

**The Rise of Reform: A Political Economy of
Neo-liberal Populism in the 1990s**

Steve Patten

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Abstract

The near meteoric rise of the Reform Party of Canada is almost unprecedented in Canadian politics. This dissertation explores the Reform Party's emergence. The core chapters concentrate on, first, situating our understanding of the Reform Party's emergence within a theoretically informed interpretation of the processes of party system change and, second, exploring the significance of Reform to the changing nature of Canadian political discourse and public policy in the 1990s.

The starting point for my explanation of Reform's emergence is the relationship between the political economic context and the processes of party system change. Reform emerged during a period of dramatic social and economic restructuring. I argue that such periods create opportunities for the emergence of new political parties, particularly those like Reform which attempt to define a future beyond the current period of tumultuous social and economic restructuring.

A second dimension of my explanation of the rise of Reform links the popularization of Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse and policy agenda to the earlier rise of a group of progressive social movements and public interest groups which have come to be known as the new social movements. I explain that populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between *the people* and *the powerful interests*, and that Reform discursively constructs this populist antagonism as one that pits ordinary working and middle-class taxpayers against the bureaucracy and the minority "special interest groups" of the new social movements.

I argue the significance of the Reform Party is rooted in the party's neo-liberal populist interventions in the struggles defining the party system's discursive framework. Reform has contributed to a broad cultural process which has transformed Canadian political discourse and public policy by advancing the neo-liberal paradigm shift in state governing practices.

With this dissertation I hope to add to our comprehension of the relationship between the party system and extra-party political economic and ideological phenomena. I also hope to contribute to bridging the gap between the scholarly literature on political parties and the newer area of research into the interrelations between economic restructuring, the rise of the new social movements, and contestation around such ideological questions as political identity.

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The core of my dissertation supervisory committee has been my supervisor, Janine Brodie, and Reg Whitaker. Janine has been a friend as well as an advisor. As will be obvious to anyone who knows her work, Janine has been a major influence on the conceptual and theoretical approach which animates this dissertation. Reg's influence on my thinking may be less obvious to the reader, but it has been just as important. Reg is one of the most insightful observers of national politics I know, and the wisdom he shares, even in informal conversation, has done much to shape this dissertation. The third member of my committee was Bob MacDermid. Bob joined the committee very late in the process, and I thank him for his willingness to commit his time to the defense process.

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My final thanks is to Marcia Nelson. Even the most carefully chosen words can't express Marcia's importance to me and my work. She is my partner; every thought I think and every word I write has been shaped by our relationship. With Marcia, I dedicate this dissertation to our daughter, Anna.

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PART ONE
The Rise of Reform: An Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

Launched at a convention in 1987 and formally registered as a political party on October 21, 1988, the Reform Party of Canada has risen, in less than a decade, to the position of Official Opposition to the Government. The near meteoric rise of the Reform Party--and, significantly, the simultaneous rise of the Bloc Québécois--is almost unprecedented in Canadian politics. Not since the Progressives burst onto the scene by winning sixty-five seats in the 1921 election, have new federal political parties so quickly and successfully broken into and disrupted the solidified patterns of partisan competition which characterize the Canadian party system. With this in mind, the rise of Reform presents an intriguing challenge for social scientists. *How can we explain the Reform Party's emergence? What factors must we consider to account for the rise of Reform and the popularization of the party's neo-liberal populist politics? Moreover, what is the Reform Party's significance to the changing nature of Canadian politics, public policy and state governing practices in the 1990s?* The purpose of this dissertation is to explore and explicate both the *fact of* and the *significance of* the rise of Reform. The chapters which follow concentrate on, first, situating our understanding of the Reform Party's emergence within a theoretically informed interpretation of the processes of party system change and, second, exploring the significance of Reform to the changing nature of Canadian political

discourse and public policy in the 1990s.

Because the Reform Party of Canada is now a major player in Canadian politics, it is important that we understand the party, its emergence, and the impact it is having on the Canadian political system. The results of the 1997 general election confirm Reform's electoral importance. Even those who were sceptics after the 1993 election must now recognize that Reform is more than simply a 'protest party' challenging the existing parties from the margins of the party system. The Reform Party is an *electorally important* contender *within* the Canadian party system. More than that, however, I will argue the Reform Party is *culturally and ideologically important*. Reform's significance, in other words, goes beyond the fact that the emergence of a new political party adds strategic complexity to partisan competition and expands the range of alternatives available to voters. The Reform Party's significance lies also in the unique and influential character of the party's discursive interventions in society's ongoing processes of ideological debate.

To suggest that Reform is significant, not only as a new party, but also as a new discursive intervention, is to stress the impact the party has had on the constellation of ideas and issues which animate Canadian politics. As a partisan vehicle for crusaders of the New Right--including advocates of both libertarian individualism and socially conservative traditionalism--Reform has been an important force behind the rightward shift in Canadian politics and public policy. At times, Reform's influence on public opinion, partisan politics and parliamentary debate has directly shaped aspects of the

political agenda. At other times, Reform's explicit and staunch support of (sometimes extreme) right-wing policy options has served as a sort of *political shield* for Jean Chrétien's Liberals as the government has adopted neo-liberal priorities--the political centre is, after all, always relative to the character of competing ideological alternatives. At all times, however, Reform's discursive interventions have helped to bring the ideas of the New Right--particularly the neo-liberal attack on the policies and institutions of the Keynesian welfare state--into the mainstream.

The limited, but growing, body of literature on the Reform Party has provided numerous insights into the party, its leader and its political agenda. This literature has not, however, tackled the research questions specified above in anything like the way that I address these questions in this dissertation. The earliest major works on the party contributed a great deal of useful background on Reform, but they were largely descriptive and their analysis remained journalistic.¹ Since then, there have been noteworthy critiques of the party's agenda,² and useful surveys of the social bases and ideological orientation of the party.³ There have also been a number of article-length works which have applied the insights of the theories of minor party development literature to an analysis of Reform's emergence.⁴ These latter articles are valuable, but they lack the depth of analysis required for a thoroughly convincing explanation of the rise of Reform.

To date, there have only been two book-length academic studies of Reform. Tom Flanagan's *Waiting for the Wave* provides an extremely insightful (insider's) analysis of

Preston Manning's influence on the character of the party. But Flanagan's principal task is not explaining the rise of Reform, and when he does address this question, his approach to explaining Reform's emergence is based on what I consider to be a less-than-convincing rational choice analysis.⁵ Trevor Harrison's *Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada*, provides what I have found to be the most convincing analysis of the rise of Reform.⁶ Harrison, a sociologist, combines the mainstays of social movement theory--relative-deprivation theory and resource mobilization theory--with a Gramscian theory of populism. He argues that populist political movements like the Reform Party arise when vulnerable social elements (with, it must be added, sufficient organizational resources and leadership) have their interests abruptly and negatively affected by dramatic social changes associated with an unravelling of the hegemonic order in the context of what he, following Gramsci, calls an "organic crisis." Although Harrison provides very little in the way of an analysis of the dynamics of change within party systems, which is the focus of my theoretical framework, he and I are in considerable agreement with regard to the broad social and political economic forces which explain the rise of Reform. However, most of Harrison's research and writing was carried out prior to the 1993 election. As a result, he provides only limited analysis of the significance of Reform's discursive interventions in the many public policy debates which have been central to ideological struggles in the 1990s.

The purpose and goals of this introductory chapter are fairly limited. In the next section I provide an outline of my conceptual approach and argument. With this

important task completed, I comment on the contribution this dissertation makes to scholarship on political parties and, more specifically, to our understanding of the emergence and significance of the Reform Party of Canada. Finally, the concluding section of the chapter outlines the plan of the dissertation.

Conceptual approach & argument

How one approaches the task of explaining the rise of the Reform Party depends, to a considerable extent, on their understanding of political parties and party systems. The same is true for the task of revealing the significance of Reform's emergence. There are, in other words, some very basic conceptual matters which must be dealt with prior to tackling the research questions posed above. How should we conceptualize and study political parties? What is meant by the notion of a *party system*? Can we theorize the processes of party system change which lead to the emergence of new political parties such as Reform? These questions--particularly the matter of theorizing party system change--are dealt with in considerable detail in subsequent chapters. My purpose here is to provide, first, an overview of my conceptual approach to the study of political parties and, second, an introduction to the core arguments developed in this dissertation.

Political parties can be conceptualized and studied from a variety of perspectives. It is common, for example, to consider parties through the lens of individual level data from survey research. This perspective is concerned with the party-in-the-electorate. The assumption is that parties represent specific segments of the electorate and, therefore, a party's political and ideological character is determined primarily by the nature of the

individuals, social cleavages and political interests it acts for. A second perspective is concerned with the party-in-itself. In this case, parties are studied as institutions which are shaped by the character of their organization, the effects of their rule structures, and the positional power of the party elite. It is assumed, in other words, that the ideological character and behavioural tendencies of parties are best understood through an investigation of party organization and leadership. Many critical political economists, on the other hand, stress the importance of unearthing empirical data providing evidence of the party's connection to and ongoing relationship with particular class forces. The assumption here is that political parties are (at least potentially) partisan expressions of particular class interests.

The perspective on parties adopted in this dissertation breaks, at least in part, with each of these traditions. It is not that I would claim these perspectives have nothing to offer. Far from it. In fact, I contend the character and success of the Reform Party is, in good part, a result of the party's organization and leadership. And I agree that our understanding of Reform is impoverished without an awareness of the social cleavages and class interests represented within the party. But my emphasis is put elsewhere. At the risk of overstating the extent to which I abandon materialist assumptions, I conceptualize political parties as *discursive moments* or, more plainly, as ideological interventions in the discursive struggles which shape social relations and give meaning to the material realities of daily life. That is to say, I emphasize the ways in which the character of a party is an ideological as much as an empirical question.

More concretely, in response to the intellectual traditions which emphasize revealing the social cleavages or class interests which parties represent, I contend that revealing the social or class basis of political parties is never a simple empirical matter. Quantitative empirical evidence on *who* the party represents is useful, and I provide this sort of data in a short appendix. But the empirical data on who the party represents won't speak for itself; indeed, much of this dissertation is a response to the fact that the political significance of the social base of a political party is always complicated by the very nature of *political representation*. As is well-known, political representation has usually been thought of as acting for or standing for a particular segment of the population or political interest.⁷ But focusing solely on this *instrumental side* of representation has too often allowed social scientists to ignore the *constitutive side* of representation. Representation in its constitutive sense involves the creation of collective political identities.⁸ As Stuart Hall explains, representation "has to be understood as an active and formative relationship."⁹ There is, in other words, an ideological dimension to representation; while political parties represent specific interests, they also forge and give meaning to these interests by discursively defining who it is they speak and act for. From this perspective, simple demographic profiles of political parties do not tell the complete story. The full significance of a party's social base will only be revealed through a critical examination of how the party's ideology and political appeals discursively construct that social base.

Parties shape how their supporters perceive of themselves and those within the political community with whom their interests are in conflict. They are never simple

expressions of social, economic or class interests. Moreover, neither a party's ideological orientation, nor its approach to controversial political questions can be *simply* and *directly* attributed to the character or distinctiveness of its organization or social base. Parties, then, must be conceptualized not just as organizations or as groups of supporters and activists, but as discursive interventions in the ideological struggles which shape political identities and interests and define the discursive character of a particular historical conjuncture.

So what is meant by the notion of a party system? It is often argued that electoral competition between party organizations produces competitive patterns and interrelationships which constitute a party system.¹⁰ At one level this is true. But these competitive patterns and interrelationships are only the most obvious and observable dimensions of the party system; they are shaped by a series of institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which, taken as a whole, constitute the party system. The party system, I will argue in subsequent chapters, is more than simply a constellation of competitive partisan organizations. The party system is a system of representation, it facilitates the representation of people and interests, but it also embodies a meaning structure which shapes our understanding of and relationship to partisan conflict. Thus, very important to the conceptual and theoretical approach taken in this dissertation, is the fact that every party system is characterized by a particular meaning structure or discursive framework which defines the boundaries of political debate, establishes the political identities to which parties appeal, provides a framework for interpreting issues

and events, and places limits on the policy options which are considered as realistic solutions. This discursive framework is shaped by, among other things, the ideological interventions of the existing parties. Thus, the significance of the emergence of a new party is, in large part, rooted in the fact that this new party represents an intervention in the struggles defining the party system's discursive framework.

The usefulness of such a conceptualization of the party system is that it takes us beyond focusing on the vote, elections, and the issue of the number and names of existing partisan organizations. I would argue, for example, that the significance of a new political party is not simply determined by its electoral success. The discursive legacies of parties are at least as important. Indeed, if we reflect upon the preponderance of flexible partisans within the Canadian electorate and the often-observed tendency toward brokerage-style politics, it becomes clear that the real significance of the death or birth of a political party is more ideological and discursive than organizational and electoral.

In the course of a critical examination of existing theoretical perspectives on party system change, I conclude that the goal of developing a rigorous *unified theory* of parties and party systems is not a realistic one. Instead, I concede the importance of adopting an eclectic perspective on the variables which are significant to the processes of party system change. There are, in other words, a range of institutional, organizational and strategic, cultural and ideological, and political economic factors which influence the processes of party system change. Nevertheless, I suggest an implicit ordering of these variables in that the framework I develop is essentially a political economic framework which begins with

the assumption that the political economic conjuncture influences the extent to which party system change is more likely than continuity. Following the materialist assumptions of political economy, I argue that the political economic context is important because of the fact that individuals do respond to the objective material conditions of life. With that said, however, I stress that the discursive interventions of mediating institutions, including political parties, influence how these material conditions are understood and transformed into political interests. Thus, consistent with the conceptualization of parties and party systems presented above, I contend that within a given political economic context, political parties (as well as other systems or structures of representation) struggle to delimit the universe of political identities and interests which are significant to partisan politics. Moreover, I argue these discursive struggles--what I call the politics of representation--are *centrally* important to both the extent and nature of party system change.

With this conceptual approach to parties, party systems and the processes of party system change as my starting point, I proceed, in subsequent chapters, to explore and explicate both the *fact of* and the *significance of* the rise of Reform. The starting point for my explanation of Reform's emergence is the political economic context. Since the political economic context influences the strategic maneuverings of existing parties and the dynamics of the broader politics of representation, I emphasize that Reform emerged during a period in which dramatic social and economic restructuring was transforming the material conditions of Canadian life. I argue that such turbulent periods of social and

economic restructuring leave the party system less able to reproduce the consensus necessary to ensure continuity within the party system. At a very general level, then, I contend that periods of crisis create opportunities for new political parties which offer new and distinctive interventions into ideological debates about the causes and solutions to the hardships associated with the processes of restructuring. In other words, the context of crisis creates space for, but also reveals the importance of, discursive struggles to define a future. And it is my contention that the Reform Party represents one dimension of just such an attempt to define a future beyond the current period of social and economic restructuring. In particular, my analysis reveals the ways in which Reform's neo-liberal populism effectively mobilizes resentment and protest against those groups and institutions which are depicted as the causes of social change and economic hardship, while also offering a potentially attractive future-oriented programme of neo-liberal solutions to the difficulties which social and economic restructuring present for ordinary Canadians.

This is not to suggest a simple macro-level (and perhaps functionalist) interpretation of how the conditions developed for the successful emergence of the Reform Party. The rise of Reform can only be understood in the context of the strategic maneuverings of competing partisan actors, the institutional conditioning variables which shape the opportunity structures of the party system, and the various issues which animate the politics-of-the-day. With that said, however, the factor beyond the political economic context which I emphasize most in my explanation of the rise of Reform is what I call the

politics of representation--that is, the struggles of political parties and other structures of representation to delimit the universe of political interests and identities which are significant to partisan politics. More concretely, I argue that the rise of Reform and the popularization of Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse and policy agenda are directly linked to the earlier rise of a group of progressive social movements and public interest groups which have come to be known as the new social movements--including feminism, environmentalism, and the gay and lesbian rights movement.

In developing this dimension of my explication of the rise of Reform I explain that populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between *the people* and *the powerful interests*. But since the content of this antagonism is not objectively given, populism is, essentially, an ideological instrument which Reform uses in a direct challenge to the new social movements. The Reform Party's neo-liberal populist political appeals construct the people/powerful interests antagonism as one which pits ordinary working and middle class taxpayers against the welfare state bureaucracy and the minority special interest groups associated with the new social movements. Neo-liberal populism is a form of identity politics played out on the terrain of the politics of representation. In direct response to the success of the public interest groups and social movement organizations which emerged from the new social movements. Reform's neo-liberal populism constructs the interests of ordinary Canadians--*the people*--as being in opposition to the interests of these supposedly powerful minority special interests.

I stated above that the significance of the emergence of a new party is, in large part, rooted in the fact that this new party represents an intervention in the struggles defining the party system's discursive framework. In exploring the significance of Reform I emphasize the party's interventions in the political and ideological struggle to promote a neo-liberal framework and approach to matters of governance. I assume, in other words, that Reform's significance is not *primarily* its impact on the distribution of power within the party system or seats within the House of Commons. In fact, whether or not the Reform Party is electorally successful long into the next century, the party's ideas have contributed to a broad cultural process which has transformed Canadian political discourse and public policy. I am cautious not to overstate the importance of Reform to the success of the discursive struggles which have marginalised welfare liberal, social democratic and traditional tory ideological commitments in favour of neo-liberalism. A variety of social forces have engaged in furthering this new right-wing agenda. I am also careful to recognize the ways in which conservative notions of the family, a concern for the social order and a basic commitment to social traditionalism, have tinged the Reform Party's neo-liberal ideological discourse. Nevertheless, through an exploration of Reform's political ideas and interventions in consequential policy debates, I demonstrate the extent to which Reform has participated in advancing the neo-liberal paradigm shift in state governing practices; and I make the case that this is the real significance of the rise of Reform.

My examination of Reform's political ideas and interventions in public policy

debates takes place over the course of two chapters. In the first, I examine the party's struggle to forge a new public consensus with regard to both the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship and the definition of the Canadian political community. Through a wide-ranging discussion of Reform's interventions into debates regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employment equity programmes, the wisdom of adding sexual orientation to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act, multiculturalism and immigration policy, bilingualism and the status of Quebec in Canadian federalism, and Aboriginal self-government, I reveal the many ways in which Reform's discursive interventions seek to advance a neo-liberal conception of citizenship and political community.

With regard to citizenship, Reform advances a narrow, individualistic and market oriented perspective which would transform citizenship from a collective to an individual political identity--the citizen as taxpayer. Reform calls for a limiting of citizenship rights to the negative liberties associated with civil and political rights, and rejects the legitimacy of the postwar trend toward the extension of social rights. With regard to political community, Reform advances a perspective which denies the legitimacy of subnational collective identities, emphasizes the essential sameness of all individuals, and calls for policies which foster social and cultural homogeneity within a community of self-reliant individuals. Clearly, from the perspective adopted in this dissertation, these matters are of particular importance due to their centrality to the construction of political identities and interests.

In the second of the two chapters on Reform's efforts to advance the neo-liberal agenda, I explore the ways in which the party's social and economic policy agenda aims to limit the role of the state and enhance the role of the private sector and market mechanisms. Following an examination of Reform's social and economic policy philosophy, I examine the party's agenda for reforming--often dismantling--public policies and programmes which have been central to the character of Canada's Keynesian welfare state, specifically Unemployment Insurance, public health care, and income security for seniors. While much of Reform's social and economic policy agenda originally seemed extreme and out of step with the mainstream, I demonstrate that the governing practices and public policies promoted by Reform are increasingly often accepted as essential to Canada's future social and economic prosperity.

The links between my explanation of Reform's emergence and my understanding of the party's significance should be clear. Reform emerged out of a period of social and economic restructuring. In the struggles to define a future beyond this period of crisis, Reform has articulated a neo-liberal agenda. But Reform advocates neo-liberalism with a populist twist which constructs the public interest groups, social movement organizations and political subjects of the new social movements as powerful special interests bent on defending (even extending) an outdated policy agenda which is contrary to the interests of *ordinary Canadians*. Thus, the real significance of Reform's discursive interventions is not simply the party's widely recognized advocacy of neo-liberalism in opposition to the institutions and governing practices of the Keynesian welfare state. The real significance

of Reform is the way in which its discursive interventions utilize populism as an ideological instrument to construct this neo-liberal agenda as if it were simply an expression of what Preston Manning likes to call "the common sense of the common people."

Contribution

The primary goal of this dissertation is to enhance our understanding of the rise of the Reform Party of Canada. While I draw quite extensively on the work of Harrison, Flanagan, Laycock, Archer and Ellis, and several others who have written on Reform, the analysis and arguments presented in this dissertation are somewhat unique. As such, I am confident that this dissertation makes a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the emergence and significance of the Reform Party. At bottom, this contribution begins with the approach taken to conceptualizing, theorizing and studying the matter of party system change. The emphasis placed on the political economic context and the politics of representation is not entirely original, and it certainly does not replace the need to consider other important factors; but it provides a unique and not sufficiently tested vantage from which to consider the rise of the Reform Party, as well as other important developments which occur within the Canadian party system. By treating the Reform Party's emergence as one dimension of the evolution of the Canadian party system, and by situating this uncertain evolutionary process in the context of the changing political economic and ideological landscape, I believe I have added to our comprehension of the relationship between the party system and extra-party political, economic and ideological

phenomena.

Furthermore, it is my hope that in writing this dissertation, I have contributed to bridging the gap between the scholarly literature on political parties and the newer area of research into the interrelations between economic restructuring, the rise of the new social movements, and contestation around such ideological questions as political identity. My treatment of parties as discursive moments and populism as a form of identity politics played out on the terrain of the politics of representation is centrally important to bridging this gap.

I also hope that this dissertation contributes to our understanding of how periods of economic crisis and social economic restructuring can undermine the capacity of the currently dominant party organizations to structure electoral politics in a manner which precludes the entry of significant organizational and discursive alternatives. Thus, at a more general level, it is my hope that this dissertation will assist in preparing us to better understand the current and future evolution of partisan politics in Canada.

Plan of dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three parts. Part one provides an introduction to the rise of the Reform Party. It includes this introductory chapter and a chapter on the birth of Reform. This second chapter is largely descriptive. It provides a recounting of the story behind Reform's birth as an electorally competitive political party. In the course of this narrative, the people, policies and structures of the party are introduced, and the roots, development and key turning points in Reform's early history are revealed. Throughout

the chapter, emphasis is placed on the indisputable importance of Preston Manning's leadership to both the success and character of the Reform Party. The discussion also illuminates some of the institutional and strategic variables which defined Reform's early success, including the political issues and events which have shaped Reform's political opportunity structure.

The three chapters in part two of the dissertation combine to offer an explanation of the Reform Party's emergence. A lengthy examination of the existing literature on party system change in chapter three lays the necessary foundations for developing a theoretically informed understanding of the underlying dynamics of continuity and change in the Canadian party system. As is explained above, this framework highlights the importance of considering the political economic context and the political and ideological struggles which constitute the politics of representation. Chapters four and five take up these challenges by further fleshing out important theoretical matters, and then applying the perspective developed to the case of Reform. Chapter four explores the political economy of Reform's emergence. Then, in chapter five, I explore Reform's neo-liberal populism, situating it in the context of the current political economic conjuncture, and show how it is, in fact, an ideological instrument used against the political subjects of the new social movements in the discursive struggles which constitute the politics of representation.

The third part of the dissertation examines the significance of the rise of Reform by exploring the ways in which the Reform Party has worked to advance the neo-liberal

agenda. As was discussed above, chapter six examines how Reform's discursive intervention in a number of policy debates has served to advance a neo-liberal conception of citizenship and the Canadian political community. Chapter seven examines Reform's social and economic policy agenda, and highlights the ways in which this agenda is intended to limit the role of the state and enhance the role of the private sector and market mechanisms. Drawing extensively on party policy documents, chapters six and seven provide considerable detail into the nature of the policy regime which is advocated by the Reform Party.

Recognizing that some readers will find it useful to have an awareness of *who* has supported and become active within the Reform Party, a short appendix develops a demographic profile of the party by reviewing some of the available data on Reform Party supporters and activists. In light of the discussion of the constitutive nature of political representation presented above, readers should be cautioned about reading too much into this profile. Neither the party's basic ideological orientation, nor its approach to controversial political questions such as the legitimacy of various conceptions of citizenship rights or the proper role of the state in the economy can be attributed directly to the party's demographic profile. Nevertheless, the appendix does provide some empirical data which is interesting to consider in the context of, in particular, the discussions of Reform's neo-liberal populism and its agenda with regard to defining Canadian citizenship and the Canadian political community.

Endnotes

1. See: Sydney Sharpe and Don Braid, *Storming Babylon: Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1992); and Murray Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1991).
2. See, for example: David Laycock, "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XXVII:2 (June, 1994), pp. 213-248.
3. See: Keith Archer and Faron Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XXVII:2 (June, 1994), pp. 277-308; and, Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (May, 1995).
4. See: Therese Arseneau, "The Reform Party of Canada: The Secret of its 'Success'." A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Kingston, Ontario, June, 1991; Peter McCormick, "The Reform Party of Canada: New Beginning or Dead End?" in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada*, (6th ed.; Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1991); and Livianna S. Tossutti, "The Past Revisited?: The Reform Party and the Dominant Explanations of Minor Party Development." A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, Ontario, June, 1993. For useful overviews of the literature theorizing the origins and development of minor parties, see: Robert J. Brym "Social Movements and Third Parties," in S.D. Berkowitz, ed. *Models and Myths in Canadian Sociology* (Toronto: Butterworth & Co. (Canada) Ltd., 1984); and, Alain-G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, "Minor Parties in the Canadian Political System: Origins, Functions, Impact," in A. Brian Tanguay and Alain-G. Gagnon, *Canadian Parties in Transition*, (2nd ed.; Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1995).
5. Tom Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995).
6. Trevor Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity: Right Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).
7. Hannah Pitkin. *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1967).

8. The notion of the two senses of representation is adapted from Jane Jenson, "A Political Economy Approach to Interest Representation," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Democracy with Justice/La juste démocratie: Essays in Honour of Khayyam Zev Paltiel* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992), p. 240.
9. Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show," in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, eds., *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), p. 26.
10. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen: Brokerage Parties and Class Politics," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), p. 24.

Chapter Two

The Birth of Reform

Introduction

This dissertation does not focus on providing a detailed look *inside* the Reform Party, nor does it aim to provide a fully comprehensive narrative of the party's history. These tasks have already been accomplished by the existing literature on Preston Manning and the Reform Party.¹ Nevertheless, to facilitate the subsequent analysis of Reform's emergence, the current chapter does provide a summary recounting of the story behind Reform's birth as an electorally competitive political party. In this chapter, the people, policies and structures of the party are introduced through a chronological review of the roots, development and key turning points in Reform's early history--that is, the events leading to the party's electoral breakthrough in 1993. Among other things, the current chapter outlines key aspects of the Reform Party's policy platform and explores the complex, sometimes contradictory, but consistently right-wing ideological orientation of the party. Throughout this chapter emphasis is placed on the indisputable importance of Preston Manning to the character and success of the party. Manning is a uniquely ambitious and quietly domineering individual with a humble and folksy public persona which often masks the influence he has over the course of events around him. Few observers of Reform would deny the centrality of his leadership to the emergence and early success of the Reform Party.

While remaining a fairly descriptive introduction to the birth of Reform, the discussion to follow will also illuminate some of the institutional and strategic variables which shaped Reform's emergence and early successes. Among the more important institutional conditioning variables were Canada's single member plurality electoral system, which tends to ensure the over-representation of parties with regionally concentrated support, and the high degree of party discipline in the Canadian Parliament, which made it difficult for, in particular, Western Tories to distance themselves from Brian Mulroney as he lost the support of once sympathetic conservative voters. Beyond Manning's leadership and the efforts of grass roots organizers, the key strategic variables which shaped Reform's political opportunity structure in the late 1980s and early 1990s were, first, the creation of partisan space on the right of the political spectrum which resulted from the generalized decline in support for Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservatives and, second, the impact that highly charged issues and events had on the overall character of national politics. For example: the CF-18 contract decision inflamed Western alienation; the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords (and the rise of the Bloc Québécois) intensified the regionalization of politics and fed anti-elitist sentiments within the electorate; the Goods and Services Tax (GST) heightened resentment regarding the level of taxes on middle-income earners; and the failure of the major political parties to effectively address the deficit issue added a sense of urgency to the political interventions of concerned fiscal conservatives.

The focus of this chapter is on Preston Manning's leadership and the readily

observable institutional and strategic variables which shaped the Reform Party's political opportunities. In subsequent chapters it will be argued that *explaining* the emergence of Reform requires an analysis which takes us beyond the account of the party's birth which is offered here. It is a mistake, however, to underestimate the importance of leadership and the strategic maneuverings of political actors. Not only the emergence of Reform, but to a very significant extent the party's policies and ideological character, are tied to Preston Manning, his background and his leadership. For this reason, the story of the birth of Reform is a story which begins when Preston Manning first dabbled in politics some thirty years ago.

Twenty years a dream: 1965-1985

The Reform Party of Canada was not the creation of Preston Manning alone. By the mid 1980s, a number of prominent Western Canadians had independently concluded the time was right for a new federal political party, and several of these individuals played key roles in getting the Reform project off the ground between 1986 and 1988. Nevertheless, the *Alberta Report* was absolutely correct to report in June, 1987 that "Manning was the guiding light...the chief reason a party emerged."² Tom Flanagan, the party's former Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications, has often referred to Reform as the party that Manning built:

To a remarkable degree, the Reform Party is the personal project of Preston Manning. Throughout the party's brief history, Manning has been its only leader and its only authoritative spokesman. He contributed the party's name, most of its Statement of Principles, and many of its policies.³

Thus, while a number of people can legitimately claim recognition for their initiative during the birth of Reform, the party's ideological, organizational and political character has been shaped by Manning. Without Preston Manning's involvement, a new federal political party may have been born in the West during the late 1980s, but it would have been a significantly different party. As many observers have noted, the birth of the Reform Party only came to pass after the *idea* of Reform had been gestating in the mind of Preston Manning for two decades.

Although often characterized as a political neophyte, Reform Party leader Preston Manning, son of former Alberta Premier Ernest Manning, made his first foray into federal politics in 1965, standing as the Social Credit candidate in the constituency of Edmonton East. Only 23 years old at the time, Manning ran as a "strong and active voice" for youth; his campaign literature claimed "[e]nthusiastic youth must be willing to accept the responsibilities of government."⁴ As Socreds, Manning and his Edmonton area running mates campaigned on the issues of economic freedom and the high cost of Canada's emergent welfare state. A campaign poster used by Manning drew on the classical liberal individualism of libertarian political ideology to attack the welfare state's infringement on personal freedom: "The moment a man forfeits his right to choose what is beneficial for himself and those in his care, he forfeits his guarantee of security."⁵

Finishing a distant second to the Tory incumbent, Manning came away from the experience having learned a couple of lessons which would guide his subsequent relationship to partisan politics. First, during the campaign, Manning came to the

conclusion that neither he nor the other local candidates had the requisite skill or knowledge to serve as representatives capable of providing political leadership to their communities.⁶ In response, Manning has since put an incredible amount of energy into honing his views on key political issues and processes. The depth and breadth of his research into and knowledge of political issues is not particularly outstanding; what is unique is the extraordinary effort Manning has directed toward refining his views, as well as perfecting the written and oral presentation of these views. One former Reform M.P. and long-time friend of Manning, Ray Speaker, recalls how Manning has always been committed to spending the time to carefully frame his ideas: "Preston and I, and Erick Schmidt and Don Hamilton, once spent hours with a blackboard writing one sentence on the definition of Social Conservatism."⁷ Even today, Manning is known for penning his own speeches and insisting on extensive personal involvement in the writing of all key party documents. The result has been a notable clarity, consistency and simplicity in most of the positions taken by Manning and the Reform Party. It has also meant that many of the political ideas which drive the Reform Party in the 1990s, are in fact ideological commitments Preston Manning formulated in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The second lesson Manning apparently took from his experience in the 1965 election was that he didn't like losing, particularly as part of an aging political machine like the federal Social Credit party. He decided that rather than working within a traditional political party, he wanted to be involved in the wave of political activism which can emerge from a major new populist movement.⁸ As a result, Manning has

consciously substituted a strategic emphasis on macro-political timing for more conventional notions of a political strategy based on coalition-building.⁹ In effect, Manning decided as early as the 1960s that when political trends suggest the time is right, he would be at the forefront of a new populist movement and political party. Thus, for twenty years, from 1965 to 1985, Manning's political efforts were directed toward developing his political ideas and testing the political waters to see if the time was right for a new federal political party. For twenty years, the Reform Party of the 1990s was a dream taking shape in the mind of Preston Manning.

During much of late 1960s, Manning was employed with the National Public Affairs Research Foundation (NPARF), a small right-wing think tank founded and funded by a number of prominent business people. NPARF, which some claim was the forerunner to the National Citizens Coalition (NCC),¹⁰ provided Manning with the material resources which allowed him to devote his energies to advising his father and honing his own political ideas. His first major project was the production of an Alberta government policy document titled *A White Paper on Human Resources Development*,¹¹ authored by himself and his friend Erick Schmidt, then Executive Assistant to the Alberta Cabinet. The *White Paper*, which was released in March, 1967 under the name of the Premier, Ernest C. Manning, represents an attempt by Manning and Schmidt to apply their personal small-c conservative principles and technocratic systems analysis to the practical questions of poverty, underdevelopment and social services delivery.

The *White Paper* is striking for a couple of reasons. First, the *White Paper* is

striking because of the technocratic naivety with which it applies systems analysis and essentially descriptive matrices as a conceptual framework for public policy and action. Reading the document in the 1990s, it appears extremely simplistic. At the time however, Manning believed his systems approach, with its policy matrices, could be extended and adapted to assist policy-making in all major policy areas.¹² More significant, however, is the way in which the *White Paper* grapples with the relationship between political principles and policy-making. At the outset, the paper is emphatic about the importance of ensuring that policy-making is driven by fundamental principles and values.¹³ It also enumerates the value judgements by which human resources development policy should be guided:

- Human resources will be treated as being intrinsically more important than physical resources.
- Prior consideration will be given to human beings individually (persons), rather than to human beings collectively (society)...
- A free enterprise economy, in which all individuals have maximum opportunity to participate, will be regarded as more desirable than a state regimented economy.
- A supporting function, rather than a domineering function, will be ascribed to the state relative to [human and physical] resources development.¹⁴

Then, in a manner which has become characteristic of Preston Manning, the paper moves on to claim that these small-c conservative principles--principles which could be labelled either *economic conservative* or *business (classical) liberal* because they entail a commitment to liberal individualism, the free market and a severely limited state--are not

incompatible with other political and ideological perspectives. In fact, in the *White Paper* there is the suggestion that it is possible to achieve what Manning now calls a *synthesis* between right-wing conservatism and left-wing liberal/socialist thinking.¹⁵ Perhaps reflecting Manning's personal sensitivity to criticisms of his father and the Social Credit government for being too staunchly right-wing and business-oriented, the *White Paper* boldly states:

The Government of Alberta is resolved to destroy, once and for all, the fallacious notion that those who believe in freedom of economic activity, private ownership of property, and individual enterprise and responsibility, are incapable of "social concern" and devoid of humanitarian sentiments.¹⁶

As will be seen, Manning was not suggesting a willingness to embrace left liberal ideological commitments. Nor was he hinting at a red toryism in his conservative ideological commitments. He was simply suggesting that individual initiative and private enterprise are the best routes to addressing the concerns raised by socially concerned left liberals. Then, having moved from a clear statement of economic conservative principles, to the claim that left liberal humanitarianism is not incompatible with conservatism, the *White Paper* makes one final claim about the relationship between political principles and policy-making: since economic conservatism can embrace humanitarian social concerns, policy issues are really above ideological and partisan difference, they are merely a matter for common sense problem-solving.¹⁷ With this claim, Preston Manning began to develop his belief that it is possible to be *simultaneously* highly principled, yet not driven by "narrow" political ideologies. As he is fond of saying today: "we reject political debate

defined in the narrow terminology of Left, Right, and Centre."¹⁸

Manning's next two projects at NPARF allowed him to dabble with the idea of forming a new political party. First, acting on behalf of his father, the Social Credit Premier, Preston and Erick Schmidt met on several occasions with Merv Leitch and Joe Clark, then an executive assistant to the Alberta Conservative leader, Peter Lougheed, to discuss the possibility of merging Alberta's Social Credit and Progressive Conservative parties under the banner of the Social Conservative Party of Alberta. During the negotiations Manning and Schmidt wrote a *Basis of Union*, a document not unlike the Reform Party's *Statement of Principles*, which would outline the basic principles of the new party. The idea was soon rejected by senior officials in both parties; however, the experience--which he today calls "my first involvement in political synthesis"¹⁹--gave Manning an initial opportunity to develop the idea of "social conservatism," a concept that he and his father pitched to the nation in a small book titled *Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians*.

