships between higher association memberships and interest group activity.

The CPA study data provides evidence for the idea that interest group involvement in local campaigns is associated with higher membership figures. This connection indirectly supports the idea that interest groups use the local associations of existing parties to further their policy objectives. The Progressive Conservative and New Democratic associations were most affected in this way, while the Liberal, Reform and CHP were much less affected. All of the regions, and Atlantic Canada in particular, showed the same positive relationship between interest group involvement and local membership.

In general, the characteristics of an association's campaign were not convincingly related to interest group campaign involvement. The relative competitiveness of the association and the amount of campaign spending, on the other hand, were consistently related to interest group involvement. There were a significant relationships with the riding's competitiveness, a delegated campaign style, and non-local campaign managers in winning ridings but the three other campaign characteristics (the timing of the campaign team's organization, and the campaign manager's appointment) were not related to interest group involvement. The strongest relationship found with the financial indicators tested was the percent of the allowable limit an association had spent, followed by whether or not the local

campaign reported a surplus. The number of members in a local association was higher when interest group activity was reported, suggesting some validity to the notion of interest group members becoming party members to influence party policy.

Chapter Six: Motivating Issues

To this point I have considered all interest groups together in a search for any general patterns to their local campaign involvement. This chapter concerns only the constituency associations where interest groups were reported to be active in order to focus on the issues that motivated interest groups to become involved in local campaigns. Its central purpose is to determine whether or not groups motivated by different issues have different patterns of local campaign involvement.

To many observers of the 1988 federal election, the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States was the dominant theme of the election campaign (Campbell and Pal 1991, Jackson and Jackson 1990, Stone and Woodside 1991); the question of Canada pursuing even closer political, economic and cultural ties with the United States sparked intense debate. Individuals and groups who felt compelled to participate in the election debate were not limited to the political parties, candidates, and political activists. Business, labour, and cultural groups also actively supported one side or the other of the issue, and individual citizens and citizen groups arose, hoping to persuade fellow voters of their position (Campbell and Pal 1991).

The exceptional policy focus of the 1988 federal election leads to the expectation that most of the interest groups actively supporting or opposing local candidates would have been motivated by the free trade issue.³¹ Given the issue's prominence in the national campaign,

³¹Local associations might also experience campaign involvement from business and labour interest groups related to the free trade issue, but these groups were not "single-issue" groups. For example, the Business Council of British Columbia was heavily involved in the free trade debate but this issue is only one of many ongoing business related concerns of the Business Council of British Columbia.

it would not be surprising if local campaigns constituted a miniature version of the national debate. The three major parties were clearly on one side or the other of the issue. As the governing party which was pursuing the free trade policy, the Progressive Conservative Party supported the deal. The Liberals and the New Democrats were both opposed to the deal and Mr. Turner, in particular, who was the leader of the official opposition at the time, fought vigorously against free trade.

In terms of interest group involvement, I expect that those motivated by the free trade issue would participate in local contests at uneven rates among the parties with more interest groups active in Conservative association campaigns. Because the Conservatives were the only major party that supported free trade, they would have benefited from the support of the pro-free trade interest groups. In addition, the interest groups that were active in the election campaign did not have equal resources. The business groups which supported free trade, and indirectly the Conservative party, contributed a disproportionate amount of funds to the debate. Hiebert (1991) estimated that 4.7 million dollars were spent by interest groups during the 1988 federal election campaign and 4.6 million of the total can be attributed to pro- and anti-free trade groups. Hiebert pointed out the extremely lopsided nature of the spending such that four times as much was spent promoting free trade as opposing it (Hiebert 1991). The major contributors to the total were pro-free trade business groups, followed by anti-free trade labour groups and then individuals and smaller citizen groups.

Because the opposition to free trade was split between the Liberals and the New Democrats, even if the pro- and anti-free trade interest groups had the same persuasive effect on voting decisions, the anti-free trade campaign would have a weaker electoral effect

because of the division of votes between two parties. In areas where one of the opposition parties was not competitive, I would expect the most viable opposition party to benefit from the anti-free trade interest groups' involvement in their campaigns.

The few interest groups involved in Reform Party campaigns are expected to have been motivated by the free trade issue, because the party is particularly concerned about economic issues. The CHP, on the other hand, would be less likely to have free trade interest groups either supporting or opposing its candidates, because its focus was moral and not primarily economic.

Responses to the CPA survey question concerning motivating issues do not delineate the position of free trade groups, merely that they were motivated by the issue. With both pro- and anti-free trade interest groups categorized together, I would not expect much regional variation in the free trade interest group involvement because the issue was significant to the entire electorate.

Another issue that I expect to have been prominent in local associations in the 1988 federal election is abortion, because of abortion policy development immediately prior to the election. The most important decisions affecting abortion policy during 1988 were the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the existing legislation in January, and the unresolved debate that had occurred in Parliament during the summer months. Of the major parties, the Liberal Party seems to have been the party in which most of the debate on this issue has taken place. This may be merely a media portrayal which typically focuses on the

Liberal encounters with pro-life groups.³² The CHP candidates would also be expected to have the support of pro-life interest groups and the opposition of pro-choice interest groups, however, it may be that even though this party held a pro-life position, interest groups would have chosen to become involved in other parties more likely to win the constituency.

On a regional basis, I would not expect significant variation in the abortion interest group campaign involvement because polling information on abortion opinions does not indicate a strong regional component (Jenish 1990).

