A Question of Values:
Representation in Canada's Contemporary System of Governance

Final Report

Final Report Prepared for the Law Commission of Canada

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Executive Summary

There has been a significant increase in interest recently in the character of representation in Canada. This can be seen in recent scholarly attention to the effects of the electoral system, with the interest of agencies such as Elections Canada with declining voter turnout, the increased public and media commentary on the rise of interest group politics in Canada, and through the creation of special commissions in a number of provinces examining electoral system reform. The question at the root of these various inquiries is whether the contemporary system of democratic governance in Canada provides sufficient and appropriate opportunities for the effective representation of citizen interests. A related question is whether Canada's political institutions create pathways or barriers to political representation.

This paper examines the changing character of representation in Canada. It begins with a discussion of the multi-dimensional character of the concept of representation, and identifies three separate dimensions, including formalistic representation, descriptive (or 'standing for') representation and 'acting for' representation. An assessment of the quality of representation in any political system will depend on which dimension of representation is selected for investigation. What is seen as effective representation using one dimension of the concept may be viewed as ineffective when viewed against another dimension. Therefore, arriving at a definitive assessment of the effectiveness of any system of representation may be difficult.

A review of representation from a theoretical perspective reveals several findings. First, two key principles are identified that have been of central importance to the development of representative democracy, including the principle of political equality and the principle of periodic competitive elections. Second, various theories

of representation have been advanced to describe the way in which representative democracy has operated, including pluralist democracy, consociational democracy and neo-corporatist democracy. These theories contain varying assumptions about the character of society, of government, and of the 'intermediary organizations', such as political parties and interest groups, that link citizens to their government. The section on theoretical foundations also includes a discussion of recent scholarship that advances the view that the foundations of representative democracy should be attentive to group interests as well as to individual interests.

In addition to being multi-dimensional in character, the system of democratic representation should be viewed as being embodied in the various institutions of government. This includes the three branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial), the formal and political executive, the two levels of government in federal systems, and other quasi-official institutions such as political parties and interest groups, each of which perform some representational functions. The argument is advanced that these institutions have evolved in relation to specific historical circumstances, and they operate in a complex set of relationships.

The analysis focuses on the representational character of elected legislatures and on the role played by the electoral system in translating votes into legislative seats. Electoral systems are not neutral, but instead serve to reflect different values. The major electoral systems are reviewed, and the values underlying each system are identified.

The extent to which Canada's electoral system provides for descriptive representation of a number of interests (for example, socio-economic interests, gender, ethnicity) is examined from both a historical and contemporary perspective. It is shown that for the first century of confederation, the elected legislature provided higher representation of individuals with higher socio-economic status, and lower representation of groups such as women, ethnic minorities, visible minorities and aboriginal peoples than would be expected given the size of each of these groups in

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the electorate as a whole. During the most recent 35 years of confederation, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of women, ethnic minorities, and visible minorities who have been elected to Parliament, although the proportions are still less than the percentage of the population of each group. The House of Commons continues to have a membership drawn disproportionately from those with higher socio-economic status, and also continues to have few members of aboriginal heritage.

The attitudes of Canadians towards the functioning of democratic representation, and towards a variety of possible reforms are examined with reference to a study in the early 1990s conducted for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, and through follow-up questions asked in the context of the 2000 Canadian Election Study. The data indicate that Canadians have relatively high levels of cynicism about politics and that they tend to hold political leaders in low regard. However, the data also indicate that Canadians demonstrate a relatively high level of satisfaction overall with the way in which democratic representation operates in Canada. This combination of attitudes suggests that Canadians seem able to distinguish their attitudes towards current elected officials from broader assessments of the functioning of the political system as a whole. Notwithstanding their satisfaction with the system of democratic representation, Canadians seem quite willing to entertain a variety of reforms to the system of government.

Selecting among political institutions involves choosing among different values. Choosing which values should be reflected in a set of political institutions is an issue about which people can and often do disagree. A number of recommendations are offered that can provide some guidance in assessing various proposals for reform, including the following.

1. Recognize that the process of representation is dynamic and ongoing. Any individual or group has multiple access points to the system of representation, and a disadvantage in one may be compensated by an advantage in another.

2. When considering changes to any element in the system of representation, consider the impact of the change on other elements. Assess the costs and benefits in the overall system of representation.

3. Consider whether the values embodied in any proposed change are consistent with the values that underlie the system of representation – equality of individuals and free and open elections.

4. When assessing any demands for special representational treatment of particular groups, consider what qualities distinguish this group from other groups in Canadian society. Consider also whether any proposed changes differentially advantage the identified group over other groups and individuals.

5. When considering changes to the system of representation, assess the variety of ways in which the desired outcome can be accomplished.

6. Consider whether any proposed change is largely administrative or substantive. An administrative change is one which operates within the context of current institutional arrangements whereas a substantive change seeks to alter the institutional arrangements. For example, a goal may be to increase youth participation in elections. An administrative change could include a targeted effort to register youth electors. A substantive change could include setting quotas for youth candidates for each party. In general,

given the inter-connection between political institutions, preference should be given to administrative changes.

7. The system of representation should be as open as possible and practical for all citizens to express their right to freely associate, vote and contest elections.

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1.0 Introduction

In the Fall of 2002, the Law Commission of Canada published a discussion paper on electoral reform, as part of its "Renewing Democracy" project (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). That paper discussed the growing "democratic malaise" in Canada, a term used to describe a set of attitudes and behaviour that includes growing cynicism towards the political process, decreased support for political parties and elected politicians and party leaders and the sharp trend in the 2000 federal election towards lower voter turnout. The report also referred to an ongoing "representational deficit" in Canada, a term used by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (1991, p. 96) to describe the situation in which the proportion of a group's members elected to the House of Commons is less than its proportion of the population. It was suggested that such representational deficits contribute to the democratic malaise, and argued that Canada's single member plurality electoral system, while not wholly responsible for such deficits, had a significant causal effect. Furthermore, the electoral system was viewed as contributing to a lack of 'fairness, representation and equality" to democratic governance in Canada (Law Commission of Canada, 2000; p. 39). Partly in response to those findings, the Law Commission of Canada has commissioned further studies on reform of the electoral system and on the changing nature of representation in Canada. This report has been written for the Commission as part of the latter initiative.

The conclusions of the Commission's discussion paper on electoral reform were in keeping with much of the public commentary and scholarship since the early 1990s on the problems with Canada's electoral system. Government reports such as

those produced by the Spicer Commission (Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future, 1991) and the Lortie Commission (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991), a growing body of scholarly analyses (Milner, 1999; Cross, 2002; MacIvor, 2003), and think tanks such as the Fraser Institute (Gibson, 2003) have identified problems with Canada's system of governance, and many have identified the electoral system as a key target for reform. Furthermore, significant reform initiatives currently are underway in several provinces, and it appears likely that others may soon follow suit. The reform initiatives currently under discussion go beyond changing the electoral system, and potentially involve other aspects of the system of political representation. The current analysis goes beyond the electoral system in examining political representation.

An analysis of the system of representation necessarily is broader and indeed more amorphous than a discussion of the electoral system. The electoral system is a subset of the system of representation, but the latter entails much more than simply translating votes in an election into legislative seats (i.e., the definition of an electoral system). The elected legislature is but one element, albeit an important element, of the process by which citizens and their interests may be represented by and in government. Arriving at an overall assessment of the representational effectiveness of a government is complicated by several facts – different political institutions may be designed to represent different (and possibly conflicting) principles, there may be different (and possibly conflicting) values underlying the representational desires of citizens, and there are different (and possibly conflicting) principles underlying the concept of representation itself. While this does not mean that no assessments can be made about the effectiveness of a system of representation, it does imply that such assessments may need to be somewhat tentative or conditional.

Section 2 examines the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of representation. It begins with an elaboration of the various dimensions of representation, and indicates the way in which each dimension can best be

understood. This section of the study also examines both the theoretical and practical foundations of representative democracy, and discusses alternative institutional arrangements for several theories of democracy. The section on theoretical foundations includes a discussion of the representational functions of different branches and levels of government, and notes that changing the character of representation in one may have significant implications for others.

The next section turns to a more detailed discussion of the electoral system – its purpose, the ways in which electoral systems may vary, and the major alternative electoral systems. Electoral systems are not neutral, but instead reflect sets of alternative values. Hence, the choice among electoral systems in not one of a biased versus an unbiased system, but rather reflects decisions on which set of values or biases that will be favoured.

Section four examines the character of descriptive representation in the federal House of Commons, both historically and in the more contemporary period. The principles upon which the Canadian electoral system was designed to function are discussed, and the outcome with respect to the election of certain categories of citizens (women, ethnic minorities, visible minorities, aboriginal people), and according to socioeconomic characteristics are presented. The analysis reveals instances both of stability and change in descriptive representation through the electoral system.

Section five presents data on the attitudes of Canadians towards their system of representative governance. The analysis focuses on attitudes towards political cynicism, party leaders, the overall system of representation, and specific reform proposals. The data reveal that Canadians hold relatively nuanced attitudes towards the process and outcome of political representation. Section six reviews issues of individual versus group representation, and choosing among alternative electoral systems, in the context of a discussion of best practices. The study concludes by highlighting the importance of values in selecting among representative institutions,

and offers a number of recommendations for choosing among substantive proposals for reform.

2.0 Alternative Conceptions of Democratic Representation

This study situates current discussions about the effectiveness and currency of the representative character of Canada's political institutions and processes in a larger context – that of alternative forms of representation in a variety of democratic political systems. It will be argued that classical notions of representative democracy emerged in the 18th century, largely in response to significant changes in governance in England, and later, in the United States and France. These changes highlighted the importance of the idea of political equality (one person, one vote), together with the principle that citizens have the right to freely associate into groups, and that individuals and groups can compete for governmental authority. Together these ideas became essential parts of the classical notion of representative democracy.

Over the years, these principles either became enshrined in institutional arrangements that gave meaning and substance to democratic governance (such as pluralist democracy), or gave rise to significant revisions to democratic principles and practices (such as through consociational or neo-corporatist arrangements). For example, pluralist democracy, which has been the most significant theoretical underpinning in countries such as the US and Canada, emphasizes the equality of opportunity for citizen participation and for the political activity of groups through the principle of freedom of association. Pluralist democracy has been challenged from a number of perspectives, and in some cases, the challenges have had both a theoretical and a practical orientation. One alternative is consociational democracy, where strong ethnic or linguistic community ties, in multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic countries, prevent effective representation through group competition. A consociational democratic system provides for elites of the various communities within segmented societies to reach accommodation, where members of society

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could not. A second alternative is the empowerment of leaders of certain social groups, particularly groups aligned with business or labour interests, to take responsibility for forging and implementing policy in the area of jurisdiction of greatest importance to group members. This neo-corporatist set of arrangements solidifies certain group attachments, and encourages the representation of 'sector interests' through sectoral organizations.

Recently, a literature has developed in response to the perception that all of the existing models of representation fail to provide fair and effective representation to groups who can be described as socially and politically marginalized. This literature has concluded that rather than resolving the under-representation of women, and various ethnic and racial groups, among others, that existing forms of representation actually reinforce their status as under-represented. The efficacy of such claims will be assessed, coupled with a review of the implications of the various theories and models of representation.

2.1 Classical liberal representation

The classic accounts of the development of the idea of political representation identify the 16th and 17th centuries, and particularly the latter part of the 18th century, as the critically important time period in which the ideas of representation not only developed among political theorists, but were put into practice through new institutional forms of governance (see, for example, Pitkin, 1967; Birch, 1971). The three countries in which representative forms of government developed provided quite different pathways to representation – in Britain, the process tended to be through a gradual growth of incremental limits on the power of the Crown and a corresponding growth in the power of Parliament; in France, representative government came through a revolutionary overthrow of the absolutist regime (for example the Estates General was not called for 175 years, from 1614-1789); and in the United States, through a self-consciously new political project following the end of colonial rule. In each of these cases, the emergence of the concept of representation

became linked with the idea of self-government, and embodied in political institutions. The connection with self-government was made by John Stuart Mill, one of the most prominent writers on the topic in the 19th century. According to Mill, two principles on which representative government is based are:

> "the rights and interests of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them," and
> "(t)he second is that the general prosperity attains a greater height, and is more widely diffused, in proportion to the amount and variety of the personal energies enlisted in promoting it". (Mill, 1958, p. 43)

Although Mill's argument provides a defence of universal enfranchisement, linked closely with an active and engaged electorate, his thinking was ahead of its time. The franchise in late 18th century Britain, France and the United States was significantly limited by age (it tended to be for those over 30 years of age), by gender (men), and in some instances to property owners. The principle of self-government, as a foundational principle for representative government, has become widely accepted over time, and the key issue has thus centred on who is included in the political community, and thus eligible to participate in politics. Over time, there was a gradual removal, often after considerable contestation, of the limits on the franchise, with the franchise extended to non-property owners, women, and to younger members of the community, with the lower age limit often set at 18 years.

When the lively debates about the character of political representation led to initiatives to embody principles in political institutions, the principles themselves began to assume an enduring quality. Some of the principles, such as limiting the franchise to various categories of citizens, have largely been done away with. However, others persist. One such principle is that the interest of wealth (in which its holders are few in number), may suffer in a representative democracy due to the greater numbers of the electorate without significant wealth. The latter could use their status as a majority to harm the interests of the minority. Therefore, the interests of wealth may be 'represented' through the creation of a second legislative house (a

Senate, or House of Lords) the seats in which may be restricted to those owning a predetermined amount of property. An alternative interest to be represented could be sparsely populated territories, whereby an upper legislative house could over-represent less populated areas.

The development of classic liberal representation in Canada was in many respects similar to general tendencies in other democracies. Representative legislatures first developed in the British North American colonies in the latter part of the 18th century, and became embodied in the constitution of the new dominion in 1867. The framework was for the elected legislature to reflect the desires of the Canadian people through a system of 'representation by population'. However, at the time of confederation, voting was limited to male property owners over 30 years of age. Most of the property qualifications were eliminated by the end of the 19th century, and the franchise (at the federal level) was extended to large numbers of women in 1917, and to virtually all women in 1918. Limitations on the voting rights of aboriginal peoples were removed by 1960, and the voting age lowered to 18 in 1967.

However, other complexities existed in the system of representation in Canada at confederation. One was an upper house in a bi-cameral legislature (the Senate), which was not only undemocratic (i.e., not consistent with principles of promoting democracy), but anti-democratic (i.e., designed to be a corrective on democracy). For example, the Senate is appointed, rather than elected, and Senators must own a fixed amount of real property. In addition, the allocation of Senate seats on a regional basis makes little or no reference to population distribution. For example, the Atlantic region (30 Senate seats) and Quebec (24 Senate seats) have a much higher per capita Senate representation than does the more populous Western region (24 Senate seats). To these limits on popular representation through the Senate were added additional limits through the creation of a constitutional monarchy, in which the formal executive powers are held by the Crown, and delegated to the Crown's representative, the governor general federally,

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and the lieutenants governor provincially. The continued existence of the Senate and of the powers of the Crown, indicate that representative government in Canada, as embodied in our political institutions, has been institutionalized through a complex set of procedures and principles.

2.1.1   Elements of Representation

A very useful analysis of the character of representation is provided in Hanna Pitkin's classic study, <u>The Concept of Representation</u> (1967). Pitkin argues that representation can be considered through a variety of lenses, relating to formalistic aspects of representation, and representation as 'standing for' and 'acting for' the individual or group being represented. It is useful to review each of these elements of representation.

The formalistic view concerns the manner of authorization – that is, in what ways and to what extent is one group given authority to act on behalf of another; and the nature of accountability – that is, what is the process by which the representative is held to account for his or her actions on behalf of those to whom they purportedly represent. The grant of authorization for political representatives in a democracy typically is contained within constitutional provisions, such as, for example, in the relative powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, through federal division of powers (if applicable), and through such limitations as a charter or bill of rights. In democracies, there also are specific term limits on the authorization for representative bodies.

The issue of accountability relates to the extent to which the actions of the representative are consistent with the desires or interests of those being represented. As we'll see below, remaining faithful to the <u>desires</u> of the represented may impose very different requirements than would remaining faithful to their <u>interests</u>. In either case, however, in a democracy the matter of accountability tends to be exercised in a post-hoc manner, in which the represented have the capacity to hold representatives

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to account only after the fact (that is, after a decision has been taken), and in most instances, where elected representatives are concerned, only through the very blunt instrument of a general election. A general election is referred here as a blunt instrument because the electorate is able to pass judgment on the representatives only on the sum total of activity between elections, and not on individual laws or policies, and typically not in the period between elections. Thus, the possibility exists for a highly imperfect match between either the desires or the interests of the electorate and the actions of the representatives.

The second element of representation according to Pitkin relates to the manner in which the representative 'stands for' the represented. There are two ways in which the representative can stand for those whom he/she represents. The first concerns the issue of descriptive representation – that is, to what extent does the representative body look like, or mirror, the characteristics of the represented. The second is the issue of symbolic representation – that is, in what ways and to what extent does the representative embody the values of those being represented. Each will be discussed in turn.

The matter of descriptive representation can be understood metaphorically as a painting or mirror, in which the question is whether the representative is a true and accurate, or a distorted depiction or reflection of the group being represented. For example, one could ask whether a representative body such as a national legislature contains roughly proportional members from each region of the country, from cities as opposed to rural areas, or from various linguistic or other groupings, as appropriate. But descriptive representation, like beauty, may be in the eye of the beholder. There may be changes over time, and differences between people and groups, in which characteristics one seeks to truly and accurately reflect in the representative body (Pitkin, 1967, p. 87). Therefore, for example, at the time of confederation, the founding fathers may have had a greater interest in ensuring descriptive accuracy on some values (such as geography, population density, and

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the French and English communities) and designed political institutions (through the electoral system) to ensure the accurate descriptive representation of such factors in the national Parliament. Over time, other factors may emerge, through processes of societal change or political contestation or both, as relevant for assessing the descriptive accuracy of the representational system. Such factors have arisen in Canada over the years, and have included things such as the degree to which women, organized labour, farmers, aboriginal Canadians, and people of various ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, find themselves and their characteristics accurately represented within the representational process.

To the issue of descriptive representation, one can add the matter of symbolic representation in assessing the degree to which representative institutions accurately stand for the represented community. In Pitkin's use of the term, symbolic representation is used to describe an affective process, in particular the extent to which the people being represented have a feeling of like or dislike towards those representing them. An example at a national governmental level is the head of state – that person, whether elected or anointed, who embodies the sovereign authority of the political community. It is possible, of course, that there is some overlap between the descriptive and symbolic elements of representation as a process of 'standing for' a community. For example, members of a community may experience more positive feelings of affect for a head of state if they think the head of state accurately reflects some of their own characteristics. Thus, for example, evidently it was viewed as important in Canadian political development over time that the Canadian head of state (that is, the Governor General), while formally a representative of the Queen, should be a Canadian by birth. Other descriptive characteristics which appear to have been brought into consideration in the selection of governors general include their linguistics background, gender, ethnic origin, and even their past political experience in political parties and government.