Researching and helping write *Political Realignment* was a formative event for Preston Manning. Today he admits the experience gave him "reason to think through the issue of attempting to reform a traditional party from within and without, versus attempting to create a new party."²⁰ With the benefit of hindsight, one can clearly see the roots of Reform in *Political Realignment*. The basic thesis of the book was that because of the absence of clear-cut alternatives between principled political parties and the public's general disillusionment and dissatisfaction with politics and political leaders, the

Canadian party system was in need of fundamental reorganization.²¹ Moreover, the Mannings argued this reorganization would ideally lead to a rationalized party system in which partisan competition involved two parties with clearly defined political ideals and principles.²²

In fact, however, *Political Realignment* contains two, somewhat contradictory, messages about the ideal partisan division of political principles. At one level, as Sharpe and Braid point out, the book shows "the Mannings themselves think very definitely in terms of left and right,"²³ and were interested in encouraging a polarized party system in which the united forces of the left challenged the united forces of the right. However, in arguing that the partisan right should be represented by a party of what the Manning's called "social conservatism"--essentially economic conservatism with faith in the humanitarian sentiments and capacities of individuals and private enterprises--they were suggesting, as they did in the *White Paper*, that the right can provide a "realistic synthesis" which would "weld the humanitarian concerns of those with awakened social consciences to the economic persuasions of those with a firm conviction in the value of freedom of economic activity and enlightened private enterprise."²⁴ For the Mannings, social conservatism could provide an ideological umbrella wide enough to include all but the hard-core statist left. Thus, at another level, it would appear that the Mannings believed social conservatism would allow them to replicate on the federal level Alberta's long history of one party dominance under the Social Credit.

To most observers, however, social conservatism is not the political and

ideological synthesis that Preston Manning believes it is. Indeed, with the exception of the traditional conservative claim that "[t]he most fundamental unit of human association is the individual family and home,"²⁵ the twenty principles of social conservatism outlined in *Political Realignment* are less conservative than they are libertarian and anti-socialist. The emphasis throughout is on individualism, liberty and limited government. The text states that "[n]o apology is made" for this focus, and warns that in "defining political principles and particularly in defining ideals, it is imperative that we avoid the error of those who define their political utopia in collectivistic and socialistic terms (in terms of the ideal society rather than ideal individuals)."²⁶ While the Mannings were focussed on rejecting the collectivist thinking of socialism and social democracy, *Political Realignment* also rejects the understanding of and commitment to the collectivity which is central to traditional conservatism and red toryism.

The main purpose of *Political Realignment* was to call upon the federal Progressive Conservatives to take up the cause of social conservatism and provide a vehicle for the realignment of the Canadian party system. At the time, the Mannings did not believe that forming an entirely new political party was the best way to achieve their goals. Nevertheless, in the event that the federal Tories rejected their plea, they had a warning:

...those affiliated with the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, should take cognizance of the following fact: if the Canadian political situation continues to degenerate, and if the cause of conservatism continues to suffer and decline, not for lack of merit or a willingness on the part of the Canadian public to support modern conservative principles

and policies, but rather because of unnecessary dissension among politicians and parties, the idea of establishing a wholly new political party committed to the social conservative position will find an ever increasing number of advocates and supporters among a concerned and aroused Canadian public.²⁷

While the Mannings' social conservative project never got off the ground, the youthful Preston Manning did form a small organization called the Social Conservative Society. Between 1966 and 1968, Preston and a number of his colleagues--including Erick Schmidt, the coauthor of the *White Paper*--met to explore the values and principles of social conservatism. As one participant, Don Hamilton, explained in his recollections of the group: "We were seeking out ways to implement social conservatism."²⁸

During most of the 1970s Preston Manning's political ambitions were much less explicit. Having formed a consulting firm with his father, by then a Senator, he was primarily occupied with matters of business. This did not, however, interfere with his desire to develop and hone his political ideas. On numerous occasions Manning took consulting contracts which allowed him to dabble in matters of public policy. One of the first papers he wrote from the father-son consulting business was *Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts*. This document, which has been described as "the most detailed description of his approach to social policy that he has likely ever produced,"²⁹ was a blueprint for the privatization of government services.

Impressed with the way in which "requests for proposals" were used by the American government to tender military and aerospace contracts, Manning became convinced that such tendering techniques could be used for the delivery of such services

as health care, educational and regional development. To this day, he maintains the belief that many public policy objectives would be "better achieved" through such a process of contracting out.³⁰ As others have suggested, *Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts* may provide some insight into exactly what today's Reform Party means by the following claim: "We would actively encourage families, communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to reassume their duties and responsibilities in social service areas."³¹ However, *Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts* was more than a strategy for governments to achieve social goals; in fact, the version of the paper sent to business people was subtitled *A Strategy to Advance the Role of Private Enterprise in Canada*, and the preface made this dimension of the paper abundantly clear:

This document proposes a strategy for establishing a new set of relations between governments and private enterprise in Canada. Pursuit of this strategy would vastly expand the responsibilities and opportunities of Canadian business and industry, and enable Canada to attain important national goals.³²

Few of Manning's other projects were as significant to the development of his political ideas as the *White Paper*, *Political Realignment* and *Requests for Proposals*. However, in the mid 1970s, with funding from the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI)--now Canada's most powerful business lobby group--Manning drafted and promoted a property rights protection clause for inclusion in the Canadian constitution.³³ He also wrote *A Realistic Perspective on Canadian Confederation* for the Canada West Foundation.³⁴ In that paper he combined his interest in systems analysis and matrices with a series of rational choice assumptions about the dynamics of federal-provincial relations

to argue that the Canadian confederation has evolved through a series of "deals" between federal and provincial governments. Manning refers to this perspective as his "Deal Model of Confederation." The document would hardly be worthy of mention, if it were not for the extreme pride with which Manning discusses the project,³⁵ and his claim that he still draws on "knowledge gained and conclusions reached as a result of fifteen years of viewing federal provincial concerns and aspirations using the national unity matrix and the Deal Model of Confederation."³⁶

During 1977 and 1978, a decade after the release of *Political Realignment* and Preston Manning's activities in the Social Conservative Society, Preston and his father made another attempt to launch a partisan political movement capable of changing the character of the federal party system. It began as a weekly coffee club of about a dozen western MPs and Senators brought together by Ernest Manning to discuss regional issues. It eventually expanded beyond parliamentarians and culminated in the formation of the Movement for National Political Change (MNPC), with Preston Manning serving as the organization's executive director.³⁷ In a style and tone which recalled their efforts to realign the federal party system around social conservatism, and which presaged the birth of the Reform Party a decade later, the MNPC claimed the traditional parties were not capable of solving the country's problems. Their goal was to build a membership of 1,000 people in Western Canada, hold regional conventions, and then host a national convention to launch "something new." A MNPC statement described this something new in the following manner: "A Movement for National Political Change which would either

radically transform one of the existing federal political parties or produce a viable new political party capable of displacing one of the existing entities.³⁸

Once again however, the Mannings had misjudged the potential for such a movement to grow into one capable of disrupting the federal party system. By 1979, when Joe Clark's Tories had displaced the Trudeau Liberals, the MNPC had disbanded. But this turn of events was not enough to dissuade Preston Manning from his long-term objective of one day leading a new partisan political movement of the right. In fact, the consistency of Manning's political ideas and motivations is one of his most striking characteristics. His political values and ambitions changed very little during the two decades preceding the birth of the Reform Party. It would seem that Manning's experience with the MNPC simply allowed him to further develop the strategic approach he would later take to his role in the founding of Reform. Like *Political Realignment* and the Social Conservative Society, the MNPC allowed Manning to test the political waters to see if the time was right. When he found it wasn't, he once again backed off and waited. In fact, while the prairies of the early 1980s spawned a number of staunchly regionalist and secessionist movements with which Preston Manning had informal and fleeting contact,³⁹ it was not until the mid 1980s that he made his third attempt to challenge the traditional parties and party system with a new right-wing political movement. Between 1986 and 1988, Preston Manning drew on his two decades of behind the scenes political experience to chart the course for the birth of the Reform Party of Canada.

The birth of Reform: 1986-1988

In 1986, when Preston Manning again concluded the time was right to work toward launching a new partisan political movement the situation was different in one important way: this time Manning and the people immediately around him were not alone. While talking up the idea with his personal political contacts--including Onoway municipal councillor Cliff Breitkreuz, and Tory M.L.A. Ray Speaker--Manning also began networking with such well-placed members of the Edmonton business and legal community as John Poole, Robert Chapman and Dick Shahany. At the same time, there were at least three other sources of independent impetus toward the formation of a new Western Canadian political party.⁴⁰ First, Ted Byfield, the socially and fiscally conservative editor and publisher of the influential right-wing *Alberta Report* magazine, wrote a column in August 1986 declaring the need for a political party to advocate the interests of Western Canadians.⁴¹

Second, in Calgary a loosely knit group of lawyers, oil patch executives and individuals who had been involved in organizing Canadian entries in the America's Cup yachting challenge, had also begun to talk about the need for a new political party. This group included Marvin Dill, organizer of Canada's America's cup entries and one of the earliest advocates of forming a new federal party; Cliff Fryers, a lawyer who was later to serve as the chief executive officer of Reform Fund Canada and chair of the Reform Party's Executive Council; Jim Gray, an oil executive and member of the Canadian Committee for a Triple-E Senate; oil man Jack Mackenzie; and lawyers Doug Hilland and

Bob Muir.

Finally, in British Columbia, Francis Winspear, a Victoria millionaire who had been making his frustrations with the Mulroney Conservatives public in discussions with associates on Vancouver Island, contacted Stan Roberts of Burnaby, B.C. to invite him to get involved in exploring new political options for disaffected Westerners. Roberts, the former president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and one time head of the Canada West Foundation, had also been leader of the Manitoba Liberal party; thus, as he began exploring the level of interest in such a project, he touched base with some of his former contacts on the prairies, including Jo Anne Hillier and Alan Beachell in Manitoba and Wally Nelson in Saskatchewan.⁴²

In the early stages these isolated groups were not in contact with one another. However this began to change in September 1986, when Manning sent a memorandum entitled *A Western Reform Movement: The Responsible Alternative to Western Separatism*, to Ted Byfield at *Alberta Report*, Jim Gray of the Canadian Committee for a Triple-E Senate, and David Elton, the current president of the Canada West Foundation. In that document--which pushed the idea of holding a small meeting at which someone (presumably Manning) would give a talk to a group of potential leaders of the next Western Reform Movement--Manning offered the following observation:

The western Canadian who views the federal political scene today sees nothing but unacceptable alternatives. There is therefore no point in further analysis or debate as to whether supporting the federal Conservatives, Liberals, or NDP in the next federal election is the lesser of the three evils. Politically, we are now in one of those situations where it is

'bold actions, not further calculations, which will carry the day.'⁴³

In response, Jim Gray invited Manning, Byfield and Elton to Calgary to meet with himself and a couple of members of the Calgary group, Bob Muir and Doug Hilland. At that meeting, which Byfield was unable to attend, both Gray and Elton expressed some reservations about moving too quickly to establish a new partisan organization. Muir and Hilland, on the other hand, were enthusiastic and invited Manning to make a presentation (the type of talk Manning had pushed for in his memorandum) to the Calgary group. On November 13, 1986, Preston Manning offered them his thoughts in a talk titled *Proposal for the Creation of a Western-Based Political Party to Run Candidates in the 1988 Federal Election*. There was considerable enthusiasm for the proposal, but the group did not get beyond agreeing that a larger meeting should be held to address the specific details of alternative courses of action.

It was at this stage that Stan Roberts, whom Manning knew from Robert's days with the Canada West Foundation, contacted Manning. With this connection made, the various groups who had been actively talking about starting a new political movement began to unite. A decision was eventually taken to establish the Reform Association of Canada and appoint a steering committee consisting of Stan Roberts, Preston Manning and Bob Muir to organize a convention, eventually named the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future, in Vancouver in the spring of 1987. Francis Winspear agreed to provide initial financial backing, Ted Byfield offered to publicize the event through the *Alberta Report* and *Western Report* magazines, Roberts took on the

supervision of the assembly's facilities and accommodation arrangements, and Manning--in an early indication of the way in which he would eventually ensure his control of the Reform Party--volunteered to draft the conference agenda and organize the resource people to present discussion papers.

Over three days in late May, 1987 approximately three hundred delegates from across the West met in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. The information kit provided to the delegates outlined two basic questions to be answered by the assembly: "What is the West's 'Agenda for Change'?" and "What political vehicle and strategy should Westerners support in order to secure action on the West's Agenda for Change?"⁴⁴ In both form and substance, the policy and political resolutions put forward to answer these questions reflected Preston Manning's extensive involvement in planning the assembly. The focus of the policy discussions was on economic reforms, but resolutions were also put forward regarding constitutional and social reforms. The delegates approved the establishment of a free-trade zone to be known as the Western Canada Economic Community. They called for the entrenchment of economic rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, passed a resolution favouring a Triple-E Senate, and voted in favour of encouraging a higher degree of public involvement in government decision-making through the placement of questions on a *question ballot* during elections. Speaking in favour of such referendum-style votes through the use of question ballots, one delegate bluntly stated a sentiment which would eventually attract hundreds of thousands of Canadians to support the fledgling Reform Party of Canada:

"I'm a member of the silent majority, and I say what we have now is not rule by the majority, but rule by small pressure groups. It's time for the rest of us to have some say."⁴⁵

While the Assembly delegates had a considerable list of economic policy priorities--privatize crown corporations, reduce taxes on businesses, reduce the deficit and deregulate the economy--there was little consensus on the specific direction they wanted to go in relation to social policy. With many delegates publicly "fulminating about the welfare hammock, UIC cheaters, and self-reliance," and others suggesting "privatizing social services would make them more efficient," there was little doubt about the basic direction delegates wanted to go with social reform, but no specific policy positions were adopted.⁴⁶ Manning had drafted a resolution on social reform which, like the *White Paper* he had authored twenty years earlier, stated "cooperative efforts are required between people with business and financial skills and people with social concerns and caring skills."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, social policy remained a major hole in the assembly's policy platform. Some time later, Manning commented that he had not done a good job of getting the kind of expert input on social policy that he had arranged on economic and constitutional policy:

I had looked for resource persons and contributors who combined the 'hard head' and 'soft heart' necessary to generate constructive alternatives to the welfare-state approach to dealing with the old, the young, the sick, and the poor, but I had not been very successful.⁴⁸

The highlight of the Western Assembly was a presentation entitled *Choosing a political vehicle to represent the West*, which Manning made to the delegates on the

Saturday evening. In his talk, Manning outlined the political options before the delegates: they could work within an existing federal political party; adopt a secessionist position and support the Western Canada Concept; or support "a new and broadly based political party" firmly committed to the Agenda for Change being developed by the delegates attending the Western Assembly. As expected, he very strongly advocated the formation of a new federal political party and encouraged the delegates to support the political resolutions directing a steering committee to organize the founding convention of this party during the fall of 1987.⁴⁹

With only Preston Manning's preferred option effectively presented to the delegates, the result of the next day's vote was a foregone conclusion. Delegates voted by a margin of almost eight to two in favour of forming a new political party. They also passed an implementation resolution specifying the agenda for the party's founding convention--define the ideological position and platform, select a name, and select a leader--and stipulating a series of guidelines (drafted by Preston Manning) for the organizers of the new party's founding convention to adhere to:

- A positive orientation and vision--not merely negative or reactionary.
- Establishment of high standards.
- Achievement of ideological balance.
- Committed to preserving and strengthening Canada--'The West wants in.'
- Provision of room to grow from a regionally based party to a truly

national party capable of forming a national government.⁵⁰

With these decisions made, Preston Manning's dream was finally about to become a reality.

On the weekend of October 30 to November 1, 1987, at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, the Reform Association of Canada held its second assembly, the founding assembly of the Reform Party of Canada. From beginning to end, Preston Manning maintained considerable influence over the proceedings. As the assembly opened, it was Manning who reported to the delegates on the results of the first assembly in Vancouver, and it was he who outlined the need for a new federal political party. Then, by a unanimous show of hands, the 262 delegates⁵¹ voted to support a formal motion, introduced by Stan Roberts and seconded by Francis Winspear, to create the new party. The party's name--Reform Party of Canada--was selected from a list of thirty potential names during a session chaired by Calgary lawyer Bob Muir.

The actual decision on the party's name would be of little interest if it were not for the subtle way in which it served to demonstrate Preston Manning's control of the assembly proceedings. Bob Muir had worked closely with Manning since they met in Jim Gray's office a year earlier. There is little doubt that Manning and Muir had already agreed "Reform Party of Canada" was their joint preference for the party's name. To underscore the appropriateness of the name, Muir read out some dictionary definitions of *reform* and informed delegates that the assembly's steering committee had discussed the importance of considering whether they wanted a name which suggested the party was

simply a regional party, or a name more suited to a national party. Of course, the delegates were well aware that the Western Assembly in Vancouver had voted to ensure that the new party would have "room to grow from a *regionally based* party to a truly national party." It may seem that the party's name was merely the logical extension of the interim association's name: Reform Association of Canada. This is true, but even that name was borrowed from Manning's September, 1986, memorandum: *A Western Reform Movement: The Responsible Alternative to Western Separatism*. Thus, it is not overstating the case to say that Manning had ideas about even the smallest of details, and he worked the agenda-setting and decision-making processes to ensure the new party reflected the ambitions he had long been formulating.

Prior to grappling with the matter of selecting a leader for the new party, the assembly delegates adopted a constitution and statement of principles. The rules and regulations forming the core of the constitution were drafted by Bob Muir and a small constitution committee. Preston Manning drafted the constitution's preamble and the *Statement of Principles* himself, using, as he has explained, "materials I had been collecting for the past twenty years"⁵²--materials, in other words, that he had been collecting since he and Erick Schmidt drafted the *Basis of Union* for what they hoped would become the Social Conservative Party of Alberta, and since he and his father outlined the basis of social conservatism in *Political Realignment*.

Going into the convention, both Preston Manning and Stan Roberts had announced their intention to seek the leadership of the party. Roberts spent more money

and campaigned, at least by traditional standards, more vigorously than Manning. Nevertheless, Manning had virtually assured his victory through the behind the scenes leadership he provided during the months of delegate selection and organizational preparation for the founding assembly. As the *Alberta Report* stated:

Instead of campaigning for the leadership, Mr. Manning simply assumed the role. At Vancouver and ever since, he has been the greatest influence on the party's agenda and platform, quietly lecturing the membership on what needs to be done next and why. He has had his way on all major points so far...⁵³

As events unfolded however, a leadership vote was not required. Early into the three day assembly Roberts made a series of accusations which suggested the Manning team was attempting to stack the convention in Preston's favour. The assembly's chair, Jo Anne Hillier, decided to call the two leadership hopefuls and their official representatives--Francis Winspear for Stan Roberts, and Bob Muir for Preston Manning--to a private meeting to discuss Roberts' allegations and seek a solution to this potentially embarrassing situation. After the meeting Roberts withdrew from the leadership race and Manning was acclaimed.

The final task of the Reform Party's founding assembly was the selection of the party's first executive council. Included among the eleven newly elected council members were: Diane Ablonczy, the Calgary lawyer whom Preston Manning selected as the executive council's first chair,⁵⁴ and who later became the M.P. for Calgary North; Ron Gamble, the Vancouver business person who eventually broke from the federal party to lead the B.C. Reform Party; Valerie Meredith, the real estate agent who was subsequently

elected as the M.P. for Surrey-White Rock; Bob Muir, the Calgary lawyer who drafted the party's constitution; Werner Schmidt, the former Alberta Social Credit leader who was later elected as the Reform M.P. for Okanagan Centre; and Gordon Shaw, the executive council's first vice-chair, and later a key Reform Party staffer.

When the preliminary registration of the Reform Party of Canada was submitted in January of 1988, the new party had a statement of principles, but lacked a detailed policy platform to present to the electorate. It had well over 3,000 members, but no officially nominated candidates. (Reform would need to nominate at least fifty candidates if it was to be registered as an official political party for the 1988 general election.) Thus, Preston Manning and the Reformers had two key tasks ahead: hammer out a policy platform, and organize constituency associations capable of nominating and supporting candidates to run in the upcoming election.

In January 1988, Preston Manning converted the Edmonton offices of his consulting business into the Reform Party offices and began to work full-time for the party. At the same time, Stephen Harper, a graduate student and part-time lecturer in economics at the University of Calgary and one-time Executive Assistant to Progressive Conservative M.P. Jim Hawkes, began to volunteer as the Reform Party's first policy chief. Harper, who had given an extremely influential speech at the party's founding assembly, was to become very influential during the party's early years of growth. His first major task involved working with Manning in drafting a party platform to present at a special Reform Party policy assembly in Calgary, August 12-14, 1988.⁵⁵

Drawing on the decisions made at the Western Assembly in Vancouver, as well as the party's new *Statement of Principles*, the 1988 Reform Party Platform--which later became the party's official *Blue Book* of Reform Party policy--outlined party policy on constitutional, political, economic and social issues. Bold, occasionally strident, the document reflected the culmination of over twenty years of development in the political ideas of Preston Manning, and it has since set the tone and character of the Reform Party of Canada. With regard to the issue of constitutional reform, the platform reiterated Reform's opposition to the Meech Lake Accord,⁵⁶ and its commitment to a Triple-E Senate and the entrenchment of property rights.⁵⁷ It stated that the legal text of future constitutional changes should be approved by a vote of the Canadian electorate and, finally, that consideration should be given to institutionalizing in the constitution a regional fairness test for public policy. With regard to regional fairness tests, the platform claimed that "such radically discriminatory actions as the National Energy Program and CF-18 contract would never have passed through such a process."⁵⁸ On political reforms, the platform called for reduced party discipline, greater accountability of M.P.s, the use of referenda and citizens' initiatives, restrictions on the number and types of Orders-in-Council permitted by a government, and an end to government subsidization of political lobbying and political parties.

The platform's discussion of economic policy called for "a new national policy" based on neo-liberal free market principles and fiscal conservatism. It supported free trade with the United States, "the shift from a government-dominated and supported

agricultural industry to an industry shaped by market forces," a more competitive banking system, and extensive privatization. The platform proposed a legal requirement for the federal government to balance its budget in each three year period, and called for extensive tax reform, "including the possibility of a flat tax."⁵⁹ In its discussion of economic policy reform, the platform attacked the tight money and high interest rate policy advocated by the Minister of Finance and the Bank of Canada. Finally, the platform called for an end to the Conservative government's Western Diversification Initiative, which it characterized as "a bureaucratic and political slush fund" inconsistent with a commitment to free enterprise and a limited state.⁶⁰

Unlike the Western Assembly, the 1988 Reform platform also had considerable detail on the matter of social policy reform. After a general statement affirming "the value and dignity of the individual person and the importance of strengthening and protecting the family unit as essential to the well-being of individuals and society," the platform offered the broad outlines of Reforms "alternatives to the Welfare State."⁶¹ In "fairness to taxpayers" it stated that social policy must be targeted and financially sustainable. Moreover, delivery mechanisms which "encourage families, communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to reassume their duties," were offered as an alternative to state-run delivery mechanisms--indeed, as an alternative capable of creating "a healthier environment for both self-reliance and social responsibility."⁶² With regard to specific social policies, the Reform Party's platform warned that the Mulroney government's proposed national day care initiative discriminated against parents who

want to raise their children at home, created "costly incentives for institutionalized child care, and could well be the first step toward universal, compulsory, state-run day care."⁶³ In line with the recommendations of the Forget Commission, the platform called for the return of Unemployment Insurance to its "original function," and an end to the use of UI for subsidizing training and stabilizing the incomes of seasonal workers. The platform raised concerns about federal spending powers and stated a preference for unconditional transfers to the provinces in areas of social policy. According to Reform, unconditional transfers for programmes in areas such as health care and social assistance would allow for more differentiated and creative responses to the social policy challenges facing the provinces.

The platform also attacked the Official Languages policy and the dualist conception of Canada which has influenced both Liberal and Tory governments since the Pearson era.⁶⁴ A lengthy section on immigration policy claimed there "is perhaps no area of public policy where the views of Canadians have been more systematically ignored."⁶⁵ In the process of accusing Liberal and Tory governments of moving increasingly toward an immigration policy "explicitly designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada," Reform's platform called for a new immigration policy based solely on Canada's domestic economic needs. It advocated the use of the Charter of Rights and Freedom's notwithstanding clause to override due process during the deportation of illegal entrants, and it called for the use of referenda to approve any "major changes" to immigration policy.⁶⁶

It was a detailed platform, and one with considerable potential appeal for both disgruntled conservatives and politically alienated Westerners. By advocating this policy platform during the 1988 general election, the Reform Party attracted the support of numerous Western Canadians whose hopes for a more regionally sensitive approach to governance had not been realized under the Mulroney Tories. For example, in opposing the Meech Lake Accord and advocating a Triple-E Senate, Reform appealed to those in the West who believed the Tory's constitutional agenda continued to be driven by Quebec. Similarly, by promising to represent Western economic interests through vehicles such as a regional fairness test for all federal public policies, Reform appealed to Western Canadians who were angered by the Mulroney cabinet's decision to award a multi-million dollar contract for the maintenance of CF-18 fighter aircraft to Canadian of Montreal despite a cheaper and technically superior bid from Bristol Aerospace of Winnipeg.⁶⁷ Indeed, by the time of the 1988 general election, the Tory's 1986 CF-18 decision had joined the Liberal's National Energy Program (NEP) as one of the most politically charged symbols of the regional injustice. Peter McCormick has gone so far as to refer to the CF-18 decision as the "catalyst" behind Reform's emergence.⁶⁸

But the regional character of Reform's 1988 appeal was matched in importance by the ideological character of the party's appeal. While Reform campaigned on the slogan *The West Wants In!*, the party's early successes were also linked to the platform's combining of neo-liberal messages with socially conservative traditionalism. Reform's platform, in other words, offered something for all elements of the New Right ideological

constituency--then a growing constituency which had wanted a radical new approach to governance which the Mulroney Tories seemed unwilling to provide. On the one hand, Reform's emphasis on families and self-reliance as alternatives to the social policies of the postwar welfare state, and the party's commitment to slow the social and cultural changes resulting from Canada's immigration, language and cultural policies, appealed to social conservatism of the New Right. On the other hand, the party's faith in market forces and its commitment to balancing the federal budget, appealed to the fiscally conservative neo-liberalism of the New Right.

While Reform's success in the 1988 election was limited, the party's platform clearly attracted the support of a range of alienated Westerners and fiscal and social conservatives who were disenchanted, even angry, because they felt ignored by Ottawa, even after four years of government under Brian Mulroney's Conservatives. In particular, the Reform Party was an appealing option for voters who thought, in 1984, they had elected Tory Westerners who would advocate a more regionally sensitive New Right policy agenda; many of these voters found that, due to the constraints of party discipline, their M.P.s went along with Mulroney's more traditional central Canadian agenda (from their perspective this was also a social liberal policy agenda) rather than publicly push for the types of policies right-wing Westerners were demanding. In any case, fielding 72 candidates in the four western provinces (30 in British Columbia, 26 in Alberta, 4 in Saskatchewan, and 12 in Manitoba), the year old Reform Party managed to capture 7.3 per cent of the overall vote in the West--an average of 8.5 per cent of the votes cast in

those constituencies where the Reform Party ran candidates. Most impressive was Reform's showing in Alberta, where the fledgling party received 15.3 per cent of the vote and placed second in nine constituencies. In a handful of Alberta constituencies, Reform captured over 30 per cent of the vote. In Yellowhead, where Preston Manning took on former Prime Minister Joe Clark, 28 per cent of voters supported Reform.⁶⁹ The strength of Manning's showing against Clark was important to the Reformers because, as the *Alberta Report* explained,

Mr. Clark symbolized the failure of the system, the quintessential example of the western Conservative MP whose sensitivity to western issues has been co-opted by Ottawa's liberal mindset, and whose primary goal is to pursue policies that cater to a majority of the voters in southern Ontario and Quebec, not the West.⁷⁰

It is interesting to note the implicit assumption the preceding quotation makes regarding the relationship between Western interests and small-c conservatism, on the one hand, and between Central Canadian interests and a liberal mindset, on the other hand. This is exactly the type of assumption which allowed Manning to advocate an ideologically principled right-wing agenda, while denying he was doing anything more than representing the common sense interests of the average person in the West. Indeed, as Keith Archer and Faron Ellis point out, Reform's 1988 slogan, *The West Wants In!*, actually had several implications:

The most obvious was that the western part of the country wanted into the decision-making structures, from which they felt historically excluded. The more subliminal interpretation of this slogan was that the "common people" wanted in, the people who held traditional (read conservative) social values.⁷¹

Thus, as Reform entered electoral politics in 1988, Reform presented a number of closely related faces to the electorate: a party of the West, an ideologically right-wing party, and a party of the common people. This suited Manning, who wished to view himself as a politician capable of appealing across ideological divisions; whether as a party of the West, or as a party of the common people, the ideologically driven Manning could claim to be above ideological partisanship.

It is often suggested that the unique dynamics of the free trade issue in the 1988 election ensured that many strategically minded right-wing voters in the West supported the Conservatives simply to ensure the pro-free trade vote was not split between two parties. If the free trade agreement with the United States was already in place, perhaps the Reform Party would have been even more successful. Nevertheless, the results were impressive for the year old party; Reform had clearly demonstrated they were a serious challenge to the existing party system. By the end of the election, the Reform Party of Canada had 23,000 members and was well-placed to begin expanding its base.

The years of growth: 1989-1992

During the year following the 1988 federal election, Reform had a series of successes which brought the party to the attention of a greater number of Canadians and helped to further establish its legitimacy within the Canadian party system. The first of these successes was the election of Deborah Grey in a by-election in the Alberta constituency of Beaver River. The Tory incumbent, John Dahmer, had died of cancer in late November, 1988, only five days after being re-elected in the general election. In many ways, the

Beaver River opportunity was ideal for Reform. First, it presented a very real chance for electoral success. The constituency was in Alberta, Reform's strongest provincial base of support. Moreover, like all by-elections, it would provide a safe opportunity for a protest vote against the government. The federal Tories had a majority in Ottawa and the free trade agreement with the United States had been signed, so right-of-centre voters could embrace the Reform agenda and vote for Grey without any risk of the consequences of splitting the right-wing vote. In Preston Manning's words: "voters could say yes to Senate reform, and no to Meech Lake, yes to fair interest rate policy, no to the new federal sales tax [the GST], and yes to a fair language policy."⁷² On by-election day, March 13, 1989, Grey received 11,154 votes, a full 4,242 votes ahead of the second place Tory candidate.⁷³

The second reason the Beaver River by-election was an ideal opportunity, was that it would allow the Reform Party to establish a presence in the House of Commons, while not distracting the leader and key party strategists from the task of grass roots political organizing outside of parliament. Leading the way in this extraparliamentary organizing effort, Manning made over 250 speeches during 1989.⁷⁴ In 1988, the main theme of Manning's public addresses was the need to achieve regional fairness through a reformed Senate and political reforms to ensure M.P.s would remain accountable to their constituents.⁷⁵ In 1989, the focus shifted as Manning became, first, an outspoken critic of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and, later, an aggressive voice for *the rest of Canada* in the debate about the Meech Lake Accord and Quebec's place within Confederation.

In the late summer and early fall of 1989, most of the Reform Party's

organizational efforts were put into fielding their candidate, Stan Waters, in Alberta's unprecedented Senate election. Since the final decision regarding Senate appointments was still the prerogative of the prime minister--and Brian Mulroney had suggested that he expected Premier Don Getty to provide a *list* of options for his consideration in filling Alberta's Senate vacancy--there was no guarantee that the candidate elected by Albertans in October 1989 would actually make it into the Senate. Nevertheless, the Senate campaign was an opportunity for the Reform Party to build on the momentum of the Beaver River by-election.

Stan Waters seemed the ideal candidate. He was an outspoken fiscal conservative--with credentials including a directorship of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and membership in both the National Citizens' Coalition and the Fraser Institute. Moreover, he was willing to join Manning in speaking out against the Meech Lake Accord and the GST. The other Senatorial candidates, particularly the Conservative candidate, Bert Brown--who had been involved with the Triple-E movement--supported Senate Reform. Stan Waters' advantage was that he was a right-of-centre candidate who could publicly distance himself from Getty, Mulroney, Meech Lake and the GST. Echoing Deborah Grey's by-election campaign, Water's campaign literature in the Senate election had four messages: "YES to Senate Reform, NO to the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, YES to reduced federal spending, NO to the proposed Goods and Services Tax."⁷⁶ While these were all popular messages with right-of-centre voters in Alberta, the GST was the issue which really made the difference for Reform.⁷⁷ On October 16, 1989, Stan Waters won

Canada's first Senate election with 41.5 per cent of the popular vote.

Just two weeks later, Manning turned up the heat on the issue of Quebec. The event was the biennial Reform Party assembly, which was held in Edmonton the weekend of October 27-29, 1989. In his keynote address Manning made a bold attempt to position himself as more than a leader for disaffected Westerners; he aggressively challenged the dualist conception of Canada, called for an end to Ottawa's pandering to Quebec, and offered himself as a strong and determined representative of *the rest of Canada*. Manning stated flatly that "we" (Canadians outside of Quebec) can not "continue to make unacceptable constitutional, economic and linguistic concessions to Quebec at the expense of the rest of Canada."

...either all Canadians, including the people of Quebec, make a clear commitment to Canada as one nation, or Quebec and the rest of Canada should explore whether there exists a better but more separate relationship between the two.⁷⁸

The speech was a timely intervention in the Meech Lake debate; but more importantly, it was a strategic attempt to reposition the Reform Party as a national party. Not coincidentally, it coincided with the Edmonton assembly's decision to establish a party task force to explore expanding east of Manitoba.

By January, 1990 the Reform Party had 27,000 members.⁷⁹ Media outlets in Ontario and Atlantic Canada were expressing increasing interest in Manning, and disillusioned right-of-centre voters were beginning to consider Reform an alternative to the Mulroney Conservatives. During the early spring of 1990, Manning made his first

major speaking tour outside the West.⁸⁰ By July, when Executive Councillor, Gordon Shaw helped Reg Gosse of Kitchener, Ontario establish an ad hoc Ontario expansion committee,⁸¹ the party's membership had past 40,000.⁸² Recognizing the growing importance of this new party, and its essentially corporate-friendly political ideology, the influential right-wing media magnate, Conrad Black, and the prominent Toronto financier, Hal Jackman, invited Manning to a private dinner with fifty members of the Canadian business and political establishment at the prestigious Toronto Club.⁸³

While the September dinner did not produce any particularly strong corporate endorsements for the Reform Party, the introduction by Black and Jackman certainly enhanced Manning's legitimacy in the power centres of Toronto. As would be expected, Manning followed up the event by sending what Sharpe and Braid have characterized as a "fund-raising solicitation" to all the dinner guests.⁸⁴ Manning's public recollection of this meal and the fund-raising letter which followed it provides an interesting example of how he purposefully develops the folksy, down-to-earth persona he has now become known for. Manning wrote:

Upon my return to Calgary, I wrote thank-you notes to those who had attended the Toronto dinner, asking each one to comment on our vision of a New Canada, the prospects of selling the Triple-E Senate concept in Ontario, and the likelihood of the Reform Party receiving support in Ontario. This letter generated some useful feedback, advice, and [--surprise?--] even a few financial contributions.⁸⁵

By the end of 1990, the Reform Party had over 50,000 members and was being tracked and reported in the monthly Gallup Polls--at that time, between six and nine per

cent of the national electorate was regularly indicating a preference for the still Western-based Reform Party.⁸⁶ The Conservative government in Ottawa, then at the mid point in its mandate, was languishing at below twenty per cent in opinion polls. It was clear that the Reform Party had momentum. But the continued growth in membership and public attention did not change the fact that Reform was still a young party, dominated by its leader, and tied by its constitution to organize only in the West. Thus, the forces underpinning the party's growth had to be channelled if Reform was to successfully use its popularity to maximize the party's influence on the national political scene. Two important decisions made during 1991 determined how Manning and Reform would attempt to manage the party's momentum in preparation for the next election: the first decision was the decision to *go national*; the second, was the decision to expand the party offices and professionalize the party's hierarchy and election team. While the decision to go national was straightforward, the professionalization of a young, leader-dominated party proved problematic.

