

PARTISAN REALIGNMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Case of the Provincial Liberal Party

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PROVINCIAL PARTY COMPETITION IN British Columbia has a sharper left-right focus than in any other part of English-speaking North America. Federal institutions have allowed the province's electoral competition to become detached from the main currents of Canada's national politics, which have focused on the attempts of the old-line federal parties to broker a host of competing regional, cultural, and socioeconomic interests.

The contemporary version of British Columbia's polarized provincial party system was born in 1952 with the collapse of a wartime provincial coalition of Liberals and Conservatives. Though Social Credit soon established an electoral dominance, it did not absorb all the anti-socialist forces. The Conservatives quickly disappeared into the new party, but the Liberals managed to hold onto about 20 per cent of the vote and a handful of seats. In 1972 the NDP won an election, but with less than 40 per cent of the vote, when much of the support of the aging Social Credit government splintered and defected. Reactions to that election led to the renewal of Social Credit leadership, the creation of a more modern party organization, and the re-establishment of a new, more complete Social Credit electoral coalition. In that rebuilding Social Credit finally managed to absorb most of the Liberal élite who had resisted them for two decades. The 1975 election returned Social Credit to power and completed the creation of the modern bipolar party system.

In October 1991, the stage was apparently set for a repeat of this dynamic. British Columbia voters elected an NDP government for only the second time in the province's history, ending a string of four successive Social Credit victories. However, unlike 1972, Social Credit slipped into third place in popular support and legislative representation. The British Columbia Liberal party staged a spectacular comeback: its popular vote soared from 6.7 per cent in 1986 to 33.2 per cent

and, with seventeen members elected, it formed the official opposition in the legislature.¹ Liberal resurgence was paralleled by Social Credit's collapse. The Liberal gain in vote share (26.5 percentage points) was nearly identical to the Socred drop (25.3 points). The once dominant party elected only seven members, only one of whom remains identified as a Socred in the legislature, four having switched allegiance to the BC Reform party, ending Social Credit's status as a recognized party in the legislature. With a strong lead in the public opinion polls throughout the spring and summer of 1995, the Liberal party seems poised to replace the Socreds as the counterweight to the NDP in a return to a two-party, ideologically-driven system.

This essay examines this incipient realignment by focussing particularly on the views of Liberal party activists in order to determine whether the party has simply replaced the Social Credit electoral coalition or represents a new and distinctive perspective in provincial politics. Our analysis relies on surveys of party activists conducted during the 1987 and 1993 provincial Liberal leadership contests, the 1986 and 1991 Social Credit leadership races, and the 1987 NDP leadership convention to compare and contrast the ideological positions, policy views, and political experiences of key participants in the political process.

We have argued elsewhere² that party activists play a pivotal role in ordering or limiting the extent or direction of change in a party system. They are central to a party's appeal for electoral support and can be an important force in shaping policy and directing leadership. By working on campaigns, and in sustaining party organizations between elections, they contribute to the magnitude, reach, and structure of voter support. They can expand or limit a party's success by their influence in choosing party candidates and leaders who are important to a party's popularity. Activists also take positions on public policies and party issues, passing resolutions in party forums and conventions which define the party's public face.

Figure 1 summarizes BC election results since 1969. From the late 1970s through the 1980s, the party system was dominated by two parties, Social Credit and the New Democrats. The combined support for the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives never exceeded 10 per cent during this period. At first glance, in 1991 the Liberal party

¹ Four of the seventeen Liberal MLAs subsequently left the party. Two sit as independents. Two others, including Gordon Wilson, the man who led the party during the election, formed a new party, the Progressive Democratic Alliance.

² Donald E. Blake, R.K. Carty, and Lynda Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians: Party Activists in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991).

