

The Year that British Columbia Went NDP: NDP Voter Support Pre- and Post-1972

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In 1972, for the first time in the history of the province, a plurality of the British Columbia electorate voted NDP in both a provincial and a federal election. Provincially the NDP won slightly more than two out of every three seats and formed the first self-professed socialist government in British Columbia's history. Federally the NDP also emerged with a plurality of British Columbia's seats, although the NDP contingent fell one seat short of a majority within the province.

But by 1974 NDP support had waned considerably within British Columbia. After the 1974 federal election, less than twenty-one months after its apogee, the NDP was down from eleven to two seats in British Columbia. The NDP share of the popular vote was down 12 per cent and, at 23 per cent, the CCF-NDP federal vote in British Columbia was at its lowest level over a forty-year period, 1957 excepted (Beck, 1968: 206-418).

At the provincial level there were indications of a similar decline in NDP fortunes among British Columbians. Hans Brown, former Provincial Secretary and current member of the B.C. NDP provincial executive, estimated that Social Credit had a nine percentage point lead over the NDP in July 1974 (Brown, 1974: 1). Some support for this assessment is provided by data collected by a province-wide public opinion survey conducted in the spring of 1974. Based upon that survey, the authors estimate that if a provincial election were held at that time the vote would have approached an all-time low for the CCF-NDP from 1933 to the present (Chief Electoral Officer, 1933-1973; Koenig and Martin, 1974).

These survey results and the electoral results presented in Table 1 indicate that NDP support, both federally and provincially, showed a fairly steady increase throughout the 1960's, peaking in 1972 before undergoing a sharp decline by 1974. What accounted for the NDP's success in 1972? Such post-election assessments as that of Tory leader Derryl Warren, who

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TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VOTE WON BY THE NDP: 1962-1974

<i>Year (Federal/Provincial)</i>	<i>Federal Election</i>	<i>Provincial Election</i>
1962/—	31%	—
1963/1963	30	28%
1965/1966	33	34
1968/1969	33	34
1972/1972	35	40
1974/—	23	—

said, "The government defeated itself," (cited in Swainson, 1974: 201) are only partial explanations. Such an assessment neither accounts for the NDP federal success in British Columbia two months later nor sheds light on the steady increase of NDP voter support within British Columbia throughout the 1960's.

Followers of British Columbia's politics are interested in answers to questions such as the following: "What were the sources of the growth in NDP voting strength over a ten-year period? What were the characteristics of voters who abandoned Social Credit in 1972? Why did so many of such defectors vote for a self-styled 'socialist' party rather than another one of the avowed 'free enterprise' parties? Why did so many of these defectors, and others, so quickly desert the NDP after 1972, both provincially and federally?"

Relying upon accounts of news commentators, or upon more scholarly assessments such as that of Swainson (1974), conjectural interpretations can be developed. However, as MacDonald (1972: 40) wrote in response to analyses based upon aggregate data:

One of the major difficulties ... (is) the general lack of good information on which to base inferences, comparisons and generalizations. The best kind of data for voting behaviour studies is survey data, or, better still, survey data garnered from a continuing panel of respondents over a period of time.

Such data are now available. Questionnaires were mailed to province-wide random samples, drawn from the voters lists for the entire province, during the weeks preceding the provincial and federal elections in August and in October 1972, and also in March of 1973 and of 1974. Each of the first three questionnaires asked for political party preference, both federally and provincially, for several points in time from 1968 to the

time of the questionnaire. The first three questionnaires utilized a modified panel design whereby each questionnaire was mailed to a new random sample, as well as to all who had responded to the previous questionnaire. A total of 446 respondents, just under 50 per cent of whom answered at least two of the three questionnaires, formed the modified panel. There were 956 respondents to the fourth questionnaire, which asked only 1974 party preferences. Response rates for all four questionnaires were 30, 31, 41 and 39 per cent, respectively.

While some, such as Kerlinger (1973), maintain that one needs a response rate approaching 90 per cent from mail questionnaires to generalize about a population, we feel that such a high response rate is unrealistic. Given the fact that established social survey centres report a completion rate for interviews of only 60 to 65 per cent, in spite of three or four call-backs (American Sociological Association, 1974), such a standard is tantamount to suggesting the abandonment of survey research in favour of armchair speculation. Indeed, Ogmundson (1972) reports that even Meisel's 1965 national election study appears to have had a response rate of only 60 to 70 per cent despite three call-backs.