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The third element of representation, according to Pitkin, examines the degree to which the representative acts for those who are being represented. Whereas to 'stand for' a community focuses attention of the correspondence of attributes, and thereby presupposes that those with similar attributes will have similar policy preferences, the element of 'acting for' a community brings this latter question into sharper relief and asks whether the actions, policies and decisions of the representatives really correspond with the desires or interests of those who they are representing. In the context of the representative acting for the represented, there are two perspectives, one focusing on the importance of representing the desires (or political preferences) of the community – in which the representative acts as a delegate, and the second focusing on representing the interests of the community, in which the representative is trustee.

The competing perspectives of representative as delegate or trustee correspond to opposing views of the manner in which the representative should 'act for' those whom he or she represents. The delegate perspective, long popular among supporters of populist government, views the representative as one who aggregates and articulates the desires and preferences of those he or she represents. According to this view, the representative's authority is (or should be) limited to acting on the instructions, either explicit or implicit, of the community being represented. The popular will, or community will, at the national level is achieved through individual representatives each expressing the will of their local community. Thus, a key function of the representative is to actively seek out the will of the local community. Traditional techniques such as door-to-door canvassing, soliciting feedback from the constituency, sponsoring town hall meetings, and even resorting to referendums have long been used as instruments for identifying, if not necessarily acting upon, the preferences of the community at both the local and national levels. More contemporary techniques of public opinion polling, maintaining local and national websites, and using focus groups also provide mechanisms for identifying public

preferences. Canadian history contains many examples of parties that have arisen in response to the perceived lack of responsiveness either of the government or of political parties, in efforts to advance the preferences of sections of the electorate. However, the reliance on party discipline in Westminster-style parliamentary systems, such as Canada's, limits the degree to which individual representatives are able to advance local preferences that are at odds with government or party policy.

In contrast, the view of the representative as trustee begins with the premise that representatives are entrusted by the community to do what is in the best interest of the community. This view, often associated with Edmund Burke, an 18th century British political theorist and member of the British House of Commons, sees representation as a considered and deliberative activity, in which the task of the representative is to consider and assess a variety of perspectives on an issue, including (but by no means restricted to) the preferences of those whom he or she is representing, and then to apply wisdom, discernment and judgment in formulating a position that he or she believes best represents the interests of the community. What is best for the community as a whole may not necessarily be what is best for the local community that elected the member. Therefore, his or her obligation is to do what is best for the community as a whole. The process of representation within a national legislature, according to this view, is not a matter of aggregating the preferences of each of the local communities, but rather for each legislator to make an assessment of what is best for the whole, and to act on that assessment.

The framework for understanding the process of representation advanced by Pitkin serves as a useful reminder of the complexity surrounding the concept of representation. Representation of various forms arises and is given reflection in a mix of political institutions (some of which are based on principles of representation at odds with, or counterbalancing, those of other institutions), the importance of context to understanding representation (particularly the self-referential character in assessment of representation), and the ways in which assessments of

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representational effectiveness may vary over time. For example, when assessing the effectiveness of representation in Canada, we are reminded of the following:

- the principle of representation by population in the Canadian House of Commons is balanced by the principle of regional representation in the Senate;

- the principle of an elected House of Commons is balanced by an appointed Senate;

- the principle of popular representation in the House of Commons is balanced by class representation in the Senate;

- the principle of a national government is balanced by the federal division of powers;

- the principle of parliamentary supremacy is balanced by a Charter of Rights and Freedoms interpreted by the Courts;

- the principle of judicial interpretation of the powers of Parliament is balanced by the Charter's notwithstanding clause;

- community expectations about the degree to which various types of citizens (for example, women, members of ethnic minorities, aboriginal Canadians, the physically or mentally disabled, youth, the elderly, people of varying occupational and social backgrounds, and others), are available and present for each of the positions within our representative institutions vary over time, and among members of the community.

Therefore, the system of representation is a dynamic interplay of the past and the present, characterized by institutional expressions of past resolutions of previous contestations for inclusion, as well as ongoing contemporary contestations for current and future inclusion. As such, the concept of representation includes much of the

fodder for ongoing political life in a democracy. The question of representation, therefore, is not one to be 'resolved' in any final or definitive manner. Rather, it is the key organizing idea around which much political debate and ongoing dialogue revolves. The following sections review a number of the major theoretical and institutional expressions of the manner in which the concept of representation has been operationalized.

2.2 Pluralist democracy

The theory of pluralist democracy was developed largely to describe the manner in which representative democracy functioned in the United States, and is most closely associated with the writing of Bentley (1908), Truman (1951) and Dahl (1961; 1971). Pluralism is based on the notion that a key characteristic of democracy is the ability of citizens freely to associate with others to pursue their individual and common interests. Since people have many interests (for example, a single person may have a set of interests related to the fact that she is female, Catholic, an urban dweller, a conservationist, a cyclist, a liberal, etc.), and since they have the ability to form groups to pursue their interests, then a large number of groups will form, or potentially will form, for the pursuit of those interests. In the pluralist theory, the process of representation thereby is characterized by a system to mediate between the interests pursued by the vast number of groups that have arisen to express the wishes of the community, together with an expectation of potential groups that may yet still emerge if their interest is not effectively addressed. The representative, both individually as an elected legislator, and the legislature as a whole, serve as mediators or referees between the interests expressed, or potentially expressed, by groups. The plurality of interests held by any member of the community, coupled with the unfettered ability of like-minded individuals to forms groups, ensures a system of effective representation, in which all citizens 'win' some of the time and 'lose' some of the time. Universal, or near-universal enfranchisement, and periodic competitive

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elections, ensure a system of effective representation, since the lack of effective representation would spell electoral defeat.

2.2.1 Free and open competition among groups

As the dominant theory of representative democracy, pluralism has been subject to unprecedented criticism, and deservedly so according to many critics (see, for example, Ricci (1971), for a review of the criticisms). The theory is based on the idea of free and open competition among groups in society, and it is this assumption that has received particular attention. If it is the case that some interests are better able to form groups than others, or that some groups are better able to advance their interest once formed than are others, then a system of representation as one based on mediating between competing interests is guaranteed to produce a result that is biased towards those groups that have a more favourable status (Schattschneider, 1960). Two key arguments have been advanced in this regard. The first is that the differential allocation of economic resources in market economies ensures that some groups, or potential groups, have a greater capacity to commit funds towards group formation and participating in the process of pressure group politics. From this perspective, groups that may be particularly advantaged are business interests as compared to labour interests, environmental interests, or the interests of poverty-stricken individuals (see, for example, Dahl and Lindblom (1997); Olson (1971); Schlozman and Verba (1979)).

The second, and related argument is that some groups, or potential groups, have greater political resources than do others. Political resources could include such things as membership with higher levels of formal education, larger membership, a membership that is geographically concentrated, greater wealth, more personal contacts with elected legislators, and the like. The argument is that similar to economic resources, political resources are not evenly distributed, and this unevenness results in some groups, or potential groups, being advantaged over others. The result is a bias in the process of representation. Therefore, from the

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perspective of the critics of pluralism, rather than reducing the system of inequality – of money, resources, power and privilege, that exist in market economies, and indeed in all societies, a system of pluralist representation serves to reinforce and replicate these through the political process.

2.3 Consociational democracy

Pluralist democracy was based on the premise that citizens have a large number of interests, and these interests lead them to become involved, or potentially to become involved, in a number of groups. The assumption is that the groups that emerge from this process have a membership that cut across social divisions. Consequently, individuals who may be opposed to one another (or members of groups that are opposed to one another) on one issue, may be members of the same group on other issues. Therefore, while two people may be in opposition to each other on the issue of conservation (one being pro-conservation, the other pro-development), they may be united on the issue of government spending for public education (both being in favour of increased government spending). Thus, these issues, or social cleavages, can be said to be cross-cutting.

However, what if the major political issues in a society were aligned in a way such that people who were opposed to each other on one issue were opposed on the other major issues as well? In this scenario, one would say the major social cleavages were reinforcing. Furthermore, if these reinforcing cleavages were distributed such that one social grouping consistently had the support of a majority of citizens (e.g., two-thirds), and the other had the support of a minority (e.g., one-third), the likely outcome through pluralist competition is that one group would always win and the other would always lose. Thus, the interests of the majority group would always be represented in government policy, and the interests of the minority would never be represented. While such a scenario might please those in the majority, it would likely produce the effect of a high level of dissatisfaction among the minority to

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the extent that the minority may withdraw its support for the political community. The result could be not only political disaffection, but varying levels of political protest and civil unrest.

This scenario is not merely a theoretical speculation, but relates to the social and political reality that existed in some societies comprised of two or more ethnic groupings, in which the social division of ethnicity tends to overlap and reinforce other cleavages such as those based on religion, language, and region of residence. Furthermore, these social cleavages may also overlap attitudes towards political issues such as support for publicly funded education (including the education of linguistic and denominational minorities). Consociational democracy provides a way of ensuring effective representation, and consequently of political stability, within such a system of reinforcing cleavages. Unlike pluralist theory, which views representatives as playing a role as independent arbiters among competing groups, and which encourages group competition, consociational democracy views the task of representative institutions as both standing for and acting for the separate group interests, and political elites accommodating the differences among them.

2.3.1 Elite accommodation in segmented societies

Representation through elite accommodation, therefore, becomes the overriding principle of consociational democracy. To accommodate the interests of the various groups requires several factors: an electoral system that effectively enables the election of representatives of the various groups, a willingness on the part of the elected representatives to view themselves largely as standing for and acting on behalf of their segment of society (that is, their group), and a system of executive branch of government formation, such as coalition governments, that allows for the inclusion of various group representatives. All of these conditions were found to hold in a number of smaller European countries in the postwar period, such as Austria, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands, where the theory of consociational democracy was developed, and which produced the predicted high

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levels of political stability despite the underlying divisions within society (Lijphart, 1977). Lijphart notes that consociational democracy was at its peak in the 1950s and gradually eroded over time largely due to its success in accommodating distinctive group interests (Ibid; p. 2).

As a method of producing effective representation for groups that may consider their interests under-represented in national legislatures, the consociational theory has some significant shortcomings. Perhaps the most important is that it was developed to apply to societies in which social cleavages overlap and reinforce. For many groups that may feel their interests are poorly represented in a national government, social divisions are not nearly as reinforcing as the consociational theory requires. Consequently, the risk of political instability that exists by under-representing, for example, women or youth, or the poor, is less than for regionally concentrated ethnic groups, since such cleavages cut across other cleavages in many societies. Thus, the ethnic cleavage in divided societies provides a unique set of circumstances that does not carry the same impact on other cleavages. Even the cleavage of ethnicity is often not sufficient to require consociational arrangements to ensure political stability. Although there have been some attempts to apply the theory of consociational democracy to understanding political representation in Canada (e.g., McRae, 1974), other factors appear to have mitigated the need for such arrangements. For example, a federal system of government, in which the sub-national (i.e., provincial) level can transform a national minority into a provincial majority, and in which the provincial government has responsibility for areas of policy of greatest importance to the (national) ethnic minority, may make elite accommodation at the national level less necessary. Likewise, there may be ways of including national minorities in governmental policy-making through other institutional arrangements (such as the use of a bi-cameral legislature, or conventions about appointment to cabinet) that can have the effect of providing means of effective representation.

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2.4 Neo-corporatist representation

Consociational democracy is both a theory and a process for the representation of majority and minority groups in ethnically divided societies. It starts from the premise that in such societies, the ethnic cleavage is particularly important and therefore the inclusion of representatives from the ethnic minority group in the governmental process is a necessary condition for their interests to be taken into account, and to be seen by the group members to be taken into account. This leads to the obvious question – in a democratic society, are there other interests that have a special significance which requires a set of institutional arrangements to ensure their effective representation? One such set of interests that has emerged, both in theory and practice, as requiring special attention is the interest of class. There are a number of ways in which to conceptualize the interest of class, and of course this has been a topic of commentary and analysis dating at least from Marx' writing in the middle of the 19th century (see, for example, Panitch, 1977). The development of the modern party system in many advanced democracies owes much to efforts first to enfranchise and then to represent the interests of the working class in democratic governance. If one conceptualizes class in simple dichotomous terms, as the working class and the owning and/or managing class, the question arises as to whether it is desirable to formulate government policy on economic issues without including representatives of either of these classes in the decision-making process.

The answer rests on an assessment of the impact of excluding either class from the decision-making process. And of course, in the real world of politics, the answer is that it depends – in some countries the effective exclusion of either of these two classes, especially labour, from governmental policy appears to have little impact, whereas in other countries it has a significant negative impact both on economic stability and consequently on political stability. The key intervening variable, according to research on this topic in the 1970s and 1980s, is the

concentration of authority among business and labour organizations in peak national associations (Schmitter and Lehmbruch, 1979). Where authority is concentrated, and hence where the action of the classes can be effectively coordinated, then an exclusion from power of either class can lead to negative results – disinventment on the part of business, and withdrawal of labour through strikes and other industrial action, on the part of labour. A theory and practice that emerged to respond to this situation was neo-corporatism, whereby governments formed tri-partite arrangements involving themselves (i.e., governmental representatives) together with representatives of peak industry and labour organizations for the development of industrial policy.

2.4.1   Formal bargaining and class conflict

It was not coincidental that neo-corporatist arrangements were at their zenith, particularly in Western Europe, in the 1970s and 1980s (Schmitter and Lehmbruch, 1979; Lembruch and Schmitter, 1982). The world economy was experiencing the significant shock of dramatically escalating price for oil, and this in turn had a ripple effect throughout the industrial sector. Double digit inflation, coupled with double digit unemployment, created increased conflict between workers and producers and led to heightened labour unrest and the risk of capital flight. Neo-corporatist arrangements were introduced to ensure that labour and industry were engaged in the formulation of policies designed to moderate wage demands and dampen escalating prices. For such arrangements to be effective, however, it was necessary for the representatives for industry and labour to bargain, but also for each of them to have the capacity to impose their negotiated settlement on their members. Where business and labour organizations were weak and fragmented, such as in Canada and the United States, there was little to be gained on the part of the government in bringing the groups together in a tri-partite bargaining process. In short, they lacked the capacity to bargain on behalf of their members. Where the peak associations of industry and labour were strong and centralized, as in much of Western Europe, neo-corporatism

provided an additional, and effective, representational instrument. Thus, the underlying social conditions have a significant impact on the viability of this option.

2.5 Representing marginal groups

The neo-corporatist model of representing class interests serves as a reminder that the distribution of legislative seats, and similarly the composition of the executive branch of government, constitutes only a partial view of the complex system whereby societal interests may be reflected in governmental policy. Indeed, one might argue that the interests of business associations or labour organizations may be better represented in face to face negotiations with government than they would be if those groups were to work through the existing electoral and party systems in the competitive quest for power. In the Canadian system of government, is it best to have more of one's representatives (in the sense of descriptive representation discussed above) in one branch of government versus the others (executive, legislative, judicial), or in one level of government or another (federal, provincial, municipal), in one of the bicameral houses or other (Senate, House of Commons), or perhaps in one element of the executive or another (formal executive – that is, the governor general, or the cabinet)? Likewise, is it better to organize an effective group (which may or may not lobby government directly) outside the institutionalized political system, or to work within elective and appointed offices? With all the choices of representational instruments at hand, and given the multiple interests that individuals possess, how does one know whether his or her interests are over- or under-represented?

These are challenging questions because they highlight some of the ambiguities around the issue of representation. The fact that there may not be a simple or definitive answer, however, does not lead to the conclusion that one cannot make judgments about representational effectiveness of a political system. It simply means that such judgments are likely to be conditional, understood within the

historical and situational context for an individual or group, partial, and a matter of ongoing discussion and contestation.

That caveat notwithstanding, the literature on representation is replete with examples of groups that are identified as 'marginal', and for whom part of the definition of being marginal is that they are viewed (or view themselves) as under-represented in the political process. Examples of such groups identified as marginal are women, people of minority ethnic origin, aboriginals, people from regions with low population relative to the national population, and minority religious groups, among others. Had this list been drawn 50 years ago, it is likely that it would have looked quite different. Should a list of 'marginalized' groups be drawn 50 years from now, it may look quite different as well. Such is the dynamic nature of the representation of marginal groups.

2.5.1   Women, minorities and other under-represented groups

Since the purpose of this analysis is to identify the changing concept of representation, rather than to evaluate particular claims about representational effectiveness, this section will focus on recent analyses of the representation of women to illustrate the more general point about changing conceptions of representation of marginal groups. Further to the comment above on the dynamic character of assessments of representation, much of the literature that examines women's representation in Canada argues that the issue itself received little scholarly or indeed community attention prior to the 1960s. The considerable build-up of social and political pressure and public interest, that led to the extension of the federal franchise to women during the first decades of the 20th century, was not followed by similar activity and interest in the immediate aftermath about the low rate of success in electing women to office. Although some successes occurred as early as the 1921 election, the following generations witnessed very low levels of success, a fact bemoaned by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (Bird Commission) in 1970 (Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970). Many commentators view

the Bird Commission report as a watershed, in its emphasis on the under-representation of women in Canadian electoral politics, and its call for more women as legislators (Arscott, 1998, p. 145). A generation later, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Lortie Commission), recommended that the proportion of women in the House of Commons should be increased in the range from 20% to 40% of legislators in order to provide for "equitable representation" (Ibid., p. 221; Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991, pp. 93-122).

The literature on the representation of women in Canada has well-documented both the increasing number of women elected to the House of Commons from the 1960s to the present, together with the ongoing gap between the proportion of women in the population and the corresponding proportion in the House of Commons (Erickson, 1998, p. 220; see sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below). The case for the under-representation of this group in the Canadian parliament is compelling. This in turn has led to calls for changing the patterns of candidate recruitment by political parties, changing the character of party, candidate and election financing (legislation to this end, Bill C-24, received Royal Assent in June 2003), and altering the electoral system (since women have been more successful in getting elected in some proportional representation systems) (Erickson, 1998; Young, 2003).

Recent scholarship on the representation of women, however, has taken a more nuanced view of the issue of under-representation. A key element of this view is that women have a plurality of interests, which according to Tremblay and Andrew, undermines "the myth of 'woman' as unique and indivisible" (1998, p. 8). This perspective suggests that an assessment of the representational effectiveness of a political (or electoral) system based on the number of women elected is misguided. Such an analysis could lead to a reductionist argument in which one would examine the number of "hyphenated" women (i.e., white women, women of colour, rich women, poor women, etc.) elected. The scope of such a project would be limited only

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by one's imagination in devising new categories of women! To put a historical form to this analysis, Young (1998) notes the paradox that precisely at the time that increasing numbers of Canadian women were being elected to Parliament, the leadership within the Canadian women's movement was rethinking, and rejecting, the strategy of electing more women to the House of Commons. In short, at least one national group recognized that there are multiple avenues to and forms of representation, and chose a path other than election of more women to the Commons. It is the strength of representative democracy that individuals and groups are free to choose the strategy of their liking, and to change that strategy over time. It is an empirical question as to which strategy is most effective in advancing the interests of a group.

