

---

## Vancouver Civic Party Leadership: Backgrounds, Attitudes, and Non-civic Party Affiliations<sup>1</sup>

ROBERT EASTON AND PAUL TENNANT

During 1968 there was more political activity in Vancouver than at any other time in recent decades. Two new political parties, The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) and the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE), were formed to challenge the Civic Non-Partisan Association (NPA), which had dominated Vancouver politics since the early 1940s. TEAM was created in the early months of the year and by the December election had 963 paid-up members; COPE was formed later in the year and grew to include several hundred members. In the December election the NPA remained dominant, electing the mayor and a majority of aldermen, school trustees, and Parks Board members; TEAM elected two aldermen, three school trustees, and one Parks Board member; COPE elected only the incumbent alderman who had been its chief organizer. It was evident to observers that the NPA was led by anti-socialist businessmen and lawyers who, in their non-civic political roles, were supporters of the Social Credit, Liberal, or Conservative parties. From the time the TEAM organization was formed conflicting observations and interpretations about it were made by journalists and even by TEAM leaders themselves. Impressions of COPE were influenced primarily by what was known of the alderman who founded the organization, and thus, like him, it was considered to be oriented towards socialism, unionism, and the interests of the working class sections of the city.

Completely lacking for all three parties, however, were explanations based on extensive studies of the influential members of the parties. For this reason, shortly after the 1968 election, members of the Urban Politics Research Seminar at the University of British Columbia designed a

<sup>1</sup>This article is a product of the Urban Politics Research Seminar, Department of Political Science, UBC. The following students should be considered joint authors: Brent Bitz, C. J. Butler, Lynn Joli, Allan Mason, Walter Rilkoff, Jon Sigurdson, and Hayne Wai. The authors are grateful to the leaders of the NPA, TEAM, and COPE for facilitating the research, and to the staff of the UBC Statistical Centre for the Social Sciences for facilitating the analysis.

written questionnaire to obtain information on the backgrounds, attitudes, and provincial and national political affiliations of party leaders. Leaders were defined as those who had held formal positions within the party organization (including the position of candidate for public office) and those who had not held such positions but were considered influential by knowledgeable members of their parties. In April and May of 1969 the questionnaire was taken in person by one of the authors to each of the leaders who could be reached. The questionnaire was completed by 30 NPA leaders, 45 TEAM leaders, and 27 COPE leaders. The response rate was approximately 80 per cent among those who were reached and approximately 67 per cent among those originally identified as party leaders. The majority of those who were not reached had played, compared to other leaders, a minor part in their parties.

No attempt is made here to compare the characteristics of the respondents with those of the Vancouver population, although in the case of social characteristics this could easily be done using census data. The percentage tables themselves need little explanation. The "N" columns show the number of respondents, while the other figures are percentages of respondents. Table 3, for example, shows that every leader reached responded to the question dealing with education, and that 73.3 per cent of the 45 TEAM respondents were university graduates. Because of the rounding of percentage figures to the nearest one-tenth per cent, the percentage columns do not always add up to exactly 100 per cent. The "all parties" columns give the characteristics of the respondents as a single group without regard to party affiliation. The "NPA," "TEAM," and COPE columns indicate something of the gross differences between the three groups of leaders. Table 4, for example, shows that the NPA group has higher incomes than those of the TEAM and COPE groups, although the table does not give information about average incomes or the range of incomes. The differences *within* each group are especially interesting. Still using table 4 as an example, one sees that NPA responses are skewed towards one end of the scale, that COPE responses are skewed towards the opposite end, and that TEAM responses, quite unlike those of the other two groups, are concentrated in the middle of the scale. Moreover, TEAM's "end" responses fall, in terms of magnitude, between the end responses of the other two groups. In other words there is an NPA-COPE polarization, with TEAM occupying a middle position. Should this pattern recur in a number of scales one may conclude not only that there are fundamental differences between the three parties, but also that the Vancouver party system forms a continuum in which the NPA occupies one end, TEAM the middle, and COPE the other end. These conclusions are inescapable in the present study. The fact of the continuum, however, is less noteworthy than the large degree and wide range of the differences between the three parties.