The formal decision to expand the Reform Party beyond its regional base in the West and begin preparing constituency associations in Ontario and Atlantic Canada to run Candidates in the 1993 general election was taken at the party's assembly in Saskatoon in April, 1991. It was an important turning point for Reform, but certainly not an unexpected one. Manning had always been in favour of building a national political party. In fact, the intention to eventually move beyond the West was clearly stated in the original motions passed at the Western Assembly in Vancouver in 1987. Moreover, this commitment was

reaffirmed by Reformers at the Edmonton assembly in 1989, when delegates voted to authorize the executive council to establish an Eastern expansion committee. Even though the outcome was never in doubt, the 1991 decision process was carefully managed to maximize the percentage of members voting in favour of expansion. At the Saskatoon assembly, the Chair of the expansion committee, Gord Shaw, offered his committee's report to the delegates and then introduced Reg Gosse of Kitchener Ontario, who reported on preliminary organizing in Ontario. Gosse told delegates that in Ontario alone, the party had already grown to six thousand members and fifty *interim* constituency associations. His message was printed on buttons worn by himself and other Ontario Reformers: "The East wants in!" When a straw vote was held, 96.6 per cent of the delegates voted in favour of expansion.⁸⁷ Preston Manning's dream of building a new national political party was one step closer to realization.

Beyond the carefully managed decision to go national, and a more contentious decision *not* to enter into provincial politics, the 1991 Saskatoon assembly has become known, particularly by critics of the Reform Party,⁸⁸ for the way in which the party's leadership--particularly Manning and Stephen Harper--managed the party's policy development process to ensure a degree of rhetorical moderation in the policy resolutions that were passed. At the 1989 assembly in Edmonton, Harper had found it necessary to warn delegates about giving critics "ammunition" to use against the party. After Harper's appeal to the delegates, the *Alberta Report* noted that "moderation became a kind of sub-theme for the assembly."⁸⁹ In 1991, however, little was left to chance. As chair of the

Party Policy Committee. Harper, and through him Manning, vetted all policy resolutions proposed by Reform constituency associations. In this way, Manning and Harper virtually controlled the tone and substance of the policy resolutions which got to the floor of the assembly. And their effort was successful; on potentially controversial items delegates accepted the Policy Committee's call for moderation. As Kenneth Whyte observed:

Frequent appeals from party leaders and delegates on the floor to consider how RPC policy would be perceived by the public and the national media obviously made an impact; there were less than a dozen dissenting votes on these decisions.⁹⁰

It should be noted that the core substance of party policy was *not* moderated at the Saskatoon assembly. Rather, the wording of potentially controversial policies on issues such as immigration and multiculturalism was cleaned up to make it more palatable to the media and a broader national audience. Equally important, Harper and Manning managed to ensure that stridently reactionary ideas coming from certain sections of the membership would not be officially considered, let alone adopted, by the party assembly. While some would wish to paint the efforts of Harper and Manning as simply a public relations exercise to broaden Reform's political appeal--and the rewording of immigration and multiculturalism policies was likely just that--an honest desire for (relative) moderation seems to have motivated the sidelining of the most reactionary ideas coming from the grass roots of the party.

The decision to expand the party offices and begin professionalising the party's hierarchy and election team was not formally taken at the 1991 Saskatoon assembly.

Rather, it was the result of a series of decisions taken by Manning and the people around him. The process began in May, 1991, when the newly elected executive council held its first official meeting. Cliff Fryers, the lawyer who had been a member of the original Calgary group back in 1986, was selected by Manning to serve as the chair of executive council. At this first meeting the executive council gave the go-ahead to a planned reorganization of the party's national office. The office, which had moved from Edmonton to Calgary a year earlier, would be organized around four departments, each headed by a full-time director.⁹¹ Hal Kupchak was hired as the first Director of Finance and Administration. Virgil Anderson, the Manning loyalist who had set aside his law practice and temporarily moved to Edson to work full-time on Manning's campaign against Joe Clark in 1988,⁹² became Director of Constituency Development and Election Readiness. University of Calgary political scientist Tom Flanagan was appointed Director of Policy, Strategy, and Communications. And Gordon Shaw, the former vice-chair of executive council and head of the expansion committee, moved into the position of Director of Special Projects. Less than a year later, however, Shaw took over the senior staff position of Executive Director. Some of the other key political staff included: Ron Wood, media; Laurie Watson, communications; George Koch, of *Alberta Report* magazine, in speech writing; and, of course, Stephen Harper, policy.

Professionalising the party's campaign team and enhancing Reform's election readiness was not to be implemented as easily as the staffing changes. It seems that by the summer of 1991, Cliff Fryers, Stephen Harper and Preston Manning had agreed on a

"two-election strategy" which would have Manning in the prime minister's office before the end of the decade.⁹³ In the first election, subsequently held in November 1993, this strategy called for Reform to win between fifty and eighty seats in a minority parliament. At the time, they believed this would be impossible without building a political machine much like that of the traditional parties. While this would involve a break from past practices, as well as from the public image Reform had always promoted, the key players in the party hierarchy were committed to a move in that direction. As Flanagan explains:

The party was supposed to become a full-scale contender at the national level, acquiring all the political technology and tools the other parties had at their disposal (polling, advertising, public relations, computer network, private jet for the leader's campaign, and so forth).⁹⁴

The process began when Fryers convinced Manning, and then the executive council, to hire the services of Alan Wiggan and his Calgary advertising and communications firm, Hayhurst Associates. Also taken on board during the summer of 1991 were Frank Luntz, an American campaign strategist who had worked with Ronald Reagan's pollster, and Rick Anderson, the one-time Liberal who had managed Don Johnston's leadership bid in 1984 and then taken up employment with the consulting and public relations giant, Hill and Knowlton.⁹⁵ As events unfolded, however, only Rick Anderson was to maintain an extensive long-term relationship with the party. The relationship between Reform and Hayhurst Associates lasted only a year; the services were too expensive for the party, and because no one in Wiggan's firm had experience with political advertising the early results were apparently less than fully satisfactory. For

his part, Luntz oversaw a national poll administered by Canadian Facts and worked on candidate-training seminars, but Manning's decision in early 1992 to suspend the expensive polling programme left Luntz as a minor player in the campaign strategy group--to earn his livelihood he thus had to spend the majority of his time in campaign consulting at home in America. At some level, the commitment to the professionalization of the Reform Party's campaign preparations remained; but due to financial limitations and Manning's decision regarding the polling programme, the party entered 1992 without a full-time professional communications consultant or a pollster.

For a number of reasons 1992 was a tumultuous year for Reform. The party's membership continued to grow rapidly, finally peaking at 133,000 in the early fall. Media treatment of the party indicated Reform's legitimacy was on the increase. On the surface, the party's move onto the national political stage seemed to be on track. However, within the party's core of strategic advisors, conflict and change halted any progress toward the intended professionalization of the campaign team.

The referendum on the Charlottetown Accord was the dominant event of 1992. Its defeat was an important victory for Manning, who, after some initial reluctance, played an important role in the campaign against the Accord. But the referendum campaign also produced some painful lessons for a party which wishes to become a professional political machine while continuing to be dominated by a single individual. Tom Flanagan's account of the internal power struggles during the Charlottetown referendum provides a unique insight into Manning's leadership style, as well as some of the strategic

challenges facing Reform in the year prior to the 1993 general election.⁹⁶

Prior to the referendum campaign, a committee known as the campaign management committee was established to oversee political strategy. But the committee was large, including most of Reform's strategic advisors and a number of operational staff. Among this group were constitutional hawks, such as Stephen Harper, Tom Flanagan, Laurie Watson and George Koch, who believed Reform should take an aggressive stand against the Charlottetown Accord. There were also a number of constitutional doves who were not as motivated--most notably Rick Anderson, who actually supported the Yes side, and Manning himself, who was initially hesitant about taking a leadership role on the No side. Manning was apparently uncomfortable with his inability to control the campaign management committee, so in early September he created a smaller steering committee consisting of himself, Cliff Fryers, Gordon Shaw, Virgil Anderson, Rick Anderson, and a newcomer, Ian Todd, who had been working as a Reform organizer in British Columbia. On this committee, Rick Anderson was, according to Flanagan, the only senior political strategist. Fryers, the man Manning selected as chair of executive council was less a strategist than an "enforcer,"⁹⁷ Shaw and Virgil Anderson were loyalist staffers, and Ian Todd acted as secretary to the committee. The apparent objectives of forming the steering committee were to marginalize the people who really wanted to fight the referendum campaign and to ensure Manning's control of strategic decisions. Nevertheless, as the referendum campaign unfolded, not even the steering committee exerted influence over Manning:

For all practical purposes, Manning became the referendum campaign. After using Stephen Harper to draft the positioning speech of September 10 and George Koch to write the launching speech of September 18, he became his own speechwriter. He also wrote pamphlets, advertising copy, even some press releases. And, with Rick Anderson's assistance, he served as his own strategist.⁹⁸

After the referendum campaign, Laurie Watson and George Koch were fired. Flanagan left the Reform Party to return to the University of Calgary, and Harper began to distance himself from Manning and reduce his involvement in the affairs of the party's national office. Alan Wiggan of Hayhurst Associates was long gone, and Frank Luntz was playing a very marginal role. From Flanagan's perspective, this represented a wiping out of the party's roster of strategic advisers.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Rick Anderson, and loyalists such as Cliff Fryers, Gordon Shaw, Virgil Anderson and Ian Todd remained to form the core of the team that would fight the 1993 election campaign and dominate the extraparliamentary wing of the party into the late 1990s.

Electoral breakthrough: 1993

By the summer of 1993 it appeared that Reform was stalling. The party's future seemed uncertain. After peaking at 133,000 in the fall of 1992, memberships were declining, soon to drop below 100,000. In July Reform hit 6 per cent in the monthly Gallup poll, the lowest point since Gallup began regularly reporting the party's standing in August 1990. When the election was called in early September, party insiders were privately conceding that Reform could come out of the campaign without a single seat.¹⁰⁰ As Campbell and Pal observed:

The Reform Party on the eve of the election had hit bottom...was internally divided over how it had fought the referendum, and its own strategists were wondering whether it could even achieve official party status.¹⁰¹

In retrospect however, the low standing of the party in opinion polls may have been a blessing in disguise; since expectations were low, Reform's gains in the polls during late September and early October were viewed as significant campaign momentum.

In the first week of the 1993 election campaign, Jean Chrétien's Liberals and Kim Campbell's Tories were neck and neck, each receiving the declared support of approximately 34 or 35 per cent of the electorate. Reform, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois were well behind, with between 8 and 11 per cent support.¹⁰² Thus, the real story of the campaign was the Tories' twenty point decline, from the mid thirties to just 16 per cent on election day. But Reform's less dramatic rise--from 11 to 19 per cent during the course of the election--was closely connected to the Tory decline. The Liberal victory is often attributed to Chrétien's ability to present a plan which focused on jobs and offered hope for the future. The Liberals set the agenda on employment, and were successful in dominating the middle of the political spectrum. Manning and Reform, on the other hand, staked out the fiscally conservative right of the political spectrum. During the campaign, Manning continued to (i) speak out against the GST and promise eventual tax relief to middle-income earners, (ii) position himself as a voice for the rest of Canada in a constitutional agenda which seemed driven by Quebec, (iii) expound on the virtues of mechanisms of direct democracy which appealed to the public's growing anti-elitism, and (iv) appeal to alienated Westerners by characterizing himself as a political outsider who

would shake things up in Ottawa. Nevertheless, the centre-piece of the election platform Manning offered Canadians was the fiscally conservative "Zero in Three" deficit elimination plan. The Tories had talked the deficit line, but had been unsuccessful at getting spending under control; thus Manning offered Reform as the more competent and committed deficit cutters.

Although Reform's success resulted, in large part, from the way Manning invaded the Tories from the right, this was not always the explicit intention of the party's campaign strategists.¹⁰³ The communications strategy had set three goals for the Reform campaign. The first was to appeal to the public's anti-elitism by positioning Manning as the only leader willing to listen to the people and respond to what the general public said the election issues should be. In the opening week of the campaign, Manning declared his desire to "Let the People Speak," and he promised to build a "people's platform" which would clearly differentiate Reform from the traditional parties.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the second communications goal was to differentiate Reform from the other parties (on issues such as Quebec and the deficit) by offering voters a distinct political option which, in Manning's words, would be "so clear that not even the dullest commentator or the most indifferent citizen will be able to say, 'These federal parties are all the same, so it makes no difference who you vote for'."¹⁰⁵ Finally, the third goal was to convince voters that a vote for Reform was not a wasted vote; in other words, if voters wanted real change, they could truly make their vote count by voting Reform, the party of outsiders who were principled and ready to make a difference in Ottawa. Manning and his strategists also

aimed to calm any fears Canadians had about voting for a new and untried political party. Thus, in the final days of the campaign, Reform strategists planned what Ellis and Archer have described as an "emotional plea urging the electorate to vote on the basis of personal conviction of right and wrong rather than fear or tradition."¹⁰⁶

It goes without saying that a Reform Party policy platform would be right-of-centre. Nevertheless, it does not seem that Reform strategists initially intended to concentrate on unambiguously staking out the fiscally conservative right of the political spectrum. In the early stages of the campaign, the Reform message lacked focus. In fact, Manning had been working on proposals for campaign themes which would tone down the aggressive nature of the party's fiscally conservative deficit elimination plan. Manning wanted speeches and campaign literature which would be positive, offer hope, and focus on the "light at the end of the tunnel."¹⁰⁷ He wanted to outline a Reform vision of the future: an emerging "New Economy" based on information and service industries with government's role limited to creating the environment necessary for private enterprise to thrive. The intent of this dimension of the campaign was to convince Canadians that Reform's tough fiscal policies were a means to greater ends. In a series of platitudes sounding not unlike those offered by traditional parties, the national campaign literature explained:

Those greater ends are the fulfilment of the personal and collective dreams and aspirations of more than 27 million Canadians, living in a Canada distinguished by the equality and freedom of all our citizens; the conservation of our magnificent environment; the acceptance of our social responsibilities; and the accountability of our elected officials.¹⁰⁸

It was clear that Manning wanted to make space for middle-of-the-road campaign themes. His long held belief that he had a vision which could make small-c conservatism palatable to people from across the political spectrum, had led Manning to deny that Reform's capacity for gaining electoral support in 1993 was primarily on the right. Of course, there was little in the campaign platform which was explicitly left-of-centre, but Tom Flanagan, the very conservative former strategist, and other right-wing Reform boosters, such as Ted Byfield of *Alberta Report*, worried early in the campaign that Manning and his campaign officials--particularly the Campaign Director, former Liberal Rick Anderson--were moving the party to the left. These Reformers began to speak out, publicly criticizing Manning for abandoning Reform's roots by articulating a vision which could have been offered by any of the traditional parties.¹⁰⁹

As a result of pressure from influential Reformers who did not want to see the party drift left of its roots, as well as pressure from a media which was far more interested in Manning's aggressive deficit cutting measures than in his "light at the end of the tunnel," the campaign soon veered more sharply to the right.¹¹⁰ The Reform policies which emerged as the central planks in the 1993 platform were explicitly right-wing and primarily fiscally conservative. Indeed, the central campaign plank was the "Zero in Three" deficit elimination plan, and many of the other policy positions taken by Manning were connected to, even dictated by, this plan. Since 1988, the party had as a policy the requirement that government balance the budget in each three year period.¹¹¹ During the

1993 campaign Manning began to spell out in more detail exactly what it would take to eliminate the deficit within three years. Among many other cuts, he promised to reduce transfers to the provinces for equalization and welfare by \$1.5 billion and to freeze transfers for health care at 1991-1992 levels. When discussing these cuts, he warned that "any federal leader who claims the budget can be balanced without painful cuts in social programs isn't levelling with voters."¹¹²

In fact, Manning managed to make a virtue of his willingness to cut programmes and spending. Echoing a Fraser Institute study of Old Age Security (OAS), Manning promised to save \$3.5 billion a year by ending payments to seniors with household incomes above \$54,000.¹¹³ He also promised to save \$4 billion annually from unemployment insurance by ending the practice of the federal government covering system deficits during periods of high unemployment, as well as by restructuring the programme to run more like a private insurance plan in which the market determines the rules and extent of coverage.¹¹⁴

Many of the campaign policy planks not directly connected with the "Zero in Three" plan were merely updated versions of policies from the party's *Blue Book*. With regard to immigration policy, which featured very prominently in the campaign, Manning continued the party's call for an immigration policy driven by Canada's economic needs. He claimed that in the immediate future this would mean cutting the number of immigrants in half--from 250,000 to about 125,000 annually.¹¹⁵ On criminal justice, Reform took a tough stance. This emphasis on law and order flowed from policy

resolutions passed at the party's 1992 assembly calling for "a more stringent parole mechanism, adequate punishment of young offenders, and the creation of inmate work programs."¹¹⁶ During the campaign Manning's law and order theme was always linked to the growing belief that the criminal justice system ignored victims of crime while being too soft on criminals: "It's time for victims' rights to receive high priority in the justice system."¹¹⁷

Although Chrétien's job creation plans dominated much of the media coverage of the campaign, Manning said little directly about jobs and employment. He attacked the Liberal job creation plan by insisting that only the private sector could create real and lasting jobs. His message on jobs was that employment prospects would not improve until the government got the debt under control and began reforms toward lower taxes: "Jobs, debt, and taxes are all connected, and we aren't going to solve any of them--especially the employment problem--until governments understand and address the relationship."¹¹⁸

As a voice for the rest of Canada, Reform benefited from the regional polarizations which were fostered by the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords and aggravated by the rise of the Bloc Québécois. As a party of outsiders, Reform benefited from Western alienation (still significant years after the NEP and the CF-18 decision) and the public's anti-elitist sentiments (which had resulted from the Prime Ministerial style of Brian Mulroney, the closed nature of executive federalism, and the prominence of interest group politics in constitutional and public policy processes). As the party of fiscal conservatism, Reform benefitted from the failure of the Tories to tackle the federal

government's massive deficit. Certainly, as will be argued in part two of this dissertation, support for Reform among Canadian voters needs to be put in the political economic context of economic restructuring and the broad shift currently under way in Canadian political culture--the death of toryism and the rise of a New Right common sense, including an attack on minority 'special interests'. But, during the election, Reform's position on concrete issues--such as the federal deficit--earned the party the support of many of the right-wing voters who were abandoning the Tory party. In October 1993, for example, an Insight Canada survey found that voters who considered the deficit the most important issue were twice as likely as the electorate at large to support Reform.¹¹⁹ With this in mind, one of Reform's biggest boosts of the campaign came in a *Globe and Mail* editorial which trumpeted:

Quite simply, Reform is the only party that has yet shown a credible commitment to getting control of the national debt: a commitment made credible by its detailed "zero-in-three" plan to halt the growth of public debt...it has set the standard by which other parties must be compared.¹²⁰

While Tory leader, Kim Campbell, claimed her own deficit elimination plan, she also went to great lengths to portray herself as a defender of social programmes. Thus, to fiscally conservative Tory voters, Campbell seemed to lacked conviction; and polling data from the election show quite clearly that Reform's support shot up during the period that Campbell was attacking Manning as a right-wing ideologue and portraying herself as a defender of the values and social programmes of a caring society.¹²¹

On election day, over 2.5 million Canadians, or 19 per cent of the electorate,

voted Reform. The party won 52 seats: 24 in British Columbia, 22 in Alberta, 4 in Saskatchewan, 1 in Manitoba, and 1 in Ontario. In 79 constituencies, 56 in Ontario, Reform placed second. While the tendency for single member plurality (SMP) electoral systems to *under-represent* minor parties undermined Reform's hopes of an electoral breakthrough in Ontario (where the party won one in five votes, but only one of ninety-nine seats), the equally well-known tendency for SMP systems to *over-represent* parties with regionally concentrated support ensured Reform's domination of electoral politics in Alberta and British Columbia. It was quite a victory for Manning and his campaign team, particularly in light of the party's position in opinion polls during the months just prior to the election. The campaign management committee, which was essentially the same team which handled Reform's referendum campaign, gained a new legitimacy. Indeed, following the campaign, Campbell and Pal offered the following observation:

The only party that ran a real campaign was Reform...Reform had a platform well in advance that it could offer as a coherent plan of action...Its strategy was to deal with different issues as the campaign unfolded, capitalizing on areas that would appeal to the right and which the other parties would avoid, such as immigration, law and order, explicit plans to cut spending, and a hard line on the Bloc and Quebec sovereignty.¹²²

While this account may overstate the strategic coherence and actual importance of Reform's campaign, such observations have helped to solidify the power of Manning loyalists--such as Rick Anderson, Cliff Fryers and Ian Todd--in the key strategic positions within the party.

Reform's success at winning 52 seats in the House of Commons presented the

party with both new opportunities and new challenges. Having won more seats than any opposition party other than the Bloc Québécois. Reform gained a sense of legitimacy that had previously eluded the party. Indeed, following Reform's electoral breakthrough in 1993, Manning and his caucus served as an informal Official Opposition to the Government for Canadians living outside of Quebec. In this role, Reform's caucus could utilize parliamentary debate, particularly the daily question period, to raise the party's profile. But increased media attention and the experience of having a full-time caucus of 52 M.P.s in Ottawa also presented unfamiliar challenges to Reform. For example, having a caucus in Ottawa meant a new challenge to Manning's dominance of the party. It also meant an end to the absolute primacy of the extraparliamentary wing of the party. While Preston Manning remains paramount, negotiating his hold on the party has been more difficult since Reform's 1993 electoral breakthrough.

Prior to the 1993 election, Reform had promised to engage in a form of parliamentary politics which was less confrontational, less bombastic, and less oriented toward grandstanding on the part of party leaders. This was not easy; neither the institutions of parliament, nor the media's approach to covering the daily question period would allow for the successful introduction of a new approach to parliamentary politics. As a result, Reform's first term in Parliament was a period of difficult adjustment for the party. Mistakes were made, and finding solutions was often difficult. From misguided symbolic decisions, such as having the leader sit in the second row to the decision to have "policy clusters" rather than designated caucus critics, there were a number of missteps

which the Reform caucus later had to admit were mistakes. As Manning's former Director of Issues Management--an experienced political staffer who had worked with Tory House Leaders in Ottawa and at Queen's Park--said when she arrived on the job in the spring of 1994, the Reform caucus was "floundering in question period...they were basically stumbling along."¹²³ In time, however, as Tom Flanagan points out in his discussion of Reform's first year in Parliament, caucus reorganization, better planning and coordination, the designation of specific critics, and other changes undertaken by Reform's parliamentary wing, ensured Reform's improved performance as an opposition party.¹²⁴ By the second year of Reform's first term in Parliament, the party had settled into the process of becoming a contender *within* the established Canadian party system. A new and significant Canadian political party had clearly been born. No longer would it be appropriate for political observers to characterize Manning as a political outsider or the Reform Party as simply a minor party of protest. Reform was now a part of the Canadian party system. Certainly, the Reform caucus was new to its role in Parliament, and in the public eye. Thus, growing pains continued. There were, for example, a number of embarrassing incidents in which individual caucus members demonstrated their political naivety or expressed intolerant views which harmed the party's efforts to expand its base of support within, in particular, the Central Canadian electorate. But, as the Reform Party's second place finish in the 1997 election has demonstrated, 1993 did indeed mark Reform's breakthrough as an electorally competitive partisan organization which will remain a force into the next century. By 1993, in other words, Preston Manning had come

a long ways toward realizing the dreams and plans he had begun formulating over two decades earlier.

Conclusion

The Reform story since 1993 is one with which readers will be quite familiar, since it has been effectively documented by political reporters from Canada's various news media. Moreover, it is the Reform Party's emergence and electoral breakthrough in 1993 which this dissertation--particularly part two of this dissertation--aims to explain. The preceding review of the roots, development and key turning points in the Reform Party's early history is offered as necessary background to facilitate subsequent analysis. While introducing the people, policies and structures of the party, this chapter has also highlighted some of the institutional and strategic variables and issues which were important to Reform's emergence. In chapter three it will be argued that a convincing *explanation* of the rise of Reform requires an examination of the deeper causes of party system change. Chapter four will explore the ways in which the political economic context shapes party system change; but since the political economy is always mediated by actors and their strategic decisions, the preceding account of the birth of Reform is crucial to our understanding of the party's emergence.

Endnotes

1. For a detailed review of the rise of Reform, see: Murray Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1991); Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1995); Trevor Harrison, Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Preston Manning, The New Canada (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992); Terry O'Neill, ed., Act of Faith: The illustrated chronicle of the fastest-growing political movement in Canadian history: the Reform Party of Canada (Vancouver: B.C. Report Magazine Ltd., 1991); Sydney Sharpe and Don Braid, Storming Babylon: Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1992); Peter McCormick, "The Reform Party of Canada: New Beginning or Dead End?" in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., Party Politics in Canada (6th ed.; Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1991); W.T. Stanbury, "The Reform Party of Canada," in W.T. Stanbury, Money and Politics: Financing Federal Parties and Candidates in Canada (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991).
2. Kenneth Whyte, et al. "The West finds a voice: A new federal party is launched," Alberta Report, June 8, 1987, in O'Neill, Act of Faith, p. 25.
3. Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave, p. 5.
4. Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, pp. 85-86.
5. Ibid.
6. Manning, The New Canada, pp. 37-38.
7. Sharpe and Braid, Storming Babylon, p. 59.
8. See: Manning, The New Canada, p. 7; and, Sharpe and Braid, Storming Babylon, p. 56.
9. This point is emphasized by Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave, particularly pp. 37-39.
10. See: Sharpe and Braid, Storming Babylon, p. 65. This is a claim, however, which is denied by NCC President, David Summerville.
11. Alberta, A White Paper on Human Resources Development (Edmonton: Government of Alberta, 1967).

12. E.C. Manning, *Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 33.
13. Alberta, *White Paper*, p. 17
14. Ibid.
15. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 43.
16. Alberta, *White Paper*, p. 97
17. Ibid., pp. 99-100. Some years later, Manning took this perspective even further, drawing up the specifications for a computer program called LEGISLATE 500: "using my old list of questions for distinguishing a bad piece of legislation from a good one, [this program] could be used to conduct second-reading analyses of bills that were before a legislature or parliament." See Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 68
18. Reform Party of Canada, *"The West Wants In!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada* (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988).
19. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 48.
20. Ibid. p. 50.
21. Manning, *Political Realignment*, chap. 1.
22. Ibid., chaps. 2 and 3.
23. Sharpe and Braid, *Storming Babylon*, p. 66.
24. Manning, *Political Realignment*, p. 63.
25. Ibid., p. 65.
26. Ibid., pp. 68-69.
27. Ibid., p. 86.
28. Cited in Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party*, p. 39.
29. Ibid., p. 49
30. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 57.

31. Reform Party of Canada, Principles and Policies: The Blue Book, 1991 (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1991), p. 28.
32. Cited in Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, p. 46.
33. Manning has said that he had "grave reservations about the principle of entrenching rights in the constitution. But our argument was that if this was going to be done, conservative provincial governments should ensure that the list of rights went beyond Trudeau's, to include economic and other rights of particular importance to their electors and constituents." See: Manning, The New Canada, p. 81.
34. M. & M. Systems Research Ltd., A Realistic Perspective on Canadian Confederation (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 1977).
35. In his biography Manning wrote: "This was one study in which I did virtually all the research and writing myself, rather than relying on hired researchers or a consulting team. This involved reading scores of standard and obscure references on the formation and development of Canadian confederation (documented in 485 footnotes), and consultations with our network of 'practitioners' past and present." See: Manning, The New Canada, p. 86.
36. Ibid., p. 88.
37. Manning, Flanagan and others mention the MNPC in their discussion of the roots of the Reform Party, but only Dobbin provides any detail on the organization. See: Manning, The New Canada, p. 91; Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave, p. 39; and Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, pp. 66-70.
38. Cited in Dobbin. Preston Manning and the Reform Party, p. 68.
39. Manning, The New Canada, p. 91.
40. The following account of the event of late 1986 is take from the following sources: Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, pp. 75-77; Harrison, Of Passionate Intensity, pp. 106-109; Manning, The New Canada, pp. 129-132; Ian Pearson, "Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West," Saturday Night, December, 1990, pp. 34-43 and 74-75; author's interview with Cliff Fryers, November, 1994.
41. Ted Byfield, "The West needs its own party," Alberta Report, August 25, 1986.
42. The Alberta Report and Trevor Harrison also link a southern Albertan agricultural protest group, the Agricultural Stability Action Committee (ASAC), to the early stages of mobilizing toward the founding of the Reform Party. Robert Grbavac, co-chair of ASAC,

did attend meetings with some of the early Reformers, but he eventually left the new movement because of its narrowly right-wing character. See: Kenneth Whyte and Mike Byfield, "Born with a bang: A controversial leadership race marks the first convention," *Alberta Report*, November 9, 1987, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 35; and, Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, pp. 103, 106, 108-109 and 112.

43. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 131.
44. Reform Association of Canada, "Draft Resolutions for the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future," documents provided to participants in the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future, Vancouver, B.C., May 29-31, 1987.
45. Cited in Steve Weatherbe, "Proposing Policy Alternatives." *Western Report*, June 8, 1987, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 27.
46. Ibid.
47. Reform Association of Canada, "Draft Resolutions for the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future."
48. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 139.
49. Preston Manning, "Choosing a political vehicle to represent the West," in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, pp. 166-173.
50. Reform Association of Canada, "Draft Resolutions for the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future."
51. It is often reported, as it was in the *Alberta Report*, that there were 305 (or 306) delegates; however, only 262 actually attended and registered. Of those, 129 were from Alberta, 76 from British Columbia, 51 from Manitoba, and 6 from Saskatchewan. See: Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 145.
52. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 147.
53. Whyte and Byfield, "Born with a bang: A controversial leadership race marks the first convention," pp. 39-40.
54. Unlike the process within other Canadian political parties, where the membership directly elects a president, the members of the Reform Party simply elect an Executive Council from which a chair, vice-chair, and various committee chairs are subsequently selected. The informal selection process for these specific positions amounts to little more

than an appointment by the leader.

55. Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 155 & 168.

56. Interestingly, with regard to the Meech Lake Accord, the platform stated that "We cannot overemphasize our opposition to this deal." At the Western Assembly in Vancouver, however, the motion urging provincial legislatures to withhold support for Meech passed by the narrow margin of 78 to 67. Other motions were passed by margins such as 160 to 5, 139 to 11, and 151 to 1. See: Steve Weatherbe, "Proposing Policy alternatives."

57. All subsequent references to the 1988 Reform Party platform are taken from the following source: Reform Party of Canada, *"The West Wants In!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada*. Unfortunately, the photocopy obtained from the Reform Party archives was without page numbers.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Robert M. Campbell and Leslie A. Pal, "The CF-18 Affair," in Robert M. Campbell and Leslie A. Pal, *The Real Worlds of Canadian Politics: Cases in Process and Policy* (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1989), pp. 19-52.

68. McCormick, "The Reform Party of Canada," p. 343.

69. The various 1988 election results reported in this paragraph are from: Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party*, p. 81; Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, pp. 134-135; and, Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 181.

70. Mathew Ingram and Paul Bunner, "Making a dent: The RPC captures 15% of the popular vote in Alberta, and 5% in B.C." *Alberta Report*, December 5, 1988, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 63.
71. Keith Archer and Faron Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XXVII:2 (June, 1994), p. 291.
72. Paul Bunner, "Beaver River breakthrough: Deborah Grey goes to the House of Commons." *Alberta Report*, March 27, 1989, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 66.
73. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 193.
74. Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party*, p. 81.
75. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 157.
76. Ibid., p. 207.
77. See: Ibid., p. 209; and, Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 63.
78. Preston Manning, "Leadership for Changing Times." Address to the Edmonton Assembly, October 28, 1989, excerpted in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 80.
79. Sharpe and Braid, *Storming Babylon*, p. 8.
80. Paul Bunner, "Into Ontario: Manning's first official tour east of Manitoba." *Alberta Report*, April 2, 1990, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, pp. 91-92.
81. On the early stages of expansion into Ontario, see: Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party*, pp. 148-152; and, Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 255-256.
82. Paul Bunner, "Capitalizing on Disillusionment: After the Meech Lake fiasco, the RPC's growth skyrockets," *Alberta Report*, July 9, 1990, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, pp. 96-97.
83. See: Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, p. 181; Sharpe and Braid, *Storming Babylon*, pp. 105-106; and, Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 251-253.
84. Sharpe and Braid, *Storming Babylon*, p. 106.
85. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 252. My emphasis.
86. Gallup Canada Inc., *The Gallup Report*, April 25, 1991, p. 2.

87. Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 278-281.
88. Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party*, chap. 6.
89. Paul Bunner and Peter MacDonald, "A national agenda: Manning calls Quebec's bluff," *Alberta Report*, November 6, 1989, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 78.
90. Kenneth Whyte, "Big decisions: Delegates to Saskatoon convention vote to take party national, but not provincial," *Alberta Report*, April 15, 1991, in O'Neill, *Act of Faith*, p. 136.
91. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 292.
92. Ibid., p. 171; and, Author's interview. Virgil Anderson. Calgary, Alberta, November, 1994.
93. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 73.
94. Ibid., p. 74.
95. This discussion of the involvement of Wiggan, Luntz and Anderson with the Reform Party is taken from: Ibid., pp. 79-84.
96. Ibid., pp. 108-112.
97. Flanagan used this term to describe Fryers during an interview. Author's interview. Tom Flanagan, Calgary, Alberta, November, 1994.
98. Flanagan. *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 110.
99. Ibid., p. 112.
100. Faron Ellis and Keith Archer, "Reform: Electoral Breakthrough." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994, p. 15.
101. Robert M. Campbell and Leslie A. Pal, "A Country Divided: The 1993 Federal Election," in Robert M. Campbell and Leslie A. Pal, *The Real Worlds of Canadian Politics: Cases in Process and Policy* (3rd edition; Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1994), p. 314.
102. Ibid., p. 290.

103. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, chaps. 7-8.
104. Preston Manning, "Let the People Speak," notes for an address by Preston Manning, Leader of the Reform Party of Canada, September 8, 1993.
105. Ibid., p. 6.
106. Ellis and Archer, "Reform: Electoral Breakthrough," p. 16.
107. Ibid., p. 17.
108. Reform Party of Canada, "This Election Don't Just Buy the Packaging, Look at what's inside." 1993 national campaign material.
109. Flanagan. *Waiting for the Wave*, pp. 132.
110. Ibid. p. 145.
111. Reform Party of Canada, *"The West Wants In!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada* (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988).
112. Jonathan Ferguson. "Manning's plan would change fabric of Canada," *The Toronto Star*, October 7, 1993, p. A23.
113. Critics argued that to save the full \$3.5 billion, the cut off would have to be considerably lower than \$54,000. Reform officials eventually conceded this, but it was never clear whether Reform was more committed to the specific dollar value of the savings, or the specific income level at which households would be cut off. See: Alan Freeman, "Reality Check: Reform figures don't work," *Globe and Mail*, September 30, 1993, p. A8
114. Miro Cermetig, "Run UI system like private plan, Manning urges," *Globe and Mail*, October 8, 1993, p. A4.
115. Ferguson, "Manning's plan would change fabric of Canada," p. A23.
116. Reform Party of Canada, *The Blue Sheet: Principles, Policies and Election Platform*, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 6.
117. Reform Party of Canada, "This Election Don't Just Buy the Packaging, Look at what's inside." 1993 national campaign material.

118. Cited in Ellis and Archer, "Reform: Electoral Breakthrough," p. 17. Also see: Reform Party of Canada, "Look at the national debt hole Canada is in: Now, look at the solution," Reform Party national campaign literature, 1993.
119. André Turcotte, "Economic Voting in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election," A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994, p. 24.
120. "The only deficit plan we've seen," *Globe and Mail*, September 23, 1993.
121. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, pp. 143-144.
122. Campbell and Pal. "A Country Divided," p. 316.
123. Author's interview. Jayne Sutherland, Director of Issues Management, Friday, October 28, 1994.
124. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, pp. 193-194.

PART TWO

The Rise of Reform: Explaining the Party's Emergence

Chapter Three

Theorizing Party System Change

Introduction

The past decade has been a tumultuous one for the Canadian party system. At the organizational level, the birth of the Reform Party and the formation of the Bloc Québécois have dramatically altered the range of partisan options available to voters. At the discursive or ideological level, there has been a notable rightward shift in the policy options championed by Canada's political parties--the politics of neo-liberalism has become pervasive. Most obviously, however, the results of the decade's two general elections have transformed the parliamentary face of Canada's party system. Indeed, the extent of change in these elections was such that shortly after the 1993 election--when the governing Conservatives were reduced to just two seats in the House of Commons, the NDP fell short of the twelve seats required for official party status, and the Bloc Québécois assumed the role of Official Opposition--Clarke and Kornberg declared that Canadians had witnessed a rare political event, a *critical election* that significantly alters the national party system.¹ Similarly, from a comparative perspective, Alan Ware recently argued that in a decade of considerable electoral upheaval, Canada is one of a handful of liberal democracies in which the scale of change compels him to label the 1990s a *decade of transformation* for the Canadian party system.² The purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the underlying dynamics of continuity and change in the

Canadian party system. The processes of party system change are complex and not sufficiently well-understood. Through theoretical reflection, and a critical examination of existing perspectives on party system change, this chapter aims to develop a framework for explaining the emergence of the Reform Party. Beyond explaining the rise of Reform, however, that this framework could also be applied to a broader analysis of the historical development of the Canadian party system.