Both theoretical and empirical analysis of the concept of representation has highlighted the ambiguity that is confronted in arriving at simple assessments of the representational effectiveness of any system of governance. Part of the ambiguity owes from the nature of the concept itself – representation is multi-dimensional in character, part subjective, part objective and relates to the values both of those who serve as representatives as well as those they purport to represent. In addition, the process of representation is of necessity mediated through a set of political institutions, and these in turn are the product of historical resolutions of contests about power and process. They both reflect the outcome of past contestation, and set the conditions over which current contestation occurs. Of all the institutions that have a bearing on the character of representation, the one which is perhaps most important in the context of democratic elections is the electoral system. It is to this key institution that the analysis now turns.

3.0 Designing Electoral Systems

An electoral system is a set of rules for translating votes in an election into seats in the legislature. In exploring the theme of the meaning of representation in

contemporary Canadian democracy, it is important to begin by examining what is being asked of the electoral system. Is the expectation that there is some set of known (or knowable) ideas or preferences held by the community, and that the electoral system should function to reproduce this distribution of preferences in the legislature? Should legislators mirror the descriptive characteristics of the population, and, if so, which characteristics? Should the electoral system produce overall political stability? Or majority governments? Or what? Electoral systems are far from neutral, and it is the task of this section to highlight some of the biases and distortions that arise through electoral systems.

3.1 The Rules for Aggregating Votes

This section begins with a review of theoretical discussions regarding the possibility that a voting system can consistently and reliably produce a result that meets with a small set of conditions normally associated with democracies. It finds that no such voting system is possible. The consequence is a reinforcement of the idea that electoral systems matter, and have a very substantial effect in interpreting community will.

3.1.1   Calculating the social welfare function

The term 'social welfare function' in a democracy, means a decision that captures the preferences of the electorate in such a way that the majority will, or the majority view, prevails. An obvious question for those designing and evaluating democratic processes is identifying the method that achieves the social welfare function. If democracy is about representing popular or majority views, then the method or processes that can consistently produce the social welfare function should be the preferred method. In a classic statement on the difficulties for an electoral system to produce the social welfare function, Kenneth Arrow (1951; 1963) developed a set of axioms which would serve as necessary preconditions to be

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achieved by an electoral system in this regard. The counter-intuitive conclusion of Arrow's analysis, as discussed by Mueller (1979, p. 185), was that "given but a few, fairly weak and ethically uninspiring axioms, no process (voting, the market, or otherwise) exists that satisfies them". In short, it is impossible to devise rules for selecting among the preferences of people in a community that ensures an outcome that satisfies the majority sentiment. To demonstrate this paradox, it is useful briefly to review the five axioms, and in doing so the following adopts the descriptions in Mueller (1979, pp. 185-6). Any set of rules (i.e., any electoral system) that achieves the social welfare function must meet the following axioms:

- "Unanimity (The Pareto Postulate). If an individual preference is unopposed by any contrary preference of any other individual, this preference is preserved in the social ordering.
- Nondictatorship. No individual enjoys a position such that whenever he expresses a preference between any two alternatives and all other individuals express the opposite preference, his preference is always preserved in the social ordering.
- Transitivity. The social welfare function gives a consistent ordering of all feasible alternatives. That is if "A" is greater than "B" and "B" is greater than "C", then "A" is greater than "C"; and if "A" is equal to "B" and "B" is equal to "C", then "A" is equal to "C".
- Range (Unrestricted domain). There is some 'universal' alternative "U" such that for every pair of other alternatives ("X" and "Y") for every individual, each of the 6 possible strict orderings of "U", "X" and "Y" is contained in some admissible raking of all alternatives for the individual.
- Independence of irrelevant alternatives. The social choice between any two alternatives must depend on the orderings of individuals over only these two alternatives, and not on their orderings over other alternatives." (Mueller, 1979, pp. 1985-6).

Any voting system must meet these 5 conditions if the outcome could be said to produce the social welfare function, or to reflect the overall preferences of the community. Arrow proceeded to demonstrate that these conditions interact in such a way that any social welfare function that results must either be arrived at through an arbitrary process, or be imposed (Mueller, 1979, p. 188). The conclusion to be drawn in an assessment of the concept of representation is to recognize that all systems for identifying the social welfare function, or all electoral systems, have some

arbitrariness to their character. The task, then, is not to seek an electoral system that is free of bias, but rather to understand the biases of the various electoral system options, and to select the bias that most closely corresponds to the values that one wishes to emphasize. This perspective is useful to bear in mind in the following sections that outline the elements of an electoral system, and the major options of electoral systems that exist in representative democracies.

3.2 Elements of an Electoral System

Electoral systems, as rules for translating votes into seats, provide a set of practices relating to 3 issues (the classic statement on the three elements of an electoral system is Rae, 1967). First, to what degree of detail is a voter able to express his or her likes or dislikes towards the candidates for office. The options range from systems that provide only a simple decision or nominal choice (i.e., Voter A likes Candidate B more than any other candidate), or a complex choice, reflecting an ordinal decision (e.g., Voter B likes Candidate C more than Candidate A, and Candidate A more than Candidate B). Second, how many candidates are elected from an electoral district – one (i.e., a single member district) or more than one (i.e., a multi-member district). Third, what is required for a candidate to be declared a winner – a plurality of votes (i.e., more than any other candidate) or a majority of votes (i.e., at least half of all votes cast). The combination of these various elements of electoral systems provides a wide array of possible permutations.

3.2.1   Preference articulation: simple vs. complex

Electoral systems vary in the degree to which they allow voters to indicate their preferences among candidates. The simplest, and crudest, method is to allow voters to make a categorical choice – to select one candidate above all the rest. This method is called simple preference articulation and is the method used in voting for members for the Canadian House of Commons and for provincial legislatures. Its advantages are that it is easy to understand, voters are able to make a clear choice,

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and as its name implies, it is simple to administer. However, a disadvantage is that the voter is able to convey only a small amount of information about their feelings towards the government and opposition in the most recent term of office, and little about the candidates in the current election. For example, imagine a three-person contest in which the voter likes candidate "A" more than candidate "B", and candidate "B" more than candidate "C". A simple preference ballot enables the voter to vote for "A", thereby indicating his or her most preferred candidate, but he or she is not able to say anything about their preference of "B" over "C". Imagine further that coverage of the election in the media indicates that there is a close race between "B" and "C", and that the overall support for "A" is quite low. This scenario raises the possibility that candidate "C" may win, which is the least preferred alternative for this hypothetical voter. To guard against his or her least favourite candidate winning, the voter may be inclined to cast a ballot for "B", and thereby supporting the second favourite candidate in a process called strategic voting. In a simple preference ballot, the complex reasoning that led to this vote is reduced to the simple message that the voter prefers "B". Thus, the message that is conveyed by the simple preference ballot is, at best, incomplete.

An alternative is a complex preference ballot in which voters express their ordinal preferences towards candidates. In such ballots, the voter rank orders his or her preferences from most preferred to least preferred, which in the previous example would enable "A" as first preference, "B" second preference, and "C" third preference. Electoral systems that use complex preference articulation use multiple stages in counting the ballots. In the first stage, the first preference of all voters are counted to determine whether any candidate has enough votes to be declared elected. The number needed for election varies according to whether it is a single member district, in which a majority is required, as in the Australian House of Representatives, or a multiple member district, in which one must simply exceed the electoral threshold, as in the Australia Senate (district magnitude is discussed in the

next section). If no candidate has a sufficient number of ballots to be elected, the second and subsequent stages involve eliminating the candidate(s) with the lowest vote total and counting the second (and subsequent) ballots of their supporters. This process continues until the full number of candidates is elected from the constituency. The advantages of this system are that it captures a fuller view of the voters' preferences, and in most cases provides the elected candidates with a stronger indication of their support among the voters. The disadvantages include the fact that it is less easy to understand, that the final counting of the ballots takes longer, and in certain circumstances does not necessarily eliminate strategic voting, since voters may still alter their choices based on assessments of who is likely to win.

3.2.2   Electoral districting: single vs. multiple

An electoral district typically is a geographic area within which votes are translated into legislative seats. In some instances, electoral districts are based on criteria other than population and geography, as for example in New Zealand, where seven seats in the national legislative assembly are reserved for electors who identify themselves as Maori, and who choose to register as Maori electors (Archer, 2003). Nonetheless, the norm is for an electoral district to be defined by territory. Electoral districts vary on the basis of the number of representatives they elect. One alternative is for each district, sometimes called a riding or constituency, to elect a single member, and hence the name single-member district. An advantage of a single member district electoral system is the existence of a direct link between the citizens and the legislature, in that all citizens have "their representative". Such a system often produces an expectation that constituency service is a key role for elected legislators. A disadvantage of single member constituencies is that there can be a high level of distortion between the votes cast in an election, and the partisan distribution of seats in the legislature. For example, in a system with three political parties in which one party consistently receives 35% of the vote in each constituency, and the other parties receive 32% and 33%, respectively, the first party would receive

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all of the seats, and the latter two parties would receive none. To illustrate with an example from Canadian federal elections, in 1993 the Liberal party received 60% of the House of Commons seats on the basis of 41.3% of the vote. The Progressive Conservatives, in contrast, received less than 1% of the Commons seats on the basis of 16% of the vote. While this is an extreme example of disproportionality between votes and legislative seats, the single member electoral district system permits such distortions (Archer, et al., 1999).

The alternative system is to have more than one member elected from each electoral district, in multi-member districts. This can be as few as two members per district (as in the American Senate) to as many as have seats in the legislative assembly (Israel has one electoral district for the entire country). Most of the countries that use multi-member districts (the Australian Senate, the Canadian Senate [albeit appointed], and the legislatures in most of Europe), choose a number of members per district between these two extremes. In elections in cases using multi-member districts, voters typically are given the option to vote for individual candidates, or for a list of candidates with the placement of names determined by the parties. An advantage of a multi-member district is the fact that the outcome is likely to be considerably more proportional in relation to the vote than is the case with single member districts. Indeed, the desire to increase the proportionality of representation is one of the major arguments advanced for such a system. And this proportionality relates not only to the partisan character of the representatives. Rather, multi-member districts that focus on increasing proportional representation provide increased opportunities for the election of groups of people who have historically been marginalized, and under-represented in the political process. For example, as Rule (1987) notes, in relation to the under-representation of women, "the type of electoral system is still the most significant predictor [of women's parliamentary recruitment]" (cited in Erickson, 1998, p. 249). Furthermore, the level of

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proportionality of the legislature, particularly with respect to the distribution of partisan support, increases as the number of members per constituency increases.

On the other hand, a disadvantage of multi-member districts is that they tend to blur the association between citizens and their representatives, since representatives from multi-member constituencies tend not to adopt a 'constituency service' role orientation to the degree of those elected from single member constituencies. A second characteristic of elections in multi-member districts that sometimes is viewed as a disadvantage is the tendency to elect members from larger number of parties, thus making it less likely that any single party can form a majority government. This in turn could lead to decreased political stability. However, some have argued that the evidence is not compelling that single member constituency systems produce more stable governments (Cairns, 1968; Farrell, 2001), and also question the importance of the legislative role of constituency representation as a key function of legislators.

In addition to the distinction between single-member and multi-member districts, there is also the distinction between simple and complex electoral districting. A simple districting formula is one in which a common set of districting rules is applied across the territory. Thus, for example, the Canadian House of Commons is constituted from a relatively simple formula[1], in which each Member is elected from a single constituency. However, electoral districting can be complex whereby different forms of districting, and of the selection of candidates, can be superimposed on the same territory. An example is the German legislature, in which half the seats are determined by the single member plurality method (for a description of the plurality method, see the following section), and the other half are selected from party lists of

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[1] The system is described as 'relatively simple' because although each Member of the House of Commons is elected from a constituency, the rules defining the way in which constituencies are determined are relatively complex (see for example Elections Canada, <u>Representation in the House of Commons</u>, 1993).

candidates, with the election of candidates based on the votes the parties received in the separate list election.

3.2.3   Decision Rule: plurality vs. majority

The third element of the electoral system according to Rae is the decision rule that determines the winner of the contest. One option is to decide the winner by a plurality rule. In this instance, the winner is the candidate who receives more votes than any other candidate. Sometimes called the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, the plurality vote is used in elections to the Canadian and British House of Commons, the American House of Representatives, and all Canadian provincial legislatures. Its advantages are its simplicity in administering and ease in understanding. The major disadvantage to this system is that candidates can be elected to office with less than majority support, and where the number of candidates is very large, with substantially less than majority support. Thus, for example, Canadian governments typically are elected with majority governments despite the fact that they rarely receive the support of a majority of voters. In those instances in which the government has less than a majority of seats, the practice has been to govern with minority rather than coalition governments. Thus, the plurality electoral formula has led to the practice of one party forming the government in spite of its minority support within the electorate.

A majority electoral formula is one in which the winner is decided when one of the candidates receives 50% plus one of the votes. Majority elections are common in the selection of leaders of Canada's political parties, at American presidential conventions, and in national elections in France and the Australian House of Representatives. A key issue in majoritarian systems is how to get a majority vote when there are more than two candidates. Several options are available. One way is to eliminate candidates with lower vote totals either incrementally or all at once. The incremental approach is to eliminate the candidate either below some threshold of votes, or who receives the lowest vote total. This can be done either by having additional rounds of voting, or through an Alternative Vote procedure. For the

Australian House of Representatives, voters rank-order all candidates, and the rank-order ballots are used to transfer votes successively to more popular candidates until one candidate has a majority of votes. In leadership conventions for the federal Progressive Conservative party, the lowest scoring candidate is eliminated prior to moving to the second and subsequent rounds of balloting until a majority winner is produced. The other approach is to eliminate all but the two leading candidates, and to have these two candidates in a second, run-off election. An advantage of the majority system is the assurance that the winner has the support of a majority of voters. A disadvantage of this system is that it can impose higher requirements on the part of voters (for example, Australian voters must vote for all candidates, even those they know little or nothing about), it can take a longer period of time to arrive at a winner, and the outcome may still be highly disproportional in the relation of votes to seats in the legislature (in which there may be a particular bias against weaker parties, as with the single member plurality system). Together, then these features of preference articulation, electoral districting, and the decision rule comprise the choices available in developing an electoral system.

3.3 Examples of Electoral Systems and Their Effects

The electoral systems that result from choices among these elements have a number of distinct features and impacts on the representational process. As Farrell (2001, p. 12) notes, "(s)ome systems are apparently associated with greater degrees of governmental stability; some systems promote smaller parties better than others; there are effects on the nature of parliamentary representation and on the organization and campaign styles of political parties and there are effects on the representation of women and ethnic minorities." This section reviews a number of the major electoral systems that have been used among democracies – single member plurality, majoritarian, proportional representation, single transferable vote and mixed

electoral systems[2]. It highlights the characteristic features of these systems, as well as their main effects in the process of representation – which parties or groups are likely to be advantaged by the electoral system, and which are likely to be penalized. This section also discusses what kinds of changes in representational efficiency for particular groups would be accomplished with changes to the electoral system.

3.3.1   Single member plurality

The single member plurality (SMP) electoral system is used in elections to the Canadian and British House of Commons, the American House of Representatives, and in Canadian provincial legislatures. It combines simple preference articulation, single member constituencies, and a plurality decision rule. SMP electoral systems have the effect of a relatively low rate of proportionality between votes and legislative seats, and thus a high level of electoral distortion. The system's bias is in favour of stronger parties, and parties whose support is geographically concentrated. The parties most penalized by SMP are those whose support is spread diffusely, but who finish second or worse in constituency contests. According to Lijphart (1994, p. 20), all majoritarian systems (in which he includes SMP systems) "systematically favour the larger parties, to produce disproportional election outcomes, and to discourage multi-partism."

In Canadian federal politics, the SMP system has traditionally favoured the party with the most votes (historically either the Liberals or the Progressive Conservatives), and parties with a regional concentration of votes (there has been a long series of regionally-significant parties, such as the Progressives in the 1920s and 30s, Social Credit/Creditiste from the 1930s to the 1960s, Reform in the early 1990s, and Canadian Alliance and Bloc Quebecois in the contemporary period). The parties most disadvantaged by SMP in Canada have been the CCF (1930s to late 1950s), the NDP (1960s to present), and most recently the Progressive

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[2] There are a number of ways of categorizing electoral systems (see, for example, Rae, 1967; Lijphart, 1994; Farrell, 2001). The labels used here are those described by Farrell.

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Conservatives (1993 to present). The present circumstance, in which both the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservatives, as parties of the ideological right, split the conservative vote has provided a significant advantage to the governing Liberals, creating stable Liberal majority governments on the basis of a national vote of approximately 40 per cent or less. This has led to an increased interest among some analysts for proposing changes to the electoral system to make it more proportional to the vote (see, for example, the essays in Milner, 1999).

3.3.2   Majoritarian

Majoritarian electoral systems are few in number in national elections, and can be used either with simple preference, or rank-ordered ballots. Where simple preference is used, as in French presidential elections, the process is two-stage, with all but the two most popular candidates eliminated from the ballot after stage 1. Where ordinal ranking is used, such as in the Australian House of Representatives elections, voters rank-order all candidates in a system referred to as Alternative Vote. In this instance, voters cast their ballot only once, but the votes are counted in stages, in which at each stage lowest ranking candidates are eliminated, and the votes of their supporters transferred to their next most preferred candidate, until one candidate achieves a majority of votes. Within a majority system, single member constituencies ensure that a winner can achieve the majority required for victory.

Assessments of the proportionality of the outcome of electoral systems reveals that majority systems are least proportional of all electoral systems, worse even than single member plurality systems. The reason for this is the very high threshold required for election in any constituency – an absolute majority of voters, making it very difficult for newly emerging parties to break in to the party system. Therefore, countries that use majority electoral systems tend to have few political parties elected to the legislature, and also tend to score lower on the representation of 'marginal' groups.

3.3.3   Proportional Representation

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In proportional representation electoral systems, typically a simple preference articulation process is combined with multi-member constituencies and a plurality electoral formula. Parties are allocated seats based on the proportion of vote received, and then the parties' candidates are elected according to their placement on lists developed by the party. Candidates placed higher on a party's list have a greater likelihood of election than those placed lower on the list. The constituencies can vary in size, from relatively small (2 to 5 members) to very large (1 constituency for the entire country). The larger the number of seats per constituency, the more proportional will be the allocation of seats in the legislature. Belgium was the first country to adopt proportional representation in 1899 and by 1920, most of continental Europe had adopted the party list system (Farrell, 2001, pp. 70-1).