**Social Composition of NPA, TEAM, and COPE Leadership**

The tables in this section deal with the variables of occupation, occupational status, education, income, age, religion, numbers of other civic organizations to which respondents belong, and self-perceptions of membership in a social class. Each table reveals significant differences between the three groups. Two other social variables, those of sex and of length of residence in Vancouver, were examined, but the distribution for each was found to be generally similar in each party. Women respondents constituted 10 per cent of the total in the NPA; 22 per cent in TEAM; and 15 per cent in COPE. Proportions of respondents in each group who had lived in Vancouver for less than fifteen years were 10 per cent in the NPA; 25 per cent in TEAM; and 12 per cent in COPE. The occupational classifications and their status rankings used in table 1 are those which have been presented by Peter C. Pineo and John Porter, with the exception of the "union officials" and "housewives" categories which, because of their importance in the present case, have been added and arbitrarily assigned the status ranking shown.<sup>2</sup> As one compares tables 4 and 5 the question of whether the differences in income distribution are related more to age than to party might be raised. Such is not the case, however, for a direct comparison of age and income showed that among the respondents the two factors were unrelated.

TABLE 1: OCCUPATIONS AND CIVIC PARTY

	NPA	TEAM	COPE	ALL PARTIES
I Lawyers	20.1	13.1	4.8	13.5
School teachers	3.3	10.7	19.0	10.1
University professors	—	13.1	—	5.6
Engineers, dentists, accountants	—	2.6	9.5	3.4
(Total professional)	(23.4)	(39.5)	(33.3)	(32.6)
II Proprietors, managers, and officials of large firms	50.0	15.8	—	23.6
III Semi-professionals (social workers, brokers, librarians, clergymen)	—	18.4	—	7.9
IV Proprietors, managers, and officials of small firms	23.4	5.3	—	10.1
v Union officials	—	2.6	23.8	6.7
VI Clerical and sales persons	—	5.3	4.8	3.4
VII Housewives	3.3	13.1	14.3	10.1
VIII Skilled and unskilled labourers	—	—	23.8	5.6
N (number of respondents to question)	30	38	21	89

NOTE: In this and the following tables, all figures are expressed as percentages, except those in the "N" columns which are totals.

<sup>2</sup>Peter C. Pineo and John Porter, "Occupational prestige in Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, IV (February, 1947), pp. 41-53.

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS AND CIVIC PARTY  
(Based on table 1)

	Low (VI, VII, VIII)	Medium (III, IV, V)	High (I, II)	N
NPA	3.3	23.4	73.4	30
TEAM	18.4	26.3	55.3	38
COPE	42.9	23.8	33.3	21
ALL PARTIES	19.1	24.7	56.2	89

TABLE 3: EDUCATION AND CIVIC PARTY

	High school graduation or less	Some university	University graduation	N
NPA	26.7	26.7	46.7	30
TEAM	11.1	15.6	73.3	45
COPE	55.6	18.5	25.9	27
ALL PARTIES	27.5	19.6	52.9	102

TABLE 4: ANNUAL INCOME AND CIVIC PARTY

	-\$7500	\$7500-\$15,000	\$15,000+	N
NPA	10.7	28.6	60.7	28
TEAM	13.9	52.8	33.3	36
COPE	50.0	45.0	5.0	20
ALL PARTIES	21.4	42.9	35.7	84

TABLE 5: AGE AND CIVIC PARTY

	-40 years	40-50 years	50 years +	N
NPA	23.3	23.3	53.3	30
TEAM	53.3	26.7	20.0	45
COPE	38.5	23.1	38.5	26
ALL PARTIES	40.6	24.8	34.6	101

TABLE 6: RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE AND CIVIC PARTY

	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	None	N
NPA	10.3	75.9	—	13.8	29
TEAM	2.5	47.5	10.0	39.5	40
COPE	3.7	7.4	—	88.9	27
ALL PARTIES	5.2	44.8	4.2	45.8	96

TABLE 7: MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

	0, 1, 2	3 or 4	5+	N
NPA	10.3	20.7	69.0	29
TEAM	31.0	38.1	31.0	42
COPE	46.2	34.6	19.2	26
ALL PARTIES	28.9	32.0	39.2	97

TABLE 8: SOCIAL CLASS AND CIVIC PARTY (SELF-PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS)

	Working or lower class	Middle class	Upper class	N
NPA	11.1	77.8	11.1	27
TEAM	10.8	75.7	13.5	37
COPE	66.7	33.3	—	24
ALL PARTIES	26.1	64.8	9.1	88

### Ideology and Outlook of NPA, TEAM, and COPE Leadership

To assess the ideology and outlook of respondents, four sets of questions were asked relating to the attitudinal dimensions of "individualism-collectivism," "traditionalism-progressivism," "elitism-democracy," and "pessimism-optimism." "Individualism" was treated in the classical Manchester liberal sense; "traditionalism," in the Oakeshottian sense of valuing what has been achieved; "elitism," in the sense of believing that only a minority are suited to govern; and "optimism," in the sense of believing that man is capable of triumphing over his basic problems. From the responses to the sets of questions the following tables 9 to 12 were derived.<sup>3</sup> Without exception, on these basic political variables there is a polarization between the NPA and COPE, while TEAM responses are more evenly distributed, with the highest proportion of responses in the "moderate" category. Clearly, despite the predilection of social scientists to consider ideology dead, it is alive and thriving in Vancouver.