One of the best known and most influential interpretations of party system change in Canada is Ken Carty's essay on the historical development of the Canadian party system. First published in 1988, Carty's "Three Canadian Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Politics"³ is currently reprinted in three leading texts on Canadian political parties,⁴ and prominently featured in a number of introductory texts on Canadian Politics.⁵ In his essay Carty argued Canada has had three successive and distinct party systems, each functionally suited to the changing requirements of governing. The first party system, 1867 to 1917, was characterized by *caucus parties* and patronage politics. Two parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, monopolized electoral competition. These parties became leader dominated cadre parties, yet the focus of partisan politics was parochial constituency issues and the party caucuses resembled coteries of local political notables from across the country. In the era of the first party system, the leaders of the governing parties managed extensive systems of patronage to maintain caucus cohesion and allow the government of the day to pursue the state-building objectives of the National Policy.

The second party system, 1921 to 1957, was characterized by *ministerial parties* and brokerage politics. During this period the Liberals and Conservatives were challenged by a series of protest parties; however, the dominance of the original parties, particularly the Liberals, was never fully shaken. In Ottawa the focus of partisan politics shifted from constituency to region as powerful regional ministers and the governing party's leader turned their attention to the challenge of brokering conflicting regional interests. The purpose of this brokerage politics, according to Carty, was nation-building. Since 1963, a third party system has been characterized by *personal parties* and electronic politics. While the emergence of this most recent party system witnessed the professionalization and democratization of party organizations, technical advances in electronic communication brought party leaders closer to the people, allowing the parties to appear as extensions of their leaders. This development, among others, has facilitated a national, or pan-Canadian, focus and a pattern of partisan politics oriented toward agenda-setting.

While Carty's historical overview of Canadian party politics has become extremely well-known, limited attention has been paid to the way in which he *explains* party system change. Without closer theoretical scrutiny, the analytic usefulness of Carty's *three party systems* is unclear. It is difficult to know, for example, whether we are currently witnessing the emergence of a new, fourth party system. Thus, it is important that we examine how Carty explains party system change.

At bottom, Carty contends the Canadian party system evolves as a result of the changing role of parties in governing; it is a theory of party system change which

emphasizes the "functional requirements of governing."⁶ Although he occasionally relates the course of party system development to social and demographic change, social mobilization, urbanization, industrialization and shifts in political culture, Carty stresses that "party system change has flowed...most directly from changes in the institutional arrangements for governing."⁷

Whatever other social or ideological changes were altering Canadian society, the first party system ended when civil service reform deprived the parties of their state-building role; the second party system ended when the nation-building tasks of regional accommodation were absorbed into the system of federal-provincial diplomacy.⁸

Alternative explanations are not actively considered in Carty's influential essay. Moreover, since subsequent works have seldom engaged in sustained consideration of an appropriate theorization of the dynamics of continuity and change in the Canadian party system, Carty's increasingly influential perspective remains largely unchallenged.

In what follows I will develop an approach to understanding party system change which departs significantly from the perspective elaborated in Carty's now ubiquitous essay. Rather than assume that party system change can be explained by the functional needs of the institutional arrangements for governing, I will argue that party system change is the result of the recursive interaction of a variety of institutional, strategic, ideological and political economic factors. I will specifically contend that *the political economic context and the discursive construction of political interests and identities* deserve to be highlighted in any theory of party system change. The character of the political economic conjuncture influences the extent to which *change* is more likely than

continuity. Within that context, political parties struggle to delimit the universe of potential political interests and identities which are significant to partisan politics, and the extent to which they are successful has significant consequences for both the organizational and the discursive character of the party system. But political parties do not exist in isolation; there are political forces located *outside* the party system which are also important to the processes of party system change. Most importantly, since interest groups and social movement organizations, among others, engage in political and ideological struggles to shape partisan agendas and influence the salience of various political interests and identities, the complex interaction of the party system and these alternative structures of representation is also significant to party system change. While it is important that the perspective developed here places considerable emphasis on the way party system change is structured by *interests, identities and the politics of representation*, the framework for explaining the rise of Reform developed in the chapter's conclusion is essentially a *political economic perspective* which, very importantly, attempts to move away from simple unicausal, or even unidirectional, understandings of party system development, and also places considerable weight on the agency of political actors within parties and other structures of representation.

Theorizing Party System Change

There is a considerable literature on political parties and party systems which addresses, if sometimes only implicitly, the question of understanding continuity and change within party systems. Prior to the Second World War this was not the case. The early twentieth

century classics tended to be organizational in focus. Ostrogorski's major comparative study of the rise and entrenchment British and American parties⁹ and Michels' study of the bureaucratization and deradicalization of European socialist parties,¹⁰ both focused on the undemocratic and oligarchic nature of political parties, rather than the dynamics of party systems. The turn toward theorizing the development and internal dynamics of party systems really began in the 1950s with Maurice Duverger's *Political Parties*¹¹ and Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.¹² For the past thirty years, the touchstone academic treatment of continuity and change in party systems has been Lipset and Rokkan's work on the transformation of cleavage structures into party systems.¹³ Since then, however, numerous new contributions have generated an array of competing perspectives on party system change.

Today, there are at least five distinct sets of perspectives on continuity and change in party systems. They can be enumerated as follows: institutional, rational choice, political agency, sociological and political economic.¹⁴ While each of these sets of perspectives has contributed useful insights, none offers a generally applicable theory of party system change. But this is no surprise; manageable yet satisfactory causal theories are elusive in political science. The dynamics of party system change, like most political phenomena, are determined by a complex of factors. The challenge is to identify these factors, and then develop an understanding of relationships between them. This task requires combining insights from a variety of existing perspectives, while avoiding the obvious pitfalls of eclectic theorizing.¹⁵

A heuristic device which can be adapted to the task of theorizing party system change is Richard Simeon's notion of a "funnel of causality."¹⁶ Admittedly, the image of a causal funnel might suggest a causal arrow pointing from the funnel's broad end to its narrow end, where party system change will emerge. However, it will be clear that this degree of theoretical simplicity is not intended. The purpose of a concept like a causal funnel is to help us organize, and visualize, the factors and processes which must be considered as we search for an adequate theorization of party system change.

At the broad end of the funnel is the *political economic context and related secular trends*. These include such factors as the balance of class forces, processes of industrialization, urbanization and globalization, the changing structure of the labour market, patterns of immigration and migration, and so on. These types of factors are often considered most appropriate to explanations of broad sweeps of history, not the minutiae of party system change. To some extent, the same is true for the middle of the funnel where we find factors such as *political culture, ideology and political identity*. I will often refer to this section of the funnel *the discursive field or discursive framework* within which party system change occurs. This is the terrain in which conflict and power produce meaning structures, where social cleavages are politicized, where political identities are formed and imagined communities are constructed. At the narrow end of the funnel are the more directly observable political *institutions and strategic variables*: the electoral system, parliamentary government, political leadership, and the strategic maneuverings of the politics-of-the-day.

The image of a causal funnel helps us distinguish between our *level of observation* and *level of analysis*. As we observe the institutions, parties and individuals at the narrow end of the funnel, we are reminded that we must interpret these observations using a level of analysis rooted at the broader end of the funnel; however, this analytical rule should not be followed *too* strictly. It would be too easy to claim that "we can explain down, but not up," or that individual actions, strategies and institutions can be explained by the discursive field and the political economic context, but not the reverse. Political reality is not so simple. For example, the political economic context is not inevitable; political parties can influence this context by coalescing around a particular economic development strategy and legislating a related set of public policies. Similarly, the strategic actions of political parties and political leaders help shape the discursive field and construct (or undermine) various political identities. Thus, understanding causal processes requires a dialectical analysis of the relationships between the factors which shape these dynamic processes of change.

The practical purpose of the notion of a funnel of causality, is that it is useful for organizing and contrasting various perspectives on party system change. Each of the five sets of perspectives on continuity and change in party systems belongs to a particular section of the causal funnel. The various institutional, rational choice and political agency perspectives highlight factors and processes located at the narrow end. The sociological perspectives provide explanations of party system change rooted in the middle of the funnel. And the political economic perspectives focus on secular trends at the funnel's

broad end. Using the funnel of causality to organize a review of these five sets of perspectives provides an ideal vantage from which to theorize party system change.

But first it is important to clarify what is meant by the concept *party system*.

Political parties are organizations which promote particular interests and advocate certain programmes and policies in an attempt to gain electoral support. Electoral competition between party organizations produces competitive patterns and interrelationships which constitute what is ordinarily considered a party system.¹⁷ In Leon Epstein's words, party systems are constituted by the "competitive interaction patterns among party units."¹⁸

However this conception of the party system is too limiting. By remaining focused on issues of party competition, the number of parties and party identification, scholars have too often ignored much of what is potentially important and unique about any given party system--that is, that party system change involves much more than partisan swings.¹⁹

Party system change takes place at a variety of levels, including changes in the style of political leadership and competition, changes in the organizational character of parties and, very importantly, changes in the definition of the political interests and identities which are significant to partisan conflict. Party systems are systems of representation; they facilitate the representation of people and interests, but they also embody meaning structures which shape our understanding of and relationship to partisan conflict. These meaning structures, in other words, delimit the universe of potential political identities we will embrace as members of the electorate. Together with the institutions, rules, norms and practices which structure the competitive interaction of party organizations, the

meaning structures which define how people are called into partisan politics must be included in our conception of the party system.

The party system, then, includes such institutions and rule structures as the legal regulation of the franchise, the electoral system, and party financing legislation. It includes informal norms related to campaigning, established practices related to party policy development, and the nature of relationships between political parties and other organized interests. But the party system is also characterized by meaning structures--or discursive frameworks--which define the boundaries of political debate, establish the political identities to which parties appeal, provide a framework for interpreting issues and events, and place limits on the variety of policy options given meaningful consideration. To understand the rise of a new party organization, such as Reform, and the popularization of new political discourses, such as Reform's neo-liberal populism, it is essential that we conceive of the party system as more than the competitive interaction among party organizations. Understanding party system change requires that we consider the institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which define those competitive interactions.

Institutional and strategic variables:

Forty years ago Maurice Duverger wrote that party systems are the product of many complex factors, some peculiar to individual countries and others common to all countries. He claimed the most important of the factors common to all countries are socio-economic class structure, ideology and the electoral system.²⁰ Since then, the

relationship between the electoral system and the dynamics of party systems has been the most common theme of institutional perspectives on party system change. The well-known argument is that electoral systems based on proportional representation produce a multiplicity of stable and independent parties, whereas single-member plurality electoral systems favour two-party party systems. While these are only "fundamental tendencies," Duverger claimed the relationship between single-member plurality electoral systems and the two party system approaches a "true sociological law."²¹

On the surface it would appear that the Canadian party system has, since 1921, often broken Duverger's law. Recognizing this, Duverger's response was to rationalize the Canadian exception with the observation that the third and fourth parties (then the CCF and Social Credit) were local, not national, parties. He argued that single-member plurality systems merely ensured a tendency toward the creation of two-party systems inside individual constituencies; the actual "parties opposed may be different in different areas of the country."²² Douglas Rae took a different approach to explaining the apparent Canadian anomaly. Referring to the significance of overlapping regional, cultural and linguistic cleavages, he claimed that the social cleavage structure, located in the middle of the causal funnel, trumped the impact of the electoral system.²³

In Canada, however, Alan Cairns offered an institutionalist exploration of the relationship between the electoral system and the party system which partially reconciled Duverger's and Rae's explanations of the Canadian anomaly.²⁴ Stressing that the relationship between party and electoral systems should never be elevated to the position

of a general theory of the party system, Cairns suggested the underlying strength of regional cleavages interacted with the electoral system to produce an exaggerated sectionalism.²⁵ While it is true that a single-member plurality electoral system will typically discourage the multiplication of parties, Cairns demonstrated that it also produces a counter tendency by over representing any minor parties with regionally concentrated support. If there is a lesson to be drawn from the institutionalists' debate regarding the effects of the electoral system on party system development, it is that these effects are not straightforward. Not only can the electoral system set in motion multiple, and sometimes conflicting, dynamics of change, but these institutional effects are also partially shaped by noninstitutional factors such as the structure of social cleavages. Moreover, it is important to remember that the single member plurality electoral system continues to exist, at least in part, as a result of strategic decisions made by the political parties themselves. On numerous occasions Canada's governing party has cut short the possibility of movement toward a proportional representation or other alternative electoral system.²⁶

Of course the electoral system is only one of a variety of institutional factors with the potential to influence the structure and dynamics of the party system. The structure of executive and legislative authority, the degree of party discipline, the extent of popular enfranchisement, and a federal division of sovereignty (as well as the degree of decentralization and the relative power of subnational units) are among the many institutional variables invoked to explain continuity and change in party systems.²⁷ But

the exact nature of the effects these institutional factors will have on party system change is unclear. For example, the Westminster model of parliamentary government, underpinned as it is by the fusion of executive and legislative authority, has ensured Canada's major parties are centrally dominated cadre parties which adhere rather strictly to the tradition of party discipline in legislative voting. It has also ensured that the governing party in a majority parliament can effectively control the legislative agenda. Thus, when regional protest movements begin to organize in the partisan arena they are faced with a choice: do they assume strict party discipline will overrule a narrow regional voice in the caucus of an established party and therefore opt to form a new party, or do they assume that the government's capacity to control the legislative agenda renders minor parties ineffectual and therefore opt to work from within an established party?²⁸

Following Lipset, Gagnon and Tanguay contend the creation of a regional protest party is the more likely scenario. They support this contention by contrasting the considerable influence of the Progressive Party with the limited influence of the Maritime Rights Movement in the 1920s.²⁹ But this important example does not definitively demonstrate Gagnon and Tanguay's claim that Canada's Westminster-style parliamentary institutions "are a *principal cause* of the growth of third-party movements."³⁰ It is true that Lipset is largely correct in arguing Canada's parliamentary institutions are more conducive to the rise of regional political parties than the American system of governance; however, a convincing and broadly useful theory of party system change can not be built on the institutionalist logic flowing from this observation.

While the insights of institutional perspectives are useful, it seems clear that institutional variables alone can not account for party system change, particularly since these variables often remain static while change precedes. Gagnon and Tanguay have it right when they are more cautious: the various institutional factors are really no more than "conditional variables," they certainly don't *determine* the overall dynamics of party system change.³¹

Herbert Kitschelt has offered a new and interesting institutionalist contribution to understanding party system change,³² one which some would call a *neo-institutionalist* perspective.³³ Kitschelt begins from the premise that political parties, interest groups and the new social movements can only be fully understood if conceptualized as closely related dimensions of a broader *politics of representation* which gives substance to political interests and identities, and also links civil society and the democratic state to form a broad pattern of interest intermediation.³⁴ After studying the impact of the new social movements on party system change, Kitschelt argued the likelihood of the new social movements successfully launching *new politics* parties is, to a considerable extent, determined by "the established networks of interest intermediation."³⁵ More specifically, he contends that whereas corporatist welfare states are conducive to the rise of *new politics* parties representing the concerns of the new social movements, democracies with pluralist patterns of interest intermediation are not.³⁶ In Canada, where pluralist policy networks are more prevalent than corporatist, Kitschelt would not predict the successful emergence of a competitive Green Party, for example.

The important lesson here--and it is perhaps ironic that it is made in the language of neo-institutionalism--is that theories of party system change must take account of the evolving fabric of linkages between various structures of political representation, ranging from parties to social movement organizations. Some time ago Frank Sorauf made the point that by exaggerating the differences between political parties and other organizations or structures of representation we close off fruitful analytical possibilities.³⁷ In other words, theories of party system change which fail to look beyond the limits of the party system will inevitably fail to capture the complex ways in which non-party political organizations and the broader dynamics of the politics of representation impact on party system change. In Canada, the importance of this can be seen quite clearly in the 1990s. While the labour movement is reevaluating its relationship with the NDP, the NDP is grappling with its relationship with the new social movements, and the Reform Party is rejecting social movement organizations and public interest advocacy groups as *special interests* without legitimacy in partisan politics and parliamentary decision processes. In fact, I will later contend that reaction against changes in the broader politics of representation which are linked to social movement and public advocacy politics are *centrally important* to the rise of the Reform Party.

Rational choice perspectives share the narrow end of the causal funnel with institutional perspectives; however, with the rational choice approach, institutional factors take a back seat to electoral competition in the political marketplace as the decisive determinant of party system change. Rational choice theorists present political parties as

rational, flexible and competitive institutions which contend for the support of individual voters. Party systems are structured by the partisan calculations of strategists, rather than by factors such as the structure of political institutions. In the final analysis, it is argued that *voters* determine the character of partisan politics because party systems merely reflect the cumulative consequences of strategic responses to the ideological opinion structure of the electorate.

In his path-breaking elaboration of a rational choice analysis of democratic party politics, Anthony Downs provided the theoretical underpinnings of what Brodie and Jenson have called the market analogy model of modern brokerage politics.³⁸ Assuming that rational behaviour is self-interested behaviour, Downs argued that the teams of partisans at the core of political parties seek office to reap the rewards of holding power.³⁹ As such, party ideologies and party platforms are merely a means to that end. Thus, if we know, for example, that the distribution of ideological positions and preferences among voters are distributed in a manner approximating a normal curve, we can predict the existence of two dominant parties with policies which are vague, middle-of-the-road and essentially similar.⁴⁰ Both major parties, in other words, will compete for the hypothetical median-voter. If ideological views are clearly and simply polarized, a polarized two-party system will result. If ideological perspectives are distributed evenly across the spectrum, there is potential for a multiplicity of political parties with platforms advocating distinct ideological positions. Moreover, Downs claimed that unless some upheaval causes a sudden change in the electorate's ideological outlook, an established party system will

tend toward "a position of equilibrium in which the number of parties and their ideological positions are stable over time."⁴¹

The rational choice perspective's market analogy, with its emphasis on the determining influence of the ideological dispositions of voters, has influenced numerous scholars in their depiction of the dynamics of party system change. Scholars as different from Downs as Frank Underhill⁴² and C.B. Macpherson,⁴³ have described how party strategists will avoid extremes and move toward middle positions as they appeal to the broad swath of the electorate clustered around the ideological norm. This emphasis on the determining influence of the electorate's opinion structure has also been important in much of the work flowing from the Canadian National Election Studies and the broader literature on party identification. While the market analogy of the rational choice perspective offers some insights into the behaviour of political parties--if for no other reason, this is so because party strategists often adopt implicit rational choice assumptions--it has been criticized on a number of counts, not the least of which is the conceptualization of the electorate's opinion structure. Downs, perhaps far more than subsequent rational choice theorists, conceived of the electorate's opinion structure as unidimensional and fairly static: voters are assumed to be arrayed along a stable left-right ideological continuum. But this is not the case. There are several dimensions of political opinion cleavage in society, and there is considerable inconsistency in voters' opinions. Moreover, some of the most politically salient issues have been *valence issues* on which everyone agrees, and thus the question becomes which political party best represents or

deals with the issue.⁴⁴

At perhaps a more fundamental level, the Downsian emphasis on understanding party system change by building on assumptions about the isolated and self-interested individual has been criticized as incapable of adequately accounting for the inherently social reality of the situated individual, or even the way rules and institutions influence and constrain all political actors.⁴⁵ Downs' abstractions are fundamentally ahistorical. Moreover, rational choice perspectives have also been criticized for emphasizing the "preference-accommodating" strategies of political parties to the exclusion of their "preference-shaping" strategies.⁴⁶ One rational choice theorist, Tom Flanagan, has argued that Downsian models tend to ignore the fact that partisan strategists are not entirely bound by the existing distribution of public opinion. Political parties try to move the median opinion, raise new issue dimensions, and generally reshape the electorate's opinion structure.⁴⁷ This important insight is stressed by the perspectives on party system change which emphasize the political agency of political parties.

These political agency perspectives stress the independent capacity of political parties, as intentional agents, to shape the course of party system change. At a rather obvious level, numerous efforts at explaining party system change have placed an emphasis on the determining importance of leadership, strategy and the capacity of key party activists to mobilize resources. Gagnon and Tanguay's reworking of Pinard's structural theory of minor party development, for example, includes an explicit reference to "the nature of the minor party's leadership."⁴⁸ Similarly, Hauss and Rayside contend the

possibilities for the emergence of new political parties are contingent on the charisma, popularity and strategic decisions of party leaders,⁴⁹ and Kitschelt draws on resource mobilization theory to integrate the skills, resources and capacities of political actors into his analysis of the logics of party formation.⁵⁰

The work of Brodie and Jenson takes this line of analysis further, moving beyond the obvious instrumental importance of party leadership and strategy.⁵¹ They characterize party organizations as strategic actors intentionally shaping the range of issues and partisan challenges which emerge in the party system, and they present this perspective as a direct challenge to both rational choice perspective and the social cleavage perspective, which will be discussed below. Parties, according to Brodie and Jenson, are more than the passive conduits assumed by rational choice theory; they are more than mere aggregators and articulators of public opinion. Parties help "define the form and substance of electoral politics."⁵² In other words, the strategic actions of existing political parties determine the issues and political styles of partisan politics, as well as the possibility of successful new partisan challenges. Moreover, by treating only some issues and social cleavages as legitimate points of reference for the formation of political interests and identities, parties "influence how the electorate will divide itself."⁵³ In Canada, for example, it is their contention that the major political parties have managed to organize class conflict out of partisan politics. Thus, while industrialization and the extension of the franchise produced class based party systems throughout much of Western Europe, the course of party system development in Canada has been different.

The central point of Brodie and Jenson's political agency perspective is that the strategic behaviour of political parties has a crucial effect on the dynamics of continuity and change within the party system. Individual voters relate to partisan politics through political parties whose rhetoric and behaviour delimits the universe of legitimate political issues, interests and identities. Thus, party system change must be analyzed from a perspective which highlights the intention and responsibility of parties as strategic actors. This perspective is useful in that it forces researchers to conceptualize political parties as *independent variables*. Nevertheless, as important and useful as their insights have been, Brodie and Jenson have been criticized for overestimating the capacity of parties and underestimating the independent importance of, among other things, the social cleavage structure.⁵⁴ To this it could be added that any political agency perspective which emphasizes how the strategic actions of political parties influence the salience of political issues, interests and identities, remains incomplete unless it also actively considers the similar role played by other competing structures of representation, such as interest groups and various social movement organizations.⁵⁵

The discursive field: political culture and identities:

There are two sociological perspectives on party system change located in the middle of the funnel of causality. The best known focuses on a purported association between the core social cleavage structures and the structure of the party system. Since Lipset and Rokkan⁵⁶ attempted to trace the evolution and eventual *freezing* of Western European party systems to the formation of social cleavage structures during the great national and

industrial revolutions, numerous social scientists have come to the conclusion that "more weight must be placed on the role of the cleavage structure in stimulating the growth of parties."⁵⁷ Although Lipset and Rokkan's macro-historical perspective placed considerable emphasis on the extent of contingency in both the historical development of core cleavage structures and their eventual translation into systems of competing partisan organizations, the popular readings of their work have suggested a certain inevitability to the process, particularly the way in which it played itself out in Europe around the turn of the twentieth century.

In their original formulation of this perspective, Lipset and Rokkan suggested the core social cleavage structures emerged during three crucial junctures in West European national histories. First was the period of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation--the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries--which pitted national religion against a supranational Roman Catholicism, as well as producing new cleavages of political interest between a dominant nation-building culture, or the *centre*, and various regional, ethnic or linguistic subject cultures of the *periphery*. The second historical juncture, the national democratic revolutions beginning in the late eighteenth century, spawned an important line of political cleavage between the secular state and the church. Finally, the industrial revolution added two important new lines of political cleavage: landed interests versus industrial and commercial entrepreneurs, and workers versus owners. Although the universe of possible alliance-opposition structures across these various lines of cleavage is extensive, Lipset and Rokkan viewed it as essentially finite.⁵⁸ Moreover, they argued

that the final cleavage, workers versus owners, had a significant homogenizing effect on industrial European party systems. They contend that the rise of working-class movements and the extension of the franchise caused a "freezing of the major party alternatives" structured primarily, but not exclusively, around this last of the core social cleavages to emerge out of the fundamental systems of change unleashed in earlier centuries.⁵⁹

Writing before Lipset and Rokkan, Robert Alford also placed considerable emphasis on social cleavage structures. With regard to Canada, Alford claimed the core cleavages were based on solidarities and attachments to regional and religious identities.⁶⁰ Although class issues have an obvious political importance, a national cleavage along class lines had not developed. Instead, Alford argued, Canadian parties emphasize the representation and compromise of political interests emerging from religious, regional and ethnic cleavages.⁶¹

Englemann and Schwartz⁶² extended this sociological perspective in their popularization of what Thorburn has labelled the *complex cleavages trap* theory of Canadian parties.⁶³ Having accepted both Lipset and Rokkan's emphasis of cleavage structures and Alford's observation about the limited political importance of a class cleavage in Canada, they argued that powerful cross cutting regional-ethnic and regional-economic cleavages (as well as weaker religious, social class and urban-rural cleavages⁶⁴) are "so pervasive that they are incorporated into the parties, without any single party serving to polarize them."⁶⁵ As a result of this complex universe of social cleavages,

Canadian parties tend to be obfuscatory brokers of political interests.⁶⁶ Any understanding of continuity and change in the Canadian party system, the logic continues, must necessarily be rooted in an analysis of the association between the core social cleavage structures and the structure of partisan competition.

As popular as this perspective has been, it has not escaped criticism. Thorburn has suggested that the reason for policy obfuscation may be the character of Canadian party leaders rather than the diversity or complexity of Canada's social cleavages,⁶⁷ and Brodie and Jenson have raised doubts about the implicit assumption that Canada has more and deeper cleavages than other societies: "if party politics in Canada remains trapped in a multiplicity of cleavages it is *not* that Canadian society is more complex than elsewhere."⁶⁸ As suggested above, Brodie and Jenson argue that the politicization of political cleavages is never inevitable. To understand why certain cleavages are politicized as points of reference for the formation of political interests and identities, they contend we must investigate the strategic ideological interventions of party organizations. Once again, it should be added here that political forces beyond parties also actively influence the definition and politicization of cleavages. Unions, feminist and environmental social movement organizations, interest groups, and a variety of other structures and systems of representation occasionally intervene in the political and ideological contestation over which social cleavages, political interests and identities are relevant to partisan conflict. I would contend that the tendency to view social cleavages as natural products of the social structure undermines efforts to develop more nuanced

understandings of the contingent and always contestable nature of political interests and identities. Przeworski and Sprauge capture very effectively the complexity of the processes which influence the formation of partisan political interests in their comment on the forces influencing the course of electoral politics:

Through a variety of means, ideological as well as organizational, conflicting political forces impose images of society on individuals, mold collective identities, and mobilize commitments to specific projects for a shared future... Thus the causes which lead individuals to vote in a particular way during each election are a cumulative consequence of the competition which pits political parties against one another as well as against other organizations which mobilize and organize collective commitments.⁶⁹

A second sociological perspective encourages us to shift our attention from social cleavages to political culture and ideologies. In an influential explanation of the existence and importance of socialism in Canada, Gad Horowitz argued that "socialism appears...because it is contained as a potential in the original political culture."⁷⁰ While partisan socialist organizations never successfully emerged in the United States, the CCF/NDP has emerged as a significant political force in Canada. Why the difference in the evolution of the two party systems? According to Horowitz, "the relative strength of socialism in Canada is related to the relative strength of toryism, and to the different position and character of liberalism in the two countries."⁷¹

This macro political cultural⁷² perspective is premised on the contention, stated succinctly by Christian and Campbell, that the course of partisan politics "is, at present, and has been in the past, influenced by ideology."⁷³ Whether couched in terms of a

Hartzian notion of the dialectical evolutionary processes of political culture and ideology,⁷⁴ or the more static conception of Canada's *national ethos* which has been used by Lipset,⁷⁵ the basic argument is the same: many of the specificities of party system change in Canada can be traced to the influence of an anti-revolutionary toryism within Canada's liberal society. According to Lipset, Canadian political culture is more conservative, traditional and hierarchical-elitist than its American counterpart.⁷⁶ This *tory touch* has influenced the character of partisan manifestations of conservatism and liberalism, and was centrally important to the potential for the more collectivist partisan alternatives which emerged during the interwar period.

Christian and Campbell's *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*, provides perhaps the most sustained example of this second sociological perspective.⁷⁷ They begin with a macro-level understanding of Canada's political culture, what they call the "Canadian ideological structure."⁷⁸ Then, proceeding from the premise that political parties are the product of differences in political principle, they trace the ebbs and flows of Canada's party system via an analysis of ideological tensions within the major political parties. In many ways, the conclusions they draw are an obvious challenge to the two perspectives which view political parties as brokers--the complex cleavages trap theory of Canadian parties and the rational choice perspective's market analogy.⁷⁹ The major weakness in works which emphasize the ideological determinants of party system change lie in the failure to situate these cultural and ideological influences in a material context. We can not forget that culture and ideology influence party system change through

conflicting political forces which exist in concrete political economic contexts. For example, the emergence of welfare liberal (and social democratic) ideologies during the 1930s and 1940s, or the increasing significance of neo-liberalism today, can not be explained by Hartzian notions of culture and ideology evolving across historical time, as the political culture tradition suggests. The changing salience of different ideological perspectives and the evolution of Canadian political culture are important to party system change, but they must be linked to more concrete political struggles and conflict.

A more recent sociological perspective--one which focuses on changes currently manifesting themselves in Western European party systems--borrows the language of both the social cleavage *and* political culture perspectives. Ronald Inglehart contends that a major new sociopolitical cleavage pitting *materialist* values against *postmaterialist* values, has placed existing party systems under stress.⁸⁰ Following loosely in the Lipset and Rokkan tradition, those who have built on Inglehart's work contend that party systems are "characterized by the historically rooted social milieu whereby social conflict produces long-term and relatively stable political cleavages."⁸¹ From this common starting point, some scholars focus on secular political economic changes which are producing new social cleavage structures, while others concentrate on the claim that there has been a surge in postmaterialist value orientations.⁸² In Canada, Neil Nevitte has pursued this latter line of inquiry.⁸³

According to Nevitte, late industrial (or postindustrial) social cleavage structures and closely related shifts in the value system underpinning Canadian political culture are

responsible for an emerging *new politics*. Canadians who have embraced the postmaterialist values of the new politics have less confidence in political institutions, they are more likely to be nonpartisan, and they advocate the primacy of a new cluster of political issues.⁸⁴ To date, the long-term implications of these developments for the party system remains unclear. Nevitte, like Inglehart, suggests postmaterialism and the new politics have thus far had greatest impact on political activism *outside* the partisan arena.⁸⁵ But their message to students of the sociological perspectives on party system change is clear: fundamental shifts in the value systems of mass publics and the emergence of previously unconventional forms of political activism will transform partisan politics, and this new reality must be investigated if we are to understand the dynamics of continuity and change in the party system. The postmaterialism thesis does not necessarily imply a rejection of the previously dominant sociological perspectives, it simply provides a new point of departure for both the social cleavages and political culture perspectives. However, as it has been presented here, the postmaterialism thesis can be little more than a new point of departure because it leaves questions about the source of changes in value systems unanswered.

Political economic context and related secular trends:

The perspectives on party system change located at the broad end of the funnel emphasize secular trends in the political economic context in which a party system exists. There are two basic approaches here. The first focuses on the determining influence of empirically observable secular trends, while the second is an attempt to develop a theory of party

system change rooted in the critical political economy tradition. Although Lipset and Rokkan are known for emphasizing the translation of social cleavage structures into party systems, their perspective on the *structural* underpinnings of social cleavages has influenced attempts to link secular political economic trends to the dynamics of party system change. Lipset and Rokkan's contention was that the major national and industrial revolutions of earlier centuries changed social cleavage structures and eventually affected the course of party system development.⁸⁶ Most importantly, they claimed that modern European party systems were the direct consequence of the nineteenth century industrial revolutions. The social and economic upheaval of industrialization and urbanization changed the structure of the labour market, thus producing a new social economic class structure which pitted an emerging working class against owners. This new political cleavage spawned working class movements which mobilized to gain entry into partisan politics, where they soon built mass political parties prepared to advocate the interest of workers. As the established cadre-style bourgeois parties responded to the labour, socialist and social democratic politics of the new mass parties, the secular trends associated with the industrial revolution were *determining* the course of party system development.

For a time, scholars assumed a certain inevitability to the structural processes which produced the class-based character of industrialized European party systems. For example, although Alford found the Canadian party system to be unlike the European systems which had developed around class cleavages, he predicted that the processes of

industrialization, urbanization and secularization would eventually lead to more class politics in Canada.⁸⁷ And despite disagreements regarding expectations about the spread of class-based partisan politics, these essentially *structuralist* perspectives which view party system development as closely tied to the course of economic development and secular trends in urbanization and industrialization have become quite influential. Party system scholars such as William Nisbet Chambers have argued "party systems adapt to forces generated outside of party politics," such as the strains of economic depression, the spread of middle class life styles, and the emergence of new media of mass communication.⁸⁸ Perhaps Everett Carll Ladd put the structuralist assumption most clearly: "At various points, society has changed so much that the parties, as mediating institutions, are substantially transformed."⁸⁹

Otto Kirchheimer's "catch-all" thesis challenged Lipset and Rokkan's contention that European party systems had frozen around a class cleavage, but his explanation of the apparent movement away from class politics drew on a similar political economic determinism. Essentially, Kirchheimer argued that generalized prosperity, reduced class tensions and the spread of a mass consumer-goods orientation had changed the underlying social structure to the extent that class-based ideological conflict was no longer appropriate.⁹⁰ With a growing proportion of the electorate in the middle class, socialist and social democratic workers' parties began to transform themselves into catch-all peoples parties. In many cases this meant a deradicalization of their ideological appeal, a de-activation of their membership and, eventually, the erosion of a collective working

class identity among party supporters.⁹¹ But it also meant that to remain electorally competitive, any cadre-style bourgeois parties were also forced to become middle of the road catch-all parties. Ironically, while following a logic of party system development quite unlike the Downsian perspective, Kirchheimer, Offe and others who have used the concept of *catch-allism* concluded that by the 1960s the character of the party system's political marketplace ensured that parties would consistently appeal to the median voter and avoid stark "product differentiation."⁹² For a time, there was considerable agreement that Kirchheimer's catch-all thesis captured the future dynamics of Western party systems.

However, in the 1970s and 1980s observers began to notice the inability of catch-all parties to stabilize the party system. Reacting to a variety of changes in partisan politics, and to the increasing importance of social movements and other alternative structures of representation, scholars interested in the structural underpinnings of Inglehart's postmaterialism thesis began to link recent secular trends in the political economic context to the apparent crisis of partisan politics. While they agreed that newly emerging postmaterialist value orientations were redefining the core political cleavages of society and setting off changes in the politics of social movements, interest groups and political parties, new structuralist explanations assumed the underlying *causes* of these trends were rooted in the specific political economic conditions of late industrialism (or post-industrialism).⁹³ Dalton, Beck and Flanagan specifically identified the rise in postwar living standards, a broad restructuring of the labour force in which agricultural, and often industrial, occupations were declining while the service sector grew, rapid urbanization

and suburbanization, increased educational opportunities and the rise of information technologies, as the sources of the cultural changes which were influencing party system development.⁹⁴ On the surface, the basic argument echoes the political culture and social cleavages perspectives: eroding class cleavages open the electorate to new political appeals based on a new set of cleavages, and groups that feel threatened begin to organize and formulate counter-ideologies, the *old politics* of class-based partisanship is thus replaced by a *new politics* of materialists versus postmaterialists.⁹⁵ The difference here is in the emphasis placed on secular trends in the political economic context as the *cause* of this new politics, and I would argue this emphasis is the important link between Lipset and Rokkan, the catch-all thesis, and Dalton, Beck and Flanagan's take on the postmaterialism thesis. While there are differences in how the processes of change are theorized, there is basic agreement on the determinants of party system change.

In Brodie and Jenson, Haeusler and Hirsch, and some of the work of Walter Dean Burnham one finds a similar, but significantly unique, political economic perspective on party system change--one that builds on the traditions of critical political economy.⁹⁶ This perspective stresses, sometimes explicitly, the importance of linking a theory of party system change to a broader political economic social theory.⁹⁷ In this case, that means placing the party system in the context of an understanding of the uneasy and often contradictory relationship between capitalism and democracy.⁹⁸ It also means accepting Macpherson's contention that since the extension of the democratic franchise an "underlying function" of the party system has been to moderate the potentially

destabilizing dynamics of class conflict.⁹⁹ However, it should be stressed that these scholars attempt to downplay, or move beyond, the simplistic functionalism such a statement implies. The role of moderator of class conflict is conceptualized such that political parties are viewed as mediators between state and society in the complex set of processes which produce and connect our understandings of political conflict to the broad behavioural norms and expectations which stabilize social and economic relations.¹⁰⁰ Since this role is not simply designated by the functional requirements of the system, it is implied that the major political parties themselves benefit from social and economic stability; that is to say, the societal consensus underpinning such stability allows them to more easily reproduce their political power base.¹⁰¹

Centrally important to this perspective is the contention that the development of capitalist society precedes through identifiable *phases* (sometimes referred to as *regimes of accumulation*) around which economic and social stability is temporarily secured. During such phases--the most obvious example being the era of the postwar settlement from the mid 1940s to the early 1970s--there is a significant degree of societal consensus around important social, political and economic questions such as the appropriate allocation of social production between popular consumption and profit accumulation, and the various institutions, procedures and values necessary to maintain stabilized social and economic relations. But stability is not necessarily the norm; intervening periods of crisis are marked by social, political and ideological struggles which constitute a process of searching for and defining the next period of stability. While political parties play a

role in attempting to maintain stability, they are also centrally important to these struggles and processes of groping through crisis toward the next phase of stability once a previous phase breaks down.