Despite the general similarly in the way in which party list systems are implemented, one major difference is in the way in which the system determines the allocation of seats. The two major alternatives are between those that allocate seats by subtraction (referred to as the largest remainder system, and used in the Hare and Droop quota methods), and those that allocate seats by division (referred to as highest average, and used in the d'Hondt and Sainte-Lague methods).[3] Both alternatives produce legislative seats much more highly proportional than is the case with SMP or majoritarian systems. In addition to the advantage of the high level of proportionality, party list systems also may facilitate the election of 'marginal' candidates – that is women, people of various social backgrounds, members of ethnic minorities, and the like, by enabling the parties to include such people on their lists. As discussed more fully below, however, systems of proportional representation provide no guarantee of increasing the number of historically marginalized candidates. It depends very much on whether the parties drawing up the lists of candidates actively seek to provide a more descriptively representative list of

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[3] For a detailed discussion of these alternatives, see Farrell, 2001, pp. 71-80.

candidates. The evidence suggests that while in some countries parties have done so, equally clear is the finding that in other countries they decidedly do not.

If the degree of descriptive representation was the only criterion used in the selection of an electoral system, a reasonable case would exist for adopting proportional representation by party list. However, other criteria may also be important. One example is the degree to which a representative has close ties to his or her constituency, and can thereby provide constituency service. Systems of proportional representation generate weak links between individual members of the legislature and the local community, since the representatives do not rely on support from a constituency for their election. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, there often is no direct link between votes in a general election and the selection of a government in systems that use proportional representation. Such systems tend to produce legislatures with a larger number of parties, with the likelihood that no party has enough seats to form a majority government. Therefore, government formation often is produced through negotiation between the parties to form a coalition of support sufficiently large to control a majority of legislative seats. The period of open political campaigning and voting is therefore often followed by a period of uncertainty over the formation of government, with negotiations taking place in private in what are pejoratively described as "smoke-filled back rooms". Furthermore, because no party typically controls a majority of legislative seats, the coalition that results from negotiation often includes substantially the same parties, and the same legislators and cabinet officials, in election after election. This can lead to the assessment that elections produce little meaningful alteration in governments, and thus little responsiveness of the electoral system to the wishes of the electorate.

A related disadvantage of systems of proportional representation that produce coalition governments is the difficulty in holding a political party responsible and accountable for government policy. Since bi-partisan or multi-partisan support is required for the passage of legislation, parties in government are in a position to

blame their coalition partners for any shortcomings that arise from their policies. With the resulting blurring of party lines, there may be decreased government and party accountability.

3.3.4 Single Transferable Vote

The single transferable vote electoral system combines multi-member electoral districts with a rank order ballot, thereby producing a level of proportionality greater than occurs with SMP but less than with proportional representation systems. Although this method is popular among electoral system specialists (Farrell, 2001), it has not been widely used, and it has been adopted in only a few instances, including Ireland, Malta and in Australian Senate elections. An advantage of this system is a relatively high degree of proportionality, and a direct link between the voter and the candidates elected. That is, voters actually choose among competing candidates rather than rely solely on lists generated by the parties in electing legislators, and this in turn can be expected to produce an increased amount of constituency service among legislators. On the other hand, since there are multiple representatives from each constituency, and typically representatives from a variety of parties, the degree of responsibility of any representative to his or her constituency is weaker than with SMP systems. The other major weakness of STV is the requirement for voters to cast their ballot for large numbers of candidates. Thus, voters must either have a lot of information about the candidates (since there are so many of them), they must reduce that information by relying on cues, such as the party label of the candidates, they must vote with less than complete information, or constituencies must be designed to have a relatively small number of seats to reduce the information required of voters. However, reducing the number of seats per constituency has an adverse effect on the proportionality of the outcome – seat totals are more proportional as the number of seats per constituency increases.

3.3.5 Mixed Electoral System

In view of the finding that there are advantages and disadvantages of all electoral systems, an increasingly popular strategy is to adopt an electoral system that combines features of two or more of the electoral systems described in the preceding sections. The first country to use a mixed electoral system was Germany, through the constitution adopted by West Germany following World War II. According to Farrell, mixed electoral systems have become so popular, particularly during the 1990s, that by 2001, 29 countries had adopted some form of mixed electoral system. The German case combines the election of one half the seats in the legislature by SMP, with the other half allocated based on party lists. German voters cast two ballots, one for the candidate in their constituency and the other for the parties' lists of candidates. The result of the constituency election, as in other SMP elections, tends to be highly distorting, favouring the strongest parties and those with regionally concentrated support. However, the second stage in the process of allocating seats is to provide to parties a number of seats in proportion to their percentage of the vote. The issue faced by mixed electoral systems is whether to use the constituency seats in the calculation of a party's total seat allocation, or whether to allocate the party list seats in proportion to the vote, leaving aside the seats won by the parties through the constituency-level contests. The first option is used in the German case, in which the party list seats are allocated as an overall corrective of the SMP process.

The risk of such a mixed system, which relies as it does on the proportional allocation of party list seats, is that political parties with representation in the legislature will proliferate, and thereby make more difficult the task of forming stable governments. In Germany, several provisions were introduced to address this issue. First, there is a prohibition against 'anti-system' parties – that is, parties whose avowed purpose is the undermining of the democratic system of governance. Second, there is a threshold that all parties must achieve (in the German case, of 5% of the total votes cast) before any of the party list seats are assigned. A second threshold in Germany is that a party must win at least three seats in the constituency

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election before any seats are allocated to it. These measures in combination have had the effect of minimizing the number of parties that win seats in the legislature, and of reducing the fractionalization of the party system. One might argue that they also have the effect of decreasing the overall level of representation of the legislature. This appears to be a price that the system's adherents are willing to pay in exchange for the high level of political stability, and higher level of representation relative to SMP, that the system produces.

The mixed electoral system has some clear advantages over SMP, which explains why it has been far more popular among countries newly democratizing or adopting new electoral systems. It combines the feature of strong constituency representation, as in SMP, with much greater proportionality of result. In addition, through the adoption of various thresholds, one can limit the proliferation of political parties, and the attendant instability that is sometimes seen to characterize systems of proportional representation. In addition, since parties control the rank ordering of candidates on their lists, the central party organization is better positioned to effect the increased representation of identified groups, such as members of marginal groups discussed above. It is not surprising to find that the election of women, for example, tends to be higher in systems that include at least some form of proportional representation (Sawer and Simms, 1993, p. 19; Erickson, 1998), either on its own, or through a mixed electoral system.

This section began with a review of a theoretical discussion of the possibility of devising unbiased, non-arbitrary, and non-dictatorial rules to identify social preferences. It found that no such rules exist, and consequently identifying social preferences was a value-laden exercise. In short, the rules for determining the wishes and preferences of a majority themselves have an impact on what is perceived to be most preferred. The analysis then turned to an empirical demonstration of this finding, with reference to the elements of an electoral system and of the major electoral systems that are available. Again, the finding was that no

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electoral system could be said to be unbiased. All electoral systems reward some kinds of values, all contain biases against some kinds of activities and processes. The issue for those designing or choosing among electoral systems is not to choose an unbiased versus a biased system. Rather, the question to ask is, what kind of outcome does one wish to foster? This itself is a highly value-laden question, and underscores the fact that designing political institutions is a highly political exercise, and a matter of considerable and ongoing contestation. It is such contestation that forms the foundation of political choice.

4.0 Representational Character of Parliament and Parties

This section provides the context for changing notions of representation in Canada by examining the patterns of representation in the House of Commons, from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Who is in and who is not? What are the demographic characteristics of Members of Parliament – in terms of sex, ethnicity, age or other characteristics, and how have these changed over time? In addition, the section reviews the party context to representation, with an assessment of the winners and losers of the Canadian electoral system, overall system distortion, and its impact on representation.

Political parties are key players in the representational process – not merely because they provide a measure of representational effectiveness of an electoral system, but more so because of the role they play in defining what is and is not a politically-relevant issue and group. This section turns to a number of questions regarding parties as instruments of representation. First, what are their internal processes of democracy? Do they attempt to represent particular groups, are they open and active, with transparent funding bases, or are they largely confined to activity as 'legislative parties'? What about the parties' processes for nominating delegates for party conventions or candidates for elections? What efforts have been made to be inclusive of various groups, particularly the historically under-represented

in these nomination contests? And finally, what conclusions should be drawn about the parties' methods of selecting leaders? To what extent have leadership selection contests been open to all party members, and what efforts, and what successes, have the parties shown in selecting leaders from various social groups, particularly from among the historically under-represented?

4.1 Who is elected to Parliament in Canada

Canada has a bi-cameral legislature within a federal system of government. Bi-cameralism means that there are two houses of Parliament – the House of Commons and the Senate, and federalism means that there is a set of governmental branches – executive, legislative and judicial, at both the federal (or national) level and within each of the provinces. The provincial legislative level is unicameral, with only one legislative house, variously called the provincial parliament, the legislative assembly or, in the case of Quebec, the national assembly. The analysis that follows focuses primarily on representation in the federal Parliament, and within that institution, it focuses mainly on the House of Commons, although some reference will be made also to representation in the Senate. This section begins with a discussion of the principles underlying representation in Parliament.

As part of the confederation agreement that led to the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the bicameral legislature that was adopted to replace the unicameral legislature that was used in the period governed by the Act of Union (1841 to 1867) established several representational principles. The legislature in place during the Act of Union period had a single legislative assembly comprised of equal representation from the colonies of Canada East (now Quebec) and Canada West (now Ontario), despite the significantly larger population in Canada East at the time of its establishment in 1841. The pre-Confederation period witnessed the gradual adoption of responsible government and with it an increase in the political authority of Prime Minister and cabinet, and a diminution in the authority of the appointed governor. The colony also experienced significant demographic change,

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with such rapid population growth in Canada West that by 1860 its population exceeded that of Canada East. The growing demographic weight of Canada West (which was largely English speaking and Protestant) as compared to Canada East (French speaking and Catholic) led to growing demands for the adoption of representation by population.

The confederation settlement responded to those demands, but with important caveats. First, the House of Commons was to be elected based on a system of representation by population, but there would be an upper house, the Senate, based on the principle of equal regional representation. Thus, the new provinces of Quebec and Ontario each would receive 24 Senate seats, as would the Maritime region, represented at Confederation by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Later, the 4 western provinces also were defined as a region, sharing 24 Senate seats, Prince Edward Island was included in the Maritime total when it joined Confederation in 1873, Newfoundland was provided with 6 Senate seats when it joined in 1949, and the federal territories were later allocated one Senate seat each. The Senate also was based on appointment rather than election (a situation that persists to the present), as well a requiring a property qualification. Thus, the Confederation settlement institutionalized a number of representational principles in Parliament, in addition to simple representation by population.

In the period since Confederation, the principle of representation by population was refined to make the House of Commons a more inclusive representational body, but also one that continues to fall well short of mirroring Canadian society. Federal elections in the period immediately following Confederation were significantly different than today. For example, the federal franchise was based on provincial franchise requirements and for a generation following Confederation, in most provinces was limited to male property owners. The secret ballot was introduced in the late 1880s, property qualifications were eliminated in the 1890s, and the federal franchise was extended to women in the late 1910s.

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The federal franchise was extended to aboriginal people in the 1960s, the same decade that the voting age was lower to 18 years. Thus, universal adult suffrage was finally in place a full century after Confederation.

4.1.1   Demographic characteristics

During the slow evolution of suffrage in Canada, the demographic characteristics of elected Members of Parliament changed, but changed very slowly and marginally. For example, in a study of the social and political characteristics of people elected to Canada's 28th Parliament (i.e., 1968 – 1972), Allan Kornberg and William Mishler had this to say,

> "A number of empirical studies of the social and political backgrounds of Canadian MPs have made clear that in comparison to a cross section of the population MPs have always been an elite group … (t)he proportion of MPs enjoying high status occupations has never been less than 60% whereas no more than 15% of the public ever has enjoyed such occupations …. Differences in educational attainment between MPs and members of the public always have been great ... members of the several federal cabinets may be said to constitute an 'elite-within-an-elite' in that they stand in approximately the same relationship to backbenchers as do the latter to the general public …If, then, MPs generally and cabinet members in particular always have constituted a socioeconomic and political elite, in what ways has the social composition of the membership of the Commons changed in the past century? The answer is that it has not changed very much." (Kornberg and Mishler, 1976, pp. 18-20).

Whereas Kornberg and Mishler emphasized the stable, over-representation of what they referred to as the 'socioeconomic and political elite' – that is, those with a higher socioeconomic status, higher paying job, from a wealthier family, with higher levels of educational attainment, and from a more highly politicized background, other social characteristics of elected Members of Parliament also differentiated them from the wider Canadian population. For example, very few women, members of visible minority groups, aboriginal Canadians, and other 'marginalized' groups were elected to Canada's parliament during the century following Confederation. By way of illustration, Young (2002, note 17 at p. 198) notes that in the 1950s and 1960s, the number of women in the House of Commons ranged from a low of one in 1968 to a high of five in 1962. Abu-Laban (2002; p. 272) states that from 1867 to 1964, a total

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of only 97 people of non-British and non-French origin were elected to the House of Commons. Pelletier (1991; cited in Black (2002, pp. 359-60)), reported that in the eight general elections from 1965 to 1988, only 10 visible minorities were elected to Parliament, and of these, fully six were elected in 1988. From 1960, when aboriginal Canadians living on reserves received the vote, through to 1988, only 9 self-identified aboriginals were elected to Parliament (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991, p. 95), and in 1993 there were 4 MPs with Aboriginal roots (Black, 2002, p. 359).

The features of the demographic characteristics of Members of the House of Commons led the Lortie Commission in 1990-1 to commission a number of studies into the representation of women (Megyery, 1991a), ethno-cultural and visible minorities (Megyery, 1991b), and aboriginal Canadians (Milen, 1991), and to devote a section of the Commission's final report to the question of representation (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991, pp. 93-122). The Commission's approach to the matter of representation reflected the quality described by Pitkin (see above) as 'descriptive' representation. In the view of the Commission,

> "Although the principles of electoral democracy do not demand that citizens be represented in the House of Commons in a manner that mirrors Canadian society, neither do they assume that citizens will be represented by a political class whose membership is restricted to certain segments of society. All things being equal, the House of Commons should reasonably reflect the country's diversity … (A) profile of MPs as a body over time constitutes a valid indicator of the openness, equity and fairness of our electoral process." (RCERPF, 1991, p. 93).

In summarizing the conclusions of their various research studies, the Commission examined the ratio of the various groups' proportion of seats in the House of Commons and their proportion of the electorate. They found that women, who comprise more than 50 percent of the population, comprised only 9.9% of MPs in 1984 and 13.2% in 1988. The data from the latter year produced a representational ratio of 25.9%, leading to the conclusion that "women are the most

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underrepresented segment of Canadian society" (Ibid., p. 94). Visible minorities had a representational ratio of 32% (2% of MPs and about 6% of the population), and Aboriginal people a ratio of 28.6% (Ibid., p. 95). The Commission then went on to describe such ratios as "representational deficits" (Ibid., p. 96), and suggested that the source of such deficits may lie largely with the parties' candidate selection processes. This in turn led the Commission to propose 6 recommendations, five of which focused on party and candidate financing, and one of which was procedural, recommending that the parties be required to establish candidate search committees, and that commit the parties "to processes that demonstrably promote the identification and nomination of broadly representative candidates." (Ibid., pp. 117-121).

In the period since the publication of the Lortie Commission report, and in some cases in the period immediately preceding the report, there have been some changes in the demographic characteristics of elected Members of Parliament. Table 1 presents the number of female candidates elected to the House of Commons from 1984 to 2000. The proportion of women in the House of Commons more than doubled between 1984 and 1997, rising from 9.6% to 20.6% of all seats. However, the rate of growth in the election of women slowed considerably between 1993 and 1997, and stabilized after 1997. The differences within and between parties that may account for these changes are examined in section 3.2.1 below.

(Table 1 about here)

Table 2 presents data on the occupational background of Members of Parliament from 1974 to 2000. What is perhaps most striking about these data is the stability in the background characteristics of legislators. As was the case for the first century following Confederation, Canadian elected Members of Parliament continue to be drawn disproportionately from professional occupations and from senior management positions. Thus, Members of Parliament in the contemporary period are

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every bit as much members of the occupational elite as noted in earlier generations by Porter and by Kornberg and his colleagues.

(Table 2 about here)

Before drawing any conclusions about whether the high socio-economic level of elected Members of Parliament should be interpreted as a 'representational deficit' for those with lower incomes and lower occupational status, it is instructive to consider the job requirements of the position of MP. A Member of Parliament is a professional level position that requires skills such as communication (written and verbal), leadership, fundraising, strategizing, research and teamwork. In view of this job profile, it would be surprising if elected MPs were not drawn disproportionately from other management-level careers. The skill set that enables one to succeed generally in society (and which leads to a greater likelihood of having a management-level career) is similar to that needed to succeed in elective politics. The difficulty in drawing definitive conclusions about the overall effectiveness of representation is that while some people would interpret that data on occupational background of elected MPs as natural, desirable, and of benefit to the quality of representative democracy in Canada, others would conclude that the legislature is unrepresentative of the economic diversity of society, and thereby produces a representational deficit for those with lower socio-economic status. Proponents of these different views would likewise hold different views of the degree to which this situation is a 'problem' and whether it need be addressed through electoral reform.

The study of class and power in Canadian society undertaken by John Porter (1965), which included and examination of the ethnic composition of Members of Parliament, led to the conclusion that power in Canadian society was distributed in a pattern that he described as a 'vertical mosaic'. This mosaic was one in which the upper reaches of power, including election to the House of Commons, was characterized disproportionately by people of the two charter groups – British and French. Studies of the impact of ethnicity on election to office are complicated

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because of some ambiguities in the character of ethnicity – it has both subjective qualities (that is, an individual's identification with an ethnic group), as well as objective features, such as a person's place of birth, the place of birth of his or her forebears, and in the case of visible minorities, their physical characteristics (Abu-Laban, 2002). The most detailed studies of the election of people of ethnic minority and visible minority backgrounds to the House of Commons have been undertaken by Jerome Black (2002; 2003), and the data reproduced in Table 3.

Table 3 presents data on the election of majority (British or French origin) and non-majority (non-British or non-French origin) candidates in the period 1993 to 2000 (Black; 2003; p. 64). The data show that 25.4% (99 of 390) of elected Members of Parliament during that period were from minority ethnic groups. Within the Liberal party, 30% of the 208 elected members were minority, compared to 36.8% among Reform-Canadian Alliance, and 42.9% among the New Democrats elected. For both the Bloc Quebecois and Conservatives, in contrast, reliance on electing members for either of the two charter groups was much greater, and thus minority members much smaller (12.5% and 9.5%, respectively). The representation of people of minority ethnic background is higher among women (30.1%) than among men (24.3%) during this period. Thus, the ethnic composition of elected Members of Parliament is significantly more diverse than reported by Porter in earlier generations.