TABLE 9: ATTITUDES ON INDIVIDUALISM-COLLECTIVISM DIMENSION

	Individualist	Moderate	Collectivist	N
NPA	76.7	16.7	6.7	30
TEAM	28.9	46.7	24.4	45
COPE	—	18.5	81.5	27
ALL PARTIES	35.3	30.4	34.3	102

TABLE 10: ATTITUDES ON TRADITIONALISM-PROGRESSIVISM DIMENSION

	Traditionalist	Moderate	Progressive	N
NPA	56.7	23.3	20.0	30
TEAM	26.7	40.0	33.3	45
COPE	3.7	18.5	77.8	27
ALL PARTIES	29.4	29.4	41.2	102

TABLE 11: ATTITUDES ON ELITISM-DEMOCRACY DIMENSION

	Elitist	Moderate	Democratic	N
NPA	46.7	46.7	6.7	30
TEAM	17.8	66.7	15.6	45
COPE	3.7	33.3	63.0	27
ALL PARTIES	22.5	52.0	25.5	102

<sup>3</sup>Although the sets of questions and the procedures used in deriving the scales are not presented in this article, they may be obtained by writing to the authors.

TABLE 12: ATTITUDES ON PESSIMISM-OPTIMISM DIMENSION

	Pessimist	Optimist	N
NPA	73.3	26.7	30
TEAM	55.6	44.4	45
COPE	33.3	66.7	27
ALL PARTIES	54.9	45.1	102

### Positions of NPA, TEAM, and COPE Leadership on Vancouver Political Issues

Among the issues in the 1968 Vancouver election campaign were two which, although usually discussed only obliquely by the contestants, may be considered basic to Vancouver city politics. One of these is whether the institutions of civic politics encourage democracy or, on the contrary, elitism; the other is whether national and provincial political parties should compete in civic elections. Another issue, like these two related to what might be termed the form of political regime, but unlike them an explicit issue in the 1968 campaign, was whether Vancouver should return to the ward system (which had been abolished in the mid-1930s). TEAM and COPE favoured the return; the NPA did not. Among the various issues having to do with government action rather than form of government was whether the city should provide children's day-care centres. TEAM and COPE advocated such centres; the NPA candidates did not. There were other issues in the campaign, but these four are sufficient to provide further insight into the nature of the NPA, TEAM, and COPE.

For each of four statements (given as the titles of the following tables) the respondents were asked to give their position on a seven-point Likert scale: (1) strongly agree, (2) moderately agree, (3) slightly agree, (4) uncertain, (5) slightly disagree, (6) moderately disagree, (7) strongly disagree. In the tables the numbers heading the vertical columns indicate which of the seven categories have been combined to form the three-point scales. As is evident, the NPA-COPE polarization continues, with TEAM responses in each case more evenly distributed.

TABLE 13: VANCOUVER CIVIC INSTITUTIONS DO NOT ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY

	1, 2	3, 4, 5	6, 7	N
NPA	13.3	16.7	70.0	30
TEAM	46.7	35.6	17.8	45
COPE	70.4	22.2	7.4	27
ALL PARTIES	43.1	26.5	30.4	102

TABLE 14: IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS IF NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES ALSO COMPETED AT THE CIVIC LEVEL