A response rate approaching 90 per cent also seems unnecessary for at least four reasons. First, as can be seen in Table 2, the socio-demographic characteristics of our respondents very closely resemble those of the British Columbia population, except for a possible under-response from those with limited education. Secondly, in other research ongoing data analysis tends to indicate overall similarity both in socio-demographic characteristics and in response patterns among those who initially answer a questionnaire and those who respond to a follow-up mailing (Koenig *et al.*, 1975). Thirdly, not only did our pre-election provincial survey correctly show the NDP winning a decisive victory, but the pre-election surveys for the 1972 and 1974 federal elections correctly forecast both the 1972 NDP win and their 1974 disaster. In fact, the percentage of 1972 NDP federal survey support was the same as the actual vote, and was only 2 per cent different in 1974. Such a finding is not surprising given Smith's (1967) finding of a high correlation between mail questionnaire response and voter turnout, as well as Laponce's (1969b: 32-42) similar finding of a relationship between failing to answer questionnaires and failing to vote.

Finally, since there is no reason to believe that possible sources of bias were different in any of the surveys, we can reasonably make inferences about trends in NDP support. As Zetterberg (1965: 128) puts it: "It is more probable that a hypothesis holds true outside the population on

TABLE 2
A COMPARISON OF THE SAMPLE WITH THE BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

	1971 Census	1972-73 Modified Panel Sample	1974 Sample
Median Age	43.2*	41.3	42.5
Per cent Male	50*	49	48
Household Income†			
Mean	\$11,069	\$11,533	\$12,312
Median	10,159	11,026	11,798
Educational Attainment‡			
Less than Grade 5	7.3%	1.7%	1.8%
Grade 5-8	21.2	6.6	12.0
Grade 9-13	57.8	61.8	65.1
Some University	9.0	13.0	11.3
University Degree	4.6	16.9	9.8
Marital Status			
Single	14.8*	14.1	13.1
Married	75.1*	77.8	74.7
Separated		2.7	3.5
Widowed	7.5*	3.3	5.0
Divorced	2.6*	2.2	3.7

* In order to provide a better comparison with the sample, this figure has been calculated only for that segment of the population at least twenty years of age as of July 1, 1971.

† At the time of writing, Statistics Canada had not yet published these data. The figures for the 1971 Census have been derived from *The Financial Post Survey of Markets and Business Yearbook, 1972* (Volume 48:37). They are based upon incomes of families and unattached individuals, rather than upon household income.

‡ Educational attainment was calculated for the entire population five years of age and over, after first excluding all students except university students who were currently attending school full-time. The discrepancy between the sample and the census on level of schooling is partly explained by Statistics Canada's caution that there is evidence of bias in overstating those not attending school, and partly by differences in coding the level of schooling. In the 1972-73 sample generous allowance was made for educational equivalency. For example, registered nurses were coded as university graduates, and completion of one or more years of technical or vocational training were coded as equivalent to the completion of one or more years of additional academic education.

Sources: Statistics Canada. Catalogues 92-730, Vol. 1 - Part 4 (Bulletin 1.4-2), April, 1973, "Population: Marital Status By Age Groups;" 92-764 (AP-13), September, 1973, "Population By School Attendance and Level of Schooling;" and *The Financial Post Survey of Markets and Business Yearbook, 1972* (Volume 48).

which it has been confirmed than that the contrary of the hypothesis holds true in the new population.”

Therefore, with the above survey data approximating what MacDonald describes as the “optimal nature,” some answers can now be offered to the questions posed earlier in this paper. In what follows, after discussing the influence of abstention and the degree of voter party-switching to and from the NDP since 1968, attention is focused upon average NDP support since 1968, as this varied across a wide range of socio-demographic categories. Finally, differences in voter support for the NDP are analysed by the degree (high, medium or low) of political participation, political knowledge, support of democratic institutions, political alienation, overall life satisfaction, and satisfaction with various areas of life. For the purpose of keeping statistics and table sizes to a minimum, only *average* figures are reported over the period from 1968 through 1974.¹ In general, voter support for the NDP increased both provincially and federally until 1973, but declined substantially by mid-1974 among most population subcategories. Substantial changes in NDP voter support among subcategories of the sample, compared to the entire electorate, are discussed within the text.

One qualification should be borne in mind. Throughout these surveys a tendency has been detected for provincial NDP voters to be slightly more likely to respond to the questionnaires. Because discussion is limited to the trend of NDP support over time, by sub-categories of the population, the following analyses are based upon the unadjusted raw data. The reader should note that the actual levels of NDP support will be slightly lower than those reported by our samples of respondents.