(Table 3 about here)

Data on the number of visible minorities in the House of Commons indicates a much lower rate of success than for ethnic minorities more generally. One feature of the categorization of ethnic minorities was that people of European origin, who are neither of British nor French origin, constitute the largest minority category, and at least with respect to their appearance, may be largely indistinguishable from members of the charter groups. However, Black (2002; p. 360) notes that visible minorities comprised only 13 elected MPs (4.4%) in 1993, and people of Aboriginal background held a further four seats. As Black (202; p. 359-60) notes, the election of

13 visible minority candidates can be interpreted different ways. On the one hand, it represents an historical high, since only 10 visible minority candidates were elected in the eight general elections between 1965 and 1988 (see also Pelletier, 1991). However, since visible minorities constituted 9.4% of the Canadian population in 1991, their proportion in the House of Commons still constituted significant descriptive under-representation. By the 2000 election, visible minorities had doubled their representation in the House of Commons, to 26 seats, while still only 4 Aboriginal Canadians were elected.

4.1.2 Partisan support

Apart from examining the demographic character of representation, a second vantage point into the character of representation in elected legislatures is to look at the distribution of votes and party seats. In Canada's Westminster-style parliamentary system, the executive by convention is drawn from the legislature, and largely from the House of Commons, so the distribution of party seats determines which party (or at least in principle, if not in practice, which parties) form the government, and thus controls the political and policy agenda. As noted above, Canada's Single Member Plurality electoral system has had several important effects in the translation of votes to legislative seats. These include:

- over-rewarding the party with the largest percentage of votes;

- over-rewarding parties whose votes are geographically concentrated;

- under-rewarding parties whose support is weaker than the most popular party in a given constituency; and is spread diffusely across the country.

The net result of these features of the electoral system is a tendency for the formation of majority governments, despite the fact that in almost every federal election, no party wins a majority of votes. In addition, there have emerged a series

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of regional parties, whose support is either weak or non-existent in other regions of the country. Third, the threshold for the emergence and electoral success of emerging parties with a pan-Canadian focus, for example such as a labour party, is very high, such that parties of this character have not developed successfully as major legislative alternatives. And finally, in the absence of a party with a majority of legislative seats, the tendency has been the formation of minority governments rather than coalition governments, often with the well-founded expectation that the minority situation will be 'corrected' by the formation of a majority government at the subsequent election. The latter observation has the effect of increasing the extent to which Canadian governments may be held accountable and responsible for legislation, since only one party typically forms the government.

Table 4 presents the partisan distribution in the Canadian House of Commons from 1878 to the present. Perhaps the most notable feature of Canadian elections is that during the 136 years since Confederation, only two parties – the Liberals and Conservatives (now Progressive Conservatives) have ever formed the government. Furthermore, in the 103 years since 1900, the Liberals have been in power for more than two-thirds of the time (72 years), and the Conservatives for 31 years. In an analysis of the stability and change in the political parties' electoral fortunes, Carty, Cross and Young (2000) have argued that there have been four distinct periods of party competition in Canada, what they call the patronage (1867 – 1917), regional brokerage (1921 – 1957), pan-Canadian (1963 – 1993), and fragmented and regionalized (1993 – present) party systems. These four stages of the party system are evident in the data in Table 4. The period to 1921 was one of straight-forward two party competition between the Liberals and Conservatives. In the period from 1921 to 1957, regional protest parties emerged in the Progressives and Social Credit, together with a party of the left (the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation), which also had a regional (Western) character to its support. From the 1960s to the early 1990s, the three main parties of the period (Liberal, Progressive Conservative and

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New Democratic Party) all had a pan-Canadian orientation, and politics focused to an increasing extent on the party leaders, particularly although not exclusively during election campaigns. In the early 1990s, the party system was fragmented with the emergence of two regional parties (Bloc Quebecois and Reform [now Canadian Alliance]), a decline in support for the Progressive Conservatives, and stable support for the Liberals. The fracturing of the opposition has meant that the Liberal party has been able to maintain its status as government despite winning 40% or less of the vote.

(Table 4 about here)

From the perspective of the representation of societal interests, the characteristics of the Canadian party system, as reflected in seats in the House of Commons and formation of government, implies that the process of group representation must occur within the governing parties, and to a very considerable extent, within the governing Liberal party. Westminster parliamentary systems vest almost all governmental power and authority in the party or parties forming the government. The operation of Westminster parliamentary government in Canada, with a historical record of majority or minority, rather than coalition, governments implies that effective interest representation within the executive and legislative system occurs with the party forming the government. Therefore, historically, the Liberal and Conservative parties have been the chief instruments of interest representation in Canadian parliament. In the contemporary period, in which the Liberal party is the only party that appears to have any reasonable or realistic chance of forming the government, then that party presents the major instrument for interest representation within Parliament.

Several caveats immediately should be added to that statement. First, the fact that federalism is superimposed on Canada's Westminster-style parliament means that in the overall system of interest representation, an individual or group could turn to the provincial governments as an alternative instrument of representation. In such

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an instance, an interest, such as the economic interest of an oil-producing community, which may be a minority interest and not well-represented in the federal government (particularly when voters of the region support an opposition party such as the Canadian Alliance) can be transformed into a majority interest in provincial government, and hence receive representation both through the province acting in its area of jurisdiction and also through such instruments as federal-provincial interaction and negotiation. Second, the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 has provided new opportunities for judicial review of federal and provincial legislation, thereby opening up the court system as an instrument of interest representation outside the federal party system. There has been much scholarly and popular commentary on the increasing effectiveness of this method of interest representation, both complementary and critical (see for example, Mandel, (1994); Morton and Knopff, (2000); Seidle, (1993)). Third, there exist other instruments of representation within the federal system of government – through appointment as Governor General, to the Senate, or to a myriad of regulatory bodies and agencies that provide alternative mechanisms for representing interests. Fourth, the highly centralized character of decision-making in the federal government (with a particular emphasis on cabinet decision-making), coupled with the expanded role for the courts, implies that an effective representational strategy could be to focus efforts through peak interest groups and voluntary associations. These caveats notwithstanding, the general conclusion that results from a review of the party system is that for groups to be successful in having their interests represented in the federal Parliament, the key to success lies in representing their interest within the Liberal party.

4.2 Political parties as instruments of representation

Since political parties play a key role in the recruitment of those who will become members of legislative assemblies, they are major instruments of representation in all democracies (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party

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Financing, 1991; p. 207). Parties vary considerably in the extent to which they perform the recruitment function – it is common in settings with Single Member Plurality electoral systems to take a decentralized approach to candidate recruitment, and for the party effectively to delegate this function to the local constituency or riding association. In other systems, particularly countries that use Proportional Representation and party lists, the responsibility for candidate recruitment often is held by the central party organization. The results of the two processes are dramatically different with respect to who is nominated for party office, and who is elected. For example, Heather MacIvor (2003, p. 22-24) presents data on the proportion of women elected to the Lower House of Parliament in 24 democracies, categorized according to the type of electoral system in use. Based on data from September 2002, she found that the average percentage of women elected to Parliament in countries using a plurality or majority electoral system was 18% (5.5% below the international average), whereas in countries using Proportional Representation with party lists, the average was 27.3%, or 3.8% above the international average. Thus, this simple comparison suggests almost a full 10 percentage point gap in the proportion of women elected to Parliament using type of electoral system as the criterion of comparison. MacIvor goes on to note that, "(w)hile the electoral system does not solely determine the percentage of women in the national legislature, it is clear that majority/plurality systems (like that used in Canada) reduce female representation." (MacIvor, 2003, p. 27). The reason for this difference seems straight-forward. In systems using Proportional Representation with party lists, the central party officials are normally in a position to determine the position of candidates on the list. In such systems, seats are allocated to the party based on the percentage vote received by the party, and the winning candidates are selected based on their relative location on the party list. By placing a candidate near the top of the list, parties with significant electoral strength can effectively ensure that the candidate is elected. The challenge in such systems is to ensure the parties

nominate candidates of historically marginalized groups (to use Williams' [1998] term) near the top of their lists. The data suggest that parties in different countries differ in their receptiveness to such demands. For example, in Sweden (which uses list-PR) fully 42.7% of elected members were women, whereas in Greece, which also uses list-PR, only 8.7% were women. Similarly, data presented by Pippa Norris (1996; p. 191) shows that of 36 democracies, the five countries with the highest percentage of female legislators and the three with the lowest percentage all used proportional representation with party lists. Hence, there is no guarantee that any marginalized group will be successful in a list-PR system. However, the data across a large number of cases suggest that women have been more successful with this electoral system than with any other. In SMP electoral systems, the challenges are first to successfully nominate the candidate in the local riding, in which each party is nominating only a single candidate, and then successfully to elect that candidate in the general election. Since local riding associations often are fiercely protective of their power to nominate candidates, success in nominating a candidate from a marginalized group in a particular riding may be considerably more difficult.

When comparing the rate at which women are elected in systems using proportional representation with party lists and with single member plurality systems, three issues should be considered[4]. First, with a list system, patterns of inclusion and exclusion are more apparent than under single member plurality systems, since one can readily assess the degree of inclusiveness of a party's list. Therefore, more concerted pressure, including moral suasion, can be applied to parties to draw lists that are broadly inclusive. Second, with list systems, party leaders and activists are in a better position to make good on a commitment to a more inclusive list of candidates, since they have the means to effect that outcome. The fragmentation of decision-making in single member plurality systems denies the capacity, or at the

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[4] Lisa Young (personal communication) suggested viewing the representational differences between party list systems and single member plurality systems in this way.

least reduces the capacity, of party leaders to institute a more inclusive list. Third, for those who support the use of quotas, the party list system makes more effective the imposition of quotas, either by the party leadership, or by governmental authorities. In short, the list system provides enhanced administrative capacity to institute any representational qualities among candidates that are viewed as desirable.

In addition to effect of the electoral system in the nomination of marginalized candidates, the attitudes of senior party officials and party activists are important factors in determining the extent to which efforts are made to recruit candidates from marginalized groups. The difference between the Swedish and Greek experience discussed above demonstrates that such attitudes can have a profound effect on the numerical representation of particular groups. In a study of the representation of women in the Canadian House of Commons, Lisa Young (2002, pp. 184-196) demonstrates that the parties have changed their strategies over the years. Prior to 1970, little was done by the parties to encourage the election of women to the House of Commons, and few were elected. From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, each of the then-major parties – the Liberals, the Conservatives, and the New Democrats, made substantial efforts (albeit the extent of effort and pace of change varied from party to party) to increase the number of women elected to Parliament. The result was a significant increase in the number of women elected. However, after 1993, these efforts either were lessened (in the case of the Liberal party), or jettisoned altogether in the Reform-Canadian Alliance. The following sections examine some of these changes in intra-party representation in more detail.

4.2.1 Intra-party democracy and efforts towards representation of marginalized groups

During the period from the 1970s to the 1990s, the major political parties underwent a number of reforms, the effect of which was to make them more open and inclusive in their membership, and in the upper reaches of their organization, than had been the case since Confederation. For example, writing in the mid-1970s

based on studies of party activists in a broad selection of democracies, Robert Putnam (1976, p. 33) argued that, "… no matter how we measure political and social status, the higher the level of political authority, the greater the representation of high-status social groups". Research on party activists in Canada confirmed the applicability of this general trend in the Canadian context (Porter, 1965; Kornberg and Mishler, 1976; Kornberg, Smith and Clarke, 1979).

The representational terrain within political parties began to shift in the 1970s, and as Lisa Young (2002) argues, much of the initiative for the change, at least with respect to the representation of women, came from the New Democratic Party. The NDP developed a strong women's caucus at federal conventions, made efforts to increase the number of female candidates, and adjusted the representational base for its senior decision-making bodies (the federal council and executive) to require significantly increased female membership (see also, Archer and Whitehorn, 1997; pp. 86-106). In addition, the party adopted policies on key issues such as child care, decriminalization of abortion and maternity leave that were consistent with those of liberal feminism (Young, 2002; p. 185). The Liberal party, while being considerably less consistent with liberal feminism on policy issues, nonetheless also increased the role of women within the party, through the creation of the National Women's Liberal Commission (note that the party's other two national commissions were on aboriginal peoples and youth), increased female representation at party conventions, and increased support for female candidates. The Conservatives followed suit also by increasing female representation at party conventions, and encouraging women to become candidates.

The increased inclusiveness of the parties towards representing women and other marginalized groups clearly has had an effect on the composition of the House of Commons as shown in Table 1 above. However, the increase in the representation of women has not been consistent across the parties, as indicated in Table 5 and 6. Table 5 presents the percentage of women elected in each of the parties for the

period 1974 to 2000. The Liberal party has experienced a relatively constant increase in the number of women MPs, from a low of 5.2% in 1974 to a high of 23.9% in 1997. The election of female Liberals MPs appears to have stabilized in 2000 at about 23 percent of all Liberal MPs. The Conservative party was slower in electing female MPs, starting at a lower base (2.1%) in 1974 and rising to 12.4% by 1988 compared to 15.7% for the Liberals in the latter year. The party was almost eliminated in the 1993 election, winning only 2 seats, one of which was won by a woman. By 1997, its proportion of female MPs had dropped to 10% and it dropped further in 2000.

(Table 5 about here)

The NDP, as the party most embracing of liberal feminism, has seen the greatest increase in the proportion of female MPs, from a low of 0% in 1974 to almost 4 in 10 (38.0%) by 1997, a percentage that dropped slightly to 35.7% in 2000. However, the relative weakness of the NDP in the House of Commons means that these relatively high percentages (by Canadian party standards) translate into few female MPs.

The Reform – Canadian Alliance first contested Canadian general elections in 1993, and its record of electing female MPs has significantly lagged behind the governing Liberals. The party's proportion of female MPs peaked in its first election at 13.5%, and dropped subsequently to 6.7% in 1997, recovering only to 11.1% in 2000. In contrast, the Bloc Quebecois has had reasonably significant success in electing female MPs in comparison with other Canadian parties, increasing from 14.8% in its inaugural election of 1993 to 26.5% in 2000, slightly above the Liberals.

A major factor in each of the parties' success in electing female Members of Parliament is their nomination of female candidates, and the nomination of these candidates in winnable ridings. Data on the proportion of nominated candidates who are female, reported in Table 6, parallel in most instances the data on election of females. The NDP has led all parties in the nomination of female candidates, with approximately one-third of its candidates being female. The Liberal party and Bloc

Quebecois nominate approximately one-quarter female candidates. The proportion of Conservative candidates who are female has dropped significantly, from a high of 23.0% in 1993 to only 13.0% in 2000. The Reform – Canadian Alliance has remained steady at the lowest level of any parliamentary party, at about 10 percent female candidates.

(Table 6 about here)

Young (2002) offers an important interpretation for both the rise, and the current stabilization of female representation in the House of Commons, based on factors internal to the party system and on those relating more broadly to interest group representation. In the period up to and including the 1988 election, Canada had a relatively stable three party system and one in which policy innovation largely was provided by the NDP. As the party most open to liberal feminism, the NDP adopted new representational requirements for women within its internal organization and set goals with respect to the nomination of candidates. It also adopted many policy positions consistent with those urged by the organized women's movement. The Liberal party in particular, and to a lesser extent the Conservatives, followed suit. However, from 1993 onwards, according to Young, changing party fortunes and a changed political climate meant that policy innovation largely switched from the purview of the NDP to the Reform – Canadian Alliance. Rather than being receptive to liberal feminism, the party largely was hostile to it. It was decidedly opposed to special representational arrangements for any groups, including women, a fact that is affirmed by the proportion of women candidates contesting seats for the Reform – Canadian Alliance party. With policy innovation coming from this perspective, the Conservatives in particular, as well as the Liberals, either reversed some of the previous positions in favour of greater inclusiveness of marginalized groups (in the case of the Conservatives), or slowed the rate of change (as in the Liberals).

The second factor identified by Young was the changing strategy of the women's movement. Rather than emphasizing the importance of increasing the

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number of women in the House of Commons, key elements of the movement, particularly the National Action Committee of the Status of Women, began to eschew working within the established parties, and instead chose more non-partisan (some would say anti-partisan) approaches. Thus paradoxically, at the time when female representation in the House was at its highest historical levels, the electoral strategy was itself being rejected.

Thus, at the beginning of the new millennium, the parties taken as a whole are somewhat more inclusive than they were for the first century of Confederation. Certainly in comparison with the situation when the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing examined parties in the early 1990s, the proportion of female Members of Parliament has increased substantially, as has the proportion of ethnic minorities and visible minorities. However, even among these historically marginalized groups, there continues to be less representation in the House of Commons than their proportions of Canadian society would seem to merit. And, of course, as we have seen, the parties themselves have varied considerably in the extent to which their legislative caucuses have reflected the full diversity of the Canadian population. The following sections examine the candidate recruitment and leadership selection practices of the parties to provide some insight into the inter-party differences that exist and that appear to be growing in magnitude.

4.2.2 Nomination of candidates

In their review of the role of political parties in democratic societies, the Lortie Commission focused particular attention on the selection and recruitment of candidates and the selection of party leaders. Although parties are essentially private organizations, the Commission argued that in the performance of certain functions, particularly candidate recruitment and leader selection, parties fulfill a broader public purpose. Because of these quasi-public roles, the Commission argued that parties deserve special acknowledgement in law, and also that they must be subject to some

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public regulation of their activities (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991; pp. 231-2).

As is the case in most democracies with Single Member Plurality electoral systems, the constituency associations play the key role in the nomination of candidates for office. As the Lortie Commission notes, this fragmentation in decision-making within the national parties is at least in part a function of the existence of the federal division of powers in Canada, and the tendency of the parties to have relatively strong provincial sections relative to the national party organization. This feature has mitigated against the development of organizationally strong and coherent parties as national political organizations. When parties that contest seats in the federal House of Commons focus their efforts either explicitly in a single province, such as the Bloc Quebecois, of more implicitly through their greater appeal in some regions than others (such as the Reform Party in the 1993 and 1997 elections, and de facto to a considerable extent with the Canadian Alliance in 2000), then the role of the parties as institutions of national integration decreases. Indeed, even the notion of a strongly centralized political party organization seems out of step with the Canadian political culture that emphasizes provincial and/or regional distinctiveness. This fact has a bearing on the ability of the central organization of the parties to insert a broader agenda on the party organization and structure, including their ability to impose more inclusive representational requirements on the selection of candidates for office.

The situation with respect to the role of the central party organization in asserting authority in candidate selection is similar today to the findings of the Lortie Commission in the early 1990s, when it stated:

> "(t)he only real authority party leaders have over candidate selection is that provided by law – the requirement that party leaders concur with the nomination of the party's candidate in each constituency. If the leader withholds approval, this action is seen as interventionist. Unfortunately, party constitutions offer little in the way of intermediary steps that could more effectively support party goals for candidate selection and the like." (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991; p. 237).

Since each of the local constituencies associations makes a decision about only a single candidate selection, it is very difficult even to contemplate the notion of representational quotas on candidate selection, without inviting the charge of interventionism on the part of the central party organization. The use of quotas for a constituency association that is selecting only one candidate could be interpreted as not a quota at all (which normally is considered to constitute some proportion of candidates nominated), but rather a directive to nominate only candidates with particular characteristics (for example, a woman, or an ethnic or visible minority). Thus, the structure of decision-making mitigates against a pan-Canadian slate of candidates that reflects the social characteristics of Canadian society.