	1, 2	3, 4, 5	6, 7	N
NPA	76.7	16.7	6.7	30
TEAM	35.6	35.6	28.9	45
COPE	4.0	16.0	80.0	25
ALL PARTIES	40.0	25.0	35.0	100

TABLE 15: VANCOUVER SHOULD HAVE A WARD SYSTEM

	1	2, 3	4, 5, 6, 7	N
NPA	—	13.3	86.7	30
TEAM	40.0	37.8	22.2	45
COPE	85.2	14.8	—	27
ALL PARTIES	40.2	24.5	35.3	102

TABLE 16: THE CITY GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE DAY-CARE CENTRES FOR CHILDREN

	1	2, 3	4, 5, 6, 7	N
NPA	13.3	23.3	63.3	30
TEAM	31.1	51.1	17.8	45
COPE	85.2	14.8	—	27
ALL PARTIES	40.2	33.3	26.5	102

### Non-civic Political Roles of NPA, TEAM, and COPE Leadership

To an outsider the question of non-civic political activities and preferences of those who are active in Vancouver civic politics may appear insignificant and uninteresting, either because the outsider may assume that civic party organizations are simply aspects of party organizations also active at other levels (as they often are in America and Great Britain), or because the question is irrelevant, given the fact that provincial and national parties do not normally contest Vancouver civic elections. In reality, however, the question of provincial and national party preferences is of obsessive interest to those who are active in civic politics. As has been indicated, observers were aware that the NPA consisted of supporters of the non-socialist parties and that COPE was evidently composed chiefly of New Democratic party supporters. The case of TEAM was less clear-cut. Its founders were mostly Liberals, but they were soon joined by prominent Conservatives; TEAM contained some prominent New Democrats, yet it also contained at least some erstwhile supporters of the NPA (two of them incumbent aldermen, both of whom returned to the NPA and were re-elected). Tables 17 and 18 provide information on the provincial and

national parties supported by the respondents. To facilitate comparison Social Credit and Conservative responses have been combined, since provincial Social Credit supporters and national Conservative supporters were almost entirely the same group of persons.

TABLE 17: PROVINCIAL PARTY SUPPORT AND CIVIC PARTY

	Socred-Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other-None	N
NPA	42.9	42.9	3.6	10.7	28
TEAM	8.9	44.4	22.2	24.4	45
COPE	—	3.7	66.7	29.6	27
ALL CIVIC PARTIES	16.0	33.0	29.0	22.0	100

TABLE 18: NATIONAL PARTY SUPPORT AND CIVIC PARTY MEMBERSHIP

	Socred-Cons.	Lib.	NDP	Other-None	N
NPA	35.7	50.0	3.6	10.7	28
TEAM	6.7	62.2	15.6	15.6	45
COPE	—	3.7	66.7	29.6	27
ALL CIVIC PARTIES	13.0	43.0	26.0	18.0	100

The NPA is a combination of Social Creditors and Conservatives on the one hand, and of Liberals on the other. TEAM is largely Liberal nationally, but much less so provincially, at which level some Liberals evidently switch either to the New Democrats or to inaction. COPE is composed chiefly of New Democratic supporters but has a significant proportion of persons who support no provincial or national party. Questions thus arise about the similarities and differences between NPA Liberals and TEAM Liberals, between TEAM Liberals and TEAM New Democrats, and between TEAM New Democrats and COPE New Democrats. Reaching conclusions on these questions is made difficult by the limited numbers of respondents involved — among provincial party supporters (the category used in this analysis) there are a total of 60 Liberals and New Democrats, with the number of each group in each civic party ranging from 10 to 20.

TABLE 19: POSITION ON INDIVIDUALISM-COLLECTIVISM DIMENSION<sup>4</sup>

	NPA Lib. (m=2)	TEAM Lib. (m=4)	TEAM New Dem. (m=7)	COPE New Dem. (m=7)	All civic parties
Individualist	100.0	90.0	20.0	11.1	56.7
Collectivist	—	10.0	80.0	88.9	43.3
N	12	20	10	18	60

<sup>4</sup>Cf. n. 3. Responses for each group on a seven-point Likert scale were divided so as to form the two most discrete groupings. To avoid misinterpretations, in this table and the following ones the median (m) score on the seven-point scale is indicated for each group.



Nevertheless, the sharp differences revealed suggest that the conclusions may be accepted with some confidence.

The nature of the differences between Liberals and New Democrats is most clearly evident on the "individualism-collectivism" dimension.

The New Democrats, whether in TEAM or COPE, are strongly collectivist, with the median scores falling in the category representing the strongest possible collectivist attitude. The NPA and TEAM Liberals differ from one another, as their "m" scores show, but they are closer to each other than the TEAM Liberals are to the TEAM New Democrats. On the basis of this dimension, the co-operation of Liberals and New Democrats in TEAM seems strange. However, the "individualism-collectivism" dimension as it has been defined in this study relates primarily to only one form of individualism: the economic form. It does not, for example, concern individualism in the intellectual sphere. If attitude towards censorship is taken as an indicator of position on intellectual individualism, then the Liberal-New Democratic division in TEAM becomes much less in magnitude, and significant divisions appear between NPA Liberals and TEAM Liberals and between TEAM New Democrats and COPE New Democrats. In addition, on this dimension of intellectual individualism, NPA members are seen to be the most collectivist and COPE members the most individualistic.