Turning first to abstention, as has been mentioned, other researchers have found that respondents who answer questionnaires are more likely to actually vote. For example, within our modified panel sample fewer than 14 per cent report having abstained in any of the four elections from 1968 through 1972. Further, a statistically significant negative relationship between abstention and political knowledge existed among such individuals (Koenig, 1974). Although abstainers are under-represented within the sample, some indication can be obtained as to the effect upon the NDP of abstainers re-entering the active voting population.

Of those who reported abstaining in the 1969 provincial election, but voting in the 1972 provincial election, 52 per cent reported having voted NDP — a somewhat higher percentage of NDP support than the 47 per

¹ Detailed trend tables, with tests of statistical significance, may be obtained at cost from either of the first two authors.

cent among the entire sample. A similar pattern prevailed in the 1972 federal election among those who abstained in 1968 (40 v. 35 per cent). Although the NDP probably gained some support in 1972 from voters who had previously abstained, their largest gain came from holding a very large proportion of their former support, while winning a large share of voters away from the 'free enterprise' parties.

Such an explanation is demonstrated by an examination of party preference among the 446 respondents included within the modified panel sample. At the provincial level 25 per cent of those who had voted for a 'free enterprise' party in 1969 switched to the NDP in 1972, compared to 13 per cent of 1969 NDP voters who switched to a 'free enterprise' party in 1972. This means that, in our sample, 38 per cent of the 1972 NDP vote came from 'free enterprise' switchers, while only 8 per cent of the 1972 'free enterprise' vote came from NDP switchers.

A very similar pattern existed at the federal level between the 1969 and 1972 elections. Of those who had voted for a 'free enterprise' party in 1968, 19 per cent switched to the NDP in 1972, and of those who voted for the NDP in 1968, 19 per cent switched to a 'free enterprise' party in 1972. But because there were many more 'free enterprise' voters than NDP voters in 1968, this means that 'free enterprise' parties had a substantial net loss to the NDP in the number of 1972 voters. This can be seen by looking at the proportions of 1972 voters who were "converts." For the NDP, 42 per cent of their 1972 supporters had voted 'free enterprise' in 1968, while, for 1972 'free enterprise' voters, only 7 per cent had voted NDP in 1968.

However, as early as March of 1973 the trend showed indications of reversal. When the sample was asked how they would vote if a new provincial election were held at that time, 12 per cent of those who selected the NDP had voted 'free enterprise' in 1972, but 15 per cent of those who had voted NDP in 1972 indicated that they would then vote for a 'free enterprise' party. The same question was asked with reference to the federal election and showed that 15 per cent of those who would vote NDP were converts, but 28 per cent of those who *had voted* NDP in the 1972 federal election then preferred a 'free enterprise' party.

By July of 1974 even the most dubious of observers was forced to acknowledge a deep decline in NDP support within B.C., as has been discussed earlier in this paper. The obvious question is: why did the sudden drop of NDP support take place? One approach to answering this question is to analyse the trend of NDP support among various socio-demographic subcategories of the population, especially among subcategories

where the trend differs substantially from that of changes in overall support for the NDP. Such an examination suggests the necessity of modifying several conventional beliefs about the bases of NDP support.

For example, as can be seen in Table 3, from 1968 to 1974, the average

TABLE 3
AVERAGE PER CENT NDP PREFERENCE BY SELECTED
SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC
CHARACTERISTICS: 1968-1974

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>Federal</i>
Sex		
Male	42%	31%
Female	37	25
Religion		
Catholic	40	27
Protestant	34	25
Other	54	34
Age		
18-29	49	30
30-39	34	26
40-49	40	25
50+	38	29
Education		
Grade School	46	34
High School	38	27
University	40	27
Income		
Under \$10,000	44	33
\$10,000 to \$14,999	42	27
Over \$15,000	31	21
Social Class Identification*		
Lower/Working	53	42
Middle/Upper	29	18
Reject Idea of Class	48	32

* For 1968-1973 only; this question was not asked in the 1974 survey.

support for the NDP has been higher among men than among women, both federally and provincially. However, what Table 3 does not show is that women were as likely as men to support the NDP in 1974. Since 1972, and especially since 1973, men have been far more likely to desert the NDP than women. This suggests that previous descriptions of the NDP as a man's party (Meisel, 1972: 12), or of relationships between sex (men) and NDP voting (Laponce, 1969b: 63-66), may no longer be applicable.