Free Trade with the United States

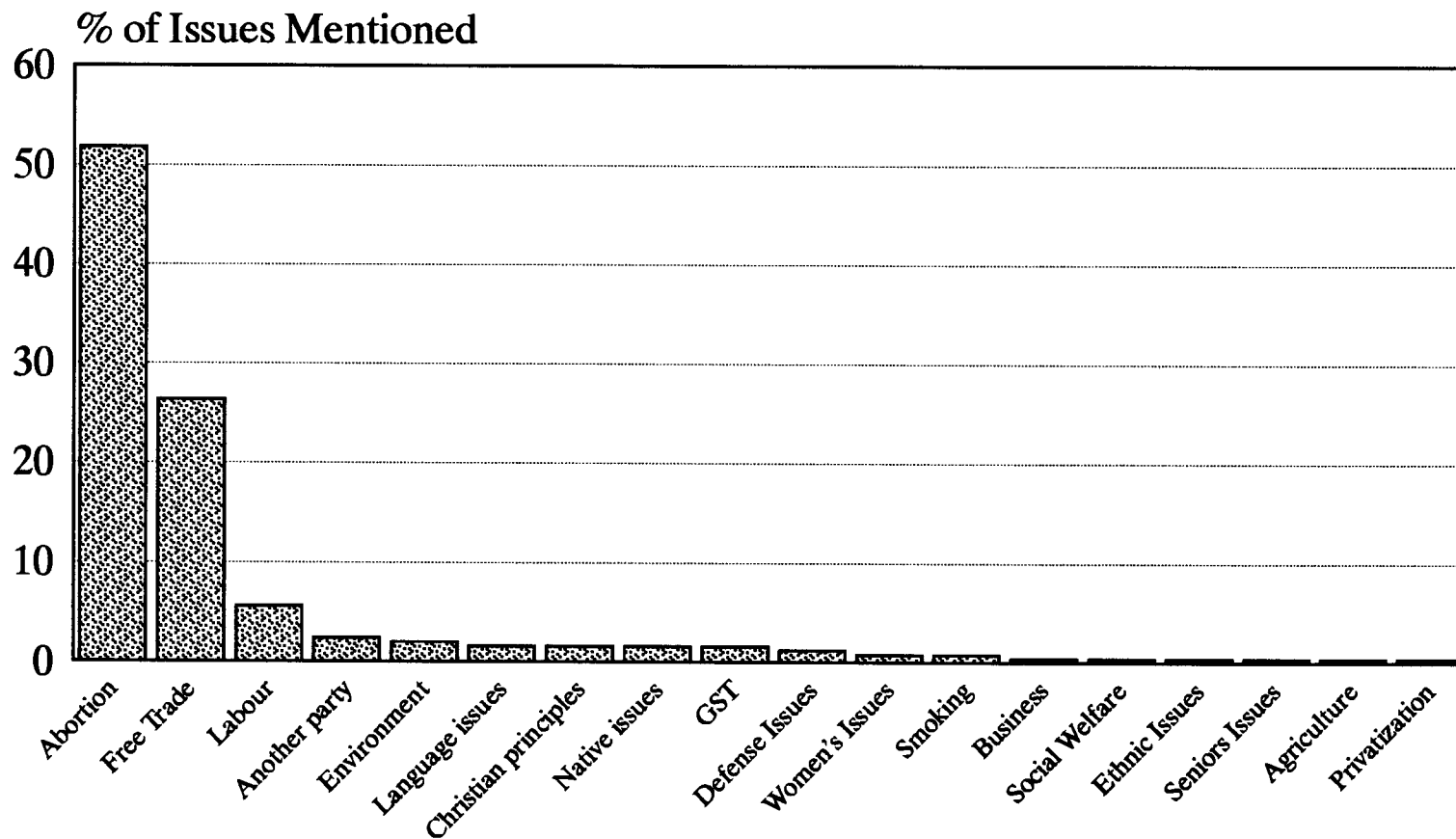
Free Trade was clearly an important issue in the two hundred and ninety-five ridings as well as in the national campaign. Unexpectedly, however, free trade was not the most frequently mentioned issue motivating interest groups involved in local campaigns (Figure 6.1). Twenty-six percent of all the issues mentioned by constituency associations were related to free trade, about half as often as abortion. No other issue was mentioned by a significant percent of constituency associations.

This surprising result might be related to the role of individual Members of Parliament. The Canadian variant of parliamentary government includes strong party discipline on most matters before a legislature. The freedom of any individual Member of Parliament to vote according to constituency preferences is quite limited in most cases. In a vote on a major international economic agreement, such as the free trade bill, party discipline was enforced. In fact, such an important economic bill would most certainly be considered a

³²For example, see Virginia Byfield's article, "Baby Paul and the Liberals," *Western Report*, October 21, 1988 (3:41), 38.

Figure 6.1

Issues Promoted or Opposed by Interest Groups



confidence motion where failure to pass the legislation would result in the dissolution of Parliament and the election of a new government. The implication of party discipline is that the views of constituents and individual Members of Parliament are muted. Interest groups motivated by free trade would have an incentive to intervene in the electoral process, to ensure that as many constituencies as possible were represented by Members of Parliament from the party promoting their position.

When considering the emphasis placed on the free trade issue in the national campaign, and the fact that one quarter of the local campaigns experienced interest group involvement related to the issue, free trade was unquestionably a significant issue in the 1988 election. Stone and Woodside, in an article comparing the Canadian and American elections of 1988, outlined the unusual set of circumstance in which an issue is likely to have an impact on voting behaviour (Stone and Woodside 1991, Kay *et al.* 1991).³³

The first condition is that the electorate must not be ambivalent about the issue but must have some view or feeling about an issue. Stone and Woodside (1991) argued that this needs to be coupled with a significant subset of voters who hold their views intensely. The issue of closer ties with the United States engaged most Canadians in some way, and a significant proportion of voters and other interests such as business, labour, and cultural groups were intensely motivated by this issue (Campbell and Pal 1991).

The second condition is that there should be an imbalance in the distribution of views such that one party benefits more than the other(s). As Hiebert (1991) noted, there was a

³³Gibbins, for example, claims that, "...policies or specific plans have never been central to winning elections" (Chase 1993a:6).

significant imbalance in the campaign advertising by interest groups, an indication of an imbalance in interest group or sectoral views which would clearly benefit the Progressive Conservatives.

The third condition is that the electorate must be able to associate the various political parties with specific positions on the issue. In the 1988 election, the positions of the three major parties on free trade were clear to the electorate. The televised debate had been particularly effective, not only in making free trade the central issue of the campaign, but in clarifying the positions of the three leaders and their parties to the electorate. Stone and Woodside claimed, "...the [television] debates turned the 1988 election into a single-issue campaign, and that issue was crucial in determining the result" (Stone and Woodside 1991:217).

