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# **Analysis on the Causes and Effects of the Merger Between the Canadian Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance**

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**Abstract:** Canada was once a British colony and party politics are still under British influence. As far as Canadian parties are concerned, politicians think it's enough to study Britain. However, Canada also has its own unique development characteristics. Since the new century, the balance of political power in Canada has changed significantly due to the merger of the Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance to form the new Conservative Party. This paper analyzes the reasons and influence of the merger between the Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance, and explains the phenomenon of the merger of political parties in Canada.

**Keywords:** Canada; Progressive Conservative Party; Canadian Alliance; the Merger; Causes and Effects

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## **1. Reasons for the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance**

Party consolidation is a method of merging two political parties by consolidating their votes and reducing their operating costs. A merger between two parties can also be seen as a manifesto to change a party and the strategy of popularity in the election. The reasons for the merger between the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance can be analyzed from Canada's political party system, election system and the changes in the economic policies adopted by the two parties in different periods.

The need for the evolution of the Canadian political party system, the progressive conservative party and the Liberal Party to take turns in power, is an important symbol of the Canadian political party system. But the 1993 federal election was an important stage in the shifting landscape of Canadian party politics. It led to a split in the Conservative Party and the gradual rise of third parties. And the Canadian political party system has gradually changed from two-party system to liberal party "one-party dominance" trend.

The conservative party's election, the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance (Reform Party), has had a major impact on Party politics in Canada, mainly by consolidating its two-party system. Because it makes the essence and form of the two parties interactive governance has been continued and developed. So that the political structure of Canada has returned to the political structure of the two-party system. The conservative party's coming into power has curbed the trend of the liberal party's one-party dominance and broken the situation of the liberal Party's one-party dominance. If the Conservatives remain in opposition this time, it will lead to a prolonged liberal one-party grip on power. Canada could move towards a one-party system.

## **2. Effects of the merger between the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance**

The merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance has brought great influence on the politics, economy, diplomacy and society of Canada. The relevant policies of the Conservative Party of Canada after the merger are not only of great significance to Canada's economic development and the solution to social problems, but also have significant changes in international relations and foreign exchanges. But there are two sides to the story, and the merger of the Progressive Conservatives with the Canadian Alliance raises some worrying questions. 2.1 Canada's political party system has changed

In the historical development of Canadian confederation, the 19th century is known as the era of the Progressive Conservatives and the 20th century as the era of the Liberals. For the past two centuries, no other party has been able to compete with the liberals and the Progressive Conservatives. However, in the historical development of the 20th century, the Progressive Conservative Party was not only in a position of no ruling for a long time, but also experienced a split situation in the later period, which made the progressive Conservative Party gradually lose its original competitiveness and could no longer compete with the Liberal Party. Since 1921, the political pattern of Canada has gradually seen the development of third parties, especially the establishment of the New Democratic Party, the Reform Party established after the split of the Progressive Conservative Party and Quebec. Although the third party has grown rapidly, it has also won many votes and seats in the federal election. But it is still uncontested compared with the Liberals. This has also led to the gradual transformation of Canada's political party pattern from a two-party system to one-party (Liberal) dominance.

In this case, the Progressive Conservative Party merges with the Canadian Alliance Party to form the Conservative Party of Canada and contest the federal election. The Conservative Party has been in power for three terms, winning federal elections in 2006, 2008 and 2011. The merger of the two parties not only broke the trend of the Liberal Party being the dominant party, but also brought Canada's political structure back to the two-party system.

### **2.2 Negative changes in Canadian policy at home and abroad**

After coming to power, Canada's Conservative Party made great efforts to improve international relations with the United States. And more actively participate in international affairs, seize the international discourse. The international policies adopted by the Conservative Party, especially the China policy, have had a negative impact on Canada.

The Conservative Party's China policy also maintains its political orientation. As a right-wing party, there is no love for China's ruling party. Some Conservative MPS are not friendly towards China, and even openly anti-China. For example, in early 2004, Conservative MP Abbott proposed the *Taiwan Affairs Act*, expressing his support for Taiwan's substantive independence. Some Conservative legislators openly support the activities of anti-China forces abroad.

### **2.3 The future of the Conservative Party of Canada**

The merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance has changed party politics in Canada. To return it from one-party (Liberal) dominance to a two-party political system. However, the interest appeal problem of Quebec province has existed for a long time, and the western region has always wanted to get more say. Canada's existing two-party system is somewhat different from the previous two-party system, and the Conservative Party is formed by the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance. The internal interests of the new party will inevitably produce contradictions and conflicts, especially the joining of the Canadian Alliance, which represents the interests of the western region, will inevitably lead to the increase of appeals for the interests of the western region. The policy of The Conservative Party of Canada will also tilt and adjust to the western region. If the Conservative Party of Canada fails to properly coordinate and balance the interests of the two parties, it may end up in a situation where it is unable to govern for a long time.

12 years of liberal rule was broken by the Conservative victory in the federal election. But the liberal government has appointed most of the federal government, the judiciary and the Senate. In addition, the Conservative Party has been outside for a long time and lacks governing experience, which brings difficulties to the conservative party's governing to some extent. In addition, the Conservative Party has many problems to solve in a series of serious domestic situations in Canada. Such as reducing taxes, increasing people's income, developing the economy, improving health care and social welfare, combating terrorist organizations and crimes, thus providing a safe and clean social environment. These are thorny issues for the Conservative Party. If Canada's Conservatives get it wrong, the development of their own party and the position of the ruling caused by the loss is imaginable.

## Conclusion

It can be seen from the above theoretical review that the existing party organization reform theory cannot completely explain the creation process of a new political party entity. The analysis of the causes of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance Party aims to highlight some factors that have not received much discussion and empirical attention in the previous theories, namely, the changes of economic policy, party system and electoral system. This includes ideological alignment, demand for votes and seats, demand for money and voters, and party rebranding. And some of these factors are theoretical studies of pre-election alliances. However, as the case of the merger between the Progressive Conservatives and the Canadian Alliance illustrates, the reasons and conditions for such a merger do not apply to every party.

Recent research on political parties' strategic cooperation shows that changes in electoral laws and preferences can create strong external pressures on political parties to regulate their behavior. In 2003, the federal government passed new listing financing rules banning corporate donations to political parties. Party funding replaces corporate donations with government subsidies and limits the size of individual donations. Because the Progressive Conservatives rely more on corporate donations than the Canadian Alliance does, and the Progressive Conservatives have lost ground in Ontario, Quebec, and even the Atlantic provinces. So, the electoral pressure on the party is relatively high. Although some members of the Progressive Conservative Party think the Canadian alliance is too extreme, under such pressure, some elements of the party, less keen on a merger with the more extreme Canadian Alliance, also agreed. These factors also help explain why a relatively moderate party would merge with a more extreme one.

Finally, consider the fact that party mergers are very rare. It takes a lot for two parties in a country to merge. The set of conditions identified in this paper are almost impossible to be met by other national parties at the same time, and certain conditions will undoubtedly help increase the possibility of a merger between the two parties.

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