Another example of a changing basis of NDP voter support can be seen from an examination of changes in support for the NDP by religious affiliation. As can be seen in Table 3, within British Columbia average support for the NDP from 1968/1969 to 1974 was lowest among Protestants and highest among non-Christians—most of whom both in the sample and in the province are without any religious affiliation. But by 1974 NDP support had dropped among such non-Christians substantially below the level of NDP support for any year since 1968. Conversely, both provincially and federally, the level of NDP support among Catholics was higher in 1974 than in 1968.

For example, by 1974, for both levels of government, support of the NDP among Catholics was almost as high as among all other non-Protestants. These data suggest a positive relationship between NDP voting and Catholic religious affiliation *within British Columbia* (but not the rest of Canada). Such a relationship also has been reported by other researchers such as Schwartz, as cited in Terry and Schultz (1973: 264), MacDonald (1969b: 63-64) and Laponce (1969b: 212).

A further departure from conventional wisdom about the bases of NDP support came from our analysis of NDP support by level of educational attainment. Our data tend to corroborate the conclusions of other researchers such as Meisel (1972: 8), Laponce (1969b: 63-64) and Blake (1971-72: 58) that NDP voter support decreases as educational level increases. However, there was a deviation from this trend beginning with the October 1972 federal election when those with some university were more likely to vote NDP than those with only some high school. By 1973, both provincially and federally, NDP support increased as educational level increased, from elementary school right through university.² This deviation had disappeared by 1974 and the traditional relationship,

² The reader will recall that this reversal occurred within the modified panel sample. Thus the analysis from 1968 to 1973 is based upon responses of *the same individuals*. Consequently, there is a very strong case to be made that a significant, if temporary, change took place, because it was the same respondents who were reporting their party preferences at each time period from 1968 through 1973.

a drop in NDP support as educational level increased, had re-emerged.

Additional examination of socio-demographic subcategories of the population illustrate other bases of NDP support, and changes therein, from 1968 to 1974. For example, as can be seen in Table 3, the NDP has appealed disproportionately to young people. But the figures for the average NDP support from 1968 through 1974 obscure two relevant findings. One of these is that the percentage of NDP support among the 30-39 age group *increased* after the 1972 win and even by 1974 had not shown as sharp a decline in NDP support as that among the other age groups. Conversely, the 18-29 age group showed the deepest decline in NDP support and, by 1974, NDP voter support among this category was virtually identical to NDP support among all other age categories combined, both provincially and federally.

Analysis of the remaining socio-demographic variables which are reported in Table 3 indicates a fairly consistent trend. Thus, the variable strength of NDP support from 1968 to 1974 shows a very similar pattern among each income grouping. The only exception is that provincial support for the NDP among those with household incomes over \$10,000 increased right up through 1973, whereas those with incomes under \$10,000 had already begun defecting by 1973. Except for this 1973 provincial anomaly, there was a complete negative relationship between income and NDP support for every analysis from 1968 to 1974, both federally and provincially.

Turning to social class self-identification, NDP support is much higher among those with lower or working class self-identification than among those with middle or upper class self-identification. However, almost 40 per cent of the total sample indicated that they did not think of themselves as belonging to one of these four social classes. The level of NDP support among these non-class identifiers was much closer to NDP support among those who identified themselves as lower or working class than it was among those who identified themselves as middle or upper class.

As with most of our other variables, there has been a fairly uniform decline in NDP support among all subcategories of self-assigned class, as well as of income. Parenthetically, however, it might be noted that the data do support a belief in the existence of a class-related basis for NDP voting within British Columbia. Consequently, the data are consistent with research reported by Ogmundson (1972), MacDonald (1972: 50-51) and Blake (1971-72).

A further indication of the differential NDP class appeal can be observed through an examination of the variable level of NDP support

by occupationally related, voluntary association membership. As can be seen in Table 4, NDP support is highest among union members, then

TABLE 4
AVERAGE PER CENT NDP PREFERENCE BY MEMBERSHIP
IN SELECTED OCCUPATIONALLY RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: 1968-1974

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>Federal</i>
Professional Association	38%	26%
Business Association	20	10
Labour Union	59	43
Farm Organization	18	11

among members of professional associations. A relatively small number of members of business associations or farm organizations support the NDP. This trend is similar both federally and provincially, although, provincially, NDP support tends to be consistently higher.