The 1988 federal election was unusual because the interest groups involved in the campaign were also clearly divided along sectoral lines, with business groups generally supporting the deal and labour groups generally in opposition to it. Typically, interest groups do not associate themselves with a particular party, but prefer the freedom of a non-partisan approach to policy (Tanguay and Kay 1991). Even though there can be some policy influence advantage in partisan identification, "...being identified with one political party is a two-edged sword that many groups prefer to avoid. Fearing that such an attachment will close their routes of access to other parties, many groups declare non-partisanship" (Jackson and Jackson 1990:563; see also Boivin 1984).

Free trade became the pivotal election issue in 1988. According to Stone and Woodside (1991), this was because of the occurrence of a specific set of unusual

circumstances. Indeed, the three conditions they outlined were met in the case of the free trade issue. The notable level of interest group activity in local campaigns reported in the CPA study provides empirical evidence of the local importance of this issue as well.

Another explanation of the interest group activity related to the free trade issue is found in Pross' (1992, 1986) explanation of interest group activity. Pross argued that the regular activity of interest groups does not include electoral politics, and is based primarily on influencing the people who have decision-making power because of the position they hold; as a result, most policy questions are resolved within the policy community, an explanatory framework that he developed. This understanding of lobbying results in a very "Ottawa centred" view of interest group involvement in the policy process.

It is difficult to transfer Pross' reasoning to an electoral contest where election candidates would be the targets of lobbying efforts. Pross did admit that there were uncommon cases where an issue was resolved outside of these normal channels, which he described as "beyond" the policy community. He identified three situations when a policy question is likely to be resolved outside of the policy community: when a policy is too important to the nation; when at least two policy communities are in conflict over the issue; and when there is a serious and open disagreement within a policy community (Pross 1986). To employ Pross' analytical framework of interest group activity, I would classify the extra-policy community interest group activity associated with the Free Trade Agreement as one of the rare occasions when an issue is so important to the nation that the electorate exercises its "super-ordinary" authority to decide the issue. In addition, because of the comprehensive sectoral nature of free trade, many different policy communities would be affected by the

deal and were not in accordance with one another. With either Stone and Woodside's (1991) or Pross' (1992, 1986) explanation of the interest group activity related to free trade in the 1988 election, the emphasis is on the unusual nature of the issue and the circumstances.

There are some interesting differences between the political parties and the occurrence of free trade interest groups. Figure 6.2 shows that free trade interest groups were active at approximately the same level in the Conservative, New Democratic and Reform Party constituency associations (19%, 16% and 14% respectively). The Liberal Party, despite its known opposition to the deal had relatively fewer interest groups motivated by free trade actively involved in its local associations (8%). This suggests a less than even division of the anti-free trade interest groups between the Liberal and NDP associations to the NDP's benefit. As expected, the CHP received almost no attention from free trade interest groups (2%). Only the Reform Party had free trade as the dominant issue promoted or opposed by interest groups in their local campaigns (60%).

Free trade was not the dominant issue in any of the regions and the issue motivated interest groups to become involved in local campaigns at fairly even levels across regions (Figure 6.3). Western Canada had the most interest group activity related to free trade, where eighteen percent of all local associations experienced the involvement of interest groups motivated by free trade. Ontario and Atlantic Canada had slightly lower levels of free trade interest group activity (11% and 13% respectively). Quebec had the lowest level of free trade groups of all of the regions (8%).³⁴

³⁴Over the three issue categories, the level of urbanization was very similar.