Like the political agency perspectives, this political economic theory of party system change assumes the structure and functioning of the party system heavily influence the definition of social and political interests and the norms of political consensus.¹⁰² But regardless of the influence of partisan struggles, or the specific attempts of party strategists to fashion a new consensus, the specific conjunctural context is considered critically important.¹⁰³ In other words, the political economic conditions "set the parameters around the range of the possible."¹⁰⁴

During periods of consensus, such as the era of the postwar settlement, there will be relative stability within the party system. Even though there may be fairly dramatic swings in the electoral popularity of major political parties, Burnham has observed that "political settlement," or consensus, "exercises a strong centripetal pressure on voting behaviour."¹⁰⁵ Perhaps more importantly, the essential institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which constitute the party system are not likely to be challenged during periods of consensus. In other words partisan politics will take the form of brokerage politics in which partisan contests take place within a dominant schema which ensures conflict is over more-or-less of a socially agreed upon policy package, not over the fundamentals.¹⁰⁶

During periods of crisis, on the other hand, the party system is less able to fulfil its

role in reproducing the consensus necessary to maintain stability. The suggestion here is certainly *not* that poor economic conditions facilitate party system change.¹⁰⁷ Rather, the critical question is whether a given era is one of generalized consensus and stability, or of crisis and economic restructuring. Periods of crisis and the related processes of restructuring mean a renegotiation of the norms and practices which stabilize social and economic relations, and this inevitably means increased volatility with regard to the political interests and identities emerging from the discursive field. It is in this way the political economic context becomes important to party system change. The context of crisis provides space for new meaning structures to emerge and define partisan politics; it allows new issues, new political priorities and new interests and identities to transform the form and substance of partisan politics. For example, the rise of minor and protest parties can end forever the once taken for granted dynamics of a two party system, as happened in Canada after the First World War. Or, the policy consensus underpinning brokerage politics can be shaken, either leading to a non-brokerage party system or a brokerage system anchored to a different consensus, as seems to be happening during the current era of political and economic restructuring in Canada. The key point is that the political economic conjuncture influences the extent to which party system change is more likely than continuity.

Conclusion: A Framework for Explaining the Rise of Reform

The purpose of this effort to understand the underlying dynamics of party system change has been to develop a framework for explaining the emergence of the Reform Party and

its neo-liberal populism within the Canadian party system. The preceding review of competing perspectives on party system change was too fast-paced to suggest an obvious, detailed and generalizable theory of party system change; indeed, the goal of developing a rigorous *unified theory* of parties and party systems is not a realistic one. What this chapter has accomplished is to identify the range of institutional, organizational and strategic, cultural and ideological, and political economic factors which influence the extent of continuity and change within party systems. Arrayed across the funnel of causality, these factors include the following:

- 1) ***Institutional Conditioning Variables:*** The electoral system, the structure of executive and legislative authority, and the degree of party discipline, are among the institutional factors which shape opportunities and influence the likelihood of party system change. Found at the narrow end of the funnel of causality, these conditioning variables influence, but certainly do not determine the course of change within the party system.
- 2) ***Strategic Variables and Opportunity Structure:*** At the narrow end of the funnel we also find the strategic behaviour of the political parties competing for electoral advantage. The strategic maneuverings of parties shape the politics of the day, thus defining the party system's opportunity structure--that is, the issue and organizational opportunities which result from the existing character of partisan competition and the relative organizational and leadership capacities mobilized by the various parties.
- 3) ***The Politics of Representation:*** Traditionally, the factors in the middle of the causal funnel have been conceptualized as social cleavages and political culture or ideology. These factors are centrally important to party system change, but to capture the importance of ideas and of various divisions of opinion, belief and interest, I have chosen emphasize the discursive construction of the political interests and identities which shape the discursive framework through which individuals relate to world of partisan politics. The political and ideological struggles of parties and non-party organizations, such as interest groups and social movement organizations, which shape and determine the salience of various political interests and identities constitute what I have called the politics of

representation. Obviously, this agency-centred approach to the processes which shape the discursive framework of partisan politics links factors from both the narrow end and the middle of the causal funnel.

- 4) ***The Political Economic Context:*** Finally, at the broad end of the funnel is the political economic context, which shapes the party system by influencing both the strategic maneuverings of political parties and the broader politics of representation. The character of the political economic conjuncture--whether there is generalized consensus and stability or crisis and economic restructuring--influence the extent to which party system change is likely. But the political economic context also shapes the material conditions of peoples' existence; and it is assumed that responses to material conditions are significant to the processes of party system change.

While it is evident that the rise of Reform was the result of the recursive interaction of many of these institutional, strategic, ideological and political economic factors, it is important to recognize that a satisfactory explanation of the party's emergence must go beyond simply identifying the complex of causal factors. Most significantly, to avoid the theoretical incoherence and contradiction which can result from eclectic theorizing, any effort to explain the rise of Reform by combining insights from the competing perspectives discussed in this chapter must be grounded in an understanding of the relationship between the various causally important factors.

The telling of the story of the birth of Reform in chapter two highlighted the significance of a number of institutional conditioning variables, strategic variables, and the party system's political opportunity structure. What such a descriptive narrative could not provide is a theoretically informed understanding of the historical configuration of these factors. Indeed, I would contend that it is precisely the historical configuration of the more overt causal factors--the institutions, strategic maneuverings, and competitive

patterns of the party system--which needs to be understood *before* an adequate explanation of the rise of Reform is within reach. It is for this reason that I argued, in the introduction to this chapter, that the political economic context and the discursive construction of political interests and identities deserve to be highlighted in any theory of party system change.

As will be evident from the discussion in chapter four, the framework I adopt for understanding the historical configuration of the party system and the relationships between various causal factors is essentially a political economic framework. I assume that the character of the political economic conjuncture influences the extent to which party system change is more likely than continuity. Moreover, within that context, political parties struggle to delimit the universe of political interests and identities which are significant to partisan politics--and the extent to which they are successful has significant consequences for the historically specific organizational and discursive character of the party system. With this in mind, I use the remainder of part two of this dissertation to elaborate and apply these theoretical insights. First, in chapter four, I will explore the political economy of Reform's emergence. Then, in chapter five, I will relate the broader discursive struggles which constitute the politics of representation to Reform's success at popularizing neo-liberal populism.

Endnotes

1. Harold D. Clarke and Allan Kornberg, "Partisan Dealignment, Electoral Choice and Party-System Change in Canada," *Party Politics* Vol. 2, No. 4 (October, 1996), pp. 455-478.
2. Alan Ware, "The Party Systems of the Established Liberal Democracies in the 1990s: Is this a Decade of Transformation?" *Government and Opposition* Vol. 30, No. 3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 312-326.
3. Ken Carty, "Three Canadian Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Politics," in George C. Perlin, ed., *Party Democracy in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1988).
4. In addition to Perlin's *Party Democracy in Canada*, Carty's essay has appeared in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1991); and, R. Kenneth Carty, ed., *Canadian Political Party Systems: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992).
5. See, in particular: Keith Archer, et al., *Parameters of Power: Canada's Political Institutions* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1995); and, Peter Woolstencroft, "Liberal Democracies and Political Parties and the Canadian Case," in Robert M. Krause and R. H. Wagenberg, eds., *Introductory Readings in Canadian Government and Politics* (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1995).
6. Carty, "Three Canadian Party Systems," p. 15. Carty's perspective is clearly influenced by David Smith's well-known exploration of the history 'party government' in Canada. See: David E. Smith, "Party Government, Representation and National Integration in Canada," in Peter Aucoin, ed., *Party Government and Regional Representation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
7. Ibid., p. 28.
8. Ibid.
9. M. Y. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (London: Macmillan, 1902).
10. Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (London: 1915).

11. Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1954).
12. Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers 1957).
13. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in Lipset and Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967).
14. This five-fold typology was influenced by numerous other attempts to enumerate the various perspectives on party system change. For example: Rose and Urwin contrast perspectives which consider party system change as 'evolutionary' with the view that party systems are in 'static equilibrium' and the view that party systems are 'frozen' around previously existing social cleavages. Archer compares explanations of party system change which are 'society-centred' and 'party-centred' with explanations which focus on the 'rules of the game'. Gagnon and Tanguay contrast institutional, cultural and structural perspectives. Archer and Ellis review structural, institutional and political mobilization factors. Finally, Bakvis explores the relative importance of social underpinnings, institutions, and party leadership and strategy. See: Richard Rose and Derek W. Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems Since 1945," in *Political Studies* Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (1970), pp. 287-319; Keith Archer, "On the Study of Political Parties in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XXII:2 (June, 1989), pp. 389-398; Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, "Minor Parties of Protest in Canada: Origins, Impact, and Prospects," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds. *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989); Keith Archer and Faron Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XXVII:2 (June, 1994), pp. 277-308; Herman Bakvis, "The Canadian Paradox: Party System Change in the Face of a Weakly Aligned Electorate," in Steven B. Wolinetz, ed. *Parties and Party Systems in Liberal Democracies* (London: Routledge, 1988).
15. It should be noted that the perspective developed in this chapter (and further elaborated in subsequent chapters) is not intended to avoid eclecticism; rather, it is intended to avoid the *potential pitfalls* of eclecticism. The most obvious of these potential pitfalls is internal theoretical incoherence or contradiction.
16. It will be clear that considerable liberty is taken in adapting Simeon's concept. See: Richard Simeon, "Studying Public Policy," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. IX:4 (December, 1976), pp.548-580.

17. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen: Brokerage Parties and Class Politics," in Alain g. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), p. 24.
18. Leon D. Epstein, "Political Parties," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Nongovernmental Politics* (Massachusetts: Reding Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975), p. 234.
19. Everett Carll Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot: The Uselessness of 'Realignment' for Understanding Change in Contemporary American Politics," in Byron E. Shafer, ed., *The End of Realignment? Interpreting American Electoral Eras* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
20. Duverger, *Political Parties*, pp. 203-204.
21. Ibid., 217.
22. Although this argument is never adequately supported with constituency by constituency electoral data. Ibid., 223.
23. Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (Revised edition; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 93-94.
24. Alan C. Cairns. "The Electoral system and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, I:1 (March 1968), 55-80.
25. Englemann and Schwartz, among many others, have also stressed this point. Frederick C. Englemann and Mildred A. Schwartz, *Canadian Political Parties: Origin, Character, Impact* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1975), p. 12.
26. Seidle points out that under pressure from the Progressives the King Liberals introduced electoral system reform bills in 1924 and 1925, but they did not pass second reading. The government also failed to act on electoral reform proposals suggested by the Task Force on Canadian Unity in 1979. See: F. Leslie Seidle, "The Canadian Electoral System and Proposals for its Reform," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989). Most recently, the governing Conservatives removed the question of changing the electoral system from the mandate of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing.

27. For examples of scholarly works which highlight the importance of these institutional factors, see: Alford, *Party and Society*, p. 259; Bakvis, "The Canadian Paradox," Robert J. Brym, "Social Movements and Third Parties," in S.D. Berkowitz, ed., *Models and Myths in Canadian Sociology* (Toronto: Butterworth & Co. (Canada) Ltd., 1984), pp. 31-32; Englemann and Schwartz, *Canadian Political Parties*, pp. 9 & 71; Leon Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 19; Charles Hauss and David Rayside, "The Development of New Parties in Western Democracies since 1945," in Louis Maise and Joseph Cooper, eds., *Political Parties: Development and Decay* (London: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 37; and, Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, p. xi.
28. This is similar to the question Preston Manning posed to delegates at the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future in 1987. See: Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992), chap. 7.
29. Gagnon and Tanguay, "Minor Parties of Protest in Canada," p. 232.
30. Ibid., Emphasis added.
31. Ibid.
32. Herbert Kitschelt, "New Social Movements and the Decline of Party Organization," in Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, eds., *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990)
33. On neo-institutionalism, see: James G. March and Johan G. Olsen, "The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 78, pp. 734-749; or, Michael M. Atkinson, "Public Policy and the New Institutionalism," In Michael M. Atkinson, ed., *Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1993).
34. In Canada this point has been stressed by Susan Phillips. See: Susan D. Phillips, "Competing, Connecting and Complementing: Parties, Interest Groups and New Social Movements," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition* (Second edition; Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1995).
35. Kitschelt, "New Social Movements and the Decline of Party Organization," p. 184.
36. For an introduction to the character of various patterns of interest intermediation see William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad, "Policy Communities and Policy Networks: A Structural Approach," in William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad, eds., *Policy*

communities and Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1990).

37. Frank J. Sorauf, "Political Parties and Political Analysis," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, eds., The American Party System: Stages of Political Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 35 & 44.
38. Brodie and Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen," pp. 29-31.
39. Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, 28.
40. Ibid., chap. 8.
41. Ibid., p. 115. With regard to changes in the number of political parties, Downs says that it "is clear that a major prerequisite for the appearance of new parties is a change in the distribution of voters along the political [or ideological] scale." But there is one exception to this rule: "When one of the parties in a two-party system has drifted away from the extreme nearest it toward the moderate center, its extremist supporters may form a new ['influence'] party to pull the policies of the old one back toward them." See Ibid., pp. 130-131.
42. Frank H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1957), pp. 4-5.
43. Macpherson argued the "underlying function" of the party system in capitalist society is to "moderate class conflict." See: C.B. Macpherson, Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 191. Nevertheless, he sounded almost Downsian when he explained how, in a two-party system, "each party tends to move towards a middle position...in order to project an image of itself as a national party." See: C.B. Macpherson, The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 66.
44. Donald Stokes, "Spatial Models of Party Competition," in Angus Campbell, et al., Elections and the Political Order (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966).
45. Jane J. Mansbridge, "The Rise and Fall of Self-Interest in the Explanation of Political Life," in Jane J. Mansbridge, ed., Beyond Self-Interest (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), particularly pp. 10-12.
46. Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1995), p. 210.
47. Ibid.

48. Gagnon and Tanguay, "Minor Parties of Protest in Canada," p. 240.
49. Hauss and Rayside, "The Development of New Parties in Western Democracies since 1945," pp. 37-38.
50. Herbert Kitschelt, The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Politics in Belgium and West Germany (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 14.
51. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, Crisis, challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada Revisited (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), chap. 1.
52. Ibid., p. 1.
53. Ibid., p. 11.
54. See, for example, Keith Archer, "On the Study of Political Parties in Canada"; A. Brian Tanguay, "Canadian Party Ideologies in the Electronic Age," in Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton, eds., Canadian Politics: An introduction to the Discipline (Peterborough: Broadview Press, Ltd., 1990), pp. 142-143; and, A. Brian Tanguay, "The Transformation of Canada's Party System in the 1990s," in Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton, eds., Canadian Politics (Second edition; Peterborough: Broadview Press, Ltd.. 1990), p 122.
55. Brodie and Jenson do pay considerable attention to the influence different forms of unionism have had on the capacity of working class identities to influence the course of partisan politics.
56. Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments."
57. Englemann and Schwartz, Canadian Political Parties, p. 12.
58. Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," pp. 36-38.
59. Ibid., p. 50.
60. Robert R. Alford, Party and Society: the Anglo-American Democracies (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 251-262.
61. Leon Epstein offered similar observations regarding Canada in his cross-national study of political party systems. Epstein, Political Parties in Western Democracies, pp. 29-31.

62. Englemann and Schwartz, *Canadian Political Parties*.
63. Hugh G. Thorburn, "Interpretations of the Canadian Party System," in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada* (5th edition; Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985), pp. 26-27. Also see Brodie and Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen," pp. 31-32.
64. Englemann and Schwartz, *Canadian Political Parties*, p. 326.
65. Ibid., p. 90.
66. Winn and McMenemy trace the notion of "brokerage politics" to H. McD. Clokie, *Canadian Government and Politics* (Toronto: Longmans Green, 1944). See Conrad Winn and John McMenemy, *Political Parties in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), p. 91. However, Winn and McMenemy's usage of brokerage theory may have more in common with the market analogies of rational choice perspectives.
67. Thorburn, "Interpretations of the Canadian Party System," p. 27.
68. Brodie and Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen," p. 32. Emphasis added.
69. Adam Przeworski and John Sprague, *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 143.
70. Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 16.
71. Ibid., p. 3.
72. There have also been micro-level political cultural perspectives on the dynamics of party system change. For example, drawing on Simeon and Elkins' earlier analysis of individual survey data, Adamson and Steward point out that "Atlantic Canadians are notoriously nonefficacious"; and they use this as an explanation for the limited success of protest parties in the region. See: Agar Adamson and Ian Stewart, "Party Politics in the Mysterious East," in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed. *Party Politics in Canada* (Fifth edition; Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985), pp. 321 & 325. In 1988, Herman Bakvis made a similar point about Canadians' loyalty to the party system and the tendency for dissatisfied voters (at least prior to 1993) to move among the three major parties. See: Bakvis, "The Canadian Paradox."
73. William Christian and Colin Campbell, *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada* (Third edition; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1990), p. 3.

74. This is essentially the perspective adopted by Horowitz.
75. Seymour Martin Lipset, "Revolution and Counterrevolution: Canada and the United States," in Thomas Found, ed. *The Revolutionary Theme in Contemporary America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).
76. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. xiv. Lipset does speculate, however, that modernization and urbanization may eventually Americanize Canadian political culture. See *Ibid.*, p. xv.
77. Christian and Campbell, *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.
80. Ronald Inglehart, "The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society," in Russell J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan and Paul Allen Beck, eds. *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
81. Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, "New Political Movements and 'New Politics' Parties in Western Europe," in Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, eds. *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), p. 211.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
83. While Nevitte's work focuses on shifts in value orientations, he accepts the contention that secular political economic changes have "thawed" Lipset and Rokkan's once "frozen" social cleavage structure. Neil Nevitte, "New Politics, the Charter and Political Participation," in Herman Bakvis, ed. *Representation, Integration and Political Parties in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), p. 379.
84. *Ibid.*, particularly pp. 380, 381-4 & 392-4.
85. Inglehart, "The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society," pp. 62 & 67. Kitschelt's observation that the dominant patterns of interest intermediation influence the extent to which 'new politics' penetrates the party system is relevant here.
86. Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments."

87. Alford, *Party and Society*, pp. 261-262, 268-269 & 284-285.
88. William Nisbet Chambers, "Party Development and the American Mainstream," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, eds. *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 15.
89. Everett Carll Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot," p. 28.
90. Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European party Systems," in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).
91. Claus Offe. "Competitive party democracy and the Keynesian welfare state," in Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984), pp. 185-187.
92. Ibid. and Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European party Systems."
93. Kitschelt. *The Logics of Party Formation*, p. 14.
94. Russell J. Dalton, Paul Allen Beck and Scott C. Flanagan, "Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies," in Russel J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan and Paul Allen Beck, eds., *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) pp. 5-7.
95. Ibid., p. 21.
96. See: Brodie and Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change*; Juergen Haeusler and Joachim Hirsch, "Political Regulation: The Crisis of Fordism and the Transformation of the party System in West Germany," in M. Gottdiener and Nicos Komninos, eds. *Capitalist Development and Crisis Theory: Accumulation, Regulation and Spatial Restructuring* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989); and, Walter Dean Burnham, "Great Britain: The Death of the Collectivist Consensus?" in Louis Maisel and Joseph Cooper, eds., *Political Parties: Development and Decay* (London: Sage Publications, 1978).
97. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," p. 300.
98. With regard to party system theory it is Burnham who makes this point, but this wording is adapted from Bowles and Gintis. See: Burnham, "Great Britain," p. 268; and, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), chap. 2.

99. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, p. 191.
100. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," pp. 303 & 305.
101. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, "New Parties, New Patterns of Representation," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition* (Second edition; Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1995).
102. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," p. 306.
103. Burnham, "Great Britain," p. 269.
104. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, "The Party System," in Michael S. Whittington and Glen Williams, eds., *Canadian Politics in the 1990s* (Third edition; Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1990), p. 252.
105. Burnham, "Great Britain," p. 290.
106. Brodie and Jenson, "New Parties, New Patterns of Representation."
107. In fact, Calum Carmichael has shown that from 1945 to 1972, poor economic conditions supported electoral stability by favouring the incumbent party. See: Calum M. Carmichael, "Economic Conditions and the Popularity of the Incumbent Party in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XXIII:4 (December, 1990), pp. 713-726.

Chapter Four

The Political Economy of Reform's Emergence

Introduction

I argued in the previous chapter that the political economic context shapes party system change by influencing both the strategic maneuverings of existing partisan organizations and the dynamics of the broader *politics of representation*--that is, the discursive struggles which constitute political interests and identities. The present chapter explores this contention in greater depth and applies a political economic analysis to the emergence of the Reform Party. In what follows, the emergence of Reform is treated as one dimension of the overall evolution of the Canadian party system, and the party system's uncertain evolutionary process is situated, for analytical purposes, in the context of Canada's changing political economic landscape. The argument developed in this chapter relies on the materialist assumptions underlying political economy; it is assumed, in other words, that individuals do respond to the *objective* conditions of everyday life. But it is a materialist method tempered by an awareness of the role of ideas and mediating institutions, including political parties, which influence how objective social conditions are understood and transformed into political identities and interests. The central argument is that the Reform Party represents one dimension of a broader attempt to define a future beyond the current period of social and economic restructuring. Attention is focussed on the capacity of Reform's neo-liberal populism to mobilize resentment and

protest while offering a future-oriented programme of neo-liberal solutions to the difficulties social and economic restructuring present for ordinary Canadians.

Earlier it was explained that political parties are organizations which promote particular interests and advocate certain programmes and policies in an attempt to gain electoral support. At the individual level of analysis, parties are political symbols that voters identify with as their belief systems develop and evolve. At the systemic level of analysis, it is often argued that electoral competition between party organizations produces competitive patterns and interrelationships which constitute a party system.¹ But these competitive patterns and interrelationships are only the most obvious and observable dimensions of the party system; they are shaped by a series of institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which, taken as a whole, constitute the party system. The party system, then, is more than simply a constellation of competitive partisan organizations. It includes institutions and rule structures such as the legal regulation of the franchise, the electoral system, and the legislation governing party financing. It also includes less formal rules and norms related to campaign techniques and leadership styles, as well as established practices related to party policy development and the relationship between political parties and other organized interests. But, equally important, every party system is characterized by a particular meaning structure or discursive framework which defines the boundaries of political debate, establishes the political identities to which parties appeal, provides a framework for interpreting issues and events, and places limits on the policy options which are considered as realistic

solutions.

I argued in chapter three that the institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which define the competitive patterns of the party system are the historically contingent outcome of an array of social, political, economic and ideological struggles, many of which actually occur outside the party system. As such, major transformations in a party system, including the emergence of a significant partisan challenge from a new party such as Reform, can not be explained exclusively by reference to the existing logic of party competition or the current character of partisan conflict. In fact, it is precisely the historical configuration of party competition and partisan conflict which needs to be understood, and this is why an explanation of party system change must be rooted in an analysis of (i) the changing political economic context and (ii) the broader political and ideological struggles which constitute what I have referred to as the politics of representation.

This chapter focusses on elucidating the relationship between the changing political economic context and party system change. To understand the rise of Reform and its neo-liberal populist discourse, we need to understand the political economic origins of the postwar system of brokerage politics and, more importantly, the political economic and ideological context in which the postwar party system has recently been transformed. First, however, attention will be focussed on elaborating a *regulationist* perspective on the political economy of party system change. This perspective, I would contend, is uniquely suited to the task of understanding the historical configuration of a

given party system and the political economic and ideological pressures which may serve to undermine or transform it.

Party Systems: A Regulationist Perspective

It is useful to begin by sketching the basic theoretical foundations of regulation theory.

Emerging two decades ago, and then coming into its own during the 1980s, the regulation approach to critical political economy continues in the historicist tradition within Marxist and neo-Marxist thought. Utilizing a variety of concepts and categories developed to elucidate the way in which the relationship between capitalist accumulation and various techniques of social and economic *regulation* is central to capitalist development, regulation theory has more recently become known as a rich source of insight into the ongoing importance of diverse social, political, economic and ideological struggles.²

Like earlier critical political economists, regulationists proceed on the assumption that historical social scientific analysis is, at bottom, an exploration of the unfolding relationship between capitalism and democracy or, as Bowles and Gintis have characterized it, the unfolding of the uneasy and often contradictory relationship between the expansionary logic of capitalist production and economic rights and the expansionary logic of democracy and personal rights.³ The best of the regulationist theorists display a sensitivity to the importance of the social and political struggles which define these rights, their scope, the political identity of those they protect, and the often uneven applicability of both economic and personal rights to various segments of society. Fortunately, however, regulationists avoid the voluntarist fallacy by consciously

combining their agency-centred focus on social and political struggle with a recognition that structural constraints such as institutionalized rules and practices, not to mention the norms and values of the existing ideological configuration, are historically important determinants of change. In other words, regulation theory assumes a structure-agency dialectic: "history is open-ended even if real effects of institutionalized practices and structural constraints exist."⁴

Drawing on some fairly abstract and esoteric notions about the relationship between capitalist accumulation strategies and various political institutions, behaviours and belief systems which contribute to social and economic regulation, regulationists have introduced into the political economists' lexicon the notions of *regime of accumulation, mode of regulation, societal paradigm, state form* and *mode of governance*.⁵ Their central claim is that phases in capitalist development, although far from unambiguous, can be identified by the *regimes of accumulation*--that is, the prevailing pattern of production and consumption which stabilizes the allocation of social production between popular consumption and capitalist accumulation--around which economic and social stability is temporarily secured. When a particular accumulation regime is stable and able to be reproduced over time, there is a significant degree of societal consensus regarding the appropriate allocation of social production between popular consumption and profit accumulation, and around the various institutions, procedures and values necessary to maintain that stability.

But stability in this sense is not necessarily the norm; equally or more common are

moments of turbulence and crisis in which social, political, economic and ideological struggles unwittingly constitute a process of searching for and defining the next period of stability. Regulationists explain that once established, the economic stability of a regime of accumulation depends on the effective hegemony of a particular *mode of regulation*--that is, the institutions, practices and rules related to the stabilization of production and exchange relations. But clearly more than economic social relations need to be *in regulation*. General social stability needs to be secured through what Jenson refers to as a broadly accepted *societal paradigm* which structures the mosaic of social relations beyond production and exchange relations.⁶ Together a hegemonic mode of regulation and societal paradigm will construct political identities, define the rights of citizenship and set parameters on what is considered to be in the national interest. Together they define a hegemonic common sense.

The concepts of *state form* and *mode of governance* have, over the past decade, become increasingly important to regulation theorists. These concepts are essentially heuristic devices which aid macro-historical political economists in developing schematic periodizations of the evolution of the basic principles of political regulation and governance in liberal-democratic capitalist societies.⁷ However, during periods of political economic turmoil and cultural transformation, the concepts of state form and mode of governance can also provide an anchor for our regulationist accounts of contemporary political and economic change. From a macro-historical perspective, Canada has witnessed three distinct state forms and modes of governance since

Confederation.⁸ For over half a century after confederation a classical (laissez-faire) liberalism characterized the mode of governance; this was the era of the laissez-faire state. With the emergence of the Keynesian welfare state during and after the Second World War, the classical liberal mode of governance was replaced by welfare liberalism. Today, we are witnessing the emergence of a neo-liberal mode of governance and state form. The endpoint of neo-liberalism is uncertain--perhaps it is still not entirely inevitable. Nevertheless, it is increasingly likely that the dismantling of the welfare state and the embrace of a neo-liberal political rationality will, within a generation, produce a social, political and economic structure almost unrecognizable to those who once anticipated a future based on the hegemony of welfare liberalism.

Those familiar with the overly economicistic nature of early regulation theory will recognize that the concept of mode of governance has actually been borrowed from the *theories of governance* literature, a body of work which is less economicistic than regulation theory. As Jessop explains, the theories of governance literature is concerned with the various "social" modes of social co-ordination rather than with narrowly political (sovereign, juridico-political, bureaucratic or at least hierarchically organized) modes of social organization."⁹ Theories of governance, in other words, stress the extra-state mechanisms which guide or steer social conduct. These extra-state dimensions of governance range from the activities of bond rating agencies to the customs, norms and habits of everyday life and the hegemonic meaning structures through which individuals make sense of the social relations in which they live. Clearly the state is always

articulated into the broad process of governance, but at a time when neo-liberal rhetoric is juxtaposing *freedom* and *rule*, and promising civil society freedom from the rule of the state, it is particularly important that we have the capacity to understand governance (in the broadest sense of the term) from a perspective which is not state centric. In the same way that the regulationist approach to critical political economy uses the concept of mode of regulation to emphasize the social embeddedness of the accumulation process and economic activity, theories of governance stress the social embeddedness of political power.

To understand the significance of the neo-liberal turn which has followed the crisis of the postwar *Fordist* regime of accumulation, we must recognize, as the theories of governance literature emphasizes, that the state does not monopolize political power. Socially consequential power exists within a number of systems of power and privilege related to gender, class, race, sexual orientation, and so on. In fact, as Bowles and Gintis say in elaborating their conception of society as a mosaic of systems of power and privilege: "power is not an amorphous constraint on action but rather a structure of rule empowering and restraining actors in varying degrees."¹⁰ I would take this even further and argue that social power relations serve to construct the very actors who are empowered and restrained. In the words of Rose and Miller: "Power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of 'making up' citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom."¹¹ Theorists of governance emphasize the fact that each mode of governance embraces a unique 'political rationality'¹² which legitimizes particular

systems of power and privilege. Thus, as political struggles undermine welfare liberalism and herald the dawning of a neo-liberal mode of governance, new understandings of the nature of society, the legitimacy of various power centres, and the efficacy of various political identities are internalized through a new hegemonic social compromise.¹³

To date the way in which political parties and partisan politics fit into the regulationist approach has been under-theorized;¹⁴ nevertheless, it is clear that party systems are important to the processes through which economic and social regulation are established (and dissolved). Haeusler and Hirsch's discussion of the West German case is one of the most detailed explications of the role of the party system in the processes of regulation. In their work the state is considered the primary regulative institution, and parties are situated as mediators between the state and individuals and institutions.

The party system represents that component of the regulative network of institutions within which antagonistic and pluralistic interests and attitudes are produced, articulated, adjusted, formed and connected in such a way that relatively coherent state action, safeguarding the reproduction of the system as a whole, is rendered possible and legitimate.¹⁵

Essentially, they conceive of the party system as a major (and privileged) mechanism for forging the consensus necessary to establish and legitimize a mode of regulation and societal paradigm. Jenson makes a similar point when she states that political parties are (at least potentially) central actors in the process of legitimizing a mode of regulation which can effectively stabilize an accumulation regime.¹⁶ For Jenson, the stability of a regime of accumulation is dependent on the capacity of the dominant mode of regulation and societal paradigm to be hegemonic, and the possibility of this is dependent on social,

political, economic and ideological struggles in a variety of sites ranging from families to unions to corporations to political parties.¹⁷

Thus the party system is both a potential mechanism of regulation and a site of constitutive struggles in the process of regulation. In fact, the institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which constitute the party system are part of the societal paradigm. They do not exist in isolation, but influence and are influenced by other parts of the societal paradigm and mode of regulation through social and political struggle.

The process of discursively constituting political identities and interests, which includes defining the illusory national community whose interests are central to social cohesion,¹⁸ is fundamental to economic and social regulation. The party system is one of the sets of mediating institutions through which our *objective* social conditions and experiences are transformed into political interests. The outcome of this process is always contingent because "under similar living conditions, individuals can develop different and even contradictory interests depending on the kind of discursive field within which they exist."¹⁹ The party system serves, as Brodie and Jenson have suggested, to construct identities, meaning structures and definitions of politics which then constitute much of the core of the societal paradigm.²⁰

During periods when a regime of accumulation is stabilized, or *in regulation*, there will be relative stability within the party system. Certainly party relations and the pattern of partisan conflict will undergo disruptions; there may even be fairly dramatic swings in the electoral popularity of the major political parties. But the essential

institutions, rules, norms, practices and meaning structures which constitute the party system are not likely to be dramatically transformed. As Jessop explains, "crisis tendencies are always present in regulation: in stable regimes of growth, however, it is the normalizing effects of institutions which predominate."²¹

This is not the case when there is a *crisis of regulation*. Unlike normal business cycles and cyclical crises *within* a regime of accumulation, a crisis of regulation is characterized by the falling apart of an earlier accumulation regime and continuous conflicts over the establishment of a new regime of accumulation and fitting modes of economic and social regulation.²² In such turbulent periods of social, economic and political restructuring, the party system is less able to reproduce the consensus necessary to maintain stability. The dominant parties are less likely to be seen as protecting the social and material interests of large segments of society, not to mention the national interest. The "context of crisis exposes both the structuring effects of the past and the importance of struggles to create the future."²³ By opening the space for challenges and change, crises of regulation enhance the capacity of political parties, including new parties such as Reform, to serve as mechanisms for introducing new alternatives.

As will be made clear below, the political economic conjuncture in which the Reform Party emerged was just such a period of turbulence and crisis. Over the past three decades, we have witnessed the falling apart of Canada's postwar Fordist regime of accumulation, then a period of political and ideological struggles which constituted a process of groping toward an uncertain future, and now the emergence of a post-Fordist,

flexible regime of accumulation and neo-liberal mode of governance. Within the party system, the Reform Party has represented an important political and ideological intervention in this process of struggling to define a future. Reform is an expression of the neo-liberal cultural transformation currently under way in the Canadian political economy, but the party is also a protagonist in the struggle to advance the neo-liberal agenda as a means to stabilizing an accumulation regime based on flexible accumulation and a trade-led development strategy. The challenge for the social scientist who has embraced a regulationist perspective is to move from the abstract and esoteric discussion above to the more complex world of the concrete and exoteric.

Fordism, the Postwar Consensus & the Postwar Party System

The roots of Reform lay in the crisis of Canada's postwar regime of accumulation. Understanding that crisis, and the associated crisis of the party system, requires an exploration of both the postwar accumulation regime and the party system which helped to define the political consensus regarding the modes of social and economic regulation which effectively stabilized that regime for nearly three decades.

The story of the *postwar consensus* in the advanced industrial democracies is by now a familiar one. However, it is a story which is too often told without references to political parties. We know that out of the economic turmoil, social struggles and military devastation which characterized the 1930s and early 1940s, came a need for social, economic, and in some cases physical, reconstruction. In most of the capitalist West, a set of accumulation policies and policies of legitimization put in place during the early postwar

era eventually stabilized what has come to be called the *Fordist* regime of accumulation.²⁴ Fordism is an *intensive* accumulation regime involving the articulation of mass production and mass consumption. In this context, rising productivity and profits are made possible by a wage-led dynamic of rising popular consumption. This full-circuiting of rising productivity, profits, wages and consumption has been characterized as a *virtuous circle* of relatively autarkic and self-reinforcing economic growth.²⁵ To a significant extent this pattern of economic growth was the result of technological advances in production processes, low resource prices, pent-up demand after the Great Depression and the war years, and demographic changes related to the baby boom and immigration. Nevertheless, there were important politically negotiated factors supporting the Fordist boom. Although these politically negotiated factors--the many policies and institutions of social and economic regulation--varied across the advanced capitalist countries, it is generally agreed that the phenomenal economic growth of postwar Fordism hinged on a three-pronged compromise: (i) Keynesian inspired fiscal and monetary policies to curb business cycles; (ii) a social policy mix and welfare state structure capable of underpinning increases in the social wage; and. (iii) institutionalized wage labour-capital relations which, often through corporatist structures of interest intermediation, ensured widespread increases in real wages.