In a recent study of the recruitment patterns of female candidates for elective office in Canada, Lynda Erickson (1998) examined the rates of success of male and female candidates for office, and found that, other things being equal, the success rate is roughly the same. The lower rate of nomination of female candidates by the political parties accounted for the lower proportion of female MPs, a finding confirmed by the data in Tables 5 and 6 above. This led Erickson to question whether the different rates of nomination of female candidates was a function of the "demand side", that is, were parties averse to nominating female candidates, or of the "supply side", in which there was a shortage of high profile and electable women contesting party nominations. Citing data from Britain and also bringing to bear Canadian data, Erickson (1998; pp. 243-7) argues that supply seems to be more important than demand. Several factors account for this. First, some parties, such as Reform – Canadian Alliance, have an approach on a wide range of policy matters that are less likely to appeal to female voters and potential female political candidates. Thus, in Pitkin's terms, the party may choose not to 'stand for' certain groups as part of its electoral strategy. In addition, Erickson perceives a relative lack on the part of Canadian parties to recruit and prepare women as candidates, a fact that is more

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important for female than male candidates in Erickson's view, since women tend to have fewer resources with which to contest elections, and are more likely to have life patterns that are atypical for electoral success (1998; pp. 247)

4.2.3   Selecting party leaders

There are several ways of examining the issue of representation by the way in which parties select their leaders. One could examine the outcome of the process – who is chosen as party leader, and are the party leaders reflective of the diversity of the Canadian population? Second, who are the delegates who attend the conventions that choose the leader (where conventions are used)? And third, who is involved in selecting delegates? Data on the first and second of these issues are readily available, whereas the third, on the character of people who select delegates to national conventions, are not. While there is some information on the character of people either selecting delegates or who directly vote for the leader at the provincial level (see, for example, Stewart and Archer, 2000), the focus of this study is limited to the federal level. Therefore, this section briefly examines the characteristics of party leaders and of convention delegates.

A striking feature of party leadership in Canada is the relative longevity with which many leaders remain in their position atop the party. The Liberal Party, perhaps not surprisingly given its success over time, has had leaders of particularly long duration. For example, in the 35 years since 1968, the Liberals have been led by only three people – Pierre Trudeau, John Turner and Jean Chretien, an average term of almost 12 years. During that same period, the Conservatives have had 7 leaders, Robert Stanfield, Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell, Jean Charest, Joe Clark (again), and Peter McKay. The New Democrats have had 5 leaders, David Lewis, Ed Broadbent, Audrey McLaughlin, Alexa McDonough and Jack Layton. The Reform Party – Canadian Alliance has had three leaders in its 15 year history, Preston Manning, Stockwell Day and Stephen Harper, and the Bloc Quebecois has had two leaders, Lucien Bouchard and Gilles Duceppe. Although the 1989 convention

represented a breakthrough for women with the selection on Audrey McLaughlin to lead the NDP, and 1993 another breakthrough with Kim Campbell's victory in the Conservative convention and thereby her selection as party leader and Prime Minister, it is still striking that the Liberal party has never elected a female leader, and appears ready to continue that trend in 2003. Likewise, the Reform Party – Canadian Alliance still has not selected a female leader. While some federal parties have selected members of minority groups as leaders (for example, David Lewis as NDP leader), none have selected a visible minority candidate.

The party members who serve as delegates to the conventions that choose the leaders are considerably more diverse in their backgrounds than the eventual winners of those contests. In a comprehensive analysis of the selection of party leaders in Canada, John Courtney (1995; pp. 336-7) presents data on the socio-demographic characteristics of delegates to the 1989 NDP, 1990 Liberal and 1993 Conservative conventions. There had been a considerable effort by each of the parties to increase the participation of women at the convention, and these efforts paid dividends. 34% of Conservative delegates were women compared to 37% of NDP delegates, and fully 44% of Liberal delegates. Both the Liberals and Conservatives also had worked to integrate youth members into the convention, and 21% of Conservatives and 26% of Liberals were 24 years or younger. The NDP, perhaps surprisingly for a party of the left, directed much less effort at youth delegates, and only 3% of its delegates were 24 years or younger. The delegates for all of the parties came disproportionately from the two charter linguistic groups, although the overwhelming Anglophone character of the NDP was revealed by the fact that 94% of its delegates claimed English as their first language compared to 74% of Liberals and 79% of Conservatives. In the latter parties, 19% and 21%, respectively, claimed French as their mother tongue. As we saw with the socio-economic background of MPs previously, convention delegates tend to be drawn disproportionately from the upper socio-economic groups. For example although only

11 percent of Canadians had a university degree in 1991, the proportion of party delegates to hold a degree was 53% for the NDP, 45% for the Liberals, and 52% for the Conservatives. In addition, delegates from all parties tended to be drawn from the professional/managerial occupations. Liberals and Conservatives had income levels considerably above the national average, whereas NDP delegates' incomes tended to approximate the national average.

Thus, on most measures, the people who occupy positions in the House of Commons, or those who serve as political activists in selecting party leaders, are significantly different from Canadians as a whole. In general, the trend in many of their characteristics is to make them more descriptively similar to the population that was the case one or two generations ago, although the socio-economic differences between MPs and the general population have not changed substantially. The following section reviews the attitudes of Canadians toward a variety of items relating to representation – their attitudes towards their elected representatives, the parties, the system of government, and certain types of reforms. We shall see what effect, if any, changing characteristics of representatives impact the attitudes of Canadians toward representative government.

5.0 Attitudes Towards Representation

To what extent does the greater, although far from uniform, inclusiveness in representation in the House of Commons lead to more sanguine attitudes among the electorate towards Parliament, political parties and their leaders, and forms of representation in Canada? The most comprehensive study of citizen attitudes towards representation in Canada was conducted by Andre Blais and Elizabeth Gidengil, under the auspices of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (often referred to as the Lortie Commission, after the Chair, Pierre Lortie). Blais and Gidengil administered a survey in the fall of 1990 to a sample of 2947 Canadians, and published the results in a book, Making Representative Democracy

Work: The View of Canadians (1991). The conclusion of their study was paradoxical. As they noted:

> "In terms of the perceived legitimacy of the (representational) process, then, the overall message is that things are basically satisfactory and there is no imperative need for reform. On a broader level, however, things are not so satisfactory. Although Canadians are generally satisfied with the process, they do not like the outcome: they simply do not have a great deal of confidence in those whom they elect." (Blais and Gidengil, 1991; p. 149).

This is not to suggest that Canadians were satisfied with all aspects of the electoral process, or that they were not in favour of reforming certain elements of the system of representation. One area that stood out as in need in reform was the use of money in politics. For example, strong majorities were in favour of imposing strict limits on campaign spending; on the public disclosure of party financing; and on not reimbursing parties and candidates with public funds for election expenses (Blais and Gidengil, 1991; p. 145). The findings of Blais and Gidengil on attitudes towards party and candidate financing were taken up in the recommendations of the Lortie Commission (1991), and subsequently some elements of these find reflection in Bill C-24, which amends election and party financing in Canada.

What the findings of Blais and Gidengil from the early 1990s do suggest, though, is that there is not widespread dissatisfaction with the key elements of the representational process, or that the dissatisfaction is not reflected in widespread agreement on alternative methods of representation. This latter point, the importance of agreement on alternative forms of representation was recently addressed by John Courtney (2002) in his comparison of proposals for reforming two "representational building blocks" in Canada – the electoral system, and the system of voter registration. Courtney argued that the lack of a clear alternative with majority support for replacing Canada's single member plurality electoral system has been key to the failure of reform initiatives, whereas the general agreement among key political officials on the merits of the permanent register of electors contributed to its rapid

adoption. This section extends the earlier analysis of Blais and Gidengil in examining attitudes towards representation in Canada.

5.1 Political Cynicism

In the introduction to a recent collection of articles on <u>Political Parties, Representation, and Electoral Democracy in Canada</u>, the volume's editor, William Cross (2002; p. 1), sets the context of the study by noting that, "In the last decade of the twentieth century … Canadian voters harboured substantial dissatisfaction with their political parties and, more generally, with what they considered to be an unresponsive political system controlled by elites." He suggests that this dissatisfaction results from the disjunction between citizen demands for greater democratization of the political process, and the tendency for "brokerage and elite-dominated politics." (Ibid.) The data in Table 7 provide an illustration of the dissatisfaction to which both Blais and Gidengil, and Cross refer. The table presents the attitudes of Canadians towards four items that Blais and Gidengil refer to as measures of political cynicism – that government doesn't care what voters think, that those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people, that elected representatives are crooked, and that government wastes taxpayers money. Although the trends in attitudes to these four issues are not linear and do not change at the same rate over the same time for each party, nonetheless the pattern is clear. The electorate of the mid-1980s to the present is substantially more cynical (by a range of 10 to 20 percentage points) than was the case in the previous generation, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Interestingly, a comparison of the data from 1988 or 1990 with that from 2000 indicates that if anything, there has been a slight decrease in political cynicism in the most recent period. However, this decrease is modest compared to the major increase in cynicism observed above. Notwithstanding the latter finding about the slight drop in political cynicism in 2000, the overall finding that between one-half and two-thirds of the electorate feel cynical towards the government and MPs is a matter of concern.

(Table 7 about here)

5.2 Attitudes Towards Political Parties

A second and indirect way of measuring attitudes towards the system of representation in Canada is through citizen feelings towards the political parties. In their 1991 study of attitudes towards representation, Blais and Gidengil presented data from the Canadian Election Studies for the period 1965 to 1988. These data are reproduced in Table 8, and extended to 2000. People were asked to state their feelings towards the parties on a 100-point scale, with a score near 100 indicating "warm" or positive feelings, and a score near 0 indicating "cold" or negative feelings. People also were told that a score of 50 represents a neutral attitude toward a party. The data in Table 8 present feelings towards each of the parties separately, and for all of the parties taken together.

(Table 8 about here)

The data show a fairly steady decline in feelings towards the political parties over the period under review. Canadians attitudes towards the political parties were at their warmest in 1968, in which the average score towards all parties was 56 on the 100-point scale. Also noteworthy from this period is that attitudes towards the party that won the election, the Liberals, was 65, which by Canadian standards is very high. Attitudes towards the Conservatives was indicated by a score of 56, which was well above the neutral point, and even the NDP, which finished a distant third in the election, managed a score of 48, only slightly below the neutral point.

By the time of the 1980 election, average scores for the parties had dropped to 51, and the Liberals, who won a strong majority, were rated only as highly (56) as the losing Conservatives had been in 1968. By the 2000 election, the average assessment of the parties had dropped by another 6 points, to 45. Only the Liberals, who won a strong majority government, were evaluated positively overall (52), whereas all of the other four parties with seats in the House of Commons were on the negative side of the thermometer scale. Furthermore, the official opposition Canadian

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Alliance was rated at a remarkably low 42, well below the historical trend for official opposition parties. The conclusion reached by Blais and Gidengil more than a decade ago that Canadians "show a deep sense of unease about parties" (1991; p. 43), is reinforced in 2000. Indeed, if anything, Canadians register an even greater sense of unease today.

5.3 Attitudes Towards Electoral Representation

The analysis of Blais and Gidengil on attitudes towards representation led them to conclude that despite the fact that Canadians were cynical about politics and were increasingly cool towards political parties, that they were generally supportive of the process of electoral representation. Data from the 2000 Canadian election study partially support that conclusion, but also point to areas in which citizens are less sanguine about the representational process. This section examines attitudes towards the operation of the electoral system and more broadly the system of representation. We follow Blais and Gidengil by presenting these attitudes for the Canadian sample as a whole, and also for groups based upon their region of residence, gender, age, education, income, employment, language and religion. Since the questions asked in the 2000 Canadian election study are different than those asked in the Blais and Gidengil study, with one exception, we are not able to present the data over time. Included in this analysis are attitudes towards the way democracy works, the electoral system, the use of referendums and the use of fixed referendums. The results are presented in Table 9.

(Table 9 about here)

When asked about their satisfaction with the way democracy works in Canada, fully 69.5% of respondents indicate they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. On a regional basis, the highest levels of satisfaction are in the Atlantic region and Ontario, where almost 80% express satisfaction with Canadian democracy, a figure that falls to approximately 70% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and only slightly over 60% in Quebec. In British Columbia and Alberta, satisfaction

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with the operation of Canadian democracy is less than 60%. Perhaps surprisingly in view of the decline in voter turnout particularly among young electors (Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 2002; pp. 45-63), the data show that younger respondents were more satisfied with the operation of Canadian democracy than their older counterparts. The data also show a positive relationship between education and satisfaction, and between income and satisfaction, as well as lower satisfaction among French-speaking (mean = 61.3) than among English-speaking or "non-Charter" linguistic groups (mean = 72.1 and 72.7, respectively). Since these data are not presented across time, it is not possible to determine whether there has been an overall increase or decrease in satisfaction with the operation of democracy. Nonetheless, attitudes towards democracy tend to be relatively positive, with notable slippage in some regions of the country (Alberta, British Columbia, and to a lesser extent, Quebec).

A key to unraveling the reason for less positive assessments of democracy in those three provinces lies in attitudes towards the electoral system. A consistent feature of the Single Member Plurality system is the tendency to produce a majority government with less than majority support for a party. The question asked in the 2000 Canadian Election Study, which was asked also in the 1990 Lortie Commission survey, probes specifically on this issue. "Under our present system, a party can win a majority of seats without winning a majority of votes. Do you find this acceptable, unacceptable, or do you not have an opinion on this?" The answers from the 2000 survey reflect very closely the findings from the previous survey, and therefore only the former are produced here. (For comparison, see Blais and Gidengil, 1991; p. 55).

Overall, satisfaction with the feature of the electoral system that creates a majority in Parliament from a minority in the electorate is supported by only 4 in 10 voters (41.2%). In addition, there are some clear demographic effects. Most significant is the regional effect. Whereas almost one-half of the respondents from the Atlantic region and Ontario (48.3% and 47.3%, respectively) feel this is

acceptable, support drops to 4 in 10 Quebecers (39.8%), slightly more than one-third of British Columbians (35.4%), and less than one in four Albertans (24.7%). It is perhaps not surprising that voters in those regions of the country with substantial seats in the government caucus have higher levels of support for the characteristic feature of the electoral system from which they benefit than those regions with few government caucus members who are penalized by this feature. It is also worth noting the more general point, namely, that in any region, only between a quarter and a half of the electorate view this feature of the electoral system as acceptable. Several other demographic variables have an impact on perceptions of the acceptability of the electoral system. Men are more supportive than women, and support is higher as education and income increase. In addition, "non-charter" linguistic groups tend to be more supportive than the two charter groups.

Respondents to the 2000 Election Study were asked two questions about the frequency with which referendums should be used, on "important issues" and on "controversial issues". The possible responses were that they could be used regularly, occasionally, rarely or never, and Table 9 presents the percentages who said either regularly or occasionally. There is considerable support for the use of referendums in Canada, with almost two-thirds responding that they should be used for important and controversial questions (mean = 66.0% and 62.7%, respectively). As with attitudes towards democracy and the electoral system, the demographic variable with the greatest impact is region of residence. Support for the use of referendums on important questions is lowest in Manitoba/Saskatchewan and Quebec (56.4% and 59.9%, respectively), and highest in Alberta and BC (79.8% and 75.5%, respectively). Support for the use of referendums on important questions was higher among women than men, and decreased as education and income increased. As well, support for the use of referendums on important issues was slightly higher among non-charter language groups, and those whose religion was other than Protestant or Catholic, although the latter differences were modest.

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On the use of referendums on controversial issues, patterns of support changed considerably on a number of variables. For example, whereas clear regional differences existed on the use of referendums for important issues, the differences were considerably less when asked about their use for controversial issues. Women remain about 6 percentage points more likely than men to support referendums for controversial issues, a gap similar to that between people under 45 and those over 45 years. Also support for the use of referendums on controversial issues decreases as education and income increase, and it is lower for non-charter language groups and those with an 'other' religious affiliation.

Respondents were asked whether they think there should be fixed dates for elections or whether the government should decide when elections are held. In keeping with the other data on support for change, almost 7 in 10 respondents (69.4%) indicated their support for fixed election dates. As with some of the other questions in Table 9, we have no data on attitudes towards this issue, and there is reason to believe that in the 2000 federal election, this issue may have been unusually salient. For example, in their comprehensive study of the 2000 federal election, Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte (2002; p. 33) describe the timing of the election as a "sleeper" issue, which is an issue whose salience increases as the campaign wears on. For example, some of the party leaders raised this particular issue during the leaders' debate, accusing the Prime Minister of political opportunism. Therefore, in view of the politicization of this issue in the 2000 election campaign, it may be that support for fixed elections is atypically high. Whatever its cause, there is no doubt that support for fixed elections was high in 2000.

Unlike other attitudes towards representation, however, there is little relationship between the various demographic variables and attitudes towards fixed elections. The only variables in which there is a notable relationship are the language and religion of respondents. However, the differences are not between the two large linguistic groups (French and English) or the two major religious groups (Protestant

and Catholic), but rather between these groups and the "others". That is those who belong to neither linguistic charter group, and those with a religion other than Protestant or Catholic, are less likely (by a margin of 5 to 10 percentage points) to support fixed elections. In other respects, there are little demographic effects, which would reinforce the likelihood that attitudes towards fixed election dates in 2000 were neither strongly held nor rigidly fixed.

The pattern of opinions as revealed in the preceding analysis presents a complex tapestry. First, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the way in which the system of democracy works in Canada. While Canadians are cynical about their politics, and while their attitudes towards the political parties are becoming more negative, they nonetheless profess satisfaction with their democratic system of government. However, when one begins to test the fabric of those attitudes, we find that interwoven with the weft of satisfaction with democracy is a warp of dissatisfaction with elements in the operation of the system, and support for certain kinds of change. For example, we found only minority support for the key feature of the electoral system, and majority support for the use of referendums and fixed elections. It may be entirely possible that the attitudes towards these various issues are either time- and context-dependent, such as fixed elections in the context of the early election call of 2000, or taken out of the context of alternatives (such as attitudes towards other electoral systems). Be that as it may, the data reveal that in the context of generalized support for the system of democratic representation, there does appear to exist areas of unhappiness and disaffection with the system. Underlying all of these attitudes, is the effect of region as a key factor in citizens' perceptions of the functioning of the political system. For many Canadians, region of residence appears to be the primary lens through which they view the political world. In the next section, we examine the issue of the representation of gender and ethnicity through these lenses.

5.4 Attitudes Towards Representing "Marginalized" Groups

In their study of attitudes towards representative democracy undertaken for the Lortie Commission, Blais and Gidengil interviewed Canadians about their attitudes towards the representation of women and visible minorities, including their views on the use of quotas to increase the number of female and visible minority candidates. They concluded that while many perceived a problem with female and visible minority representation, few thought the problem was very serious, and fewer than half thought quotas should be imposed on the parties (Blais and Gidengil, 1991, p. 79). The 2000 Canadian Election Study included a number of the same items as used a decade previously, and are presented in Table 10. For a direct comparison with the previous results, see Blais and Gidengil, (1991, Table 4.5 and 4.7).