Figure 6.2

Interest Group Issues and Party

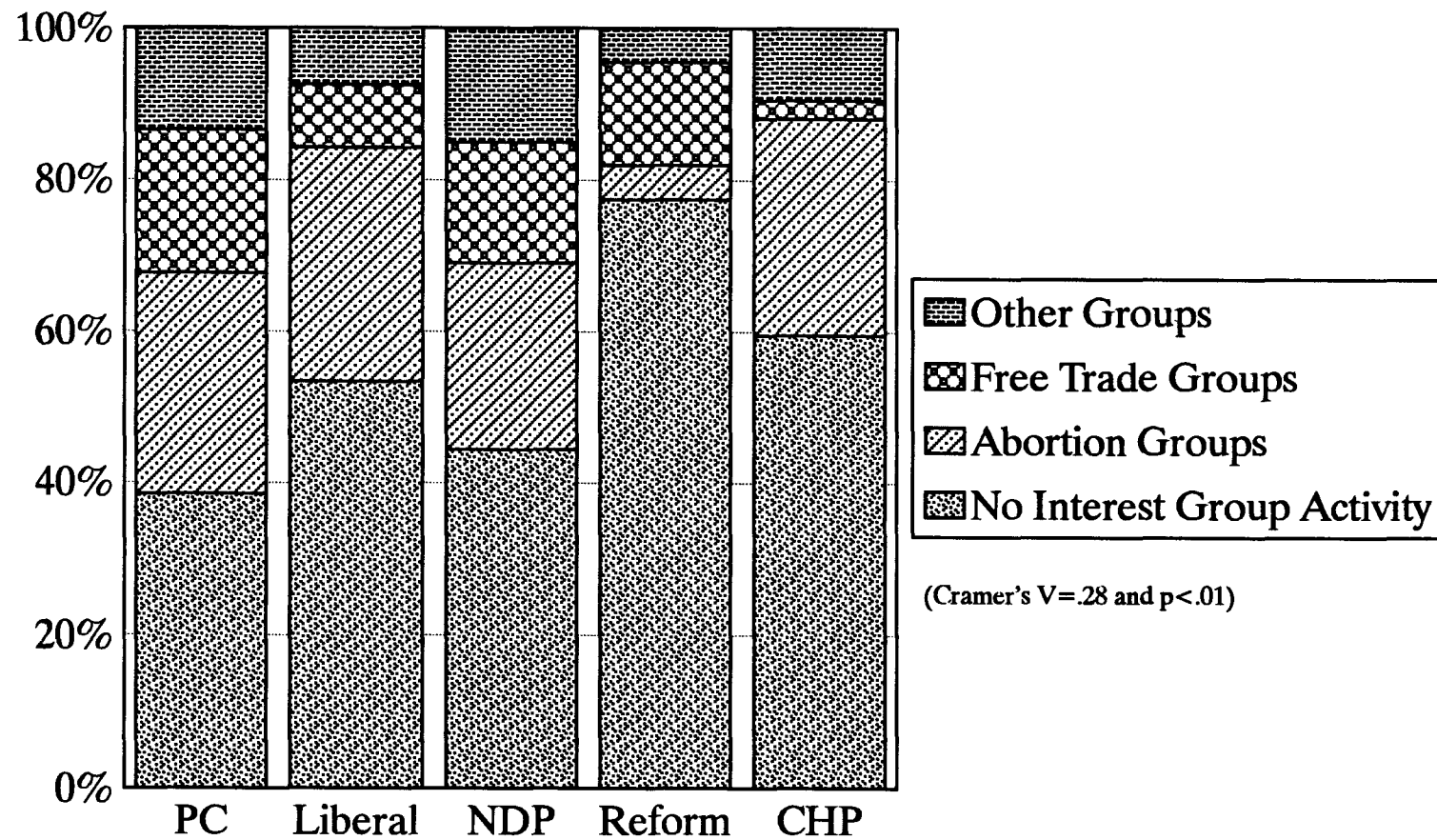
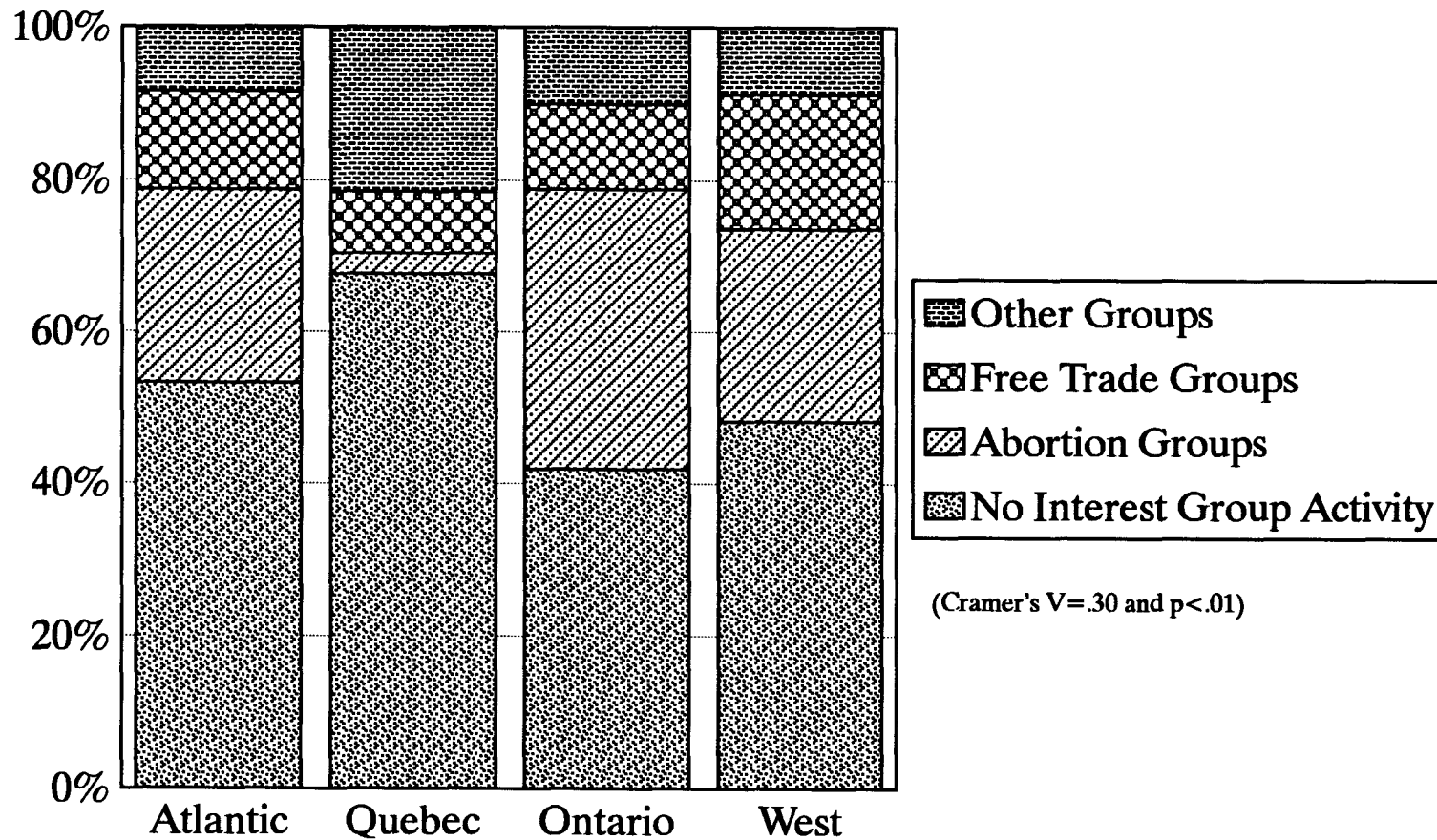


Figure 6.3

Interest Group Issues and Region



The competitiveness of the local association was not a factor related to interest groups motivated by the free trade issue. There were no significant variations in the frequency of free trade interest groups associated with the competitiveness of the riding association.³⁵ The percentage of the spending limit used by a local constituency during the course of the election campaign was not related to the free trade motivated interest groups except in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, where having spent a greater percent of the allowable constituency limit was associated with free trade groups.

The free trade issue motivated a significant number of interest groups to involve themselves in local campaigns, however, the level (26%) was lower than expected given the issue's dominance in the national campaign. For any single issue to have such prominence is unusual and both Stone and Woodside's and Pross' analysis concur in the atypical centrality of one policy question in an election campaign.

The free trade question was lower in both the Liberal and CHP riding associations. The Liberal result is worth noting because of the party's dynamic campaign based on this issue. As a party with a more limited policy agenda, it was not surprising that the CHP had almost no free trade groups active in its riding association campaigns. Constituency association characteristics did not provide any further nuances to the campaign involvement of free trade interest groups.

³⁵ Among Liberal ridings, there were slightly more free trade groups in the more competitive Liberal ridings, but not the difference was not significant. Quebec had more free trade groups in uncompetitive riding associations, but again this was not significant.