Generally, both federal and provincial support for the NDP among members of each type of organization increased up to 1973 but by 1974 had declined to approximately the 1968-69 levels. However, members of farm organizations had already begun defecting by 1973, and the decline of NDP support among labour union members went far below 1968-69 levels. For example, the percentage of provincial NDP support among labour union members in 1969 was 62 per cent, going to 67 per cent in 1972, but dropping all the way down to 39 per cent by 1974. Federally, the corresponding figures were 44, 50 and 29 per cent. These data on union membership and support for the NDP within British Columbia up until 1973 are consistent with other research such as that by Laponce (1969b: 63-64) and Chi (1973: 234-237).

The question that remains to be answered is: why did NDP support drop so sharply among most subcategories of the population after 1973? It seems that one way in which this can be accounted for is to analyse the traditional appeal of the NDP in terms of the attraction of a non-establishment political party to population subcategories which see themselves as marginal. Thus, it can be plausibly argued that a non-establishment political party will have a disproportionately strong appeal to isolated individuals and to population subcategories which lack influence and respectability in the eyes of the established power structure. Indeed, there is considerable cross-national data supporting such a perspective

(for example, Hamilton, 1967; Kornhauser, 1959; Lipset, 1960; Pinard, 1971, and Porter, 1970).

Although the concept of marginality has been used with numerous different meanings (UNESCO, 1964: 406-407), if we define marginality as the absence of strong social ties with a social aggregate respected by, and influencing, the established power structure, then the previously discussed correlates of NDP support fall into a pattern. Specifically, the NDP shows a disproportionately strong appeal to marginal population subcategories, as defined above. Simultaneously after becoming the major provincial political party,³ the NDP suffers its deepest decline in support among these same marginal subpopulations, *notwithstanding the fact that such subpopulations continue to disproportionately support the NDP and provide the backbone of its strength.*

But if this is true, then some of the changes which we have discussed require an explanation. Why, for example, are women becoming as likely as men to support the NDP in British Columbia, and why do a higher percentage of Catholics support the NDP in 1974 than did so in 1968/1969 when the reverse is true for non-Catholics?

In examining the NDP appeal to the other marginal groups of the population, such as those with non-Christian or no religious affiliation, those with less education, those in the lower socio-economic brackets and the young, it should be remembered that these groups have been *traditionally* marginal to the social structure in some way for a *long period of time*. However, in examining the case of women, the advent of the various women's movements, by raising women's consciousness and questioning the validity of traditional attitudes to women's roles in society, has *recently* instilled a feeling of uncertainty and marginality among many women in contemporary society. Because of the growing popularity of such women's movements, these feelings of marginality are subsequently increasing among women. If such a conjecture is true, it follows that women in our society are not only a newly created marginal group but are becoming increasingly so, as more women are affected.

In the same vein, Catholics, because of recent major changes within their church, also may be experiencing increasing feelings of marginality as cherished traditions are abandoned. For both women and Catholics, NDP support is increasing as more individuals within each of these cate-

³ In addition to forming the provincial government in 1972, the NDP also became the decisive balance of power in the House of Commons. Social Credit never attained a similar situation in which they could defeat the government with the support of only one other federal party.

gories are experiencing marginality for the first time. In both cases we would expect to find that those who experienced such marginality as early as 1968, like other marginal categories, would have begun to withdraw their support from an NDP which had achieved "establishment" status by 1973. We feel that such a conjecture deserves to be examined further. Unfortunately, our data are not amenable to this type of an investigation.

However, the remainder of the trends which we have discussed provide impressive support for a hypothesis relating marginality to NDP support. For example, those people with no religious affiliation tend to be unorganized and lacking in church-related social ties. Those of a non-Christian religious affiliation tend to be very small numerically and, frequently, members of ethnic minorities. In addition, both categories can be described as being marginal to the larger, Christian religious structure of the province. Moreover, among Christians, Catholics, relative to Protestants, occupy a minority status within British Columbia. The disproportionately strong NDP appeal, not only among non-Christians but, secondarily, among Catholics as opposed to Protestants, is consistent with an explanation of correlates of NDP support as representing a relationship between NDP support and marginality.

Similarly, with regard to education, if it is assumed that lower education is indicative of higher marginality, then, using educational attainment as an indirect indicator of marginality, it can be argued that the generally negative relationship between education and NDP support is indicative of the NDP appeal to marginal groups.

Paralleling this, with regard to income and self-assigned class, those with lower household incomes and those who identify themselves with the lower or working class can be assumed to be marginal to the socio-economic mainstream of the province. Accordingly, they have disproportionately supported the NDP compared to those with higher household incomes and individuals with middle or upper social class self-identification.