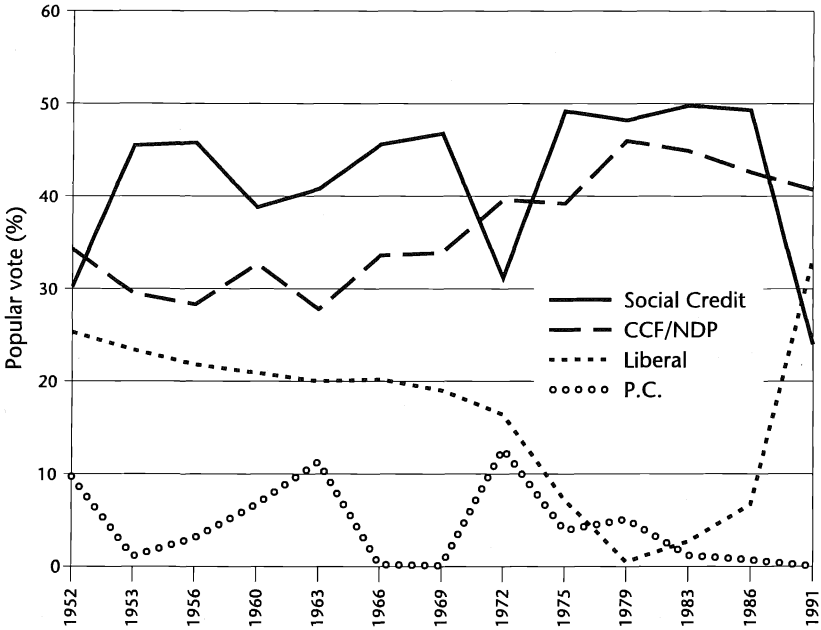


FIGURE 1 B.C. election results, 1952-1991.

seems to have played the spoiler role it shared with the Progressive Conservatives in 1972, siphoning off enough Social Credit votes to give the NDP a victory even though the NDP vote share declined slightly from 1986. Given a very weak party organization³ and small membership base, Liberal victories in 1991 depended far more on the peculiar circumstances of the campaign and vote splits in individual constituencies than on any underlying party structure. In fact, many observers attributed Liberal resurgence to a single event — the performance of party leader Gordon Wilson in a televised leaders' debate shortly before election day.

A number of other factors led to a collapse in Social Credit support. They include the struggles within Social Credit leading up to the resignation of William Vander Zalm as party leader and Premier, the bitter battle to succeed him, and the inability of the new Social Credit leader, Rita Johnston, to unite the party and dissociate it in the public mind from her predecessor before the constitutional clock forced a provincial election. Moreover, the NDP leader, Mike Harcourt, had

³ The leader of the party was chosen by delegates at a leadership selection convention in 1987. Though it had involved members of both the (still united) federal and provincial wings of the Liberal party in British Columbia, that convention had involved only 240 delegates and Wilson was chosen by acclamation. For further details see *ibid.*

had four years to prepare for the election. He also projected a more moderate image than his predecessor.

As is apparent from table 1, the shift away from Social Credit towards the Liberals was nearly universal. In three out of six regions (accounting for 52 of 75 ridings), average Liberal gains per riding were within 1 percentage point of Social Credit losses.⁴ In fact, across the province, 66 per cent of the variance in Liberal vote increases is statistically explained by Social Credit losses.⁵

TABLE I
Average Riding Level Vote Swing by Party and Region, 1986-1991

REGION	NDP	SOCIAL CREDIT	LIBERAL
Lower Mainland	-1.5	-27.3	+27.1
Vancouver Island	-1.7	-27.9	+27.5
Fraser Valley	-2.4	-28.9	+29.7
Kootenays	-2.5	-15.4	+17.1
Okanagan/Southern Interior	-3.2	-20.6	+26.1
North	+0.2	-15.5	+18.4
Province-wide	-1.6	-24.7	+25.8

Nevertheless, significant growth in Liberal party membership did not even begin until some eighteen months following the election, after Gordon Wilson had resigned following severe criticism of his leadership by members of the provincial executive and his own caucus, and the race to succeed him began. As late as mid-April 1993 the party had just 3,684 members in total, and in over a quarter of the province's seventy-five constituencies the party membership was under two dozen. Once the leadership contest started that changed very rapidly and by late July membership had grown to 13,446. Virtually all of this growth was the result of efforts by various leadership candidates to recruit support; a remarkable twenty-nine per cent of the new

⁴ A significant redrawing of constituency boundaries and an increase in their number took place following the 1986 election. All double-member ridings (sixteen) were eliminated and the legislature expanded from sixty-nine to seventy-five members. The authors' computation of vote shifts is based on a recalculation of the 1986 results using 1991 boundaries.