(Table 10 about here)

Slightly more than one in three Canadians (35.7%) believe that the presence of more men than women in the House of Commons is either a very serious or quite serious problem, a slight increase from 32% in 1991. The pattern of opinion on this issue is similar to that observed in the earlier study. Residents of Quebec and British Columbia are most likely to perceive this as a serious problem (49.1% and 38.9%, respectively), whereas only about one in four respondents from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (25.6%) or Alberta (27.2%) feel likewise. Women are a full 10 percentage points more likely than men (41.5% versus 30.2%) to view this as a problem, although it should be noted than even among women, three out of five do not see this as a serious problem. There is a weak positive relationship with education, and a weak negative relationship with age and with income in attitudes towards the seriousness of the gender imbalance in the House of Commons. Consistent with the regional data for Quebec, French-speaking respondents were more likely to perceive this as a problem (46.0%) than were English-speaking or non-Charter linguistic respondents (33.1% and 25.7%, respectively).

Although slightly more respondents viewed the gender imbalance as a serious problem in 2000 compared to 1991, slightly fewer (37.0% versus 41%)

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favoured requiring parties to have an equal number of male and female candidates. Support for the use of quotas was relatively strong in Quebec (54.7%) and particularly weak in Alberta (22.4%), corresponding to similar polar positions on the perceived seriousness of the problem. Generally higher levels of support were found among women (40.6%), those under 45 years of age (42.1%), those with the lowest levels of education (49.2%), those with low income (50.3%), French-speaking respondents, and Catholics (47.6%). In general, attitudes are either evenly split between those who favour or oppose quotas, or alternatively are more heavily weighted towards opposing quotas.

With respect to attitudes towards the representation of visible minorities, there has been a drop of approximately five percent (40 % versus 34.5%) between 1991 and 2000 in those who see this as a very serious or quite a serious problem, and almost no change (45% versus 46.2%) in attitudes towards the use of quotas. Overall, trends in patterns of support are similar to those regarding female representation, with support generally being somewhat higher in Quebec, among women and the youth, and lower in Alberta. Support for the use of quotas to increase the number of minority candidates is particularly high among those with a non-Charter language (who one might surmise are disproportionately of visible minority status), and among those with a low income.

What do the attitudes reported in this section tell us about Canadians' perceptions of their system of representation? Four findings are worth emphasizing. First, there has been a consistent decline in the past two generations in satisfaction with the people we elect to office, coupled with a decline in satisfaction towards the party leaders. One should be cautious, however, in ascribing this decline as the product of a 'representational deficit' unique to the Canadian political system. Research across a broad selection of democracies has revealed declining levels of support for politicians. Nevitte (1996) has argued that this has been produced by a

change in core political values and beliefs, which he has labeled a 'decline in deference'.

The conclusion that decreasing support for and opinions of our political leaders and elected officials does not rest solely with attitudes towards the party and electoral system is reinforced by the second major finding, namely that Canadians continue to express high levels of satisfaction with the overall outcome of their democratic system of government. In assessing attitudes towards politics, political scientists often distinguish between affective and cognitive attitudes. Affective attitudes have a visceral quality to them – they refer to one's generalized likes and dislikes. In contrast, cognitive attitudes are situated more in the mind than the body, and are explicitly evaluative. Affective attitudes are based on emotions whereas cognitive attitudes are based more on reason, or rational calculation and assessment. One can hold positive affective attitudes (for example, could express the view "I like our democratic system"), without filtering them through a cognitive lens of comparing the literally hundreds of ways in which a system of democratic governance can vary. While this study did not expressly address the issue of whether attitudes towards Canadian democracy were affective or cognitive, there is reason to infer, based on the data regarding specific reform proposals, that the general attitudes towards the democratic system are affective in character. Recalling Courtney's (2002) analysis of the pre-requisites to changing the 'representational building blocks' of our political institutions, it is useful to remain mindful of the reservoir of support that exists among Canadians towards the overall operation of the system of government.

Notwithstanding that support, the third finding to emphasize is that a relatively large percentage of Canadians is willing to entertain significant change to a number of elements of their system of representation. This could be seen in the fact that only a minority agreed that it was acceptable that the electoral system could transform a minority of votes into a majority of seats. It was also evident in the relatively robust

levels of support of the use of referendums, and for the introduction of fixed election dates. Although these attitudes suggest that support exists for certain kinds of changes to the representational system, two caveats are in order. First, it is not clear the extent to which the 'attitudes' expressed in the survey reflect strong, enduring and/or deeply held views, or whether they are relatively facile opinions subject to change in light of a different set of options. Relatedly, it is not clear whether some of the attitudes expressed relate to concerns over the representational process as reflected in the character of representation in Parliament, including in the executive, or whether they may reflect opinions about other elements of the overall governmental process, such as for example the role of the courts in interpreting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Thus, for example, do respondents support the use of referendums of important or controversial issues because they wish to override the position of Parliament, or because they disagree with the way in which the Courts have interpreted the Charter? One suspects that both issues may undergird these responses. The second caveat is the finding of relatively stable and consistent patterns of opinion about changes to the representational system, and in particular the higher support for change in the Western region, particularly in Alberta and British Columbia, and in general among women. This latter observation would suggest a certain stability in the attitudes towards change, but also that almost all possible change will be interpreted in Canada through a lens of federalism.

The fourth general finding is that although there is significant minority support for increased inclusiveness in representing historically marginalized groups in the House of Commons, and minority support for requiring parties to adopt quotas for candidate selection, nonetheless there remains majority opposition to these positions. There are likely several reasons for this. The principles of freedom of choice and freedom of association are foundational principles to democracies. To the extent that government requires parties to elect certain categories of candidates, such requirements operate as a constraint of those foundational principles. In

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addition, there may well be questions in the mind of voters that if governments can require political parties to nominate these categories of candidates (that is, women and visible minorities), might this lead in the future to regulations to require the nomination of other types of candidates in an endless reductionist cycle? Will electoral politics be reduced to special pleading to become a designated group which requires special provision for representation among each of the parties' slates of candidates? These of course are simply speculations as to some of the reasons that Canadians do not provide majority support for greater representation of historically marginalized groups. More empirical studies of this issue would provide useful.

6.0 Best Practices in Representation

The representation of interests is the sine qua non of democratic governance. To the extent that democratic forms of governance are superior to non-democratic forms, it is because those who are subject to the authority of government have some control over those who wield the instruments of power and authority. It is for this reason that theorists, analysts and practitioners historically have placed such a high value on the institutional requisites of democracy, namely, the existence of universal enfranchisement and periodic competitive elections. And yet, as we have seen, democratic governments defined by these institutional characteristics vary widely in the extent to which they can be said effectively to represent the diversity of societal interests in government policy. There are myriad ways by which political institutions can be crafted that have a bearing on the responsiveness of the political system to the demands of various interests. Furthermore, the selection among the various institutional forms is itself an explicitly political decision. It involves a complex interplay of factors such as historical development, societal expectations (which themselves may change over time), existing distribution of power as reflected in political and partisan institutions, together with societal satisfaction with current political arrangements.

Furthermore, the set of power relationships embodied in political institutions is itself highly interdependent. Changing one set of relationships, such as changing the representational basis in the electoral institutions of the federal government, may impact such things as the relative power relations between federal and provincial governments, or between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, or indeed between legislatures in a bicameral system of government. To take one example, changing the Canadian Senate from an appointed to an elected body, and moving from a Senate based on regional representation to one based on provincial representation, would be expected to have a significant impact on federal-provincial relations, on legislative-executive relations, and on the character of the individuals with seats in the Upper House. Thus, fundamental features of the Canadian system of representation would be altered by such a change. The overall political system, following such a change, might be characterized as being able to more effectively represent societal interests within the federal legislature. But if such a change led to an increase in the number of parties in the Upper House, more protracted disagreements between the legislative houses or a decreased ability of voters to identify which party was responsible for the legislative agenda of the previous legislature, one might question whether the system of representation in its entirety was improved. In view of the frequency of calls for just such reform to the Senate, it is apparent that many people believe that such a change would be an improvement. Assessing that claim is beyond the scope of this paper. The point here is simply that the various institutional arrangements in place to represent societal interests are tightly interwoven, and a change in one is likely to reverberate in others.

This is not to argue against change to the institutional arrangements in government. Rather, it is to urge caution in the assessment of the kinds of change that can result when proposing a change in an institution perceived as unresponsive or ineffective. The other caution worth noting is that political institutions do not always travel well from one context to another. Political institutions often arise from

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processes unique to their setting, and are themselves a product of competition among diverse groups and/or interests in a local setting. The manner in which a common set of institutions operate in one setting may be quite different from their functioning in another setting, with different traditions, interests and group configurations. Notwithstanding these caveats, this section examines the ways in which the representation of interests have become institutionalized in various settings, including in Canada in a search for best practices in interest representation.

6.1 Individuals versus groups as units of representation

Democracy, and particularly representative democracy, experienced its most robust period of development and institutionalization during the period of liberal ascendancy in the 17th through the 19th centuries. The political philosophy of liberalism celebrated above all else the inherent political equality of individuals. Included in this philosophy is the principle that individuals have the right to choose their governors through free and periodic elections, and that the franchise was held and could be exercised equally by all citizens. The political institutions founding on the basis of these principles were those that created legislatures, and ultimately political executives, whose authority rested on the ability to win their seats in periodic elections. In its early form, relatively narrow views of citizenship limited the franchise to males, property owners and typically to those over thirty years of age. However, over time, and as a result of political contestation in different settings, the franchise gradually was expanded, so that today most democracies experience universal enfranchisement. The principle of political equality and of the inherent importance of the individual are reflected in Canada's political culture, expressed in our political and electoral institutions, and affirmed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the context of an overarching commitment to individual equality, there also has developed a number of justifications for an understanding and recognition of groups as a possible base for the representation of societal interests. At least three justifications for group-based representation exist. First, the representational

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outcomes based only on the aggregation of individual preferences may be ineffective or counter-productive for the operation of the political system as a whole. For example, we found that in ethnically divided societies, systems of consociational democracy may provide opportunities for clearly defined and rigidly organized groups to effectively represent the interests of their members through a system of elite accommodation. Rather than bringing individuals and groups into contact in the competitive quest for power, consociational arrangements ensure groups are kept separate and apart. However, it also affirms the importance of representing the interests of each primary group in the decision-making process. As well, neo-corporatist arrangements affirm the importance of group standing in the policy process, although they place bargaining among the groups outside the legislative arena, creating opportunities for interest representation in government policy. Neither the consociational model nor neo-corporatist policy-making have been popular in the Canadian setting. The group basis of Canadian society lacks the cohesion characteristic of societies that have used elite accommodation for representing interests, and also lacks the highly centralized structure of group interests that characterizes those in which neo-corporatism has been used. Neither would appear to hold much promise for the Canadian setting.

A second reason for adopting a group basis of representation is for the representation of historically marginalized groups. In the Canadian case, the data show that for the first century of Confederation, the membership in the House of Commons was not descriptively representative of the Canadian population. Furthermore, although there have been changes during the period since the mid-1960s, and in a number of instances the 'representational deficit', to use the term favoured by the Lortie Commission, has been reduced, nonetheless according to some analysts, the 'memory of marginalization' produced long-term deleterious consequences for the marginalized groups and for their individual members (Williams, 1998). To the extent that this is the case, special efforts could be used to

ameliorate both the conditions of disadvantage, and the historical legacy that continues to live within the memory of such groups. From this perspective, the appropriate response would be to launch targeted efforts to improve the likelihood that such groups may be elected. There are a variety of instruments that can be used for this purpose. One would be the use of proportional representation electoral systems with party lists, with the expectation that the parties would include in their lists members of historically marginalized groups. A related strategy would be to insert quotas into the composition of party lists. Third, one could adopt the approach used in New Zealand, in which separate electoral districts have been created for Maori electors, together with parallel lists of electors (Archer, 2003). One could also address this issue through efforts by the political parties to recruitment more candidates from historically marginalized groups, to better prepare such candidates by offering, for example, special training sessions, and to adjust party and campaign financing to ensure that such candidates are not disadvantaged. To date, the Canadian approach has focused more on the latter kind of response, although as noted the political parties continue to vary in the extent to which they view the representation of historically marginalized groups as a problem, and also in the extent to which they view themselves as responsible for solving the problem.

The third justification for adopting a group-based interpretation of representation is related to the second, but focuses on the contemporary situation rather than the historical legacy. That is, the issue is not whether a group was numerically under-represented in the past, or its reasons for under-representation. But rather, to ask what is the current situation with regard to the character of descriptive representation, and contemporary rates of participation. Where rates of participation of a group are much lower than for citizens generally, then there is cause to address those low rates through special efforts in support of the increased activity of such groups. It is this perspective that would seem to underlie the approach used by election management bodies, such as Elections Canada, to view

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contemporary rates of participation by youth, by linguistic minorities, and by aboriginal people, as low in relation to Canadians as a whole, and to develop programs specifically targeted to these groups. Such efforts, of course, direct attention more to the inputs into the electoral process – that is, who votes, rather than the output of who is elected to office.

6.2 Choosing among electoral systems

Electoral systems have a major impact on the character of representation in a democracy. Giovanni Sartori (1968; p. 273, cited in Lijphart, 1994), one of the leading international experts of political parties and electoral systems, referred to electoral systems as "the most specific manipulative instrument of politics." Arendt Lijphart (1994; p. 139), another leading scholar, has noted that, "the degree of electoral disproportionality or proportionality responds very sensitively to the rules of the electoral system." The data presented above demonstrate that countries that use proportional representation and party lists generally produce elected representatives that more closely approximate the characteristics of the electorate than do those that use single member plurality systems. In addition, proportional representation with party lists also can play a role not only in increasing the proportion of elected representatives from historically marginalized group, but also can ensure the election of a more balanced slate of candidates from all regions of the country than exists with Canada's SMP system. Indeed, this was one of the key factors that led the Task Force on Canadian Unity to recommend in 1979 the adoption of a mixed electoral system for Canada, a recommendation that subsequently has not been adopted. However, the cause for changing Canada's electoral system to produce a legislature that is either more descriptively representative of the Canadian population, or that more accurately reflects the partisan distribution of votes across the regions, has been joined by a number of scholars recently (on descriptive representation, see, among others, Erickson, 1998; MacIvor, 2003; on regional representation, see,

among others, a number of the articles in Milner, 1999). To date, these calls for reform have gone unheeded.

In reflecting on the merits of adopting a new electoral system in Canada, and in particular of moving towards one with greater proportionality, it is useful to bear in mind that the decision on electoral systems is not between a good and unbiased system of a bad and biased system. Rather, all electoral systems have inherent biases, and an assessment of the goodness or badness of outcome is, like beauty, often in the eye of the beholder. Thus, electoral system change should not be viewed as a panacea for all that ails the system of representation in Canada. The following comments on the features of proportional representation with party list systems provide some context for assessing the relative merits of adopting such a system.

First, as discussed above, while the data show a strong tendency for proportional representation with party lists systems to produce more descriptively representative legislators, the relationship is far from perfect, and there is no guarantee that this system achieves such an objective. Some countries that use this system have a proportion of female legislators that is well below the international average, and well below other countries that use SMP. Clearly there are other factors at work. One of these concerns the general attitudes within a country towards the importance of representing historically marginalized groups. Where these attitudes are either non-supportive or hostile, then the lists produced by the parties will reflect such attitudes. Similarly, some parties may choose, for ideological reasons or for reasons owing to their strategic issue space, to place on their list a set of candidates that is not reflective of the diversity of the population. Parties often claim that the right to carve a distinctive issue space is a primary feature of the freedom to associate, one of the foundational principles of democratic governance. Thus, by positioning themselves in opposition to "special representation" of any group, the result may be, as we have seen, a descriptively unrepresentative legislature even with proportional representation.

Second, the use of a proportional representation with party list electoral system comes at the cost of the development of relatively weak ties between citizens and the members of a legislature. Constituency based electoral systems, particularly those that elect a single member, imply a direct and personal connection between the citizen and his or her representative, a tie that contributes to the constituency service that characterizes much of the activities of legislators. Where such ties are weak or absent, citizens often feel more distant from their representatives. It is largely for this reason that most of the countries that have adopted new electoral systems in the past decade have opted for a mixed system, combining the features of constituency representation with greater proportionality (Farrell, 2001). The trend would suggest that should Canada adopt a new electoral system, consideration should be given to a mixed system rather than a more pure form of proportional representation.

A third factor to consider in changing the electoral system is the impact on the size of Parliament, and similarly the impact the change would produce in the size of the typical constituency. The trade-offs on this matter are reasonably straight-forward. Reforming the electoral system by adopting a mixed system and simply adding new seats to the current 301 (or 308 following the 2003 redistribution exercise), could have the effects of increasing the costs of Parliament, and producing a House of Commons membership that literally has outgrown the size of the legislative chamber. In contrast, adopting a mixed system with the current number of seats would produce constituencies that are much larger in size and in population. The cost of such a change could be accounted through an increase in the travel and workload of constituency Members of Parliament, greater diversity in the character of constituencies, and weaker ties between MPs and their more far-flung constituents. While these challenges should not be viewed necessarily as insurmountable, neither should they be ignored. It should be noted that there also may be benefits to increasing the size of the House of Commons. For example, in a paper written in the

mid-1980s for the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (the Macdonald Commission), John Courtney (1985) identified a number of advantages to a larger House of Commons, including greater power and independence of backbench MPs, more effective committees (providing greater oversight of the public service), and greater proportionality in the vote to seat ratio. Therefore, increasing the size of Parliament should not be viewed as having the potential for only negative implications.

The fourth factor to consider when examining alternative electoral systems is the impact of changes to the electoral system on other relationships or institutions of governance. For example, changes to the regional characteristics of the parties' seats in the House of Commons would likely have an impact on the role of the Senate, as an instrument of regional representation, and on the role of the provinces, and particularly the Premiers, in their interaction with the federal government, and potentially on the likelihood of forming majority governments. An overall distribution of legislative seats that more closely corresponds to the popular vote would instantly transform Canadian government from one in which majority governments prevail to one in which the most common election outcome is a minority, and possibly a coalition, government. One feature of coalition governments is their tendency to give disproportionately strong power to minor parties, since the life of the government may depend upon the continuing support of the minor party. To the extent this is the case, it may also produce governments that are less stable, and who more frequently lose the confidence of the House, resulting in more frequent reliance on the governor general to appoint a new government, more "backroom" maneuvering among the parties for the support of possible coalition partners, more frequent elections, or a combination of all three. Thus, the unintended consequences of such a change may be sufficiently negative to erase the potential benefits.