But what about almost 40 per cent of the total sample who indicated that they did not think of themselves as belonging to one of these four social classes? Webb (1973: 329) has concluded that "if class is meaningful to them at all in their normal day-to-day existence . . . it is perhaps advisable to let the respondents themselves select the term rather than have it thrust upon them." The fact that non-class identifiers, almost as much as lower or working class self-identifiers, disproportionately support the NDP is not surprising given the fact that such non-class identification

indicates a degree of drift or marginality by virtue of the weakness or absence of *any* meaningful, perceived social class affiliation. As C. Wright Mills (1956: 294-298) suggested long ago, white collar workers may be loath to identify themselves as lower or working class, but at the same time they may come to see themselves as not being members of the middle or upper classes. Superficialities aside, their incomes, job security and control over their work environment tend to be much more similar to that of blue collar workers than to that of members of the middle or upper classes. Indeed, members of blue collar trades unions often have more autonomous, secure, fulfilling and challenging jobs, as well as higher income, than their non-unionized white collar brothers and sisters.

However, to what degree do the data on occupationally related voluntary association membership fit with an over-all interpretation of marginality? Certainly it would be foolish to suggest that organized labour and professionals are not members of strong interest groups. However, it is a matter of record that prior to 1972 organized labour had never been strong enough to achieve one of its objectives — the election of a CCF-NDP government within British Columbia. Furthermore, the record is also clear that on more than one occasion in 1972 the Social Credit government had used organized labour, or professionals such as teachers and doctors, as whipping boys. Consequently, by 1972 organized labour and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation had lost virtually whatever small influence upon, or respect from, the Social Credit political establishment they may have enjoyed previously. It follows that their disproportionately strong support for the NDP is consistent with a thesis of marginality.⁴ It is also common knowledge that both labour and teachers were making a concerted effort to defeat the Social Credit government.

By way of a running summary, the NDP has a disproportionately high appeal to subcategories of the population which evidence some marginality to the social structure and, until 1973, this disproportionate appeal tended to persist among population subcategories regardless of overall fluctuations in the trend of NDP support. But once the appeal increased sufficiently to produce a win for the NDP, then the NDP itself became the target of hostility for some of these subpopulations.

Why this should be the case is not at all clear. Quite possibly there are processes of government which are viewed to be necessary by any given government but which antagonize marginal individuals. Examples

⁴ Membership in a "professional association" was self-classified by respondents. However, when we analysed teachers separately, we found much stronger support for the NDP among teachers than among other members of "professional associations."

of these might be advertising of pet government projects and patronage (which may be viewed by disadvantaged individuals as poor use of tax revenue); clogged bureaucratic channels; disregard for politically unacceptable recommendations contained in government-commissioned or independent studies and reports; or an impression of ineptitude created by the necessity of taking "second looks" at policies which initially did not involve sufficient public input due to political considerations (such as a desire to catch the opposition unprepared). As Michels (1959: 391) put it a half-century ago, administrative contingencies imply that "the socialists might conquer, but not socialism, which would perish in the moment of its adherents' triumph." Put differently, the qualities necessary to *maintain* power may differ from the qualities needed to *achieve* power.

It is reasonable to assume that various practices, viewed as necessary by the former government, may have generated support for the NDP as a means of defeating Social Credit and ending such practices. However, if similar practices are viewed as necessary by the new government, regardless of party, it follows that the party forming a new government will quickly suffer a loss of support among individuals disaffected by such practices. Although it would be foolish to draw any firm conclusions from a mid-term trend, given the propensity of governments to introduce their unpopular programmes early during their terms of office, by mid-1974 the NDP *had* experienced a loss of support.

Interestingly enough, there are also other data which suggest that an established NDP government by 1973 had begun to increase its appeal to *non-marginal* subpopulations. For example, many relationships, most of which have not been reported because of their small magnitude, indicate that *less marginal*, more conventional individuals provide a low degree of support for the NDP, but after 1972 actually increased their support of the NDP (the new *establishment* party) in 1973 or even through 1974, while other subcategories of the population were decreasing in NDP support, following an increase up until 1972. Two federal examples of this phenomenon would be voters 30 to 39 years old and individuals who score low on a measure of political alienation (to be discussed shortly). Provincial examples abound and include those with more than a grade 12 education, those 30 to 39 years old, those with household incomes over \$10,000, Protestants, those in managerial occupations and members of business associations.

Thus far only socio-demographic bases of NDP support before and since 1972 have been discussed. In the following section we analyse differential NDP support as this varies by high, medium and low scores on

scales measuring support of democratic institutions, political participation, political knowledge and political alienation.