⁵ In all but eighteen of seventy-five ridings, Liberal gains were within one standard deviation of Social Credit losses. Parallelism between Liberal gains and Social Credit losses is also suggested by regression analysis using riding level data from the 1986 Census of Canada. The correlation between average family income by riding and Social Credit vote dropped from .33 in 1986 to .01 in 1991. Conversely, the correlation for the Liberals rose from .45 to .53.

members were registered in the last week before the membership lists were closed.⁶

TRANSFORMATION OF THE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY

We are particularly interested in the views of the thousands of new members, since many of them were recruited by the victorious Gordon Campbell team. Just six years earlier, the views of provincial Liberal activists were marked by a determined centrism. When asked to place their party on a seven-point scale ranting from left to right, 87 per cent had placed their party at the centre or within one point on either side of centre. A large majority placed the NDP on the left and Social Credit on the right, both at some distance from their own party.⁷

However, as shown below, many of the new members are disaffected Socreds whose addition to the Liberal activist group has shifted the Liberal party's ideological position towards the right. As a group to which the new Liberal leader owes his victory, their views must be taken seriously as the party attempts to consolidate and expand its position.

Our analysis of current Liberal party activists relies on a survey of the party membership mailed to a random sample of 3,000 in early December 1993.⁸ The sample was stratified so that one-half the questionnaires were sent to registered voters and one-half to party members who did not register for the televote. The return rate from those who did not participate in the leadership vote (18.9%) was lower than that from registered voters (32.7%). The overall response rate of 25.8 per cent is thus slightly lower than that obtained in the 1986 and 1991 studies of delegates to two successive BC Social Credit leadership conventions (27% and 40% respectively), and significantly lower than the return rate (48%) for the 1987 NDP leadership survey.⁹ However, we are satisfied that the sample is representative of Liberal activists.

⁶ Donald E. Blake and R. Kenneth Carty, "Televoting for the Leader of the British Columbia Liberal Party: The Leadership Contest of 1993," presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, Alberta, 1994.

⁷ Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians*, 115.

⁸ The survey was funded mainly by Maritime Tel. and Tel. with additional support from the Liberal party of British Columbia. We wish to acknowledge the advice and support of Michael Pollard of MT&T, and of the Liberal party, especially Reni Masi, president of the party and Floyd Sully, past-president. Neither MT&T nor the Liberal party exercised any control over the questionnaire design or analysis. Responsibility for the conclusions reached belongs solely to the authors. Roseanne Sovka, Kelly Lauth, Arlette Blake, and Erin Blake provided invaluable assistance with data entry.

⁹ Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians*.

The geographical distribution of the sample is very close to the actual distribution of the party membership, except for the underrepresentation of Vancouver Island and the overrepresentation of members from the southern interior and Kootenay regions.¹⁰

Half our sample (50.4%) joined the Liberal party in 1993 during the runup to the leadership convention. Of those, 26.5 per cent had previously been active in another political party, most of them (75%) with Social Credit. If we expand the group of new recruits to include those who joined the party in 1991 and 1992 and compare them to relative veterans, we find marked differences in the level of support for the party in the recent past (table 2). Nearly 90 per cent of the Liberal veterans reported voting for the party in the 1991 provincial election compared to 62.9 per cent of newcomers. The latter evidenced an even lower level of support for the Liberals in the 1993 federal election (50.2%), which took place in the month following the provincial leadership vote. Their level of campaign activity on behalf of the provincial and federal parties is correspondingly less than that of veterans as well.

TABLE 2
Liberal Party Support by Date of Membership

SUPPORT MEASURE	BEFORE 1991	1991-1993
Liberal vote, 1991 provincial election	89.4	62.9
Liberal vote, 1993 federal election	88.7	50.2
Liberal campaign activity, 1991 provincial election	75.8	38.5
Liberal campaign activity, 1993 federal election	82.2	45.4
Average N	273	427

Note: Table entries are percentages. N's vary because of different amounts of missing data.

Newcomers are also ideologically distinct from veterans. Table 3 compares activists who joined after 1991 with the party's long-standing members on four attitudinal dimensions: social spending, infrastruc-

¹⁰ The questionnaire was sent out in a bulk mail category, and not all those mailed to Vancouver Island may have been delivered. The distribution of leadership vote in the sub-sample of registered voters is remarkably close to the actual result. Moreover, the return rate in the voter sub-sample is not too much lower than that obtained in 1987 (40%), when a questionnaire was distributed in person to delegates at the provincial Liberal leadership convention. Further details can be found in Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians*.

ture spending, left/right self-placement, and populism.¹¹ The former are significantly less supportive of increases in government social spending as well as government spending on infrastructure. They are also significantly more right-wing and populist.