Abortion

Another surprising result from the CPA survey, concerning interest group involvement in local campaigns, was the dominance of the abortion issue at the local level (Figure 6.1). Over half (52%) of all of the issues mentioned related to abortion.³⁶

Tanguay and Kay, in their study of interest groups in the 1988 federal election, also found that, "...the most widespread interest group campaign during the 1988 federal election at the constituency level," was the Campaign Life Coalition motivated by the abortion issue (Tanguay and Kay 1991:97). This suggests that much of the abortion interest group activity reported in the CPA survey was a result of Campaign Life Coalition activities. It is also possible that this pro-life activity incited groups on the other side of the debate to participate in local campaigns. In addition, there may have been interest groups concerned with abortion but which were not primarily abortion groups, such as women's group or labour groups.

The role of a Member of Parliament in an abortion bill is quite different from that on a free trade bill. Abortion resolutions were treated as a "free votes," in the summer of 1988 where Members of Parliament were not bound by party discipline and were be "free" to vote according to the will of their constituents, their own conscience or other factors unrelated to party discipline. In such a situation, it is expected that a local interest group would make its

³⁶I used only the first response, even though up to three responses were coded, because the inclusion of all three responses exponentially complicated the analysis, and their inclusion did not change the overall ranking of the issues (abortion remained first, followed by free trade). When only the first responses are considered, abortion constituted fifty-two percent and free trade constituted twenty-six percent of the issues mentioned. This changed to forty-four percent for abortion and twenty-seven percent for free trade when all three responses were compiled. The pro-abortion, anti-abortion and unspecified abortion positions were coded together under the general category of "abortion" groups.

position on the issue known to all of the candidates, and particularly to the local winner, regardless of party affiliation. Pross agreed stating that, "...the independent views of members can be truly influential only during 'free votes,' when the member is permitted to vote according to his or her conscience. On these occasions, the average backbencher is submitted to a degree of persuasion comparable to that normally endured by Cabinet Ministers" (1992:171).³⁷

Because of the importance of the views of the each election candidate, abortion groups, and Campaign Life Coalition in particular, crossed party lines and both endorsed and opposed candidates from all three major parties (Kay *et al.* 1991). Such a strategy required that the abortion interest group make known its preferred candidate in each of the two hundred ninety-five constituencies. Kay *et al.* (1991) suggested that an issue that crossed party lines is made much more difficult in Canada by election campaigns that usually emphasize party leaders and the national campaign. The 1988 election campaign and the focus on the Free Trade Agreement with the United States was a case in point. In addition, Kay *et al.* observed that many electors could not name the candidates in their local riding and in urban areas, "...voters may not necessarily even know the name of their constituency" (Kay *et al.* 1991:146). Against these information obstacles, it is not surprising that Kay *et al.* (1991) found that there was no significant impact on the electoral results of candidates that had their views on abortion made public in the context of the election campaign.

Perhaps the goal of Campaign Life Coalition and other interest groups motivated by abortion was to make all candidates aware of their presence in the constituency, and to

³⁷Marsh (1984) found a Parliamentary focus among British abortion groups.

initiate the ground work for future influence when a vote on the issue would be called (Pross 1986). Winning candidates, whether they were opposed or supported by abortion interest groups, would then be aware of the possibility and extent of electoral retribution such groups could initiate. Pross believed that the essence of interest group influence is, "...that pressure groups speak for a significant part of the public, a part that can be mobilized into political action should its interest not be reasonably accommodated in public policy" (Pross 1986:8). In making their claims to elected representatives, interest groups often use the implicit or direct threat of electoral retaliation. Posing as spokespeople for many citizens, interest groups claim that they and their adherents are ready to use the political process for the furtherance of their cause, especially if they are not given what they believe to be an adequate hearing. There are many interest group tactics which would stress the importance of a given issue to an elected representative but the most final and significant would be the vote (Pross, 1992).

Kay *et al.* take a contrary position, suggesting that "part of the lore of participatory democracy" attributes the capacity for "electoral retribution" (Kay *et al.* 1991:142) to interest groups as the basic threat behind their demands for policy influence. Instead, Kay *et al.* suggested that the idea of electoral retaliation was accepted by both interest groups and elected representatives but was not clearly proven in electoral experience.

When the pro-life and pro-choice groups gave their supporters the "call to action," the result was minimal impact on the electoral outcome. Kay *et al.* determined that, "...the evidence presented here suggests that Members of Parliament will face little electoral fallout from their parliamentary votes on the abortion issue" (Kay *et al.* 1991:152). While this was

true in 1988, it seems premature to completely discount the potential electoral clout of abortion groups. In a future election campaign which was not centred on such a significant policy issue as free trade, the impact of these groups might be more significant.

Stone and Woodside's (1991) analysis of the role of issues in election campaigns can be applied to the abortion issue to explain its failure to become a prominent issue in the national campaign in 1988. Stone and Woodside's first condition, that electors not be ambivalent about the issue and that a significant portion hold their views intensely, is partially fulfilled by the abortion issue. Kay *et al.* (1991) cite a series of opinion polls which show that a majority of Canadians do not hold strong views on the question of abortion. However, they did identify two significant and polarized sub-groups of the electorate who do hold their views on abortion intensely. The pro-life and pro-choice advocates are believed to constitute thirteen percent and twenty-five percent of the electorate, respectively. Excluding these two groups, sixty-two percent of Canadians neither support nor oppose abortion without reservation (Kay *et al.* 1991). Stone and Woodside's first condition is not met by the abortion issue because even while adequate activists are motivated by the issue, most electors do not hold a clearly defined position.

The second condition, an opinion imbalance in favour of one party, is not present. The NDP might benefit if the imbalance of opinion favoured the pro-choice side, or at least split the pro-life voters evenly between the Liberals and Conservatives. The third condition, that the electorate be able to associate the political parties with a particular position, is not met either. While the NDP does have a clear and well known pro-choice position, the other two major parties are not as plain in their position on this issue.

Any electoral benefit that one party might gain from a particular abortion position would be weakened by the expectation that any future abortion bill would be introduced as a vote of conscience. Because of this, unless the NDP were to form the government, there is little incentive for voters to cast their ballot on the basis of this issue.