Support of democratic institutions was measured by a scale, based upon the degree of agreement or disagreement with eight items such as: "I don't mind a politician's methods if he manages to get the right things done." (Of course, those who support democratic institutions would disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.) As can be seen in Table 5, NDP voter support increased as support of democratic institutions

TABLE 5
AVERAGE PER CENT NDP PREFERENCE BY SELECTED
POLITICALLY RELEVANT VARIABLES: 1968-1973

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Provincial</i>			<i>Federal</i>		
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
Political Participation	48%	45%	36%	34%	33%	24%
Political Knowledge	48	40	43	35	27	30
Support of Democratic Institutions	47	42	39	34	30	25
Political Alienation	63	37	32	49	25	19

increased. The same relationship existed between NDP support and political participation. Political participation was a scale, also derived from eight items, ranging from voting, through petitions and letters to MLAs or MPs, financial contributions, bumper stickers, political buttons, etc., to having demonstrated against the government.

Like the other variables, political knowledge was a scale derived from nine items such as: "Which political party forms the most provincial governments in Canada?" Correct answers ranged from 39 to 98 per cent and averaged 66 per cent. As can be seen, there was a curvilinear relationship in NDP support by degree of political knowledge.

However, when we compared the proportion of NDP supporters and non-NDP supporters at each level of political knowledge, NDP supporters were somewhat more likely to be politically knowledgeable. This finding is consistent with previous research reported by Laponce (1969b: 63-65, 212) and Schwartz (1974: 268-269), who found that federal NDP voters within British Columbia were the most politically knowledgeable.

NDP voters are also the most alienated. Political alienation, like support of democratic institutions, was a scale derived from the degree of agreement or disagreement with items such as: "Government is pretty

much run for the benefit of all the people." As can be seen in Table 5, consistent with many of the other findings, NDP voters' support is clearly the highest among the most alienated respondents, and it is assumed by the authors that such alienation can be taken as a subjective indicator of marginality.

Provincially, within each category of political alienation, there was a fairly consistent increase in NDP voter support from 1969 to 1972, increasing slightly higher by 1973. Federally, the situation was quite different. By far the most substantial increase in federal NDP voter support occurred among the most highly alienated subcategory from 1968 to 1972; by 1973 about *half of the increase* in NDP support among this category had already left what they may have begun to see as an established party which was nurturing the federal government. The trend was virtually identical, but much less pronounced, among those with a medium degree of political alienation.

But among those who evidenced a low degree of alienation the increase in federal NDP support from 1968 to 1972 was almost imperceptible (1.3 per cent), but *continued* to increase up to 1973, unlike the situation among the more marginal remainder of the sample. It will be recalled that this is an illustration of precisely the paradox which was earlier discussed.

Specifically, the NDP drew its strongest support from among the most marginal individuals. However, once their over-all support increased sufficiently to win a plurality of voter support, they then suffered their greatest loss of support from among these same individuals — presumably because a segment of such individuals came to view the NDP as the established adversary.

The four social-psychological scales which have just been discussed were not repeated in the 1974 survey. However, that survey did include other questions which permitted a further investigation of the hypothesis linking marginality to NDP support. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree (on a seven-point scale) to which they were satisfied both with their lives as a whole and with various aspects of their lives. As can be seen in Table 6, in response to the question of over-all life satisfaction, the hypothesis receives support. As over-all life satisfaction decreased, NDP support increased.

What can be said about the remaining twelve items dealing with specific areas of life satisfaction? One can draw one's own conclusions about the relative importance of various areas of life satisfaction to NDP voting support. However, for our purposes, we see these items as provid-

TABLE 6
PER CENT NDP PREFERENCE BY DEGREE OF SATISFACTION
WITH SELECTED ASPECTS OF LIFE: 1974

Area of Life Satisfaction; Satisfaction With:	Provincial			Federal		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Self-Accomplishment	26%	32%	33%	18%	21%	23%
Family Life	28	36	34	19	24	26
Income	30	29	35	19	18	26
Living Standard	30	27	41	19	17	33
Amount of Fun	29	32	32	20	20	25
Living Quarters	26	32	41	17	22	30
Family Activity	30	31	32	20	19	28
Amount of Leisure Time	30	31	32	19	22	22
How Leisure Time Spent	29	30	35	20	20	25
Local Goods and Services	28	29	33	15	19	24
Own Health	30	28	38	20	20	24
Job	28	33	34	18	23	22
Life as a Whole	27	33	35	19	21	24

ing strong support for our thesis that the NDP has a greater attraction for dissatisfied (marginal) than for satisfied segments of the British Columbia population.