TABLE 3
Liberal Attitudinal Differences by Membership Characteristics

ATTITUDINAL MEASURE	WHEN JOINED LIBERAL PARTY		PREVIOUSLY ACTIVE IN DIFFERENT PARTY	
	PRE-1991	1991-93	NO	YES
Support for social spending	0.14	-0.15*	0.01	-0.27*
Support for infrastructure spending	0.64	0.48*	0.55	0.50
Left/right self-placement	3.03	3.57*	3.29	3.63*
Populism	2.07	2.34*	2.24	2.30
Average N	240	443	509	239

Note: Table entries are mean scores. Higher scores are associated with support for increasing social spending, increasing infrastructure spending, self-placement closer to the right, and greater populism. N's vary because of differing amounts of missing data. An asterisk indicates a statistically significant attitudinal difference (.05 level) on a given measure between those with different membership characteristics.

The social spending dimension was created by assigning a score from -2 to +2 to respondents depending on whether they believed that government spending in social policy areas should be decreased (negative scores), increased (positive scores) or remain the same (scored 0). The spending areas were: education, welfare rates, health care, daycare, and government salaries.

The infrastructure spending measure was created in the same fashion by combining responses to questions about government spending on tourism, highways, job creation, and reforestation.

Left/right self-placement was determined by assigning a score between 1 (left) and 5 (right) on the basis of answers to the following question: "Would you describe your political views as left, left-centre, centre, centre-right, or right?"

Support for populist beliefs was measured on a scale from 1 (low populism) to 3 (high populism) by combining responses to following questions:

1. In the long run, I'll put my trust in the simple, down-to-earth thinking of ordinary people rather than the theories of experts and intellectuals.
2. We could probably solve most of our big political problems if government could actually be brought back to people at the grass roots.
3. What we need is a government that gets the job done without all this red tape.

The second panel of table 3 compares the views of those who had been previously active in a different political party with those who

¹¹ Extensive use is made of the populism and spending dimensions in earlier work comparing NDP, Social Credit, and Liberal activists in British Columbia. See Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *ibid.*

have been only Liberal activists. As noted above, most of the first group are former Socred activists. In this case, significant differences appear only in the case of the two measures most closely linked to the left/right dimension: social spending and ideological self-placement. However, the fact that those with previous activity in a different party hold views which are clearly more conservative provides a foretaste of what is to come when we compare activist attitudes across political parties.

Most of these new activists joined the Liberal party because of the superior mobilization efforts of Gordon Campbell's leadership team. As shown in table 4, Gordon Campbell voters were significantly more conservative, as measured by attitudes towards social spending and ideological self-placement, than supporters of other candidates. These characteristics of activists also stand out when a variety of possible explanatory variables are tested for their impact on the probability of a vote for Campbell as opposed to one of his opponents. The statistical technique used, regression analysis, treats a vote for Campbell versus a vote for one of his opponents as the dependent variable in an equation with the possible explanatory variables as independent variables. Independent variables with statistically significant regression coefficients are associated with a higher probability of support for Campbell if they have a positive sign and a lower probability of support if the signs are negative. The independent variables tested were the attitudinal variables presented in previous tables as well as the three measures of membership activity and commitment. These measured campaign activity on behalf of the Liberal party, and distinguished party veterans from newcomers and party office-holders from rank-and-file members. Possible regional variation in support for Campbell was also tested. Table 5 provides the details on the significant explanatory variables. It shows that Liberal activists with more conservative views and new members were significantly more likely to have voted for Gordon Campbell as leader. The only other significant explanatory variable among those tested is one which distinguished Liberal activists from the Fraser Valley from the others. Its coefficient indicates that, with ideological position and year of joining controlled, Fraser Valley Liberals were less likely than those from other regions to have voted for Campbell.

Not surprisingly given the major recruitment drive by the Campbell team and the fact that Gordon Campbell had not been a member of the party before he entered the leadership race, our snapshot of Liberal party activists in 1993 also revealed a significant attitudinal gap

TABLE 4
Liberal Attitudinal Differences by Leadership Vote

ATTITUDINAL MEASURE	LEADERSHIP VOTE	
	GORDON CAMPBELL	ANOTHER CANDIDATE
Support for social spending	-0.12	0.10*
Support for infrastructure spending	0.49	0.61
Left/right self-placement	3.51	3.11*
Populism	2.26	2.16
Average N	239	151

Note: N's vary because of differing amounts of missing data. See note to Table 3.