TABLE 20: THERE SHOULD BE NO CENSORSHIP

	NPA Lib. (m=5)	TEAM Lib. (m=3)	TEAM New Dem. (m=2)	COPE New Dem. (m=1)	All civic parties
Agree most	33.3	45.0	60.0	76.5	54.2
Agree least	66.7	55.0	40.0	23.5	45.8
N	12	20	9	18	59

On the dimension of "traditionalism-progressivism," there are differences between TEAM Liberals and TEAM New Democrats, although there are also differences between TEAM and COPE New Democrats in response distribution and between TEAM and NPA Liberals in both response distribution and "m" score of responses.

TABLE 21: POSITION ON TRADITIONALISM-PROGRESSIVISM DIMENSION

	NPA Lib. (m=4)	TEAM Lib. (m=5)	TEAM New Dem. (m=6)	COPE New Dem. (m=6)	All civic parties
Traditionalist	83.3	65.0	40.0	22.2	51.6
Progressive	16.7	35.0	60.0	77.8	48.3
N	12	20	10	18	60

Nevertheless, on two questions which relate to the "traditionalism-progressivism" dimension, but which were asked separately from the set of questions on which the scales in tables 10 and 21 are based, TEAM Liberals and TEAM New Democrats are more similar to one another than is at least one of the groups to its counterpart in the other civic party.

TABLE 22: THE WATER SUPPLY SHOULD BE FLUORIDATED<sup>5</sup>

	NPA Lib. (m=1)	TEAM Lib. (m=1)	TEAM New Dem. (m=1)	COPE New Dem. (m=1)	All civic parties
Agree most	66.7	75.0	70.0	55.6	66.7
Agree least	33.3	25.0	30.0	44.4	33.3
N	12	20	10	18	60

TABLE 23: VANCOUVER SHOULD BE WORKING TOWARDS SOME FORM OF  
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

	NPA Lib. (m=1)	TEAM Lib. (m=1)	TEAM New Dem. (m=1)	COPE New Dem. (m=2)	All civic parties
Agree most	63.6	75.0	90.0	38.9	64.4
Agree least	36.4	25.0	10.0	61.1	35.6
N	11	20	10	18	59

Both fluoridation and regional government were major issues in Vancouver in 1968 and thus may well be related to the decision of some New Democrats to support TEAM and of other New Democrats to support COPE. Furthermore, neither fluoridation nor regional government are explicitly economic issues, and thus the suggestion is reinforced that TEAM and COPE New Democrats are in agreement mainly on economic issues and not necessarily on civic issues having no direct economic implication.

In addition there are the obvious explanations, requiring no social science survey, that TEAM New Democrats were willing to work with members of other parties at the civic level and unwilling to have the New Democratic party as such compete at the civic level, that COPE New Democrats were unwilling to work with members of other parties at the civic level, and that NPA Liberals had had an opportunity to develop loyalty to the NPA and may have been unwilling to work with socialists at the civic level. (The first interpretation is supported by the fact, not widely known, of the unsuccessful behind-the-scenes effort of the TEAM executive to persuade the founder of COPE to have his group coalesce with TEAM.)

Finally two social variables seem to divide TEAM New Democrats from COPE New Democrats and to unite TEAM Liberals and TEAM New Democrats. First, 61 per cent of COPE New Democrats, but only 20 per cent of TEAM New Democrats, perceive themselves to be in the working class. This observation is of importance, for it has been well documented that members of the working class are much more likely to be liberal in economic than in non-economic issues.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, as far as amount of

<sup>5</sup>Admittedly the issue of fluoridation is one which probably relates as well to dimensions other than "traditionalism-progressivism."

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political man* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963), pp. 87-126.

education is concerned there are close similarities between TEAM Liberals and TEAM New Democrats, sharp differences between TEAM and COPE New Democrats, and significant differences between TEAM and NPA Liberals.

TABLE 24: AMOUNT OF EDUCATION

	NPA Lib.	TEAM Lib.	TEAM New Dem.	COPE New Dem.	All civic parties
University graduation	50.0	65.0	70.0	27.8	51.7
Less than university graduation	50.0	35.0	30.0	72.2	48.3
N	12	20	10	18	60

**Conclusion**

It is clear that the leaderships of the Civic Non-Partisan Association, The Electors Action Movement, and the Committee of Progressive Electors are distinct from one another in social composition, ideology and outlook, positions on contemporary civic issues, and support of national and provincial political parties. It may be suggested as well that New Democratic party supporters in TEAM are distinct from New Democratic supporters in COPE in terms of social make-up, ideology and outlook on economic issues, and positions on contemporary civic issues. Liberal supporters in the NPA would seem to be distinct from Liberal supporters in TEAM primarily in terms of existing loyalties and attitudes towards co-operating with socialists at the civic level.