Neither provincially nor federally was there a single linear relationship among these eleven items which would contradict such an interpretation. Furthermore, there was the expected linear relationship between NDP preference and dissatisfaction in eight of the eleven items, provincially, and in seven of the eleven items, federally. In the remainder of the items the relationship was curvilinear, with the "medium satisfaction" category departing from expectations.

What, then, are we to conclude? Over all, NDP support has generally been disproportionately high within subpopulations whose members are marginal (defined as the absence of strong social ties with a social aggregate respected by, and influencing, the established power structure).

Marginal socio-demographic subpopulations would include those low in education or income, non-Protestants, younger voters, those who identify themselves as working or lower class, as well as those who reject the idea of belonging to *any* social class, and, increasingly, women. *Within the context of a British Columbia Social Credit government, organized*

labour up to 1972 can also be considered marginal, as defined, as could some professionals, especially teachers prior to the 1972 provincial election. On a more social-psychological level, marginal subpopulations would be those which were high on political alienation and low in life satisfaction.

Coincidentally, shortly after the NDP election victories in British Columbia, subpopulations which would be defined as non-marginal tended to increase somewhat their support for the establishment NDP. Federally, this included voters who were low on political alienation or 30 to 39 years old. Provincially, it included those with higher education, higher income, businessmen and individuals 30 to 39 years old. On the other hand, there were very sharp losses by 1974 among respondents within subpopulations which had been among the strongest NDP supporters in 1972: the highly politically alienated, labour union members, those under 30 years of age and non-Christians.

Earlier in this paper we asked why NDP support increased up to 1972 (provincially, at the expense of Social Credit) and why such support had declined by 1974. Black (1968) has described British Columbia as a largely traditionless, frontier culture in which both Social Credit and the NDP served as focal points for anti-establishment protests of the majority of British Columbians. Social Credit within British Columbia has been described by Black (1968: 31) as:

an institutionalized protest against established élites of all kinds. The inability of such groups to secure the desired hearing and appropriate action accounts for the frequent charges . . . characteristically made by members of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Teachers' Federation, the chambers of commerce, the university community, the wildlife federations, and labour groups.

If both Social Credit and the NDP appeal to anti-establishment feelings of protest, it is reasonable to assume that some marginal individuals may have become disaffected with, or otherwise come to perceive as the establishment, a government which had been in power for twenty years under the leadership of the same person. Such a conjecture would account for the steady increase of NDP support throughout the 1960's and up to 1972.

But why did the NDP so quickly suffer a loss of some of their support by 1974? Conjectural answers abound, but our data offer no firm basis for an answer to such a question. In the British Columbia case the 1974 federal reversal cannot be attributed to a vote for the Liberals to defeat the Tory proposal for wage and price controls — in fact most of what

the NDP lost as a percentage of the popular vote was offset by a Tory gain. It is also questionable whether or not provincially the 1974 public opinion poll merely reflects a typical mid-term slump.

We are inclined to see the 1974 drop in NDP support to be the ironical result of NDP idealism. Black (1968: 24) has noted that British Columbia's governments have always emphasized economic matters rather than services to people. If this is true, then the present NDP provincial government may have made a political mistake by stressing services to people rather than the economic exploitation of the province. Simultaneously, and paradoxically, the 1972 NDP federal success may have done serious harm to the NDP by providing the NDP with a decisive balance of power. By "trying to make Parliament work" and keeping the eastern-based Liberal government in power for a year and a half, the NDP may have come to be seen by some British Columbians as a bed partner of the despised "eastern establishment."

In conclusion, one wonders if the findings of this paper can be extended. "Western alienation" has been frequently discussed by political observers, journalists and even by the Prime Minister. Could there be a parallel between the widely recognized existence of "western alienation" and the propensity of the four western provinces to elect MPs and provincial governments from parties other than the two Canadian establishment political parties?

Political observers frequently offer quite different explanations of the reasons for western NDP (and previous Social Credit) successes. Could the NDP governments in three out of four western provinces, (as well as Social Credit strength in Alberta and British Columbia) be generally attributable to nothing more than widespread perceptions of marginality, although for different reasons — described as "western alienation" — among population subcategories within these provinces? Such a general explanation might also be quite applicable to the Quebec successes of the Union Nationale, the Cr ditistes, and the Parti Qu b cois. In conclusion, we wonder if an excessive concern with regional analysis has not made political observers myopic and blinded them to an underlying continuity of third-party strength across Canada.

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