At a more concrete level, one can distinguish between various Fordisms as they were manifested in the advanced industrial nations. In what we loosely think of as a Western European model of Fordism, political parties played a central role in negotiating

the series of class compromises which formed the basis of the postwar consensus. As Jenson notes, "analyses of the Fordist regime of accumulation have identified political parties and trade unions as central actors, whose acceptance and legitimization of the mode of regulation was a necessary condition for its effectiveness."²⁶ In other words, this Fordist matrix of institutions, policies and practices was sustained, at least in part, by Western Europe's class-divided party system. Not only the corporatist institutional structures, but also the various wage and employment policies which were central to Western European Fordism, have been linked to the presence of competitive left-wing parties with close ties to the union movement.²⁷

Canada's postwar Fordist regime of accumulation was unique in a number of ways and for a number of reasons. For one thing, Canada's position in the international political economy as a small, open economy relying on relatively unprocessed natural resources and located next to America, the international hegemon of the Fordist era, ensured that Canadian Fordism was less autarkic. Canada's postwar accumulation regime was premised on *continentalism*, or the functional integration of the American and Canadian economies. This is one reason for the labelling of Canadian Fordism as *permeable Fordism*.²⁸

The policy consensus underpinning Canada's permeable Fordism was also unique. For a time there was a keen interest in Keynesian macro-economic policies in partisan and bureaucratic circles. Yet a number of factors, including Canada's small, open economy and the lack of effective labour or social democratic influences in the national

party system,²⁹ militated against Keynesianism taking a dominant place in macro-economic policy: "Government paid lip-service to the Keynesian doctrines of demand management but rarely practised it."³⁰ In particular, the basic Keynesian strategy of keeping aggregate demand high by a policy commitment to full employment played only a limited practical role in Canada. Instead, continentalist policies of opening the door to increased American investment in Canadian industry and facilitating the export of natural resources, were relied upon as the engine of economic growth. While Canadian governments did become more interventionist and make some use of a Keynesian macro-economic philosophy, Canada's Keynesian consensus involved little more than a commitment to a watered-down or *bastardized* Keynesianism.

Similarly, the social policy measures adopted to offset the excesses of the market were not as extensive as in most of Western Europe. During the 1940s and early 1950s the state did assume responsibility for financing unemployment insurance, family allowances and the universal Old Age Security programme; but it was not until the mid 1960s that medical insurance, a contributory state pension plan and guaranteed federal contributions to the provinces' means-tested programmes of social assistance were implemented. Admittedly, these dimensions of the postwar policy consensus had important and far-reaching implications for what could be called the *entitlements* of citizenship. The state obviously assumed a new responsibility for the socio-economic welfare of its citizens; and in doing so may also have helped to stabilize the Fordist pattern of mass consumption. Nevertheless, the Canadian welfare state was a limited

liberal welfare state providing limited benefits to those most disadvantaged by the market.³¹ Canada's welfare state never guaranteed the range of universal and generous social-democratic entitlements commonly associated with the European notion of *social citizenship*.³²

The somewhat limited embrace of Keynesian interventionism and social welfare policies was, at least in part, a consequence of the nature of partisan ideological discourse in the early postwar era. Mackenzie King's purported commitment to welfare liberalism reinforced changes in public attitudes following the depression of the 1930s, and this was significant to the emergence of a welfare liberal mode of governance. But King's welfare liberalism never overwhelmed the Liberal party's business liberalism, and the blend of business and welfare liberalism he established continued under St. Laurent and Pearson. Business liberalism was also extremely influential within the Conservative party. Certainly, George Drew's emphasis on economic freedom and competitive enterprise was tempered by Diefenbaker's democratic toryism, but business liberalism remained influential and Diefenbaker's toryism "in no way overshadowed his liberalism."³³ Thus, on the one hand, partisan ideological discourse shifted to the left with the rise of welfare liberalism and red toryism, and this legitimized a limited Keynesian interventionism and expanded social policy regime. But, on the other hand, the influence of business liberalism in the two major parties of the postwar party system ensured the Canadian welfare state would be what Tuohy, following Esping-Anderson, labels liberal rather than social democratic.³⁴ Certainly, Canada's welfare liberal mode of governance stood in

sharp contrast to the classical (*laissez faire*) liberal mode of governance; but it was liberal all the same.

In the partisan arena, the right-wing business liberals in the Liberal and Conservative parties were the most significant challenge to the hegemony of welfare liberalism and the emergence of Canada's Keynesian welfare state. But there were other right-wing partisan challenges to the welfare liberal mode of governance. With the exception of Diefenbaker's sweep in 1958, the Social Credit and the Créditistes elected between fourteen and thirty members to the House of Commons in each election between 1953 and 1972. The last election in which the English Canadian Social Credit successfully elected candidates to Parliament was 1965. In that year a young Preston Manning stood as the Social Credit candidate in Edmonton East. He and his Edmonton area running mates challenged Keynesian interventionism and Canada's emerging social welfare policy regime. Campaigning on a platform emphasizing the virtues of economic freedom and the folly of a high cost welfare state, the Social Credit slate in Edmonton went against the tide of the postwar consensus by arguing that state interference in free enterprise and personal freedom undermined personal security.³⁵ Of course, the existence of a minor party challenging the postwar consensus is not a surprise; every hegemonic social consensus exists in a state of being contested. Nevertheless, it is significant that at the height of welfare liberalism, in the late 1960s, Preston Manning was positioning himself as a defender of a classical liberal mode of governance.

Another central feature of permeable Fordism's mode of regulation was the legal

recognition of unions, the automatic check-off of union dues from pay stubs, and the subsequent spread of collective bargaining. Unlike the situation under Western European Fordism, Canada did not experience tripartite or corporatist structures. Instead, even as union membership continued to increase through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a system of industrial legalism ensured that wage labour-capital relations were privately organized and trade unions remained outside institutionalized public decision-making processes.³⁶ The postwar class compromise which emerged in this context was not one which relied on a class divided party system. In the interwar period, and occasionally in the postwar era, minor parties introduced elements of a class-based discourse into the partisan arena; but the major parties helped to define the form and substance of partisan politics in non-class terms.³⁷ As a result, class-based political identities never emerged as an organizing feature of Canada's Fordist paradigm.

Instead of class-based identities, the collective identity mobilized through Canada's postwar societal paradigm was a national or pan-Canadian identity which stressed the commonality of all Canadians and promised a better life through economic growth.³⁸ During these years the major parties, particularly the Liberals, were centrally important to the strategic mobilization of this growth-oriented national identity. In his study of Canadian parties and national integration, David Smith argues that the first suggestion of a new pan-Canadian approach to party leadership came in the form of the King government's 1946 Canadian Citizenship Act. The St. Laurent government's creation of the Canada Council in response to the Massey Commission on National

Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, and a variety of other initiatives, including the ending of judicial appeals to the JCPC in 1949, furthered this trajectory. But it was under Diefenbaker and Pearson that the importance of a nation-based identity became most explicit: Diefenbaker's *One Canada* rhetoric, the 1960 Bill of Rights, Pearson's desire to construct a country-wide nationalism based on bilingualism and biculturalism, and the federal role in medicare and the Canada Pension Plan, are all cited as evidence of the importance of partisan influence on the postwar era's pan-Canadian political identity.³⁹

It is often stressed by those who contrast the postwar consensus in Canada with the Western European case, that Canadian parties did not play a central role in consolidating and institutionalizing the *class compromise* which underpinned the postwar Fordist accumulation regime. While this may be true from a narrow perspective which focusses on labour-capital relations, it is worth stressing again that Canada's political parties were, in fact, an important mechanism for forging the many dimensions of postwar consensus. Duncan Cameron has gone so far as to argue that in the postwar era "the Liberal Party was to frame debate and govern on the basis of a consensus that it was able to work out and impose as a majority view."⁴⁰ Perhaps most significant to the postwar consensus was the capacity of the Liberals--the party which under King, St. Laurent and Pearson established the parameters of partisan conflict--to contain divisions between business liberals and welfare liberals by (i) committing to new social welfare policies while pursuing economic growth in terms of a continentalist business agenda, (ii)

accepting the legitimacy of trade unions while denying real class divisions, and (iii) abandoning earlier provincialist positions in favour of a strong federalist stance.⁴¹

The partisan political consensus fashioned by the Liberals contributed to the social, political and economic stability of the early postwar era; and it was in the context of this stability that *brokerage* politics was able to plant deep roots. Brokering, when fundamentally similar parties direct appeals at many interests to create electoral coalitions,⁴² is an activity of parties most compatible with periods of consensus, when there is a shared *common sense* based on a hegemonic mode of regulation and societal paradigm. Brokerage parties aim to frame their appeals in consensus terms. During election campaigns their rhetoric will stress the existence of significant *product differentiation*, but substantive differences regarding fundamental questions of social and economic development will not exist. In the postwar era, Canada's brokerage-style party system united the major parties around a common development strategy and helped to stabilize Canada's permeable Fordist accumulation regime. Of course there were partisan challenges to the hegemony of brokerage politics. On the left there was the left-nationalist radicalism which led to the Waffle; on the right there was, among other challenges, Ernest and Preston Manning's effort to advance *social conservatism* as a clear-cut right-wing alternative to the welfare liberalism which seemed to dominate the Canadian party system.⁴³ But their limited impact simply reinforces the extent of social consensus and the potential momentum of brokerage-style politics during periods of political economic stability. With this in mind, it is no surprise that the crisis of Fordism, which began in the

1970s, would eventually be linked to a series of significant changes in the Canadian party system, including the rise of Reform and its neo-liberal populism.

The Crisis of Fordism, Restructuring & the Rise of Reform

Until the 1970s Canada's postwar development strategy worked fairly successfully. GDP growth was strong, real wage gains were being realized and unemployment was not unmanageably high. These material conditions helped to maintain the postwar consensus. With living conditions improving for most working and middle class families, the political economic context helped to reinforce popular support for the principles of the welfare liberal mode of governance. Most Canadians supported the gradual extension of the Keynesian welfare state. Academics wrote of the *end of ideology*, and the public mood was one of optimism. Even during downturns in the business cycle, there was general confidence that, with the help of Keynesian inspired counter-cyclical economic policies, the economy would rebound and the material conditions of life would continue to improve. The major parties competed for electoral support simply by promising to be *better managers* of the Keynesian welfare state, and the brokerage character of partisan conflict served to sustain ideological commitment to the hegemonic societal paradigm and mode of regulation. Moreover, generalized partisan consensus on the major questions of social and economic development virtually precluded successful challenges by alternative partisan discourses. In the context of the postwar consensus, in other words, most Canadians were willing to accept that their political interests were reflected in the partisan policy consensus which underpinned the postwar system of brokerage politics.

Those with alternative viewpoints--including Preston Manning's *social conservatism* in the late 1960s and early 1970s--were truly marginalized.

By the early 1970s however, the postwar economic boom was past, and a series of social and economic developments were beginning to undermine the postwar consensus. It is now widely accepted that during the 1970s, rapid technological change, the emergence of competition from the newly industrializing economies, the oil price shocks and a variety of other factors caused the Canadian manufacturing sector to contract and created a new economic demon: stagflation. This marked the beginning of a turbulent period of rapid political economic change. It was also the first stage of the crisis of Fordism, when a series of fundamental changes in the Canadian political economy made it increasingly difficult for business and government to maintain the old ways of doing things. Since then, contradictions within the Fordist model of development and the postwar policy consensus have produced a highly contested process of political economic restructuring--this was a crisis in the Gramscian sense that it is marked by the inability of the old to hold and uncertainty regarding the shape of things to come.

Since the 1970s, technological change and the globalization of production have altered the pace and importance of trade. New flexible manufacturing and accumulation strategies have altered industrial organization and transformed the labour market. As a result of these, and other, political economic developments, Fordism's *virtuous circle*--in which mass production and mass consumption allowed for economic growth based on rising profits and real wage gains--has been broken. With governments and businesses

now opting for a trade-led development strategy, profits and economic growth depend increasingly on a domestic labour market polarized between *good jobs* and *bad jobs*. In this context, the goals of full employment and real wage gains are considered increasingly unrealistic. The postwar consensus has evaporated and the once accepted Keynesian macro-economic philosophy and the social welfare policies of the welfare state are both attacked as underlying *causes* of the widening economic crisis.

During this period, Canada has also undergone a substantial social and cultural transformation: increasing numbers of women are entering the paid workforce; the dominance of the traditional nuclear family is being challenged; and an increasing percentage of immigrants to Canada are coming from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean or South and Central America, rather than Europe. Combined, the many social and cultural changes taking place and the political economic crisis form part of a more general social crisis in which public commitment to the previously hegemonic mode of governance is shaken and the hegemony of the societal paradigm is threatened. As was argued above, such turbulent periods of social, economic and political restructuring, leave the party system less able to reproduce the consensus necessary to maintain stability. The dominant parties are also less likely to be seen as protecting the social and material interests of large segments of society, not to mention the national interest. At a very general level, the "context of crisis exposes...the importance of struggles to create the future."⁴⁴ More specifically, by opening the space for challenges and change, periods of crisis create the space for new discourses and enhance the opportunities for new political parties, such as

Reform, to serve as mechanisms for championing these new alternatives.

This is not to suggest a simple macro-level (and perhaps functionalist) interpretation of how the conditions developed for the successful emergence of the Reform Party. The rise of Reform can only be understood in the context of the strategic maneuverings of parties and other political formations, as well as the political choices made by individual Canadians. The politics of the day is centrally important to the Reform story, and to explaining the emergence of Reform and its neo-liberal populist discourse. Nevertheless, the crisis of Fordism created the space for new ideological interventions, as well as the material conditions for popular interest in pursuing these new alternatives. In other words, the macroeconomic dimensions of the crisis of Fordism were largely responsible for the fact that, by the mid 1970s, three decades of partisan consensus on economic development strategies broke down. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the context of economic restructuring helped to sustain fundamental partisan disagreements on issues such as economic nationalism and the proper role of the state in the economy.

During the latter Trudeau years--when Joe Clark was leading the Progressive Conservatives--Canada's two major parties lined up on opposite sides of a debate regarding possible alternatives to the postwar development strategy. The Tories, with the support of *province building* governments such as Alberta, advocated a decentralist and free market oriented strategy based on ending the interventionism of nationalist economic policies, such as the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) and Petro Canada, and

allowing market forces to respond to the decentralized character of the Canadian economy.⁴⁵ The Liberals, on the other hand, advocated the economic nationalism of a neo-interventionist development strategy. Having created the likes of Petro Canada, FIRA and the Canadian Development Corporation (CDC) in the early and mid 1970s, the Liberals began to toy with the idea of a more explicitly state-centred industrial strategy in which resource megaprojects would allow for industrial spin-offs from Canada's competitive advantage in natural resources. The introduction of the National Energy Programme (NEP) and the strengthening of FIRA in 1980-81 seemed to signal victory for the nationalist interventionism of the Liberals. But the recession of the early 1980s and falling oil prices undermined Liberal economic policies and fuelled the scepticism of the free market business liberals in both the Tory and Liberal parties. Thus, the debate raged on.

By the mid 1980s, following the election of the federal Tories under Brian Mulroney and the report of the Macdonald Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, business leaders, editorialists, professional and academic business economists and a significant number of increasingly influential think tanks, had embraced a neo-liberal *restructuring discourse* which advocated an economic development strategy centred around continental free trade, deregulation of the economy, and retrenchment of the welfare state.⁴⁶ This emerging consensus among important opinion leaders telegraphed the neo-liberal turn in Canadian political discourse and marked the onset of a major cultural transformation within the Canadian political

economy. Initially, however, the federal Liberals and the New Democratic Party resisted the trend, and the 1988 election became a virtual referendum on the question of bilateral free trade with the United States. Retrospective reviews of the 1988 election have stressed that having an election so explicitly focussed on opposing strategies for economic development was unique, quite uncharacteristic of postwar brokerage-style politics.⁴⁷ With this in mind, it is significant that Reform's interventions in that election campaign--the party's first--were firmly on the side of free trade and the emerging neo-liberal agenda. At that stage Reform was still a regional party; indeed, a regional fairness test for public policies was near the top of the party's economic policy agenda, but Reform's campaign platform emphasized freeing up market forces and making a commitment to fiscal conservatism.⁴⁸

While the debate over economic development strategies continued, the processes of economic restructuring were fundamentally altering the material conditions of life for working and middle class Canadians. For example, the trend in employment growth since the late 1960s has been away from the primary industries and manufacturing and toward the service sectors. Between 1967 and 1988 the share of the labour force employed in primary industries, manufacturing and construction dropped from 41% to 29%. At the same time the service sectors grew from 59% to 71% of the labour force. Indeed, almost 90% of employment growth between 1967 and 1988 took place in the service sectors.⁴⁹ This trend has quite profoundly transformed the Canadian labour market and, thus, the way working people experience the Canadian political economy. In the service sectors,

both the quality of employment and income levels are quite polarized. For example, in 1986 the average hourly earnings of jobs in nonmarket and dynamic services were 117% and 111%, respectively, of the national average. In traditional services, on the other hand, workers earned only 73% of the national average.⁵⁰ Since each of the service sectors (nonmarket, dynamic and traditional) employs approximately one quarter of the labour force, and the annual rate of growth in employment in each of these sectors between the late 1960s and the late 1980s was almost identical (approximately 3.4% compared to .9% for primary industries, manufacturing and construction),⁵¹ there has been an increasing polarization of incomes and a decline in the percentage of Canadians earning the national average.

Equally significant for working people has been the rapid growth in nonstandard employment, including part-time, short-term, self-employed and temporary-help agencies. Between 1981 and 1986 these forms of nonstandard employment accounted for roughly half of all new jobs, and now represent almost one third of total employment.⁵² In addition, the percentage of part-time workers who are *involuntary* in the sense that they would prefer a full-time job, has increased from 10% in 1976, to 20% in 1990, to about 31% during the mid 1990s.⁵³

With the growth of the service economy and nonstandard employment, the labour market has become highly polarized, with two identifiable growth poles: "Virtually all of the recent employment growth has involved either highly skilled well-compensated, and secure jobs or unstable and relatively poorly paid jobs."⁵⁴ The percentage of Canadians

earning middle-level incomes has declined, inequality has increased, and the Canadian labour market has become more stratified.⁵⁵ In addition, more and more Canadians have been moved out of the active labour market by continued high unemployment. The annual unemployment rate in Canada has not dropped below 7.5% since the late 1970s. In fact, although the rate of unemployment varies with business cycles, there has been a long-term secular increase in joblessness for the past three decades. Unemployment rates rose from 4.8% for 1960-67, to 5.4% for 1968-73, to 7.3% for 1974-79, to 9.3% for 1980-89. In the 1990s unemployment rates have often been over 10%.⁵⁶

In the context of the crisis of Fordism, the postwar dream of a continually increasing standard of living for working people has obviously become something of an *impossible dream* for a growing segment of the population. Not only has unemployment been persistently high, but for Canadians who are working, real wage gains—which had been in the range of 35% to over 40% a decade during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s--dropped dramatically after 1970. During the 1980s real wage gains were a mere 2%; for male workers real wages actually *declined* between 1980 and 1990.⁵⁷ At the same time, average household debt has been on the increase, more than doubling between 1971 and 1995.⁵⁸ And personal bankruptcies have increased from below 10,000 per year in the mid 1970s to 20,000 in 1980, 40,000 in 1990, and almost 80,000 in 1996.⁵⁹ The net result of increasing economic strain and insecurity has been a growing sense of alienation which has generally undermined public optimism. One poll, released in early 1993, reported that 56% of the population expect the next generation to be worse off than their parents--only

18% thought the next generation would be better off.⁶⁰ Of course, given that Canadians had just experienced the worst recession of the postwar era,⁶¹ this poll result was not surprising--there are *objective* reasons for declining optimism.

In developing this line of argumentation, I am clearly assuming that individuals respond to the material conditions they face in daily life. This has long been the assumption of students of voting behaviour.⁶² It is also an important element of Maurice Pinard's theory of minor party development.⁶³ Following Pinard, Gagnon and Tanguay have argued that economic *strain*, such as that experienced during an "[e]conomic recession, with its attendant high levels of unemployment and lowering of individual financial expectations, is *obviously* likely to induce voters to turn away from the government in power."⁶⁴ Livianna Tossutti has also suggested that relative economic uncertainty in Alberta prior to Reform's birth as a political party in 1987-88 helps explain the party's roots in that province.

Reform also probably benefited from voter apprehension about deteriorating economic conditions...In the 4 years between the 1984 and 1988 national elections, Alberta's provincial economy stagnated, while Ontario's grew rapidly. Alberta's average annual GDP growth rate during the period was 1.7 percent (at market prices)--well below Ontario's average annual growth rate of 10 percent and the national average of 8 percent. Alberta's average annual unemployment rate during the same period was 9.3 percent, compared to Ontario's 6.5 percent jobless rate.⁶⁵

While the relationship between politics and the economy highlighted by the literature on voting behaviour and the rise of minor parties is not to be ignored, as social scientists we must be aware of the role of ideas and mediating institutions, including

political parties, which influence *how* apparently objective social and economic conditions are understood and transformed into political interests and action. We must always remember that under similar material conditions, individuals can develop very different political identities and interests "depending on the kind of discursive field within which they exist."⁶⁶ As Robert Mullaly explains.

although a rising budget deficit, increasing inflation, stagnation, and high unemployment may constitute 'objective' phenomena, the analyses, explanations, and interpretations of these phenomena are 'subjective'. In other words, a crisis may be seen as a set of objective circumstances, but it includes a subjective interpretation.⁶⁷

Theoretically, what is important to us here is that the understandings of the economy and social relations which inform the *analysis, explanation, and interpretation* of economic conditions will vary, both between individuals and across time. During periods of stability, when a hegemonic mode of regulation and societal paradigm are maintaining a particular regime of accumulation *in regulation*, there is likely to be a greater degree of popular consensus on how to interpret economic conditions. Partisan competitors are likely to blame one another for economic downturns, but they will essentially agree on the solutions to poor economic conditions. The explanations and solutions offered by alternative discursive frameworks will be marginalized, and partisan organizations will tend to coalesce around common analysis and interpretation of economic conditions. For this reason, it is not entirely surprising that Calum Carmichael's recent study of economic conditions and incumbent party popularity found that from 1945 to 1972 negative economic conditions preceding an election actually benefited the incumbent party.⁶⁸ Nor

is it surprising that these effects were diminished or reversed in the period coinciding with the crisis of Fordism, 1972-1993.

It would be difficult to sustain the argument that the onset of a crisis in regulation is *directly* responsible for changing the response of voters to negative economic conditions. This is not my intention. But because the onset of crisis destabilizes the hegemonic societal paradigm and opens the space for alternative discursive interventions, the role of parties as mediating institutions which offer analysis and interpretation of economic conditions increases in importance. In other words, with the once agreed upon discursive framework destabilized, the material and ideological conditions are ripe for the emergence of new parties and alternative political discourses. During the 1980s, the crisis of Fordism and the processes of political economic restructuring resulted in a situation in which the party system became a site of ideological struggles between contending understandings of the economy and social relations. There are always alternative perspectives struggling for legitimacy within the party system, but they are often influential only at the margins. During periods of crisis these ideological struggles move to centre stage until a new hegemonic consensus is forged. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Reform Party participated in these discursive struggles as a protagonist in the effort to advance neo-liberalism. Reform is an expression of the neo-liberal ideological turn which began before the birth of the party, but it is also an active participant in the effort to marginalize welfare liberalism in favour of a neo-liberal mode of governance.

In 1987 and 1988 Reform emerged as a Western-based party advocating greater

sensitivity to unique regional economic interests. But the party specifically opposed *politically-motivated* decisions regarding regional economic development. While the party's platform for the 1988 election criticized the Mulroney Tories for favouring Quebec in awarding the 1986 CF-18 maintenance contract to Canadian, Reform did *not* call for the *politically-motivated* decision-making to be reoriented in favour of the West. Instead, the party platform called for "a government procurement policy based on fairness and normal commercial criteria of price and quality."⁶⁹ The platform stressed that Reform proposed to "depoliticize economic decision-making in Canada."⁷⁰ The West, in other words, would only benefit to the extent it *naturally* would in a free market environment. Even on energy, Reform argued that "despite a period of low oil prices...the energy industry should respond to the dictates of the market."⁷¹ On other issues, the economic platform which Reform took into the 1988 election called for a more competitive banking system, privatization of crown corporations, free trade with the U.S., a simpler system of income tax, including the possibility of a flat tax, and measures to require the federal government to balance its budget in each three year period or be obliged to call an election.

It is interesting that in 1988 and 1993 Manning and his party actually pitched their policy agenda as a solution to the crisis of Fordist regulation. Of course, the language used by Reform was quite different, but Manning often evoked the image of a crisis of regulation when he suggested that Old Canada is dying and New Canada is struggling to be born. In campaign speeches and a party publication which was widely distributed

during the 1993 election campaign, Manning asked:

What's happening to Canada's economy...what is happening to our country? With plant closures, lay-offs and down-sizings, there are now over 1.6 million Canadians unemployed, and hundreds of thousands more in dead-end jobs paying low wages. But there is good news. A New Economy is struggling to be born.⁷²

He also seemed to accept the tumultuous and conflict ridden nature of social and economic restructuring when he invited Canadians to get involved in the struggle to define this emerging future economy.⁷³

Of course, Reform's analysis of Canada's economic dilemmas was not original, nor did the party's proposed solutions form an entirely comprehensive and coherent solution to the crisis of Fordism. Much of what Canadians heard from Reform with regard to economic policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s borrowed from other forces in the ongoing debate. Nevertheless, Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse spoke to many working Canadians who were in search of a new direction in economic policy. It spoke to right-wing fiscal conservatives who had always been troubled by the Keynesian welfare state. It spoke to middle class Canadians who felt economically vulnerable and squeezed by a state form which appeared to have them paying (in taxes), but not receiving (in the way of directed welfare state programmes). And, finally, it spoke to that "classically populist audience: people whose expectations and/or experiences of material and cultural security have seriously declined during social and economic restructuring."⁷⁴ Essentially, I would argue that the reason Reform's economic analysis and policy agenda has been appealing to so many working and middle class Canadians is that it provides an

analysis, explanation, and interpretation of economic problems which is consistent with the restructuring discourse pushed by the business community, media and think tank agenda-setters, while also highlighting the concerns that middle-income tax payers have with their personal capacity to support the continuation of the postwar system.

Furthermore, in 1988 and 1993 Reform pitched their agenda as simultaneously *offering solutions* and, very importantly, *placing blame*; they combined a future-oriented neo-liberal agenda with, as will be explained in more detail in chapter five, a defensive attack on the minority special interests who they blame for the deteriorating social and economic situation in which many Canadians found themselves (or worried they soon would find themselves).

During the late 1980s and, particularly, the early 1990s, Canadians were looking for solutions to the problems associated with economic restructuring--not just the economically insecure, but many fairly comfortable upper-middle income earners who felt squeezed by rising taxes and worried about their children's future, believed *new* solutions were necessary. Reform offered solutions based on a neo-liberal restructuring discourse which emphasized the need to turn away from old ways of doing things. The party actively rejected the policy consensus which the major brokerage parties had endorsed for most of the postwar era. It similarly rejected the nationalist interventionism the Liberals had experimented with in the early 1980s. After several decades of a welfare liberal mode of governance which allowed for the expansion of the welfare state, Reform endorsed the neo-liberal call to dramatically restrict the role of government in society.

The party advocated the deregulation and depoliticization of the economy, and demanded that social policy be subordinated to the requirements of labour market flexibility and structural competitiveness. In their primary policy document, Preston Manning and his party claimed to offer Canadians an "alternative to the welfare state."⁷⁵ They supported a shift from an emphasis on collective responsibility toward market oriented values which emphasize individual initiative, and they promised that this would result in cost-savings and create more potential for market-based solutions which did not require continued government intervention in the economic and personal lives of Canadians. In light of the fact that some political economists had labelled the postwar development strategy and policy consensus Canada's *second national policy*, it is interesting that in 1988 Reform presented this neo-liberal economic platform as "a new national policy".⁷⁶

In 1988 and 1993 the Liberals and NDP campaigned on resisting much of the emerging neo-liberal agenda. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that within the partisan arena the Tories had been championing neo-liberal restructuring discourse for a number of years prior to the birth of Reform. What the Reform Party was able to do was critique the failure of the Tories without rejecting the fundamentals of neo-liberalism. They did this in two ways.⁷⁷ First, this was done by raising doubts about the Tory conviction to fiscal responsibility and the free market. Drawing on the same neo-liberal rhetoric that Brian Mulroney had embraced, Reformers asked who the *true* fiscal conservatives are. By attacking the government's inability to control spending, grapple with the deficit or effectively reduce the size of the welfare state, Manning tried to

position his party as the *fiscal conscience* of Canada, the true voice of fiscal conservatism and neo-liberalism. Reform, he claimed, was the party with the strength of conviction to provide a fiscally responsible and future-oriented plan capable of responding to the ongoing economic crisis.⁷⁸

Of course, the Reform Party's ability to become Canada's party of fiscal conservatism in the early 1990s would not depend solely on the Conservative government's record. Unrelated factors such as the personal popularity (or lack thereof) of Prime Ministers Mulroney and Campbell influenced the extent to which people trusted the Tories to deal with the deficit. But in 1993, when Reform received 18.7% of the votes cast in the federal election, an October opinion poll showed Reform was supported by 36.2% of Canadians who felt the deficit was the most important issue.⁷⁹ Thus, to the extent that voters could be convinced to accept neo-liberal analysis about the importance of deficit control to solving economic problems, Reform was positioned to win the support of Canadians hurt by or concerned about the state of the economy.

The second dimension of Reform's critique of the Tories' neo-liberal credentials was the claim that the Tory party, like all traditional political parties, was unable to blaze a new trail of fiscal responsibility because it was too tied to the bureaucratic interests of the welfare state and far too willing to pander to the powerful special interests of the postwar era who always wanted more from government. Manning told voters that government can't respond to the common sense concerns of ordinary Canadians who are being hurt by tough economic times when they are preoccupied with responding to all

sorts of minority special interest groups. The message was that the Tories were unwilling to follow through on their neo-liberal convictions and defend the economic interests of ordinary Canadians because their policies were dictated by the bureaucrats and special interest groups which remain committed to perpetuating the unaffordable Keynesian welfare state.⁸⁰

Obviously, as is emphasized in chapter two, the public's negative opinion of Brian Mulroney (and Kim Campbell), as well as the politics of specific issues, such as the GST, the Meech Lake Accord and the CF-18 maintenance contract decision, help to explain the existence of electoral opportunities for Preston Manning and the Reform Party. But the appeal of Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse was the result of broader political economic and ideological changes taking place within Canada. Chapter five will explore the ways in which the specifically *populist* dimensions of Reform's political discourse are rooted in the broader political and ideological struggles which constitute the politics of representation. At this point, my aim has simply been to establish how the context of crisis and the particular material conditions of life in the 1980s and early 1990s created a space for Reform's emergence as an electorally competitive protagonist in the struggle to advance neo-liberal economic discourse and development strategies. The political economic context shapes party system change; with this in mind, I have argued that an understanding of the changing political economic context is essential to the task of explaining the rise of Reform.

Conclusion

As an early and vigorous advocate of fiscal conservatism and other dimensions of the neo-liberal agenda, the Reform Party has played a role in legitimizing the emergence of a neo-liberal mode of governance. From its birth as a political party, Reform has challenged what it views as outdated Keynesian and welfare liberal discursive frameworks for interpreting events and defining policy options. Today, the paradigm shift in governing practices which has been associated with the neo-liberal turn is continuing. The governing Liberals have gradually shifted from defending postwar development strategies, to embracing a neo-liberal policy agenda not unlike that of the previous Tory regime, or the Reform Party. Nevertheless, Reform remains the purest partisan expression of the cultural transformation associated with the neo-liberal turn.

An important factor behind Reform's electoral breakthrough in 1993 was the party's assumption of the role of partisan champion of fiscal conservatism. It is true that Harrison, Johnston and Krahn have stressed the need to be cautious about overstating the electoral importance of the deficit issue and Reform's New Right economic policy analysis.⁸¹ But, in 1993, championing fiscal conservatism proved useful because it allowed Manning and his party to challenge the neo-liberal credentials of other parties--in particular the Tories--while also allowing Reform the opportunity to mobilize populist resentment and protest against the special interests which Reform blames for perpetuating the increasingly unaffordable welfare state; and Harrison, Johnston and Krahn's research does support the paramount electoral significance of Reform's anti-special interest politics. The two dimensions of the party's electoral appeal were, in other words, closely

intertwined.

Since the party's birth, Reform's ideological interventions in the struggle to define the parameters of the emerging neo-liberal mode of governance focussed on popularizing, within the partisan arena, an economic analysis which links welfare state retrenchment to tax cuts, and then links tax cuts and shrinking government to economic growth and private sector job creation. By positioning Reform as the primary partisan advocate of market-based neo-liberal solutions to the challenges of social and economic restructuring, Manning and his strategists hoped to be rewarded as neo-liberalism's analytical and ideological framework was established as the dominant discursive framework of the Canadian party system. Even in 1993, when the Liberals successfully established the unemployment crisis as the key election issue by promising an interventionist infrastructure programme to create new jobs, Manning focussed steadfastly on deficit reduction. He rarely mentioned the unemployed during the campaign. Instead, he appealed to voters as *tax payers* who should be concerned by government overspending. One of his central campaign messages was that "the best thing the government can do for Canadians is get off their backs and get out of their pockets."⁸² Reform wanted to convince hard-working tax payers who had been squeezed by a decade of Tory tax reform that they would, eventually, be the beneficiaries of deficit reduction⁸³

The central plank in the Reform Party's 1993 election platform was their "Zero in Three" deficit elimination programme. This plan for eliminating the federal deficit in just three years was sold to Canadians as a strategy to start spending tax dollars responsibly so

that tax payers could soon experience some tax relief. Of course, the subtext was always that ordinary Canadians had been footing the bill for special interests which had successfully milked the system in the context of the postwar Keynesian welfare state. It is to Reform's neo-liberal populist attack on these special interests that I turn in chapter five.

Endnotes

1. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, "Piercing the Smokescreen: Brokerage Parties and Class Politics," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), p. 24.
2. While I will usually refer to the regulation approach and regulation theory in the singular, it is clear that there are a plurality of regulation approaches. Jessop suggests there are seven regulationist schools which can be grouped into four broad approaches based on their inclination toward a national level or international focus and whether they place emphasis exclusively on the economic or on a broader conception of social regulation. In this paper I will borrow from a variety of sources, but there will be a tendency to emphasize those works which focus on the national level and emphasize both social and economic regulation. See Bob Jessop, "Regulation theories in retrospect and prospect," *Economy and Society*, Volume 19 Number 2 (May, 1990).
3. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), Chapter 2.
4. Jane Jenson, "All the World's a Stage: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy," *Studies in Political Economy*, 36 (Fall 1991), p. 49.
5. Fairly succinct explanations of the key concepts of 'regime of accumulation' and 'mode of regulation' can be found in Alain Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles: The Crisis of Global Fordism*, (London: Verso, 1987), pp. 14-15. Jenson develops the notion of 'societal paradigm' in Jane Jenson, "all the World's a Stage: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy." And the concepts of 'state form' and 'mode of governance' are developed in the work of Jessop, Brodie, and Rose and Miller. See: Bob Jessop "Towards a Schumpeterian Welfare State? Preliminary Remarks on Post-Fordist Political Economy," in *Studies in Political Economy*, 40 (Spring, 1993); Janine Brodie, "Gender, the New Citizenship and the Neo-Liberal State," *Citizenship Studies* 1:2, 1997; and, Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political power beyond the state: problematics of government," in *British Journal of Sociology*, Volume 43, Number 2 (June, 1992).
6. Jenson, "All the World's a Stage," p. 56 and Jane Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional': Canada's permeable fordism," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 26 (1989), pp.74-76.

7. Those familiar with the concepts of state form and mode of governance will be aware that some have used the concept of state form in a manner which captures much of what is intended by the concept of governance; and others have used governance to capture most of what is intended by state form. In their respective discussion of state forms and modes of governance, Brodie and Rose and Miller demonstrate the possibilities which exist for collapsing these concepts. See: Brodie, "Gender, the New Citizenship and the Neo-Liberal State"; and, Rose and Miller, "Political power beyond the state: problematics of government."
8. While this observation is now commonplace, Brodie's recent discussion of these three distinct periods is particularly useful because it is uniquely clear and concise. See: Brodie, "Gender, the New Citizenship and the Neo-Liberal State."
9. Bob Jessop, "The regulation approach, governance and post-Fordism: alternative perspectives on economic and political change?" in Economy and Society, Volume 24, Number 3 (August, 1995), p. 317.
10. Bowles and Gintis. Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community, and the Contradiction of Modern Social Thought, p. 94.
11. Rose and Miller, "Political power beyond the state: problematics of government," p. 174.
12. While the term 'political rationality' has an obvious meaning, Rose and Miller elaborate on that meaning by explaining that political rationalities "are morally coloured, grounded upon knowledge, and made thinkable through language." Every political rationality has (i) a 'moral form', which suggests the fitting powers and duties of different authorities (ie. political, spiritual, military, pedagogic, familial) and specifies the ideals or principles to which governance should be directed; (ii) an 'epistemological character', which provides a conception of the nature of the objects to be governed (ie. individuals, society, the nation, the population, the economy); and, (iii) a 'distinctive idiom', which contributes the political discourse and intellectual machinery for rendering reality thinkable. See: Ibid., pp. 178-179.
13. Those familiar with the work of Jane Jenson will recognize the similarities between this discussion of mode of governance and Jenson's description of a societal paradigm as a "set of interconnected norms, habits and laws which make sense of ...social relations." See: Jenson, "All the World's a State: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy," p. 56.
14. Partisan politics and party systems are given theoretical attention in the following works: Rene Bertramsen, et al., State, Economy and Society, (London: Unwin Hyman,

1991); Juergen Haeusler and Joachim Hirsch, "Political regulation: The Crisis of Fordism and the Transformation of the Party System in West Germany," in M. Gottdiener and Nicos Komninos, eds., *Capitalist Development and Crisis Theory: Accumulation, Regulation and Spatial Restructuring*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989); Jenson, "All the World's a Stage,"; Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional'"; Jessop, "Regulation theories in retrospect and prospect."

15. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," p. 306.
16. Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional'." p. 73.
17. Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional'." p. 76; and Jenson, "All the World's a Stage," pp. 56-57.
18. Jessop, "Regulation theories in retrospect and prospect," p. 201.
19. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," p. 311.
20. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada Revisited*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988). Chapter 1.
21. Jessop, "Regulation theories in retrospect and prospect." p. 172.
22. Haeusler and Hirsch, "Political Regulation," pp. 302-303.
23. Jenson, "All the World's a Stage," p. 57.
24. The essential characteristics of a Fordist regime of accumulation are discussed by, among others: David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), chapter 8; and Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles*, chapter 2.
25. Mike Davis, "The Political Economy of Late-Imperial America," *New Left Review*, 123 (1984), pp. 8 & 10.
26. Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional'." p. 73.
27. Andrew Martin, "The Politics of Employment and Welfare: National Policies and International Interdependence," in Keith Banting, ed.. *The State and Economic Interests* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).
28. Jenson, "'Different but not 'exceptional'." and Jenson, "Representations in Crisis."

29. William D. Coleman, "Macroeconomic Policy: Dwindling Options," in Michael M. Atkinson, ed., *Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1993), pp. 214-215.
30. Cy Gonick, *The Great Economic Debate* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1987), p. 91.
31. Carolyn Tuohy, "Social Policy: Two Worlds," in Michael M. Atkinson, ed., *Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), pp. 276-279.
32. Jenson, "Different but not 'exceptional,'" p. 81. The contrast between the North American and European welfare states is made starkly for popular audiences in Linda McQuaig, *The Wealthy Banker's Wife: The Assault on Equality in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1993).
33. As is evident, much of the discussion in this paragraph is informed by Christian and Campbell. See: Christian and Campbell, *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*, Third Edition (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1990), p. 133.
34. Tuohy, "Social Policy: Two Worlds."
35. Murray Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1991), pp. 85-86.
36. Gregory Albo, "The 'New Realism' and Canadian Workers," in Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton, eds., *Canadian Politics: an introduction to the discipline* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1990); and Charlotte Yates, "Labour and Lobbying: A Political Economy Approach," in William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad, eds., *Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach* (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1990).
37. This, of course, is the central thesis of Brodie and Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change*.
38. Combined as it was with a business liberal commitment to continentalism, this national identity differs from the anti-American Left nationalism Canadians are more familiar with today. Under King and St. Laurent the Liberals were "preoccupied with escaping British ties, they were blind to the new bonds they were forging" through continentalism. See William Christian and Colin Campbell, *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*, p. 253.

39. David E. Smith "Party Government, representation and national integration in Canada," in Peter Aucoin, ed., *Party Government and Regional Representation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
40. Duncan Cameron, "Political Discourse in the Eighties." in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), p. 65.
41. Christian and Campbell, *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*, pp. 59-68.
42. Harold D. Clarke, et al., *Absent Mandate: Interpreting change in Canadian Elections*, Second Edition (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 8-14; and Brodie and Jenson. "Piercing the Smokescreen," pp. 29-33.
43. E.C. Manning *Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967).
44. Jenson, "All the World's a Stage," p. 57.
45. This discussion is based on, among other sources. Janine Brodie. *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada, 1990), chapter 7.
46. Brodie uses the term 'restructuring discourse' to suggest a historically specific set of ideas and practices which, during a crisis period, seems to be in the process of defining an emerging hegemonic paradigm. See Janine Brodie, "Politics in a Globalized World: New State Forms, New Political Spaces." A paper presented to the Mexican Association of Canadian Studies, Mexico City, April 26, 1994.
47. Janine Brodie, "The 'Free Trade' Election," *Studies in Political Economy*, 28 (Spring, 1989).
48. Reform Party of Canada, "The West Wants In! Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada." (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988).
49. Economic Council of Canada, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Employment in the Service Economy* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1990), pp. 4-5.
50. Gordon Betcherman, "The Disappearing Middle," in Daniel Drache, ed., *Getting On Track: Social Democratic Strategies for Ontario* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 131.
51. Economic Council of Canada, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, p. 5.

52. Economic Council of Canada. Good Jobs, Bad Jobs, pp. 11-12.
53. The Globe and Mail, April 20, 1996.
54. Economic Council of Canada. Good Jobs, Bad Jobs, p. 10.
55. The question of exactly why this is happening is one that has caused considerable controversy throughout North America. Some have denied the 'trend' and argued that changes are merely cyclical. Others have argued that with a younger working population and more women entering the labour force, changes in the labour supply are the 'cause' of the trend. Still others have argued that the problem is in the nature of jobs in the new service economy. However, none of these explanations seem to offer a full explanation. The entry of women and young people into the labour market has been a factor, but polarization remains when age and sex are controlled for. Similarly, detailed studies have found growing polarization within industries and occupations as well as between them. With this in mind some have begun to look at the impact of competition from low-wage economies and the diminishing role of unions, but very little is conclusive. For two good overviews of the debate see: Betcherman, "The Disappearing Middle"; and Gary W. Loveman and Chris Tilly, "Good jobs or bad jobs?" in International Labour Review, Vol. 127, No. 5 (1988).
56. Coleman. "Macroeconomic Policy: Dwindling Options," p. 228.
57. Statistics Canada. "Seven Decades of Wage Changes." cited in Globe & Mail, July 6, 1993, pp. A1-2.
58. Kenneth Kidd. "Consumers: An Endangered Species." Report on Business Magazine (December, 1996), pp. 38-39.
59. John Saunders. "More Canadians going broke." The Globe and Mail, March 15, 1997, p. A1.
60. Maclean's, Jan. 4, 1993, p. 17.
61. Statistics from the Ontario Ministry of Treasury and Economics show that in Ontario the five recessions between 1950 and 1980 resulted in an average real GDP decline of -1.7% over an average length of 2.6 quarters. The 1981-82 recession lasted 5 quarters with a GDP decline of -5.9%, and during 6 quarters between 1989-91 the real GDP declined -7.8%. Cited in McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation, p. 145.
62. See, for example: Harold D. Clarke and Allan Kornberg, "Support for the Canadian Federal Progressive Conservative Party since 1988: The Impact of Economic Evaluations

and Economic Issues," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXV:1 (March, 1992), pp. 29-53; and, Richard Nadeau and André Blais, "Explaining Election Outcomes in Canada: Economy and Politics." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXVI:4 (December, 1993), pp. 775-790.

63. Maurice Pinard, *The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971).
64. Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, "Minor Parties of Protest in Canada: Origins, Impact, and Prospects," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), pp. 237-238.
65. Livianna S. Tossutti, "From communitarian Protest towards Institutionalization: The Evolution of 'Hybrid' Parties in Canada and Italy," *Party Politics* Volume 2, Number 4 (October, 1996), p. 442.
66. Juergen Haeusler and Joachim Hirsch, "Political Regulation: The Crisis of Fordism and the Transformations of the Party System in West Germany," in M. Gottdiener and Nicos Komninos, eds., *Capitalist Development and Crisis Theory: Accumulation, Regulation and Spatial Restructuring* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 311.
67. Robert Mullaly, "Social Welfare and the New Right: A Class Mobilization Perspective," in Andrew F. Johnson, Stephen McBride and Patrick K. Smith, eds., *Continuities and Discontinuities: The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 78.
68. Calum M Carmichael, "Economic Conditions and the Popularity of the Incumbent Party in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXIII:4 (December, 1990), pp. 713-726.
69. Reform Party of Canada, "'The West Wants In! Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada," (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988).
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Reform Party of Canada, "This Election Don't Just Buy The Packaging. Look at what's inside," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 2.
73. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 358.

74. Laycock, "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project." p. 219.
75. Reform Party of Canada, *The Blue Book: Principles and Policies*, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1991), p. 28.
76. Reform Party of Canada, "'The West Wants In! Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada," (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988).
77. This basic argument is also presented in Steve Patten and Reg Whitaker. "Learning From Mr. Right: Taking Preston Manning and the Reform Party Seriously." *The Canadian Forum*, Volume LXXIV, Number 841 (July/August, 1995).
78. See for example: Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 336-351; or, Reform Party of Canada, "Look at the national debt hole Canada is in."
79. André Turcotte, "Economic Voting in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election." A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association. Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994. p. 24.
80. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 320.
81. Trevor Harrison, Bill Johnston and Harvey Krahn, "Special Interests and/or New Right Economics? The Ideological Bases of Reform Party Support in Alberta in the 1993 Federal Election," in *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 33.2. May 1996. pp. 150-179.
82. Carol Goar, *Toronto Star*, Oct. 16, 1993, p. A8.
83. While piecing together a comprehensive picture of the impact tax reform has had on Canadians is a difficult task, it is clear that the middle class tax fatigue emphasized by the Reform Party is rooted in reality. Visible tax changes such as the implementation of the regressive Goods and Services Tax are the most controversial, but numerous less visible changes have tightened the tax squeeze which has produced this widespread sense of tax fatigue. In his study of changes to the tax system between 1984 and 1991 Patrick Grady found the impact on corporations and individuals differed significantly. There was a reduction in the corporate tax rate--motivated by "the need to remain competitive with the U.S. tax system"--while personal marginal tax rates increased. According to Grady, the "magnitude of the increase in average marginal rates is particularly striking in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 income range." See: Patrick Grady, "Taking Stock of Tory Tax Reform," Paper presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Economic Association, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June 2, 1991, pp. 10-12.

Chapter Five

The Politics of Representation and Reform's Neo-liberal Populism

Introduction

At first it might seem odd to argue that the rise of the Reform Party and the popularization of Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse and policy agenda is directly linked to the earlier rise of a group of progressive social movements and public interest groups which have come to be known as the *new social movements*--including feminism, environmentalism, and the gay and lesbian rights movement. Nevertheless, it is the intention of this chapter to demonstrate the importance of that very relationship. To do so requires consideration of the very different ways in which Reform and the new social movements have intervened in the *politics of representation*--that is, the political and ideological struggles and conflicts which shape and determine the salience of various political interests and identities.

Often the concept of *political representation* is used simply to refer to acting for or standing for a particular segment of the population or political interest.¹ But focusing solely on this *instrumental side* of representation, has distracted social scientists from the task of exploring the *constitutive side* of representation. As I explained in the introductory chapter, representation in its constitutive sense involves the creation of collective political identities.² From this perspective representation is an "active and formative relationship"

with an important ideological or discursive dimension.³ In other words, the process of representing a political interest forges and gives meaning to that interest by discursively defining *who* is being represented.⁴ Thus, as political parties integrate individuals into the ongoing system of partisan relations through strategic appeals which call voters into politics, the particular way in which they construct these appeals influences which social differences and tensions will have sufficient salience to underpin the collective political identities around which the electorate divides itself.⁵ In this way the political and ideological interventions of political parties influence the discursive construction of political interests and identities.

Clearly, however, the discursive practices of political parties are only one dimension of the complex representational processes which shape Canadian politics. Interest groups and social movement organizations are another dimension, and they too influence the construction of political interests and identities.⁶ Indeed, the defining feature of the new social movements is their commitment to cultural transformation at the level of social relations and political identities. William Carroll contends these movements can be "viewed as instances of cultural and political praxis through which new identities are formed, new ways of life are tested, and new forms of community are prefigured."⁷ Since the late 1960s, the efforts of the new social movements to challenge oppression and domination have politicized a range of social relations and drawn attention to themes such as sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, racism, environmental degradation, and discrimination against people with disabilities. Similarly, the new social movements'

commitment to a politics which combines self-transformation and the building of multiple solidarities has resulted in the proliferation of salient individual and collective political identities.

In this chapter, I will argue that populism is a form of identity politics played out on the terrain of the politics of representation. More specifically, populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between *the people* and *the powerful interests*. Importantly, however, I will stress that the content of this antagonism between the people and the powerful interests is always contestable. Neither the essence of this antagonism, nor the political identities of the people and the powerful interests, are objectively given. Thus, for populist movements or parties, populism is essentially an ideological instrument for the construction of these political identities and their respective political interests. Reform's neo-liberal populism, I will contend, is a response, in part, to the success of the public interest groups and social movement organizations which have emerged from the new social movements. The party's neo-liberal populism constructs the people/powerful interests antagonism as one which pits ordinary working and middle class taxpayers against the welfare state bureaucracy and the minority special interests associated with the new social movements which Reform contends have dominated decision-making processes within the modern welfare state. By constructing the populist antagonism in this way, Reform has engaged in a powerful form of identity politics which challenges the special interests of the new social movements by constructing their political agenda as at

odds with the interests of *ordinary Canadians*. Through their appeals to *ordinary Canadians*, the Reform Party constructs (while championing) what Manning calls the *common sense of the common people*.⁸ At the same time, Reform's discursive interventions constitute a challenge to the new social movements.

Giving content to notions of the common people and common sense is the ideological equivalent of what political strategists call *setting the agenda*. Common sense is the accumulated, and often taken-for-granted, set of assumptions and beliefs people use to impose an ideological structure upon the social world.⁹ As Canadians strive to make sense of the turbulent times in which we live, the Reform Party's success depends on calling working and middle class Canadians into politics as *ordinary Canadians*, and then constructing their political interests as being fundamentally at odds with the perpetuation of the welfare state and the demands of special interests ranging from feminists, to minority language and cultural groups, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and welfare recipients. As a protagonist in the struggle to advance neo-liberalism, Reform has played the unique role of developing the specifically *populist* dimensions of the neo-liberal ideological turn. The party's neo-liberal populism is an ideological challenge to the new social movements, and can only be fully understood through an examination of the conflicts between these movements and Reform as they are played out on the terrain of the politics of representation.

This chapter begins with an examination of the new social movements and the ways in which they have, since the 1960s, transformed the politics of representation.

Then, prior to examining Reform's populist politics, attention will turn to further elaborating the concept of populism and the ways in which populism is a form of identity politics.

The Politics of Representation & the New Social Movements

To begin, it should be noted that the content, significance and even the *newness* of the new social movements has been highly contested.¹⁰ Any even-handed account of the rise of the new social movements would admit that many these movements are merely earlier movements which have evolved in a context of significant social and political economic change. But a growing body of literature is claiming that over the past three decades feminist, anti-racist, ecological, and gay and lesbian social movements, among others, have highlighted the social conflictuality inherent in a wide variety of social relations and generated resistance to forms of subordination which were previously considered *natural*. Moreover, it is commonly argued that the new social movements' political and ideological resistance to relations of oppression is based on valorizing *difference*, enhancing the legitimacy and salience of an array of new political identities, and generally encouraging a "proliferation of particularisms" in progressive politics.¹¹ While it is true these movements have spawned traditional public interest groups which engage in state-centred policy advocacy, the larger *raison d'être* of new social movement organizations is to effect social change through cultural struggle which challenges the behaviour, relationships, ideas and identities of individuals. This has required new ways of defining and doing politics; in particular, it has meant a progressive politics for which class

identities and the terrain of the state are less central.¹² As Claus Offe explains, the new social movements' space of political struggle is *noninstitutional politics*:

they seek to politicize civil society in ways that are not constrained by representative-bureaucratic political institutions...[they] employ practices that belong to an intermediate sphere between private pursuits and concerns and institutional, state-sanctioned modes of politics.¹³

There is considerable debate about the origins of the new social movements.

Typically, the rise of these movements is explained as a cultural dimension of political economic changes which have occurred in the advanced capitalist democracies since the Second World War, but there are a variety of competing interpretations of the material conditions and social processes which led to their emergence. Ronald Inglehart contends the new social movements are best explained by reference to an intergenerational shift in value priorities which began with the first generation to spend its formative years in the relative economic and physical security of the postwar Fordist economic boom.¹⁴ He argues that with the maturing of the first postwar generation a *new politics* based on a *postmaterialist* outlook emerged to challenge traditional materialist outlooks and the class-based ideological cleavages which had dominated Western European (if not Canadian) politics. From this perspective, a primarily middle-class postmaterialist minority forms the social base of the new social movements.

Laclau and Mouffe, on the other hand, contend that the new struggles--and radicalized older struggles--of the new social movements are linked not to postwar affluence, but to new antagonisms and forms of subordination which have resulted from

the *commodification* and *bureaucratization* of an increasing array of social relations.¹⁵

Essentially, they argue that with the consolidation of Fordism and the hegemonic paradigm of the postwar era, consumerism and urbanization have fostered the penetration of capitalist relations into more areas of social life and more social spaces. At the same time, the Keynesian welfare state has facilitated the penetration of large bureaucratic organizations into (formerly) private areas of life. Laclau and Mouffe contend that, when combined, these developments expand the field of social conflictuality, and this leads to the emergence of new political subjects--in the form of the new social movements--which display new forms of resistance to relations of oppression and domination.

While not entirely rejecting Inglehart's emphasis on postwar affluence or the emphasis Laclau and Mouffe place on the importance of bureaucratization, Claus Offe's explanation of the rise of the new social movements stresses political economic developments *since* the onset of the crisis of Fordism. Offe argues that the political paradigm of the first two postwar decades--the Fordist paradigm of comprehensive economic growth combined with advances in the distributional positions of the working class--was effectively managed within the traditional liberal-democratic mechanisms of formal collective bargaining, party competition and representative government.¹⁶ This postwar compromise involved a particular hegemonic configuration of priority issues and institutional arrangements which defined the boundaries of the political. By the late 1960s, however, this postwar compromise and its associated political paradigm had begun to unravel. A series of consequential economic crises, an increasingly severe strain

on business profits, the rise of the information and service industries and the globalization of production undermined the possibility of continuing to combine economic growth and prosperity with further distributional advances for the working class. Moreover, according to Offe, the crisis of Fordism coincided with the transition from an *industrial* to a *post-industrial* economy. Post-industrialism, he explains, is marked by a substantial increase in the size of the white-collar service oriented *new middle class*, and significant growth in the numbers of workers--or at least people who are nominally *workers*--who are fully or partially *decommodified* by their location outside of or only peripherally involved in the labour force. Offe contends that because of their new and, in postwar terms, unique political interests, the new middle class and the peripheral or decommodified groups, as well as select elements of the old middle class, form the social base of the new social movements.¹⁷ Nevertheless, he puts particular emphasis on the importance of the new middle class to the sociostructural composition of these movements.

Support for the new social movements...is derived predominantly not from peripheral or underprivileged strata but from groups who themselves play a rather central role in steering and managing what Daniel Bell has called 'post-industrial' society. These core groups are relatively well-to-do, and include people from the new middle classes and the professional and service sectors who have the highest levels of education and the greatest cognitive skills.¹⁸

While Offe links the rise of the new social movements to post-industrialism, he does not follow those, such as Magnusson and Walker,¹⁹ who contend that post-industrialism marks a breach between modernity and postmodernity; nor does he contend that the new social movements struggle on the basis of new *postmodern identities* as is so

often argued.²⁰ Instead, Offe stresses the element of *continuity* in the new social movements. Rather than contend that the new social movements advocate entirely new values, he emphasizes the ways in which these movements champion the extension of modern values--such as autonomy, identity, authenticity, and human rights--and raise questions about the extent to which these modern values have been satisfactorily generalized within advanced capitalist societies. Offe's contention is that the new social movements engage in the "selective radicalization of modern values."²¹ Laclau and Mouffe emphasize a similar element of continuity in the rise of the new social movements. They argue that the new social movements embrace existing liberal-democratic discourse in a way which takes the principles of the democratic revolutions of earlier centuries and extends them to a whole new series of social relations. In identifying the new social movements with struggles against relations of subordination, they explain that

[i]t is the permanence of this egalitarian [liberal-democratic] imaginary which permits us to establish a continuity between the struggles of the nineteenth century against the inequalities bequeathed by the ancien régime and the social movements of the present.²²

The new social movements, then, are political movements engaged in a project of radical democracy. By struggling to transform social relations which have oppressed and marginalized women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and gays and lesbians, among others, the new social movements have transformed the landscape of salient political interests and identities. As social movements, their defining commitment is to

cultural transformation at the level of social relations and political identities. "[T]heir common denominator of organization and action is some sense of collective identity."²³ As Barry Adam argued in his study of gay liberation and the gay and lesbian movement, only by embracing a collective political identity could homosexuals be organized as a movement capable of articulating its interests and defending itself against its enemies.²⁴ Since they have emerged, the new social movements have politicized new themes and problematized once accepted social relations. They question liberal-democracy's traditionally narrow definition of politics, and call for the extension of personal rights, often at the expense of property rights. Moreover, while many of the demands they articulate are *postmaterialist*, the new social movements are *materialist* in the sense that they challenge the impact the prevailing mode of production has upon "the physical and human substance of social life."²⁵ For all these reasons, the new social movements have represented something of a challenge to the postwar social order. Over the past three decades they have shaken things up by challenging social relations which they identify as sexist, racist, heterosexist, abilist, and so on. But they have also often challenged the paramountcy of property rights and the assumed benefits of capitalist relations of production and economic growth. Thus, there is little doubt that the political and ideological struggles of the new social movements have transformed the *politics of representation* and altered the character of political and ideological struggle in liberal capitalist societies such as Canada. And it is in opposition to these developments that Reform's neo-liberal populism has emerged.

Populism and the Politics of Identity

Political economists and other critical social scientists have tended to view populism as a transitional phenomenon caused by asynchronisms in the modernizing phases of capitalist development.²⁶ Whether populism is explained as the product of a social economic situation unique to the period of modernization in dependent capitalist economies outside of Western Europe,²⁷ or as the ideological expression of the interests of the agrarian petite bourgeoisie during modernization and industrialization,²⁸ populist phenomena are often treated as a transitional pathology which emerges as class forces evolve in the context of capitalist development. The most significant contribution this literature has made to the search for a broadly applicable understanding of populism is the emphasis it places on linking populism to crisis and transitional phases of capitalist development.

Unfortunately, the somewhat orthodox and stagist conception of the development of class forces and capitalism employed in much of this work serves to limit the conceptualization of crisis and, as a result, leads to the conclusion that the era of populism is, for much of the world, now behind us.

As Ernesto Laclau points out, this position seems to imply a denial of populist experiences which take place in the so-called developed countries.²⁹ In the late 1970s Laclau led the way in providing an alternative theorization of populism. His work is theoretically dense, and it has its own weaknesses. Nevertheless, it is highly suggestive and, I believe, serves as the most useful starting point for developing an understanding of populism. Laclau began with the assumption that it is a mistake to assume that classes

and empirically observable groups necessarily coincide.³⁰ He argued that at both the political and ideological levels, classes have no necessary form of existence.³¹ For this reason, and because of the entirely dissimilar social bases of many historical populist movements, Laclau rejected the notion that populism is simply the expression of a determinate social class (such as the agrarian petite bourgeoisie).

In developing his perspective on populism, Laclau placed considerable emphasis on the role of class forces in political and ideological struggles, but he also stressed the importance of the *subjective* dimensions of politics--that is, those dimensions of political and ideological struggle which contribute to the discursive construction of political interests and identities. He argued that while the ideology of a populist movement will have what he calls a "class belonging," some of the central interpellations which constitute it will have a distinctly non-class character.³² And these non-class interpellations which characterize populism involve appeals to *the people*. In other words, populist discourses call political subjects into politics as the people; they construct their political subjects as the people.

Populism, from this perspective, would not include just any rhetorical political appeal to the people. In Laclau's work, populism would only include political interventions whose non-class interpellations feature two specific characteristics. First, they must consciously appeal to the people as one of two poles of the "people/power bloc contradiction" which he explains is fashioned by "the complex of political and ideological relations of domination constituting a determinate social formation."³³ Second, according

to Laclau, they must clearly represent a challenge to existing power structures.³⁴ Thus, populism is a challenge to the relations of domination constituted by the people/power bloc contradiction (which I shall herein refer to as the people/powerful interests antagonism³⁵) and the dominant ideology which reinforces such relations of domination. This is not to suggest that populism is necessarily progressive or revolutionary, or even that it is necessarily an ideology of the dominated classes. Since the people/powerful interests antagonism exists at the political and ideological level, a populism which accepts capitalist relations of production and whose class belonging is not strictly working class is also possible. According to Laclau, it "is sufficient for a class or class fraction to need a substantial transformation in the power bloc in order to assert its hegemony, for a populist experience to be possible."³⁶

While Laclau challenged more reductionist forms of Marxism by arguing that "classes exist at the ideological and political level in a process of articulation and not reduction," his work on populism remained closely tied to a Marxist class theoretic model.³⁷ It was in this way that he could argue that at the ideological level a populist movement's discourse will have *class belonging*, while also insisting that the strictly populist dimension of the movement's discourse lies in the people/powerful interests antagonism articulated into that discourse. In other words, populism involves the interpenetration of class interests and populist appeals within a movement's ideological discourse.

There are similarities between this perspective on populism and the approach

Stuart Hall has taken in his work on Thatcherism. Hall contends political movements and parties are not direct expressions of a class in the political arena. Political movements and parties may serve as a means of representation of a class; but representation "has to be understood as an active and formative relationship."³⁸ The process of representation organizes the class, constituting it as a political force with a particular character. In the case of populist movements and parties, populist interpellations constitute the class as *the people*, while also appealing across classes to link people from a variety of class positions with a political agenda and ideology which actually has its own particular class belonging. One can see here a certain dialectic tension between the people and classes which determines the form of the populist movement's ideological discourse.

Rounding out Laclau's thinking on populism is the Gramscian notion of hegemony as the political and ideological organization of consent. Like Hall, Laclau argues classes "only exist as hegemonic forces to the extent that they can articulate popular [populist or national-popular] interpellations into their own discourses."³⁹ Thus, the social construction of hegemony is best understood in terms of the populist interpellations which serve to construct political subjects with identities and interests rooted in a common sense which, while being discursively constructed as reflecting the interests of the whole of the people, in fact *belongs* to the dominant classes.

Laclau's efforts at theorizing populism suggest a worthwhile strategy for isolating and understanding populist politics, including the populist politics of Preston Manning and the Reform Party. Among Canadian scholars, Laycock, Finkel and Richards,⁴⁰ have

all acknowledged Laclau's influence on their own perspectives on populism. To develop a theoretically grounded understanding of Reform's neo-liberal populism, we too must recognize Laclau's contribution, but then identify its weaknesses and specify an understanding of populism which builds on the strengths of his work.

The suggestion that populism is a politics which appeals to the people as one pole in the people/powerful interests antagonism has focused scholars' attention on the way in which the people, as political subjects, are defined in the discourse, rhetoric and actions of populist movements and parties. It has helped illuminate, in other words, the importance of the discursive struggles which constitute the politics of representation. This has been very useful.

'The people' is, after all, also a discursive figure, a rhetorical device, a mode of address. It is open to constant negotiation, contestation and redefinition. It represents as a 'unity' what are in fact a diversity of different positions and interests.⁴¹

But there is more to populist interpellations than an attempt to redefine popular conceptions of the people.

I would contend that to emphasize the people/powerful interests antagonism in a movement or party's strategic political discourse requires more than just appealing across classes to offer a politicized reconceptualization of the people. It also involves active contestation over our understanding of the individuals, groups or social forces which constitute the powerful interests. That is to say, populism also involves advancing a contestable understanding of the people/powerful interests antagonism which is to be

challenged by the populist movement's political and ideological interventions. In his work on populism, Laclau is too quick to suggest this antagonism, and his *power bloc*, are identified objectively; he seems to assume it is only the people that needs to be politically and ideologically constituted through a populist politics of representation. Following from this, I also dispute Laclau's contention that we should restrict the term populism to a politics which challenges the dominant ideological orientation and requires a substantial transformation in the existing power bloc.⁴² In fact, it may well be that *the powerful interests*--at least as they are ideologically and politically constructed by a populist discourse--do not coincide with the *power bloc* as it would be defined by critical social scientists such as Laclau.

Thus, while I sympathize with the contention that populist politics is not status quo politics, I dispute Laclau's suggestion that populist politics is necessarily, by definition, a counter-hegemonic politics. Populism does not necessarily aim to topple relations of domination. The emergence of populism, as Laclau himself has argued, tends to be "historically linked to a crisis of the dominant ideological discourse which is in turn part of a more general social crisis."⁴³ While populist politics *can* be counter-hegemonic politics, the populisms which emerge in moments of crisis, such as the crisis of Fordism, need not be counter-hegemonic in character. At crisis moments, the hegemonic status of the historically-developed sets of practices and meanings which serve to maintain power and the privileges of the powerful are brought into question. A space for political and ideological experimentation is opened, and the resolution of crisis depends on the politics

of experimentation. Whether aspects of that experimentation take the form of populism or not, the more successful forces are likely to be engaged in a politics which aims to establish sets of practices and meanings which serve to re-establish the hegemony of the (altered, but still recognizable) dominant social forces.⁴⁴

Within Laclau's framework, hegemony is examined in terms of the formation of political subjects and the construction of an appropriate common sense. Successful populist political struggles will, by definition, influence popular conceptions of citizenship rights and the definition of the national interest. Populist political struggles also challenge the boundaries of public and private and, by implication, the previously dominant conception of the political. Like the political and ideological struggles of the new social movements, the potential material implications of populist politics entail consequential changes in the sphere of production relations as well as social relations related to gender, race, sexual orientation and the whole series of relations of power and domination which constitute liberal capitalist society.

Thus, while it is correct to emphasize the interpenetration of class interests and populist appeals within the ideological discourse of populist movements, we must recognize that a politics so specifically involved in the formation of political identities gives meaning to a variety of conflictual social relations. As a result, it can not be neutral with regard to the identities involved in society's other systems of power and domination. Laclau's work on populism avoids economism by allowing for the autonomy of the political and ideological, but it remains a specifically class theoretic model. It is for this

reason that he so strongly emphasizes the class belonging of the ideology of populist movements. However, it is also for this reason that he pays too little attention to, for example, the gendered nature of the populist interpellations which construct their subjects as the people.

If, instead of the fairly narrow class theoretic model, we begin with a conception of society as a mosaic of social relations--or systems of power, privilege and domination--we can see with more clarity the complexity of the potential implications of populist politics.⁴⁵ Populist interpellations do not merely appeal to the people across classes, they appeal across a variety of contradictory social relations, related to gender, race and so on. And, if instead of thinking of the dominant ideology primarily in terms of its role in the maintenance of extant production relations, we begin with a conception of the dominant ideology as also maintaining the societal paradigm which serves to make sense of the many social relations beyond the realm of production,⁴⁶ the implications of the subjective dimensions of populist interpellations become infinitely more complex. The identity politics inherent in populism is far more complex than the question of class versus non-class interpellations. As a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a particular conception of an antagonism between the people and the powerful interests, populism is an ideological instrument which aims to construct the political identity and interests of the *common people*. Populist politics aims to construct a *common sense* which challenges the power relations inherent to its conception of the people/powerful interests antagonism; it aims, essentially, to

(re)construct the common sense of the common people.

Reform's Neo-liberal Populism and the Politics of Representation

Many of Preston Manning's interventions in the politics of representation have been characterized by populist-style rhetoric which portrays the Reform Party as a political movement of ordinary, common sense Canadians; he is convinced that Reform speaks for the silent majority of ordinary taxpayers. Indeed, Manning's stated goal is "to restore 'the common sense of the common people' to a more central position in federal politics."⁴⁷ He believes his party's eventual success is assured by the fact that "there is no more potent political force on the face of the earth" than the common people's common sense.⁴⁸ So long as Reform policies are a reflection of the common sense of the common people, Manning is convinced that his populist political party is only an election away from unseating the old-line parties which have, in his view, lost faith in the wisdom of ordinary Canadians. However, Manning's depiction of the relationship between Reform and the common people is something of a self-serving illusion. As political scientist and one-time Reform Party policy advisor Tom Flanagan points out: "'The common sense of the common people' does not have any independent existence; it is an artifact of agenda control."⁴⁹ In other words, Reform's political and ideological interventions actually give content to popular conceptions of Manning's silent majority by defining the political identity and political interests of the common people. As a powerful form of identity politics, Reform's populism is simultaneously helping to create what Manning claims to reflect. While Manning contends that populism is a process for discovering and

articulating the will of the people,⁵⁰ it is in fact an ideological instrument for the construction of the political identities and interests of *the people*, in opposition to those who are discursively constructed as the *powerful interests*.

Much of the significance of the Reform Party's populism lies in its compatibility with the emerging neo-liberal state form and mode of governance. It is because Reform's populism is a *neo-liberal* populism that the party's populist agenda is compatible with the neo-liberal political economic agenda of those who make the multiple judgements and decisions which underpin business confidence.⁵¹ But Reform-style populism is not inherent to neo-liberalism--it is compatible with, perhaps even a logical extension of, neo-liberalism, but not essential to it. Thus, we must look beyond the party's neo-liberalism, particularly beyond its neo-liberal economic policy agenda, to understand Reform's populism and the ways in which it is a politics which challenges the new social movements.

Perhaps the best route to an understanding of the specific character of Reform's populism begins from an examination of how Manning and his supporters have come to view the political interests represented by the new social movements as *the powerful interests*. First, it is worth noting the extent to which Reform's conception of the powerful interests marks a break from Canada's earlier agrarian populist movements. For Canada's agrarian populists the powerful interests were the railroads, banks and grain elevator companies. Of course there were important differences between the Progressives' emphasis on the way in which eastern business interests dominated the party system, the

UFA's notion of a plutocracy of highly organized and exploitative economic interests manipulating party politics, and the early Social Credit's demonization of the financial interests controlling the monetary system. Nonetheless, they all agreed the primary threat to the people was that segment of the capitalist class which most benefited from the monopoly nature of encroaching corporate capitalism.

The Reform Party's perspective on the powerful interests which threaten ordinary Canadians is quite different; it is new, timely and linked to the recent political and ideological success of the new social movements, but its deeper roots can be traced back to the Alberta Social Credit and right-wing hostility to the growth of the welfare state. David Laycock explains how between 1935 and the late 1940s, the Social Credit's notion of the powerful interests shifted from an emphasis on financiers and their minions, to more emphasis on central planners, bureaucrats and state socialists.⁵² Alberta Social Credit leaders William Aberhart and Ernest Manning opposed the emergence of the welfare state and the widespread embrace of welfare liberalism. In a mid-1940s radio broadcast, Ernest Manning characterized the growing influence of ideological support for the interventionism of the welfare state as presenting Canadians with "a choice between Christian Democracy...and the materialistic and pagan doctrine of state socialism."⁵³ His message, at the time, was that the emerging postwar compromise was a threat to the interests of ordinary Canadians, and the senior Manning continued to hold these views throughout his career. He fought against the introduction of national social programmes such as medicare and, as late as 1969--by which time Preston Manning was working very

closely with his father--Ernest Manning claimed he had "no doubt" about the existence of a world-wide Communist conspiracy which existed as a threat to the interests of ordinary Canadian citizens.⁵⁴ In 1967 Preston Manning demonstrated he shared these types of concerns when he warned, in his characteristically understated manner, that "in defining political principles and particularly in defining ideals, it is imperative that we avoid the error of those who define their political utopia in collectivistic and socialistic terms."⁵⁵ Public policy-makers, he argued, should give primary consideration to human beings *individually* rather than *collectively*; they should strive to maximize opportunities for a free enterprise economy, and avoid a "domineering function" for the state.⁵⁶ At a time (the late 1960s) when welfare liberalism was hegemonic, the Canadian welfare state was expanding like never before, and the student movement, peace protests and the radicalization of the New Left were prominent in the news, Preston Manning and his father came to view "the organized left as the enemy."⁵⁷ Together, they promoted the principles of social conservatism, and warned that the forces behind the liberalization of social values and the growth of the welfare state were emerging as powerful special interests which threatened the interests of ordinary Canadians. As far back as the late 1960s, then, Preston Manning identified the rise of the New Left and the new social movements as an emerging threat to ordinary Canadians.

In retrospect, there were three broad developments among the many social, political and economic changes which accompanied the rise of the postwar welfare state and welfare liberal mode of governance which troubled Preston Manning and many of

those who would later be supporters of the Reform Party. First, a new consensus on the boundaries between public and private expanded the role of the state and politicized a number of social relations formerly considered private. Second, with the welfare state, there emerged a number of positive liberties which helped to transform the dominant common sense and lend legitimacy to the notions of collective responsibility and social rights. Finally, as discussed earlier, a variety of new political subjects, often in the form of the new social movements, emerged through struggles to raise awareness of the social conflictuality inherent in a larger and larger variety of social relations.