The Campaign Life Coalition strategy to cross party lines and to endorse and oppose candidates within parties captures the complexity and individual nature of the abortion question. Such cross-party endorsements, however, do not make the voter's choice immediately clear, creating an information obstacle for voters in the polarized opinion subgroups who would be inclined to take this issue into consideration in their voting decision. In addition, the majority of electors who do not hold strong views on this issue would be unlikely to seek out the necessary additional information on the abortion position of candidates when there is another important, clearly defined national election issue on which they do hold an opinion. Because of these barriers, it was unlikely for the abortion issue to have been the pivotal issue in an elector's voting decision in 1988.

This analysis does not suggest that abortion is unique in this regard; it is Free Trade which is unusual in that it does meet all of the conditions outlined by Stone and Woodside (1991). There are very few policy questions that would meet their three conditions, which suggests that in most elections, policy is unlikely to become the focus of the campaign.

The political party affiliation of a constituency association was related to the abortion issue as a motivator for locally active interest groups (Figure 6.2). The clearest difference between the local associations of the different parties was the low level of abortion interest group activity in Reform Party associations. Only five percent of all Reform constituency

associations reported abortion groups either supporting or opposing their candidates. The overall percentage of Conservative, Liberal, NDP and CHP associations was quite similar (29%, 31%, 25% and 29%, respectively), however when only the associations that experienced interest group involvement are considered, the CHP and the Liberal Party had more of the interest groups active in their local campaigns motivated by abortion. Seventy-one percent of interest groups activity in CHP campaigns and sixty-six percent of Liberal campaigns was attributed to groups either promoting or opposing abortion.

Quebec stands out from the other regions because only three percent of Quebec's constituency associations reported that abortion was the issue that prompted interest group activity in their local campaigns (Figure 6.3). This is coupled with the fact that of all the regions Quebec had the lowest overall campaign involvement by interest groups. Clearly, unlike the rest of Canada, abortion was not an issue that sparked much local campaign controversy in Quebec. All of the other regions had abortion as the most frequently mentioned issue and at similar levels (Atlantic 26%, Ontario 37%, and Western Canada 25%³⁸).

The competitiveness variable indicated that the abortion groups were not associated with the more competitive ridings in any of the parties except the Liberal associations where abortion interest groups were more likely to be involved in the most competitive ridings and less involved in the least competitive associations.

³⁸In the province of Saskatchewan, forty-six percent of all its constituency associations reported interest group activity related to abortion. This constituted eighty percent of all interest group activity in the province.

Tanguay and Kay (1991) studied the interest groups directly and one of their findings may have some explanatory value for this present study. From their interviews they found that the wealthier interest groups were the most satisfied with the political system, and that they tended to be more discreet in their relations with Members of Parliament and the political system in general than the less well-off groups. Conversely, interest groups with limited resources tended to contact their Members of Parliament more frequently and were also more likely to employ confrontational or unconventional political strategies. If Hiebert's (1991) estimates of the amount spent in the 1988 election campaign by interest groups reflect the relative wealth of free trade and abortion groups, perhaps the tactics of the two types of groups parallel their findings. Abortion groups (the less well-off interest group) were more confrontational in their use of tactics such as confronting individual candidates on their policy issue whereas free trade groups (the wealthier groups) opted for a more general advertising campaign not directed at any particular candidate.

The notion that the Liberal party has a more cantankerous relationship with abortion groups, and particularly pro-life groups, was not supported by the CPA data. Considering only the Liberal constituency associations, there was no relationship between the abortion groups and greater competition for local nominations, or leadership convention delegates. Nor was an association's experience with "instant members" more negative when abortion groups were involved.

In Atlantic Canada and Ontario, abortion groups more active in the most competitive riding associations. This was not the case in Quebec and in Western Canadian riding associations where there was no association between the competitiveness of the local riding

association and abortion groups. There was no relationship between abortion groups and the amount of constituency spending limit.

Because so much of the interest group campaign involvement in the 1988 federal election was due to local abortion groups, some discussion of gender seemed worthwhile. There was, however, no difference in the reported participation of women in a constituency association and interest group involvement. The median percent of women members was reported to be fifty percent overall, and fifty percent with or without interest group activity which may reflect an unwillingness of the parties to report gender imbalances in their membership. Two other indicators of women's participation were whether or not the constituency association had made any special efforts to involve women in the central affairs of the local party or to recruit women candidates. Again, there was no association with either variable and the incidence of interest group involvement (involvement of women: $\tau\text{-}b = .06$ and $T = 1.23$, and recruiting women candidates: $\tau\text{-}b = .05$ and $T = 1.20$). Nor was having nominated a women candidate associated with interest group activity ($V = .04$ and $p > .05$).³⁹ In general, the decision for interest groups to involve themselves in local election campaigns did not have a gender dimension.

Abortion was the interest group issue with which riding associations most frequently had to contend in the 1988 federal election. One interpretation for the local dominance of the abortion issue is its nature as a "conscience" issue and its treatment in Parliament as a free vote. The local action by interest groups, however, had no significant impact on the

³⁹There were no further highlights when controlling for party or for region except in Western Canada where having a female candidate was associated with greater interest group involvement ($V = .21$ and $p < .05$).

electoral outcome. Stone and Woodside's conditions provide the most probable explanation of the failure of abortion to become a national issue. As expected the Liberals and CHP had a greater proportion of their interest group campaign involvement from abortion groups. The very low rate of abortion group involvement in Quebec local associations was not expected given the high levels of abortion group involvement in the other regions.

"Other" Issues

All of the "other" issues mentioned by constituency associations as motivating local interest group activity are scattered across many policy areas (Figure 6.1). In total twenty-four "other" issues were mentioned by respondents. Given that the context of their activities was the 1988 federal election, it would be expected that the issues would be federal or national responsibilities. While many of the issues mentioned have some overlap of jurisdiction, only eleven of the issues mentioned are either predominantly or solely federal responsibilities, two issues could be either federal or provincial issues, and three were provincial issues. In addition to the issues that are associated with some level of government, six of the remaining issues mentioned had broad over-arching policy implications and two were not based on policy but were a consequence of the election contest itself.⁴⁰

"Other" issues were more frequently mentioned in Conservative ridings (14%). The most probable explanation for this is the "government challenge" idea presented earlier which

⁴⁰I categorized abortion, free trade, languages, agriculture, women's issues, defense, capital punishment, native issues, the Goods and Services Tax, privatization, and scientific research as federal issues; transportation and the Meech Lake Accord as federal or provincial; and labour, literacy, and social welfare as provincial issues. The broad policy issues were the environment, business, Christian principles, seniors' issues, pro-smoking, and ethnic issues. The election related issues were groups promoting or opposing the candidate personally and another political party.

suggests that many groups use an election campaign as a forum for questioning government candidates about their past record. NDP ridings had a similar level of other issues (15%) which may reflect the NDP's reputation for accommodating special interest groups such as workers, women, homosexuals, and environmentalists. The data show that when these issues⁴¹ were mentioned it was only by NDP associations. "Other" issues comprised less than ten percent of the issues that motivated interest groups in Liberal, Reform and CHP riding associations.