TABLE 5
Determinants of Liberal Leadership Vote

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT	T-RATIO
Left/right self-placement	0.07	2.18
Joined pre-1991	-0.29	6.15
Fraser Valley resident	-0.18	2.20
(Constant)	0.78	6.22
R ²	.14	

Note: The dependent variable was scored 1 (vote for Campbell) or 0 (vote for another candidate). Positive regression coefficients identify variables associated with a greater probability of a vote for Campbell. Negative coefficients identify variables which reduce the probability of a vote for Campbell.

between party officials and new membership as well as between experienced campaigners and those with no campaign experience (table 6).¹² Those with no experience of election battles or office-holding in the party were more conservative and populist. This is the reverse of what one would expect, for other studies of party activists have shown ordinary party members to be more moderate than party leaders and sub-leaders.¹³

¹² The campaign activity variable distinguishes those who campaigned on behalf of a Liberal candidate in at least one of the following election campaigns from those who did not: the 1986 and 1991 provincial campaigns and the 1988 and 1993 federal campaigns. The executive membership variable distinguishes current and former of provincial or federal riding association executives from those with no such experience.

¹³ Pippa Norris, "May's Law of Curvilinear Disparity Revisited: Leaders, Officers, Members and Voters in British Political Parties," *Party Politics* 1 (1995): 29-47.

TABLE 6
Liberal Attitudinal Differences by Membership Activity

ATTITUDINAL MEASURE	CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY		MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Support for social spending	0.07	-0.31*	0.18	-0.08*
Support for infrastructure spending	0.61	0.37*	0.55	0.54
Left/right self-placement	3.19	3.76*	2.97	3.42*
Populism	2.20	2.38*	1.91	2.29*
Average N	196	459	77	577

Note: Table entries are mean scores. Higher scores are associated with support for increasing social spending, increasing infrastructure spending, self-placement closer to the right, and greater populism. N's vary because of differing amounts of missing data. An Asterisk indicates a statistically significant attitudinal difference (.05 level) on a given measure between those with different levels of membership party activity. See notes to Table 3.

Of course, as the expanded party organization gels, new members will win offices in riding associations as well on the provincial executive. They will also have the opportunity to participate in election campaigns on behalf of Liberal candidates. In short, they will help to reshape what Liberalism stands for at the provincial level. In the next section we offer some evidence of what this portends for the position of the Liberal party in the provincial political spectrum.

INTER-PARTY IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Prior to 1991, the provincial Liberal party was poorly placed both strategically and ideologically to succeed in the BC party system. The party had traditionally (until 1992) operated as a single unit in both federal and provincial politics, giving it something of an identity crisis, for the electoral politics of those two political worlds had revolved around quite different issues. Liberals had continued as important players in federal elections even though they were marginal provincially. As a centrist party, whose activists' views were closer to the NDP than to Social Credit on many issues, it had considerable difficulty breaking into a system "where polarized politics is the

norm."¹⁴ Given its history and its orientation in federal politics, it could not outflank Social Credit on the right. Its position between Social Credit and the NDP made it vulnerable to defections by left-Liberals eager to defeat Social Credit and by right-Liberals just as concerned to prevent that result.

Events leading up the 1991 election campaign and the campaign itself helped to modify the strategic situation. The NDP was now led by Mike Harcourt, formerly a popular mayor of Vancouver. He had a considerably more moderate image than the man he succeeded, and made a major effort to alleviate the concerns of the business community. As noted above, Liberal leader Gordon Wilson turned in an outstanding performance in the leadership debate prior to the election. He offered an alternative to Social Credit voters and party activists alienated from the party by Vander Zalm or by the struggle to succeed him. Given the NDP's more benign image, a vote for the Liberals presented only a modest risk in policy terms even if the New Democrats won as a result of a split in the non-left vote. With the Social Credit party in tatters, its former supporters shifted to the Liberals in droves.