7.0 Recommendations

This report has examined the character of representation in Canada. It was argued that the concept of representation is multi-dimensional, and that it is embodied in the institutions of government in a variety of ways and through a complex web of relationships. The ways in which representation are institutionalized result from the country's history, the nature of Canadian society, and the ongoing efforts by groups to have their voice heard in the policy-making process. As society changes, for example as the relations between men and women evolve, as new groups emerge through patterns of immigration or as groups become more powerful through processes of cultural change, new demands may arise to have the interests of such groups better reflected in government policy. Changes in society often occur more rapidly than changes in political institutions. This can be seen, for example, in the time lag between the rise of the women's movement and the increase in female representation in the House of Commons. Although the suffragette movement in the early years of the 20th century led to extending the federal franchise to women in 1917-18, still by the early 1960s women had made little headway in party politics or in getting elected to Parliament. The feminist movement that arose in the 1960s and 1970s ultimately led to changes in candidate nomination practices of parties, and in attitudes of Canadians about the electability of women. Finally, by the late 1980s and the 1990s, women began to be elected in far greater numbers to the House of Commons. Similar trends can be seen in the growing ethnic diversity of elected officials.

The Canadian experience in the increasingly diverse character of elected representatives leads to a number of questions. Have the changes in our political institutions (in this case, in electing more diverse MPs) occurred quickly enough? Have the changes gone far enough? Are the institutions of government responsive to citizen demands for greater representational inclusiveness, or do the institutions act as barriers to change? Furthermore, if institutions are slow to respond to citizen

demands for change, should the institutions (such as the electoral system, or the political parties) have changes imposed on them?

At the root of our political institutions are a set of values about the character and meaning of representation. Arguably the most fundamental value is the principle of political equality. Our system of representation is based on the idea that political equality refers to the equality of individuals, and is captured in the principle of one person, one vote. This principle is focused on the "input" side of representation. Some of the recent critiques of representation in Canada seek to alter this principle in two ways. One is to replace the focus on individuals with a focus on groups. The second is to focus on "outcomes" rather than inputs. By thinking about representation as group-based and by examining election outcomes, one is led, as was the case with the Lortie Commission, to compare the proportion of a group in the population with its proportion in the legislature, and to discuss any differences in terms of "representational deficits".

There are two problems with such an approach. The first concerns the way in which one defines politically relevant groups. Which groups should have "equitable" representation in elected legislatures? Are the relevant group characteristics limited to region or province of residence, and also gender? Do they include ethnic origin, aboriginal status, religious denomination, sexual orientation and age? Should factors such as home ownership, employment, family configuration, physical attributes, health, lifestyle choices etc. also be considered politically relevant? Defining which characteristics are politically relevant is a highly value-laden exercise and subject to difference of opinion. Furthermore, individuals may change their perceptions of which characteristics are more or less politically relevant. In a system of group-based representation, who determines the priorities of characteristics that require special representational provisions – the state, the parties, interest groups?

The second problem with a conception of representation based on group electoral outcomes is that organized groups may be forced to pursue the

representation of their interest by competing in elections. In the contemporary system of representation, groups may purse a number of strategies, including non-partisan lobbying, court challenges based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, electing their candidates in party leadership elections, and the like. Requiring 'designated groups' to elect MPs to the House of Commons may effectively limit a group's ability to pursue other options.

It also bears repeating that the various institutions of representative government are highly inter-related. A change in one representative institution, such as introducing proportional representation into Canada's electoral system, can have a major impact on other institutions, such as the character of the executive branch of government. Currently the norm in Canada is to form majority governments comprised of cabinet members from a single political party. Proportional representation would almost certainly reduce the likelihood of any party holding a majority of seats, and thus would likely produce either minority or coalition governments. Such governments must rely on the support of other, often much smaller, parties. This can have the effect of significantly increasing the power of parties with very little electoral support, and decreasing the power of parties with substantial support. Whether such a change is good or bad for representative democracy is an open question.

All of this is not to argue against changes to Canada's system of representative democracy. It is suggested that choosing between different institutional forms of government is a heavily value-laden exercise. The recommendations that follow are cast not in terms of specific substantive suggestions for change. That is a task best left to proponents of particular representational values. Rather, the recommendations are cast as issues to consider when assessing specific reform proposals.

1. Recognize that the process of representation is dynamic and ongoing. Any individual or group has multiple access points to the system of representation, and a disadvantage in one may be compensated by an advantage in another.

2. When considering changes to any element in the system of representation, consider the impact of the change on other elements. Assess the costs and benefits in the overall system of representation.

3. Consider whether the values embodied in any proposed change are consistent with the values that underlie the system of representation – equality of individuals and free and open elections.

4. When assessing any demands for special representational treatment of particular groups, consider what qualities distinguish this group from other groups in Canadian society. Consider also whether any proposed changes differentially advantage the identified group over other groups and individuals.

5. When considering changes to the system of representation, assess the variety of ways in which the desired outcome can be accomplished.

6. Consider whether any proposed change is largely administrative or substantive. An administrative change is one which operates within the context of current institutional arrangements whereas a substantive change seeks to alter the institutional arrangements. For example, a goal may be to increase youth participation in elections. An administrative change could include a targeted effort to register youth electors. A substantive change could include setting quotas for youth candidates for each party. In general,

given the inter-connection between political institutions, preference should be given to administrative changes.

7. The system of representation should be as open as possible and practical for all citizens to express their right to freely associate, vote and contest elections.

Table 1

Total Female Candidates Elected to House of Commons, 1984-2000

Year	Number of Female Candidates Elected[5]	Percent of Female Members in House Of Commons	Total Seats in House of Commons[6]
1984	27	9.6%	282
1988	39	13.2%	295
1993	53	18.0%	295
1997	62	20.6%	301
2000	62	20.6%	301

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[5] Number of female candidates from MacIvor, (2003; p. 31)
[6] Number of seats in House of Commons from Thorburn, and Whitehorn, (2001; pp. 486-7; and from Elections Canada, http://www.elections.ca)

Table 2

Main Occupations of MPs, selected years 1974 to 2000[7]

Year

Primary Occupations	1974	1980	1988	1997	2000
Management, senior Managers	43	62	69	70	71
Management, middle Managers	17	15	25	19	16
Business and finance Professional	9	11	8	21	20
Admin and business Skilled	4	8	6	10	13
Clerical	2	0	1	1	1
Natural and applied Sciences, professional	7	9	10	9	5
Natural and applied Sciences, technical	2	2	2	4	4
Health, professional	15	11	15	9	10
Health, assistance	0	0	0	1	0
Law, social science, educ, Government services and Religion, professional	107	126	125	124	123
Law, social science, educ, Religion, paraprofessional	0	1	0	1	1
Art and culture, professional	14	11	11	13	15
Art, culture, recreation and Sport, technical and skilled	2	2	4	2	3
Sales and service, skilled	7	5	4	6	5
Sales and service,	13	4	5	2	2

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[7] Library of Parliament. Information and Documentation Branch. Due to double counting of some occupations, categories such to larger than size of House of Commons.

Table 2 (continued)

Primary Occupations	1974	1980	1988	1997	2000
Intermediate					
Sales and service, Elemental	0	1	0	0	0
Transport and equipment	5	4	5	3	4
Trades and skilled operators	0	0	0	0	0
Transport equipment Operation, installation and Maintenance	0	0	1	0	0
Primary industry	21	17	17	22	20
Processing and manufacturing Machine, operators and Assemblers	0	2	0	0	0
Processing, manufacturing And utilities, labourer	0	0	1	0	0
Total seats in House of Commons	264	282	295	301	301

Table 3

Ethnic Minorities Elected to House of Commons, 1993 to 2000 (pooled data)[8]

Party Distribution of Members of Parliament

Party	Female Minority	Female Majority	Male Minority	Male Majority	Total
Liberal	16	27	46	119	208
Reform-Canadian Alliance	3	5	25	38	68
Bloc Quebecois	0	12	10	58	80
New Democratic Party	2	6	7	6	21
Progressive Conservative	1	1	1	18	21
Independent	0	0	0	1	1
Total	22	51	77	240	390

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[8] Data adapted from Black (2003; p. 64)

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Table 4

Partisan Distribution in the House of Commons, 1878 – 2000

Party Votes (in percentages) and Seats (in numbers)[9]

Election Year	Party in	Total Seats	Lib. Seats	Lib. Votes	PC Seats	PC Votes	Prog/CCF/NDP Seats	Prog/CCF/NDP Votes	Socred Ref. Seats	Socred Ref. Votes	Cred./BQ Seats	Cred./BQ Votes
1878	Cons.	206	65	45	140	53						
1882	Cons.	211	73	47	138	53						
1887	Cons.	215	87	49	128	51						
1891	Cons.	215	91	46	122	52						
1896	Lib.	213	118	45	88	46						
1900	Lib.	213	132	52	81	47						
1904	Lib.	214	139	53	75	47						
1908	Lib.	221	135	51	85	47						
1911	Cons.	221	87	48	134	51						
1917	Cons.[10]	235	82	40	153	57	Progressive					
1921	Lib.	235	116	41	50	30	65	23				
1925	Lib.	245	99	40	116	47	24	9				
1926	Lib.	245	128	46	91	45	20	5				
1930	Cons.	245	91	46	137	49	12	3				
							CCF		Social Credit			
1935	Lib.	245	173	45	40	30	7	9	17	4		
1940	Lib.	245	181	52	40	31	8	9	10	3	Bloc Populaire	
1945	Lib.	245	125	41	67	27	28	16	13	4	2	3
1949	Lib.	262	190	50	41	30	13	13	10	4		
1953	Lib.	265	171	49	51	31	23	11	15	5		
1957	Cons.	265	105	41	112	39	25	11	19	7		
1958	Cons.	265	49	34	208	54	8	10	0	3		
							NDP					
1962	Cons.	265	99	37	116	37	19	14	30	12		
1963	Lib.	265	129	42	95	33	17	13	24	12	Creditiste	
1965	Lib.	265	132	40	97	32	21	18	5	4	9	5
1968	Lib.	264	155	46	72	31	22	17	0	1	14	3
1972	Lib.	264	109	39	107	35	31	18	15	8		
1974	Lib.	264	141	43	95	35	16	15	11	5		
1979	Cons.	282	114	40	136	36	26	18	6	5		
1980	Lib.	282	147	44	103	33	32	20	0	2		
1984	Cons.	282	40	28	211	50	30	19				
									Reform			
1988	Cons.	295	83	32	169	43	43	20	0	2		
											Bloc quebecois	
1993	Lib.	295	177	41	2	16	9	7	52	19	54	14
1997	Lib.	301	155	39	20	19	21	11	60	19	44	11
									Can. Alliance			
2000	Lib.	301	172	41	12	12	13	9	66	26	38	11

[9] Data from 1978 – 1997 from Thorburn and Whitehorn (2000; pp. 486-7). Data from 2000 from Elections Canada.
[10] Wartime coalition

Table 5

Percentage of Women Elected to House of Commons, By Party, 1974 to 2000[11]

Year	Party				
	Liberal	Conservative	NDP	Reform/ Canadian Alliance	Bloc Quebecois
1974	5.2	2.1	0.0	--	--
1979	5.3	1.5	7.7	--	--
1980	6.8	1.9	6.3	--	--
1984	12.5	9.0	10.0	--	--
1988	15.7	12.4	11.6	--	--
1993	20.0	50.0	11.0	13.5	14.8
1997	23.9	10.0	38.0	6.7	25.0
2000	23.4	7.0	35.7	11.1	26.5

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[11] Data for 1974 to 1997 from Young, (2000; p. 186). Data for 2000 from Elections Canada.

Table 6

Percentage of Women Nominated for Election to House of Commons,
By Party, 1974 to 2000[12]

Year	Party				
	Liberal	Conservative	NDP	Reform/ Canadian Alliance	Bloc Quebecois
1974	7.8	4.3	15.5	--	--
1979	7.5	5.0	16.7	--	--
1980	8.2	5.0	11.7	--	--
1984	13.6	8.2	22.7	--	--
1988	18.0	12.5	28.5	--	--
1993	22.0	23.0	38.0	11.1	13.3
1997	27.9	18.6	35.6	10.1	21.3
2000	21.6	13.0	29.2	10.7	24.0

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[12] Data for 1974 to 1997 from Young, (2000; p. 186). Data for 2000 from MacIvor, (2003; p. 31)

Table 7

Evolution of Political Cynicism in Canada[13]

	1965	1968	1974	1979	1984	1988	1990	2000
Government does not care[a]	49	45	59	53	63	n/a	70	66
Elected Lose Touch[a]	60	61	65	65	78	n/a	79	70
Government Crooked	27	27	n/a	n/a	n/a	52	n/a	49
Government Wastes	38	46	n/a	n/a	n/a	66	n/a	65

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[13] Data from 1965 to 1990 are from Blais and Gidengil, (1991). *Data from* 2000 is drawn from Canadian Election Study.

Note that the results for 2000 are based on response sets that differ from those used in previous years. The data from 1965 to 1990 were drawn from questions with categories 'basically agree' and 'basically disagree'. The questions used in the 2000 election study contained strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results combine the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories.

Table 8

Evolution of Party Rating in Canada[14]

	1968	1974	1979	1980	1988	1997	2000
Liberal Party	65	62	58	56	48	44	52
Progressive Conservative Party	56	54	55	51	51	52	43
New Democratic Party	48	44	47	46	43	36	39
Reform/Canadian Alliance	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	42
Bloc Quebecois	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	43[a]	47
Average	56	53	53	51	47	42	45

[14] Data for 1965 to 1990 are from Blais and Gidengil, (1991). Data for 1997 and 2000 are from the 1997 and 2000 Canadian Election Studies.
Note that the rating for the Bloc Quebecois is for Quebec respondents only. Consequently it is much higher than reported in Carty, Cross and Young (2000).

Table 9

Attitudes Towards Electoral and Democratic Representation in Canada, 2000

	Democracy (% satisfied)	Electoral System (% satisfied)	Important Referendum (% often)	Controversial Referendum (% often)	Fixed Elections (% support)
Atlantic	79.7	48.3	65.7	57.5	65.1
Quebec	62.7	39.8	59.9	62.1	70.6
Ontario	79.0	47.3	65.0	62.1	70.3
Man./Sask.	69.4	42.6	56.4	64.7	65.5
Alberta	56.6	24.7	79.8	63.1	71.1
B. C.	58.0	35.4	75.5	68.2	68.1
Men	68.4	45.3	63.4	59.9	70.0
Women	70.8	35.8	68.9	65.8	68.7
Under 45	72.6	40.0	69.4	65.9	70.2
Over 45	66.1	42.4	62.3	59.4	68.5
Low Education	65.4	39.1	69.0	65.7	68.3
Medium Education	71.5	40.4	67.1	68.0	69.9
High Education	73.4	45.1	59.3	50.8	70.1
Low Income	63.7	35.6	70.0	67.3	67.4
Medium Income	69.2	42.8	64.9	65.9	70.2
High Income	71.6	43.0	64.8	57.8	72.4
Private	71.5	41.4	68.2	64.1	69.3
Public	75.8	46.8	61.6	63.4	71.1
Unionized	71.6	44.6	65.1	64.3	69.3
Non-Unionized	68.5	39.2	66.6	61.8	69.6
English	72.1	41.0	66.7	62.9	68.8
French	61.3	40.5	63.2	63.3	72.3
Non-Charter	72.7	46.7	68.1	57.3	63.9
Protestant	69.2	40.3	69.3	64.9	72.6
Catholic	70.0	42.3	63.2	64.6	70.1
Other	76.5	39.9	72.2	57.9	61.5
CANADA	**69.5**	**41.2**	**66.0**	**62.7**	**69.4**

Table 9 (continued)

The following questions were included:

Democratic Satisfaction: On the whole when it comes to the way democracy works
in Canada, are you:
(1) very satisfied   (3) somewhat satisfied   (5) not very satisfied   (5)
not satisfied at all
(Individuals responding with a 1 or 3 are coded as satisfied with democracy).

Electoral Satisfaction: Under our present system, a party can win a majority of
seats without winning a majority of votes. Do you find this acceptable,
unacceptable, or do you not have an opinion on this?
(1) acceptable   (5) unacceptable
(Individuals responding with a 1 are coded as satisfied).

Important Referendum: Do you think that referendums on IMPORTANT issues
should be held:
(1) regularly   (3) occasionally   (5) rarely   (7) never
(Individuals responding with a 1 and 3 are coded as often).

Controversial Referendum: Do you think that referendums on CONTROVERSIAL
issues should be held:
(1) regularly   (3) occasionally   (5) rarely   (7) never
(Individuals responding with a 1 and 3 are coded as often).

Fixed Elections: Should we have fixed elections or should the government decide
when elections are held?
(1) fixed dates   (5) government should decide
(Individuals responding with a 1 are coded as supporting fixed elections).

Table 10

Attitudes Towards Representation of 'Marginalized Groups' in Canada, 2000

	Female Representation (% serious)	Female Quotas (% supporting)	Minority Representation (% serious)	Minority Quotas (% supporting)
Atlantic	31.1	43.5	32.5	51.4
Quebec	49.1	54.7	37.7	54.4
Ontario	31.3	30.7	36.7	46.7
Man./Sask.	25.6	33.9	26.3	36.8
Alberta	27.2	22.4	27.3	33.6
B. C.	38.9	30.0	32.8	38.8
Men	30.2	33.5	29.7	40.9
Women	41.5	40.6	40.1	52.3
Under 45	37.2	42.1	39.0	51.0
Over 45	34.1	31.4	29.3	40.4
Low Education	33.8	49.2	32.3	50.7
Medium Education	35.6	34.5	34.4	50.1
High Education	38.9	20.8	39.0	33.4
Low Income	38.0	50.3	41.7	61.3
Medium Income	39.2	37.6	35.9	47.5
High Income	32.8	28.4	31.0	37.2
Private	34.1	41.2	30.0	48.1
Public	41.7	30.5	38.8	38.9
Unionized	36.9	38.8	36.6	48.0
Non-Unionized	34.9	35.8	33.3	45.0
English	33.1	30.7	33.0	42.0
French	46.0	54.8	38.0	54.5
Non-Charter	25.7	37.5	38.7	63.1
Protestant	31.5	29.1	29.8	37.0
Catholic	39.7	47.6	34.4	52.6
Other	29.5	33.1	46.6	53.6
CANADA	**35.7**	**37.0**	**34.5**	**46.2**

Table 10 (continued)

The following questions were included:

Female Representation: As you may know there are many more men than women in the House of Commons. In your view, is this a:
(1) very serious problem　　(3) quite a serious problem　(5) not a very serious problem　　(7) not a problem at all
(Individuals responding with a 1 or 3 are coded as agreeing that it is a serious problem).

Female Quotas: Would you favour or oppose requiring the parties to have an equal number of male and female candidates?
(1) favour　　(5) oppose
(Individuals responding with a 1 are coded as being in favour of quotas).

Minority Representation: As you may know there are very few members of RACIAL MINORITIES in the House of Commons. In your view, is this a:
(1) very serious problem　　(3) quite a serious problem　(5) not a very serious problem　　(7) not a problem at all
(Individuals responding with a 1 or 3 are coded as agreeing that it is a serious problem).

Minority Quotas: Would you favour or oppose requiring the parties to have more members of racial minorities as candidates?
(1) favour　　(5) oppose
(Individuals responding with a 1 are coded as being in favour of quotas).

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