"Other" issues were not important in any region or province except Quebec where twenty-two percent of all Quebec constituencies had "other" interest groups active. This was twice as high as any other region and constituted two thirds of all interest groups activity in Quebec. However, like the other regions, no one issue dominated the "other" category.

Within the parties, the competitiveness of the local association was not associated with interest group activity but by region there were two slight nuances. In Atlantic Canada and Ontario, "other" issues were pursued in the more competitive ridings, while in Quebec, interest group activity motivated by "other" issues was more frequent in the least competitive ridings. "Other" interest groups occurred evenly across different levels of competition in Western Canada. There was no association between the amount of the election spending limit used and "other" issues.

Because more than three quarters (78%) of the interest group campaign involvement in the 1988 federal election can be attributed to interest groups motivated by either abortion

⁴¹The "typically" NDP issues mentioned were: women's issues, social welfare, defense issues, and opposition to the privatization of crown corporations.

or free trade, the nature of each of these two issues is central to the analysis of this chapter. Free trade was a national partisan issue which also affected local campaigns. Abortion, on the other hand, was a non-partisan and almost individual issue which failed to be included in the national campaign to any significant degree even though there was enormous local campaign activity on this issue. "Other" issues came from many policy areas and government jurisdictions and constituted the remaining twenty-two percent of local interest group activity. While more frequent in Quebec, no issue or type of issue dominated the "other" interest group activity.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The starting point of the present study was the apparent contradiction between the high level of interest group election involvement experienced by the ridings associations in the 1988 federal election and the low level of interest group election involvement predicted by the interest group literature. While searching for trends in interest group election involvement in the light of the many possible explanations, the two positions have become much closer to reconciliation.

The experience of the five political parties with interest group involvement was markedly distinct. The Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Party local associations had more interest groups promoting or opposing their candidates. The Liberals and the CHP had less interest group involvement overall, but their interest group activity was associated primarily with the abortion issue. The Reform Party had the lowest level of interest group campaign involvement, most of it related to the free trade issue.

The analysis of interest group election activity and political party provides significant support for the government challenge theory in which an election is viewed as an opportunity to question the most recent government's policy record. An election campaign furnishes interest groups with an environment of easy access to elected representatives, a situation which not all interest groups enjoy on a regular basis.

No support was found for an alliance between the NDP and labour interest groups and this was most clear in the regions where the NDP electoral support was very low. This is surprising given the predominance of the free trade issue in the election campaign and labour interest groups' clear anti-free trade position. The most probable explanation for this low

result is that NDP associations did not view labour groups as external to their associations or as "single-issue" interest groups.

The most important geographic variable in interest group local campaign involvement was region, where Quebec had not only a much lower level of interest group involvement but the two dominant issues in the 1988 federal election, abortion and free trade, were issues of much less significance in Quebec. Abortion interest group involvement was almost nonexistent and free trade interest group involvement in Quebec was the lowest of any region. Yet language was not a factor, and interest group local campaign involvement was not clearly associated with a higher level of urbanization.

The characteristics of a local campaign, particularly the features Carty (1991) found to be informative, were generally weakly associated with interest group involvement, if at all. A significant relationship was found between interest group campaign involvement and the local association's competitiveness where interest groups more often promoted or opposed the most competitive candidates. Of all of the campaign organization characteristics, only the control of the campaign was associated with interest groups. This result suggests that the cadre/mass party distinction elaborated by Carty (1991) is not central to whether or not interest groups choose to become involved in riding campaigns.

While there was a significant relationship between constituency associations that reported a campaign surplus and interest group involvement, the strongest financial indicator was the percentage of the allowable spending limit that a constituency association used which was positively associated with interest group involvement. A similar effect was found with party membership figures where interest group activity was associated with higher mean

membership levels. While some significant relationships did exist between interest group campaign involvement and constituency association characteristics, they were all secondary or incidental associations because many closely related characteristics were not associated with interest group involvement. It is most probable that interest groups are not primarily choosing local associations on the basis of the characteristics of their campaign.

The issue that prompted most local campaign involvement by interest groups was abortion. One important conclusion about the motivating issue was that Quebec associations experienced a very different level of abortion related interest group activity than the other regions. From the standpoint of the political parties, the Reform Party associations were different from other associations because they had an almost complete absence of abortion as an issue in their local campaigns.

Stone and Woodside's conditions for a successful election policy issue were not met by the abortion issue in 1988. Should abortion groups attempt to make the abortion issue central in a future election, I would predict that such a campaign would again fail to have any significant electoral outcome because neither the distribution of opinion on abortion nor the number of abortion activists is likely to change sufficiently to meet their first condition. As well, the Progressive Conservative and Liberal Parties have little incentive to present a clear position on the abortion issue because of the non-partisan way the issue would be handled if it were again debated in Parliament. Although abortion is unlikely to become the central issue in a national election campaign it may continue to have significance to constituency campaigns.

Free trade, on the other hand was a significant national issue and the local campaign involvement across the nation reflected a "spill-over" from the national campaign. It is unlikely for the free trade issue to resurface as a central policy question in a future election because the issue has been resolved. The relative lack of controversy concerning the North American Free Trade Agreement supports this idea.

The phenomena of scattered "other" issues will reappear in future elections because they represent marginal issues that are of intense significance to a local riding or to an interest group within a riding. The fact that less than half of the "other" issues were exclusively federal in a federal election supports the idea that such groups are seeking a general forum to present their ideas to the electorate. Quebec was the only region where "other" issues were important, and even there, no greater frequency of one issue over another occurred.