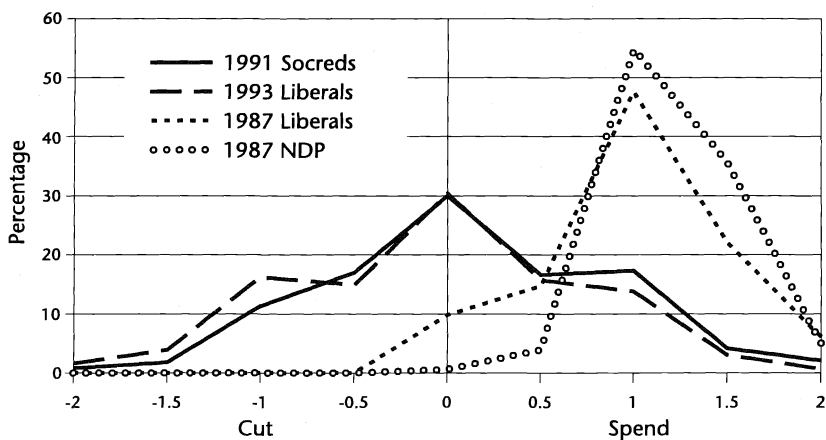


FIGURE 2 Support for social spending.

The impact on the policy profile of the provincial Liberal party is clearly evident when 1993 activists are compared to those who acclaimed Gordon Wilson leader in 1987 (figure 2). On the social spending dimension, by 1993 Liberals were virtually indistinguishable from delegates who attended the 1991 Social Credit leadership

¹⁴ Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians*, 84.

convention.¹⁵ The median position for both groups is the status quo on social spending. This represents a remarkable shift from 1987, when views on social spending among Liberal activists strongly resembled those of New Democrats and virtually all members of both groups favoured spending increases.

A similar but less dramatic shift is apparent on support for infrastructure spending (figure 3). A majority of activists from all four surveys are found on the “spending” side of the graph. However, the overall averages are lower for 1991 Socreds and 1993 Liberals, indicating less support for increased spending on infrastructure compared to the other two groups.

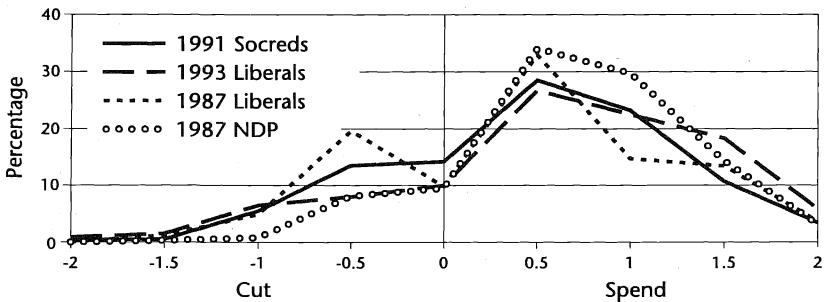


FIGURE 3 Support for infrastructure spending.

Finally, while 1987 Liberals were somewhat more populist than 1987 New Democrats, and much less so than 1991 Socreds, the Liberals who elected Gordon Campbell in 1993 bear a striking resemblance to the Socreds who attended the convention that replaced William Vander Zalm as party leader (figure 4). At least 50 per cent of both groups score at the most populist end of the scale.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

With the virtual disappearance of the provincial Social Credit party, a repeat of their post-1972 resurrection is exceedingly unlikely. However, whether the Liberals will simply replace Social Credit in a return to a

¹⁵ The 1987 Liberal delegate survey was conducted by Anthony Sayers under the supervision of the authors. The 1991 Social Credit survey was conducted by Ken Schmidt under the supervision of the authors. See Anthony Sayers, “Liberal Activists in British Columbia” (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991); Kenneth Schmidt, “William Vander Zalm to Rita Johnston: The 1991 Leadership Choice of the Social Credit Party of British Columbia” (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1993); and Blake, Carty, and Erickson, *Grassroots Politicians*.

¹⁶ The left/right self-placement item appeared only in the 1993 Liberal activist survey. Hence, we could not compare activist groups on this dimension.