In conclusion, patterns to the interest group election involvement in the 1988 federal election campaign were evident. The results of the present study suggest that interest groups will continue to be involved in future election contests. It is likely that the government challenge theory will provide a solid basis for the interpretation of future interest group activity, where the party in power will receive the most interest group campaign activity. Quebec's lower overall rate of interest group activity, perhaps due to its different and negative view of interest group activity, will endure for the short-term. However, because interest groups are central to most policy development, this attitude will most likely erode over the long-term. Interest groups do not choose to involve themselves in local campaigns primarily on the basis of the associations characteristics and it unlikely for this to change

significantly in the future. While the issues that motivate interest groups will change, it is likely that abortion will continue to be a local, albeit unsuccessful, issue.

Elections are important forums for interest groups because it is in this context that they can seek increased legitimacy, find easier access to the political agenda, and gain effective political participation for their local members. The desire to influence the outcome of an election is present; however, it does not provide the only motivation, and perhaps not even the primary one. The superficial treatment of the election involvement of interest groups in the literature should be reexamined, and a perspective broader than an interest group's influence on public policy outcome adopted.

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Appendix 1
Selected Questions from the Constituency Party Association Survey

1. Did any single-issue interest group play an active role in the local campaign in an attempt to promote or oppose your candidate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what issue were they promoting or opposing?

2. How would you describe the relationship between the local association executive and the local campaign team?

☐ Association executive maintains control
☐ Control completely delegated to the campaign team
☐ A balance between these two positions

3. Was your campaign organization:

☐ In place before the candidate was nominated
☐ Only set up after the candidate was nominated

4. Did your local campaign team have nay individuals come in to help you form outside the constituency in 1988?

☐ Yes ☐ No

if Yes,

a) How many? _____

b) Were these outsiders (please check as many as appropriate):

☐ Volunteer workers
☐ Strategists/managers
☐ Paid organizers
☐ Other _____ (please specify)

5. Who appointed the local campaign manager?
- ☐ Local constituency party executive
☐ The candidate
☐ Provincial or national party official
☐ Other _____ (please specify)
6. Was the campaign manager a regular member of your local constituency association?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. How many volunteers do you require to run an effective local campaign in your constituency? _____
8. How many volunteers did you have in 1988? _____
9. Of the volunteers you had in your campaign team in 1988, what proportion would you say:
- ____% Are regular party members
____% Are regular financial contributors to your association
____% Worked in the 1984 general election
____% Were women
10. If you had a different candidate would you expect to have:
- ☐ Almost completely different group of volunteers
☐ Somewhat different group of volunteers
☐ Largely the same group of volunteers
☐ The very same group of volunteers
11. How would you rank in importance the following factors in attracting volunteers to your campaign? (please rank 1 to 5)
- ____ Local candidate
____ Opposition candidate
____ Party leader
____ Party policies
____ Traditional party loyalty
12. Did your candidate's campaign have a financial surplus at the end of the 1988 election campaign?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Could you tell us what the size of your constituency party membership was in the following years?

1990	_____	1988	_____
1989	_____	1987	_____

14. Of your current membership what proportion are:

_____%	Women
_____%	Visible minorities

15. Has your constituency association made a special effort to involve any of the following groups in an attempt to increase their participation in the central affairs of the local party? (please check as many as appropriate).

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visible minorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal peoples
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No special efforts made

16. Do groups of visible minorities exist in significant numbers in your constituency?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	--------------------------	----

If yes, have they become a factor in your constituency's politics?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	--------------------------	----

17. What has been the experience with recruiting "instant members" in your association for nominations?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive, it increases our membership
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negative, it is very disruptive of the association
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It has not happened in our constituency association

18. Please indicate the gender of those holding the following positions in your constituency association and whether they are a member of a visible minority or not.

	Male	Female	Visible Minority (please check if yes)
Constituency Association President	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Constituency Association Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Constituency Association Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1988 election candidate	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1988 election campaign manager	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1988 election candidate's agent	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

19. Have any special efforts been made to recruit women candidates by your association?

☐ ☐ Yes ☐ ☐ No

Appendix 2

Derivation of the Variable "Margin2"

Definition of variables used to create margin2:

win="dummy" variable which counts the winners.
var2=Rank of PC candidate in 1988 election results
var3=Rank of Liberal candidate in 1988 election results
var4=Rank of NDP candidate in 1988 election results
var5=Rank of Reform candidate in 1988 election results
var6=Rank of CHP candidate in 1988 election results
var7=Number of votes received by PC candidate
var8=Number of votes received by Liberal candidate
var9=Number of votes received by NDP candidate
var10=Number of votes received by Reform candidate
var11=Number of votes received by CHP candidate
var12=Total Valid vote in constituency (All votes - spoiled ballots)
second="dummy" variable which counts the second place candidates.
portion="dummy" variable which calculates the proportion
v307=political party affiliation (1=PC, 2=Lib, 3=NDP, 4=Reform, 5=CHP).

"Margin2"

```
compute win=0.  
if (var2 eq 1) win = var7/var12.  
if (var3 eq 1) win = var8/var12.  
if (var4 eq 1) win = var9/var12.  
if (var5 eq 1) win = var10/var12.  
recode win (0.00=sysmis).  
compute second=0.  
if (var2 eq 2) second = var7/var12.  
if (var3 eq 2) second = var8/var12.  
if (var4 eq 2) second = var9/var12.  
if (var5 eq 2) second = var10/var12.  
recode second (0=sysmis).  
compute portion=15.  
if (v307 eq 1) portion =var7/var12.  
if (v307 eq 2) portion =var8/var12.  
if (v307 eq 3) portion =var9/var12.  
if (v307 eq 4) portion =var10/var12.  
if (v307 eq 5) portion = var11/12.  
recode portion (15.00 = sysmis).  
compute margin = win - portion  
compute margin2=margin.  
if (margin eq 0.0000) margin2=win - second.
```

Frequency of Margin2

Value (Percentage Points Difference)		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid%</u>	<u>Cum%</u>
1.	10 or less	133	26	26	26
2.	11 to 25	135	26	27	53
3.	26 to 40	139	27	28	81
4.	41 and over	98	19	19	100
Missing		<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Missing</u>	
		522	100	100	