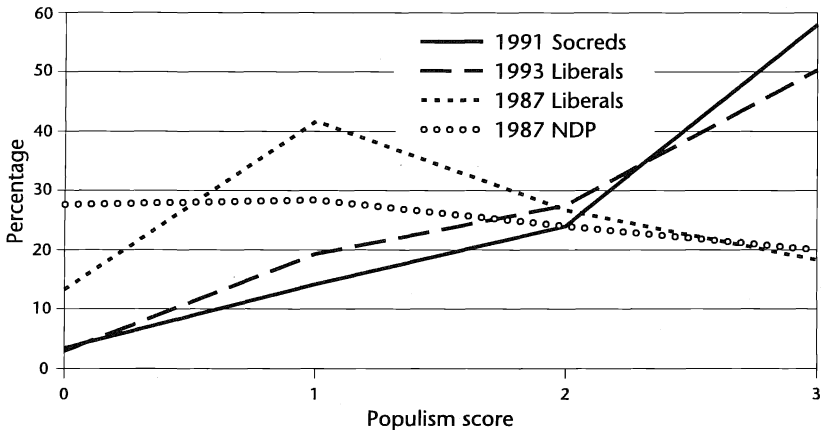


FIGURE 4 Populism.

polarized two-party system will depend, in part, on the fate of the BC Reform party.

Despite its name, the Reform Party of British Columbia has no official connection with the federal Reform party led by Preston Manning. In fact, the federal party has resisted all attempts by those inside and outside the party to contest provincial elections. BC Reform was formed before the federal Reform party, thus acquiring the right to the name in provincial elections. In the 1991 election the party fielded four candidates, who garnered a minuscule 0.18 per cent of the popular vote.

With the collapse of the Social Credit vote in 1991, and the popularity of federal Reform in national polls, the provincial Reform party offered an attractive refuge for dissident Socreds, especially those with more conservative views living in the interior and northern areas of the province. After the election, four of the seven sitting Social Credit MLAs, all representing non-urban ridings, joined the BC Reform party. Since then, former Socreds have essentially hijacked the party. Its current leader is a former Social Credit cabinet minister, Jack Weisgerber.

Support for BC Reform hovered at around 20 per cent in public opinion polls throughout 1994, with its greatest support in the Fraser Valley and the interior and north of the province. These areas were the heartland of the Social Credit party. On the other hand, they remain weak on Vancouver Island and in the major urban areas of the province where most voters are located.¹⁷ The history of provincial

¹⁷ Angus Reid Group, *BC Reid Report*, 1994.

politics has shown how difficult it is to mount an electoral challenge from a position in third place.

For itself, the Liberal party has staked out a policy position on the centre-right of the political spectrum. In a recent speech at a fundraising dinner attended by 2,800 Vancouver business leaders and party faithful, Gordon Campbell gave a preview of the platform his party will present to the voters during the next election, which must be held by October 1996.¹⁸ He placed heavy emphasis on reducing the size and cost of government, including a promise to introduce a balanced-budget law. In addition he pledged to sell dozens of crown corporations and use the proceeds to pay down the public debt. Perhaps mindful of the much more populist following he helped to attract in his bid for the party leadership, he also promised to eliminate subsidies to business, and reduce the number of MLAs (and their pension entitlements) and the number of government ministries. On the other hand, he steered clear of social spending cuts, pledging instead to reorganize delivery of health and social programs so that more of the funding winds up addressing the needs of those it is designed to help, instead of in the pockets of health and social welfare workers.

The evidence from membership surveys suggests that the Liberals will have little difficulty selling this program to their membership, which continues to grow dramatically. The party had just over 13,000 members when Gordon Campbell was elected leader. By April 1995, membership had reached 40,400, making the Liberals the largest party in the province.¹⁹ With membership growing by 1,200 per week, the party is expected to have over 50,000 members by mid-summer 1995. It is likely that this new membership, like that in our sample, will contribute to the Social Credit look of the party.

Moreover, given their current standing in the public opinion polls, the Liberals can anticipate a resonance with a substantial part of the electorate as well. While we have stressed the similarity between the views of current Liberal activists and those active in Social Credit just before its electoral collapse, we must also acknowledge the diversity of opinion in both groups compared to that found within the NDP. Like Social Credit, the Liberal party is well placed to adapt to shifts in public opinion. As the dominant player on the non-left, the Liberals are the best placed of all the NDP's opponents to assume the role once played by Social Credit in the dynamic relationship that has structured the provincial party system for half a century.

¹⁸ See the Vancouver *Sun*, 28 April 1995, A22.

¹⁹ Campbell gave this figure in a speech in Vancouver on 26 April 1995.