Guided as they are by libertarian individualism, a neo-liberal faith in the free market, and a basic social conservatism, Preston Manning and his supporters were uncomfortable with all of these developments. Reformers believe the accelerated politicization of society and expanded role of the bureaucracy in the context of the modern welfare state places a disturbing amount of power in the hands of bureaucrats. They feel, as the conservative author, William Gairdner, explained in his address to the 1991 Reform Party Assembly, that the postwar era--particularly the era since the mid-1960s--has been marked by social decline: "In the mere space of a quarter century our beloved country has endured a wrenching economic, political and moral transformation...[from] a classical liberal society into...a social welfare state."⁵⁸ Not only have the structures and paradigms of governance changed, but with the emergence of the new social movements and related public interest groups, Reformers are concerned that a wider and wider variety of political subjects are now relying on the notion of social rights

to gain entitlements from the increasingly powerful bureaucracy. In fact, the party's 1988 election platform denounced the bureaucracy, political professionals and special interests for using the apparatus of government for their own "self-interest." According to the party platform, this "growing tendency" is one of the "fundamental threats to the supremacy of society over government, which is the foundation of our freedoms."⁵⁹ In Manning's words: "As special interest groups are given more status, privileges, and public funding, they use their bargaining power to exact concessions from governments that are both economically inefficient and politically undemocratic."⁶⁰

For the Reform Party, the powerful interests include the burgeoning government bureaucracy and, perhaps most importantly, the new political subjects of the postwar era, the minority special interests of the new social movements which seek undue privileges from the welfare state bureaucracy. These are not the groups or social forces usually identified as hegemonic, or as a threat to ordinary working people. In Reform's discursive construction of power and politics, however, welfare state bureaucrats and the public interest groups and social movement organizations which have become vested special interests of the welfare state are portrayed as an increasingly powerful threat to the interests of the common people. One Reform publication declared the Canadian political system is "driven by party interests, special interests, and self-interest, rather than people interest."⁶¹ Another stated that "In Ottawa, every special interest group counts except one: Canadians."⁶² The bottom line, in the more caustic words of the Reform Party's 1993 candidate for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, is that if "you're a woman, colored and lesbian,

you're laughing all the way to the bank."⁶³ Of course, most of the party elite cringe at such careless public utterances; but the sentiment is not incompatible with the way in which influential former Reform M.P. Stephen Harper summed up Reformers' fears about the welfare state and special interest groups in his speech to the party's founding convention:

The welfare state has placed unprecedented power in the centralizing hands of the federal bureaucracy, both in terms of its new reaches into Canadian life and its insistence on standardizing all policies and practices on a national scale...The welfare state has witnessed the phenomenon of greedy pressure-group politics reaching unprecedented depths. The vested interests of the welfare state operate in the guts of government decision-making machinery. Thus, their networks have been highly successful in achieving constant growth for their programs and bureaucracies.⁶⁴

In the opinion of Reform M.P.s, the power of the public interest groups and social movement organizations was strikingly clear when the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development (HRD) held its public consultations on social security reform in 1994. When the HRD Committee reported, the Reform Party's dissenting opinion blasted the "lack of *genuine* consultation."⁶⁵ The Reform M.P.s complained that because 159 interest groups and social movement organizations--ranging from the Canadian AIDS Society to the Child Poverty Action Group, the Victoria Status of Women Action Group, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and Saskatchewan's Downtown Chaplaincy--were funded to prepare and make presentations to the Committee, "ordinary, unsubsidized Canadians" could not "be heard over the din of the special interests."⁶⁶ In their dissenting opinion, the Reformers demanded that a way be found to "hear the opinions of *real Canadians*"; they even suggested the process should

give "preference to individuals unaffiliated with a special interest group."⁶⁷

Thus, at the heart of Reform's populist politics is the commitment to end the power and undue influence of the public interest groups and social movement organizations which have emerged from the new social movements. From the party's earliest policy platform, which stated that Reform "opposes the use of taxpayers' dollars for the purpose of subsidizing political lobbying,"⁶⁸ to the "Zero in Three" deficit elimination proposal, which claimed that "special interest lobby groups should raise their own funding from the people they claim to represent."⁶⁹ to the introduction of a Private Members Bill to rescind the charitable status of any organization, corporation or trust which engages in political activities,⁷⁰ the Reform Party has consistently committed itself to ending state subsidization of public interest advocacy groups. In the context of Reform's populist construction of the people/powerful interests antagonism, reducing the power of interest groups is essential. As long as they remain influential, special interest groups are, according to one Reform M.P., "the Achille's heel of democracy."⁷¹ Public interest groups, in other words, are a threat to the representation of the interests of *real Canadians*.

And who are these real Canadians, the Reform Party's *common people*? For the Reform Party, the common people are conceptualized as the silent majority of hard-working taxpayers who are not identifiably attached to minority special interest groups. As Preston Manning has said on more than one occasion: "for every special interest person that you anger, you make six taxpayers happy."⁷² The result, at bottom, is that

Reform's populist appeals construct the common people, the party's potential supporters, as working and middle class taxpayers removed from and unrepresented within the political and bureaucratic decision-making networks which (Reformers believe) have been dominated by special interest groups since the maturing of the Canadian welfare state.⁷³ Reform's political subjects are individualized and detached from broader social relations. Women are appealed to simply as citizens, implicitly encouraged not to identify their own interests with those of the feminist special interest groups.⁷⁴ Unionized workers are appealed to as taxpayers, implicitly encouraged not to identify with the labour movement.⁷⁵ And these types of appeals have hit a responsive chord. It is increasingly common for Canadians to demand that public policy treat all citizens as individuals, as taxpayers, as Canadians period. The notion that democracy involves emphasizing *that which unites us* and rejecting political discourses or public policies which seem to valorize difference by catering to the particularisms of the new social movements, has increased in lockstep with the popularity of Reform-style populism.

In interviews I have asked Reformers to talk about their understanding of populism. One constituency association President, in a very typical response, stated he thinks "it's just a frustration with the system...because it doesn't properly represent people or listen to people." When asked who the government actually listens to, he replied: "They listen to the media obviously, the special interests...most of the people with the common sense in this country seem to be the quieter ones." And who does he feel the Reform Party represents? "I guess it would be the majority, and it would be the common

people with the common sense."⁷⁶ It is exactly this resonance which convinces Preston Manning he can successfully market Reform's policies to the "silent majority."⁷⁷

Preston Manning often seems convinced that public interest groups and social movement organizations are distorting mediators which highlight superficial but divisive divisions among people.⁷⁸ He has argued that political differences could be reconciled if we let the people speak unmediated by special interests: "This is because rank and file people everywhere want more or less the same things for themselves and their children."⁷⁹ But equally often Reformers are explicitly antagonistic toward the public interest groups and social movement organizations which they have defined as in opposition to the interests of the common people. In Reform discourse, the antagonistic relationship between the common people and the powerful special interests is, as David Laycock has observed, constructed as the essential social antagonism.⁸⁰ Since Reformers have taken the view that *that which unites us* are simply those characteristics *not* held by the special interests, their populist discourse actually serves to narrow the essential core of Reform's notion of the common people. Usually implicitly, but occasionally explicitly, the Reform Party's conception of *the people* does not include linguistic and cultural minorities, feminists (women?), trade unionists, people of colour, immigrants, homosexuals and so on. As they are constructed by the ideological discourse of the Reform Party, the people are white, heterosexual, working and middle class, English-speaking men who pay taxes to support a welfare state which benefits only the powerful minority special interests.

Like Thatcherite populism, the Reform Party mobilizes a "narrow and exclusive

definition of 'the people'" against "a range of different minorities who are 'not one of us'."⁸¹ The essence of Reform's neo-liberal populism, and Thatcher's authoritarian populism, is nicely summed up by Laclau and Mouffe's description of the New Right attacks on the welfare state:

An antagonism is thus constructed between two poles: the 'people', which includes all those who defend the traditional values and freedom of enterprise; and their adversaries: the state and all the subversives (feminists, blacks, young people and 'permissives' of every type).⁸²

Indeed, Lash and Urry argue that the political economic and cultural changes which produced the radical-democratic antihierarchical politics of the new social movements (feminists, anti-racists, and so on) were also at the root of the *new-bourgeois* politics of Thatcherism, Reaganism and authoritarian populism.⁸³

The Reform Party is clearly not the first to attack the postwar welfare state, the extension of substantive social rights and the proliferation of organized interests making demands on the expanding bureaucracy. Emerging as it did in 1987, the Reform Party followed in the footsteps of well over a decade of challenges to postwar consensus. It must be remembered that it was the 1970s which witnessed the early embrace of monetarism and the rise of the New Right as a political reaction to the crisis of Fordism and the politicization of the industrial world's (supposedly) *ungovernable* liberal democracies. In fact, Offe contends the mid 1970s efforts by neo-conservatives to delegitimize the growth of public interest groups and social movement organizations and to restore uncontested social hierarchies emerged in direct opposition to the new social

movement's efforts to politicize society.⁸⁴ This immediate historical backdrop helped to ensure Reform's neo-liberal populism would be a somewhat recognizable political intervention. Moreover, as was discussed in chapter four, the political economic circumstances of the 1970s and 1980s provided the material underpinnings to the popular appeal and potential political success of Reform's neo-liberal populist politics.

What has been centrally important to the success of Reform's political appeal is the way in which it combines a future-oriented solution based on neo-liberal restructuring discourse (as was discussed in chapter four), with a defensive *attack* on the legitimacy and power of minority special interests. This *populist twist* on neo-liberal restructuring discourse involves a discursive representation of power and politics which appeals to the common people as one pole in an antagonism between the people and the powerful special interests. Reform's depiction of ordinary Canadians treats the future of the threatened middle strata as if it were dependent on winning a zero-sum struggle against a range of powerful minority interests.⁸⁵ This perspective on Reform's neo-liberal populism draws on earlier analysis of the rise of the New Right in America. For example, in his discussion of New Right politics following the onset of the crisis of Fordism in America, Mike Davis pointed out how corporate capital could become unified with the middle strata "in a strategy of cost-displacement towards the working and unwaged poor."⁸⁶ Arguing that the middle strata's willingness to embrace the neo-liberalism of the New Right recalled a pattern of politics from the turn of the century Progressive movements, Davis suggested a revanchist middle strata was now engaged in a "class struggle of a third

kind":

Faced with genuinely collapsing standards of living in many sectors of traditional white working class, these groups increasingly visualized themselves...as locked into a separate zero-sum rivalry with equality-seeking minorities and women.⁸⁷

This construction of a specific slice of the threatened middle strata as ordinary Canadians and all others as special interests, is the central feature of Reform's populist politics. While this brand of populism is not inherent to neo-liberalism, Janine Brodie explains how neo-liberal restructuring discourse has often demonstrated its capacity to marginalize and deconstruct minority and oppositional movements as unrepresentative and self-interested lobby groups without concern for the general interest.⁸⁸ As the various political subjects of the new social movements, ranging from feminists to anti-poverty activists to gay and lesbian rights activists, are valorizing differences and pushing for the extension of postwar social citizenship rights, Reform's populist discourse casts these very same political subjects outside the political community around which a new development strategy and mode of social regulation needs to be constructed. Today, Reform is using this discursive representation of power and politics to justify *not* responding to several dimensions of existing and growing inequality in our society. When packaged effectively, this populist politics is quite attractive to many Canadians experiencing the challenges of social and economic restructuring.

In the past, the New Right's tendency to demonize special interests and blame interest group politics for demand overload and spiralling deficits was criticized by the

Left as anti-democratic. But by redefining the contours of public and private to favour a limiting of the role of modern government and popularizing an explicitly libertarian and market-based notion of citizenship, the Reform Party's populist politics defines some demands as more legitimate than others. This allows Manning to formulate his party's populist appeal to the middle strata as a call for *more* democratization, not less. Critics may claim that in practice it would be a narrow democratization, even a hidden privileging of those voters Reformers call ordinary Canadians. It clearly does involve emphasizing the political interests of white middle income taxpayers at the expense of more marginalized citizens. But this, in fact, is what makes Reform's populism so powerful. If, like Laclau, we examine hegemony in terms of the formation of political subjects through populist interpellations which serve to construct a new common sense, we can see the extent to which the Reform Party undermines the public legitimacy of the new social movements and helps further entrench New Right politics as the Canadian mainstream. Further, we can see that Reform, while certainly not the partisan political voice of corporate Canada, is helping to popularize a political agenda which is entirely compatible with the neo-liberal state form and mode of governance advocated by business interests.

Conclusion

I have been arguing throughout that populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between the people and the powerful interests. Further, the content of this antagonism, including

the portrayal of the people and the powerful interests, can take many different forms. Preston Manning and the Reform Party construct this antagonism as one which pits ordinary working and middle class taxpayers against the bureaucracy and the minority special interest of the new social movements, which they believe dominate decision-making within the modern welfare state. In this way, Reform's populism defines the political interests of ordinary Canadians as being fundamentally at odds with the perpetuation of the welfare state and the demands of social movement organizations ranging from minority language and cultural groups, to immigrants, gays and lesbians, and welfare recipients. In other words, as political subjects, the common people are constructed as white, male, heterosexual and English-speaking taxpayers form the working and middle classes. And, importantly, Reform's populist message is that, in these turbulent times of political economic restructuring, only their party is committed to making Canada a safe place for these common people to live and prosper.

But the real significance of Reform's populist political and ideological interventions may go even further. The present is a moment of turbulence, of political and economic restructuring, and the Reform Party is playing an important role in the processes which are fundamentally changing the Canadian political culture. As Brodie explains, periods of crisis and restructuring are "a prolonged and conflict ridden political process during which old assumptions and shared understandings are put under stress and eventually rejected while social forces struggle to achieve a new consensus."⁸⁹ The Reform Party represents an important political and ideological intervention in this process

of trying to define a future. In fact, the neo-liberal populist discourse of Reform may telegraph the emerging mode of social and economic regulation which will stabilize an emerging new accumulation regime. The contours of the state form which is characterizing the post-Fordist political economy are still taking their shape. To the extent that Reform mobilizes working and middle class Canadians with its populist politics, popular support will exist for the exclusionary practices of a neo-liberal mode of governance.

The party system is always a potentially important mediating institution in the processes which establish consensus, construct identities, and formulate a common sense which is capable of making sense of the material conditions of peoples' lives. It is true, as some have argued, that Canadian parties did not provide the *primary* site of constitutive struggle during the consolidation of the postwar Fordist accumulation regime. Nonetheless, even then, parties were an important mechanism for forging consensus.⁹⁰ While party systems are always influenced by the changing political economy, the parties of this system also have significant impact on the capacity of an accumulation regime to remain in regulation. For most of postwar era, a pattern of brokerage politics helped to stabilize Canada's Fordist model of development. But, as was argued in chapter four, brokerage politics is an activity of parties most compatible with periods of consensus, when there is a shared common sense based on a hegemonic mode of regulation and societal paradigm. Over the past two decades of restructuring, the potential for an end to brokerage politics was opened. Today, however, I would argue that the success of

Reform's populism is one factor which may be serving to reestablish brokerage politics around a new neo-liberal consensus. Through its construction of the common sense of the common people, the Reform Party's populism is entrenching New Right politics within the mainstream of the Canadian party system. In chapters six and seven, we turn to a detailed examination of the Reform Party's policy agenda and its relationship to the emergence of a neo-liberal state form and mode of governance.

Endnotes

1. Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1967).
2. The notion of the two senses of representation is adapted from Jane Jenson, "A Political Economy Approach to Interest Representation," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Democracy with Justice/La juste démocratie: Essays in Honour of Khayyam Zev Paltiel* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992), p. 240.
3. Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show," in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, eds., *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), p. 26.
4. Some poststructuralist theorists would push this line of reasoning further and argue that identities and interests do not have a prediscursive existence. Laclau and Mouffe, for example, refer to the "discursive character of every subject position." See: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 115.
5. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada Revisited* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), chap. 1.
6. Claude Galipeau makes a similar point when he explains that parties, groups and social movements form three "analytically distinct levels of representation." See: Claude Galipeau, "Political Parties, Interest Groups, and New Social Movements: Toward New Representations?" in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989).
7. William K. Carroll, "Introduction: Social Movements and Counter-Hegemony in a Canadian Context," in William K. Carroll, ed., *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1992), p. 7.
8. See, for example: Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992), p. 25.
9. This definition of common sense borrows very directly from Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 70.
10. Sidney Tarrow, for example, argues that the phenomena which have been identified as new social movements are not wholly new, that *new* politics have not replaced *old*

politics and any changes we have observed are simply part of history's longer term "cycles of protest." Alberto Melucci, on the other hand, argues that new social movements have "become stable and irreversible components of contemporary social systems, because they are strictly connected to deep structural changes in these systems." See: Sidney Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest* Western Societies Program, Occasional Paper No. 21, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1989, pp 57-69; and, Alberto Melucci, "The Symbolic challenge of Contemporary Movements," *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter, 1985).

11. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 164.
12. These observations are central to Warren Magnusson's work on the new social movements. See, for example: Warren Magnusson, "Critical Social Movements," in Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton, *Canadian Politics: An Introduction to the Discipline* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1990); and, Warren Magnusson, "Decentring the State, or Looking for Politics," in William K. Carroll, ed., *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1992).
13. Claus Offe, "Challenging the boundaries of institutional politics: social movements since the 1960s," in Charles S. Maier, ed., *Changing boundaries of the political: Essays in the evolving balance between the state and society, public and private in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 65.
14. Ronald Inglehart, "The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society," in Russell J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan and Paul Allen Beck, eds., *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 27.
15. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp. 160-163.
16. Offe, "Challenging the boundaries of institutional politics: social movements since the 1960s," p. 67.
17. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
18. Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 293.
19. Warren Magnusson and Rob Walker, "De-centring the State: Political Theory and Canadian Political Economy," *Studies in Political Economy*, 26 (Summer, 1988).
20. Scott Lash and John Urry, on the other hand, contend that the transition from industrial capitalism (what they call *organized capitalism*) to post-industrial capitalism

(what they call *disorganized capitalism*) is marked by emerging *postmodern cultural sensibilities*. They further argue that the white-collar and service class which is becoming increasingly important in post-industrial society is both the social base for the new social movements and the most likely audience for and carriers of postmodernist culture. See: Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), particularly pp. 5, 15, & 195.

21. Offe, "Challenging the boundaries of institutional politics: social movements since the 1960s," p. 90.
22. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 160.
23. Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, p. 189.
24. Barry D. Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), pp. 2 & 107-108.
25. Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, p. 176.
26. Mainstream liberal social scientists, on the other hand, have tended to treat populism more as a style of politics. Margaret Canovan, for instance, suggests that populism is an anti-elitist politics which involves "some kind of exaltation of and appeal to 'the people'." In her well-known work, Canovan develops an extensive seven-fold descriptive typology of populisms, three of which she labels 'agrarian populism' (farmers' radicalism, peasant movements, and intellectual agrarian socialism) and four of which she labels 'political populism' (populist dictatorships, populist democracy, reactionary populism, and politicians' populism). The unfortunate weakness of Canovan's very useful overview of populist politics is its failure to theorize the essence of populism. Her work is very descriptive and, in the end, she claims that the various different populisms "are not reducible to a single core." See: Margaret Canovan, *Populism*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).
27. Students of the primarily urban populism of Latin America argue that in situations of dependent development with rapid, but severely limited industrialization, there occurs a 'premature emergence of mass society' and an increased awareness of material deprivation and being peripheral to the centres of power. Moreover, urbanization in the context of modern communications brings people into contact with the forces and ideas of higher levels of development. This fuels the values of consumer society and a 'revolution of rising expectations'. But with too few jobs and too little wealth being created by the processes of dependent development, material deprivation continues, leaving wants and expectations unsatisfied. In this situation, nationalist populist movements mobilize by drawing on the imagery of 'the people' as honest folk whose relative material deprivation

is the result of conspiracies perpetrated by political and economic interests at the centres of power. See, as an example: Alistair Hennessy, "Latin America," and Angus Stewart, "The Social Roots," in Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds., *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969).

28. Theorists of populism in North America have insisted that populism is the ideological expression of the interests of the agrarian petite bourgeoisie during the modernizing phase of capitalist development. John Conway explains that while populism is the political expression of the petite bourgeoisie, it presents itself as a general ideology, as a defence of 'small rural people' threatened by encroaching industrial and financial capitalism. See, for example: John F. Conway, "The Nature of Populism: A Clarification," in *Studies in Political Economy*, 13 (Spring, 1984); John F. Conway, "Populism in the United States, Russia, and Canada: Explaining the Roots of Canada's Third Parties," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XI:I (March, 1978); and, Sinclair, "Class Structure and Populist Protest: The Case of Western Canada," in George Melnyk, ed., *Riel to Reform: A History of Protest in Western Canada* (Saskatoon. Fifth House Publishers, 1992).
29. Ernesto Laclau. "Towards a Theory of Populism," in Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: Verso, 1977), p. 153.
30. Ibid., p. 163.
31. Ibid., pp. 158-159.
32. Laclau makes use of Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation (hailing) to suggest the process through which political and ideological appeals construct ideological or political subjects. Populist interpellations, from this perspective, construct their subjects as 'the people'.
33. Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism," p. 166.
34. Laclau explains that populism "involves the presentation of popular-democratic [populist] interpellations as a synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology." See: Ibid., pp. 172-173.
35. The notion of power bloc suggests the way in which fractions of the dominant class are reunified to ensure their capacity to control the state and remain hegemonic. Since I will be suggesting that different populisms construct their own understanding of the powerful interests which threaten the people, the term power bloc has a history which imbues it with too much suggestive imagery for my purposes.

36. Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism," p. 173.
37. Ibid., p. 161.
38. Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show," in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, eds., *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), p. 26.
39. Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism," p. 196.
40. See Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Finkel, "Populism and the Proletariat," *Studies in Political Economy* 13 (Spring, 1984); and, John Richards, "Populism: A Qualified Defence," *Studies in Political Economy* 5 (Spring, 1981).
41. Stuart Hall and David Held, "Citizens and Citizenship," in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, eds., *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 183.
42. Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism," p. 173.
43. Ibid., p. 175.
44. This formulation draws on Jane Jenson, "Representations in Crisis: The Roots of Canada's Permeable Fordism," in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXIII:4 (December, 1990), pp. 662-666.
45. For a discussion of society as a mosaic of systems of power and domination see Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Theory* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986), chapter 4. Alain Lipietz uses similar imagery when he refers to society as a "social mould" which is structured by the relationships among systems of social relations. See: Alain Lipietz, "Reflections on a Tale: The Marxist Foundations of the Concepts of Regulation and Accumulation," *Studies in Political Economy* 26 (Summer, 1988), pp. 14-21.
46. For a discussion of the notion of societal paradigm see Jenson, "All the World's a Stage: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy," *Studies in Canadian Political Economy* 36 (Fall, 1991), p. 56.
47. Manning, *The New Canada*, p. 26.
48. Ibid., p. 25.

49. Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995), p. 27.

50. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

51. The importance of this point cannot be overstated. The Reform Party has not developed and maintained the type of tight and cosy relationship with big business that traditional conservative parties have. But clearly this is not necessary for political success. Capitalist social forces occupy a privileged social position with its own unique logic of collective action and techniques of political influence--the power of vaguely articulated expressions of business confidence (or lack thereof) is such that direct instrumental involvement in party affairs by business interests is not necessary to ensure business interests are, in effect, well-represented. So long as a party's policy agenda avoids undermining that elusive state of mind known as business confidence, the party can escape being thwarted by the political maneuverings of capitalist social forces.

52. Laycock, Populism and Democratic Thought, chapter 5.

53. Sharpe and Braid, Storming Babylon, p. 76.

54. Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, p. 18.

55. E. C. Manning, Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians, (Toronto: McClelland and Steward Limited, 1967), p. 69. Although published under his father's name, Preston Manning openly admits his participation in writing this short book, and observers generally agree that he was the primary author.

56. Alberta, A White Paper on Human Resources Development (Edmonton: Government of Alberta, 1967), p. 17. This Alberta government document was co-authored by Preston Manning and Erick Schmidt, then Executive Assistant to the Alberta Cabinet.

57. Sharpe and Braid, Storming Babylon, p. 66.

58. Cited in Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party, p. 147.

59. Reform Party of Canada, "The West Wants in!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988). Unfortunately, the photocopy obtained from the Reform Party archives was without page numbers.

60. Manning, The New Canada, p. 320.

61. Reform Party of Canada, "Why did 2.5 Million Canadians Vote Reform in the 1993 Federal Election," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1994). Emphasis in original.

62. Cited in David Laycock, "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXVII:2 (June, 1994), p. 219.
63. Colyne Gibbons cited in Jonathan Ferguson, "Manning on defensive over racism charges," *Toronto Star*, October 16, 1993, p. A19.
64. Excerpted from a speech given by Stephen Harper at the founding convention of the Reform Party and reprinted, in part, in Terry O'Neill, ed., *Act of Faith* (Vancouver: British Columbia Report Books, 1991). p. 44-46.
65. Canada. Parliament, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee On Human Resources Development," (Ottawa, 1994), p. 294. Emphasis added.
66. Ibid., pp. 294-295.
67. Ibid. p. 295. Emphasis added.
68. Reform Party of Canada, "'The West Wants In!' Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada," (1988).
69. Reform Party of Canada, "Look at the national debt hole Canada is in," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 2.
70. This Bill was introduced during the First Session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament by Ted White, Reform M.P. for North Vancouver. See: Canada, House of Commons, *Bill C-338 An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (political activities by charities receiving public funds)*, (Ottawa, June 21, 1995).
71. Herb Grubel, cited in *The Globe and Mail*, April 1, 1995, p. D1. Other Reformers have used much stronger language. One Reform Candidate, John Tillman, wrote in a letter to his Tory opponent in the 1993 election that women's groups and other 'minority groups' are "parasites of society." See: *The Globe and Mail*, October 29, 1993, p. A9.
72. Mario Toneguzzi, "Reform accuses women's groups of discrimination," *Calgary Herald*, June 15, 1994, p. A1.
73. Manning, *The New Canada*, pp. 320-321.
74. A 1993 Reform Party pamphlet said "Let's ensure that women are treated equally by removing barriers to advancement, but not by labelling women as a special-interest minority group." See: Reform Party of Canada, "Who are the Reformers," (Calgary:

Reform Party of Canada, 1993).

75. The Reform Party's *Blue Sheet* "rejects the view that labour and management must constitute warring camps." While they support "the right of workers of organize democratically," they clearly reject the labour movement's conception of this right. See: Reform Party of Canada, *Blue Sheet: Principles, Policies & Election Platform* (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 4.
76. Interview with Wayne Karlem, President, Calgary South East Reform Association President, November 28, 1994.
77. Tu Thanh Ha, "Manning spoiling for a fight on unity," *The Globe and Mail*, October 17, 1994, p. A1.
78. See: Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, pp. 2-3; and, Laycock, "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project," p. 230.
79. Preston Manning, "The Road to New Canada," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1991), p. 15.
80. Laycock, "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project," p. 216.
81. Hall and Held, "Citizens and Citizenship," p. 183.
82. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 170.
83. Lash and Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism*, p. 299.
84. Offe, "Challenging the boundaries of institutional politics," pp. 63-65.
85. Betz makes a similar argument about the emergence of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. He argues that their success depends on two factors: "their ability to mobilize resentment and protest and their capacity to offer a future-oriented program that confronts the challenge posed by the economic, social, and cultural transformation of advanced West European democracies." See: Hans-Georg Betz, "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-wing Populist Parties in Western Europe," in *Comparative Politics* 25 (July, 1993), p. 415.
86. Mike Davis, "The Political Economy of Late-Imperial America," *New Left Review*, 123 (1984), p. 28.

87. Ibid., p. 35.
88. Brodie, "Politics in a Globalized World," pp. 21-23.
89. Ibid.
90. Jenson, "'Different' but not 'exceptional': Canada's permeable Fordism," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 26 (1989).

PART THREE

The Rise of Reform: Advancing the Neo-liberal Agenda

Chapter Six

Defining Citizenship and Political Community for an era of Neo-liberal Governance

Introduction

Since its birth, the Reform Party has been an active protagonist in the political and ideological struggle to promote and fortify the emergence of a neo-liberal state form and mode of governance. Indeed, no other national political party has been as tireless an advocate of the neo-liberal paradigm in state governing practices. For a decade now, Reform has consistently demonstrated a determination to ensure the marginalization of welfare liberalism (not to mention social democracy) and the sidelining of traditional tory ideology in favour of the hyper-liberalism of the New Right. Admittedly, as the turn of the century approaches, the hegemony of neo-liberalism remains incomplete and the policy legacies of the postwar consensus are still very apparent. The current moment, in other words, remains riddled with contradictions--political discourses and public policies reveal both continuities and discontinuities with the political rationality of the postwar era and the Keynesian welfare state.¹ Nevertheless, considerable progress has been made toward entrenching neo-liberalism as Canada's hegemonic public policy paradigm. And this paradigm shift is, at least in part, a consequence of the political and ideological interventions of the Reform Party.

The current chapter is the first of two which examine the Reform Party's efforts to

shape Canadian political discourse and public policy. In this chapter, my particular interest is situating Reform's political discourse and policies in the context of struggles to forge a new public consensus with regard to both the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship and the definition of the Canadian political community. Citizenship and political community are historically evolving concepts that have "carried different meanings, contents and webs of inclusion and exclusion" at different points in time.² They are concepts which evolve with assumptions about the social order, the legitimacy of various political identities, and the appropriateness of competing interpretations of social relations. No single political actor--the Reform Party or any other--changes the meaning of such concepts on their own; rather, it is the ongoing "struggle of discourses" which changes their meanings.³ And since these discursive struggles take place through a complex series of interventions in society's ongoing political and ideological conflicts, they are not readily observable struggles. In fact, the political and ideological interventions which are significant to the social construction of meaning occur in sites as diverse as the media, class rooms, churches, trade unions, and the House of Commons.⁴ But out of the interplay of these discursive interventions emerges hegemonic conceptions of, among other things, citizenship and political community; through these processes, in other words, a political and ideological consensus is forged on the boundaries of the Canadian political identity. What does it mean to be Canadian? What rights and obligations do citizens have? What patterns of inequality are legitimate within the Canadian political community? Each of these questions is answered, if only temporarily,

through the discursive politics of identity.⁵ From this perspective, national political communities do not simply exist, *a priori*, as objective realities; they must be invented. As Benedict Anderson points out, nations are imagined political communities with a variety of contestable boundaries, both internal and external, which are continually reinvented through political and ideological struggle.⁶

While some representations of Canada's national political community may be more soundly grounded in empirical observations, and others may have greater popular resonance, every such representation is an ideological construct which is contestable from other ideological perspectives. The mapping of the Canadian nation found in Reform's political discourse and policies is rooted in the party's ideological commitments to libertarian individualism, socially conservative traditionalism and, of course, neo-liberal populism. Drawing on these ideological commitments (which, admittedly, often exist in dynamic tension) and reflecting on their own personal material interests, Reformers share a common perspective on Canadian citizenship and the Canadian political community. And this perspective on citizenship and political community is closely tied to what Reformers consider to be the cornerstones of a good society--that is, private property and free markets, individualism and self-reliance, the heterosexual nuclear family and, for some Reformers, the Christian church.

Placing an ideological label on Reform's perspective on citizenship and political community is difficult. No political party speaks with one voice, and few individual voices which are heard on complex social and political issues are without analytical

tensions, even contradictions. As sets of ideas, perceptions, values and beliefs through which individuals interpret social events and formulate opinions on how the world ought to be, ideological perspectives will never be more than *fairly coherent*--political parties (even more than individuals) will articulate ideological perspectives which contain numerous internal tensions. The New Right, of which Reform is a part, has always combined the individualism of libertarianism with the social traditionalism and concern for the social order which is associated with conservatism. It could be argued that Reform, like the New Right more broadly, has two faces: the first face is *neo-liberal*, emphasizing individual freedom in a market society; the second face is *neo-conservative*, emphasizing tradition and authority in a disciplined society.⁷ While these parallel mental universes shape Reform's perspective on citizenship and political community, I have chosen to refer to the party's perspective as neo-liberal and, as a result, emphasize the individualistic and market oriented dimensions of the party's ideological perspective. I do not, however, ignore the ways in which conservative notions of family and other commitments to social traditionalism tinge Reform's neo-liberal discourse on citizenship and political community. In the end, the importance of social and cultural conservatism to Reform will be evident, even though my starting point is Reform's neo-liberalism.

What is meant by a neo-liberal perspective on citizenship and political community, and how are the ideological commitments of Reformers reflected in such a conception? First, with regard to citizenship, neo-liberalism adopts a narrow, individualistic and market oriented perspective. The libertarian individualism of neo-

liberalism tends to transform citizenship from a collective to an individual political identity--which, in the context of neo-liberal market values, is manifested as an economic identity: usually the citizen as *taxpayer*.⁸ Neo-liberalism opposes the extension of social rights and calls for a limiting of citizenship rights to the narrower negative liberties associated with civil and political rights. Moreover, neo-liberalism demands the restriction of the public realm; issues which have been politicized with the extension of social rights, are to be depoliticized. Structuralist interpretations of social inequality which have highlighted the systemic character of racism and sexism are rejected, and calls for affirmative action programmes are discounted as inconsistent with the equal treatment of rights bearing citizens.

With regard to the political community, neo-liberalism assumes that any political community is simply an aggregation of individuals who, because they are conceptualized as abstracted from social relations, share an essential sameness which is more fundamental than any apparent differences. Subnational collective identities are rejected as artificial and divisive. The national political community is, therefore, a homogeneous community of individuals who share a core humanity. It is a community which is best strengthened by policies which emphasize the sameness and equality of all citizens. In the Canadian context, this means rejecting the importance of the binational (multinational if we include Aboriginal nations) and polyethnic nature of Canadian society--interestingly, this *can* mean supporting the types of policies which foster cultural homogeneity (rather than binationalism or multiculturalism) which are associated with cultural conservatism.

In its more individualistic form, however, neo-liberalism would even question the notion of a national political community. As Richard Sigurdson recently observed, neo-liberalism's combined commitment to liberalism and capitalism poses a challenge to the notions of citizenship and political nationality which have been associated with the modern nation state: "[l]iberal universalism respects no collective identity, even nationality; capitalism respects no boundaries, including national ones."⁹

Since the mid 1960s, Reformers and other Canadians who are committed to individualism, the free market and social conservatism, have often sensed that their basic ideological commitments were being marginalized. They argue that social activists and the political elite alike tend to embrace illiberal conceptions of citizenship and political community, and that these and other social, political and ideological developments have threatened the values and institutions which are the cornerstones of a good society.¹⁰ From their perspective, many of the public policies which define citizenship and shape our political community are, in fact, misguided threats to Canadian society. Of course, it is more than their ideological commitments regarding the basis of a properly ordered society which have been threatened; immersed as they are in a mosaic of material social relations, the individuals drawn to Reform's neo-liberal ideological beliefs are often articulating what they perceive to be in their own material self-interest. There is, in other words, a social and material basis to the rise of neo-liberalism and the popularization of neo-liberal policy proposals.¹¹ More concretely, it is worth noting that the extent to which neo-liberal conceptions of citizenship and political community shape key public policies

will affect the social and material well-being of individual Reformers relative to other segments of society, particularly the minority *special interests* against whom Reform has directed so much political energy.¹²

The remainder of this chapter explores the ways in which Reform's neo-liberal populist thinking has shaped the party's interventions in policy debates which are crucial to the social construction of citizenship and political community. It is not my intention to suggest that Reform has had a *determining* influence on the evolution of these pivotal political concepts. Considering the roles played by other powerful social forces--including international political, economic and cultural forces--it would be a mistake to overstate the significance of the Reform Party to the neo-liberal hegemonic project. Indeed, Reform is a *consequence* as well as a *cause* of the neo-liberal ideological turn. Nevertheless, reviewing Reform's interventions in some key public policy debates will help to illuminate the role of Reform in enhancing the popular resonance of neo-liberal discourse on citizenship and political community. The next section of this chapter reviews Reform's efforts to shape the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship. Then, the subsequent section examines Reform's discourse on issues and policies which serve to define the Canadian political community.

Shaping the Meaning & Rights of Canadian Citizenship

The discursive struggles which define the meaning and rights of citizenship have far reaching social consequences. New understandings of citizenship can transform our individual and collective political identities, alter relationships between individuals and

between groups or classes of individuals, adjust the balance between public and private, and modify the rule structures governing these realms of life. In doing so, these new understandings inevitably influence the structure of social inequality and our interpretation of the causes of these inequalities. But more than that, some social theorists have argued that political and ideological struggles around the meaning and rights of citizenship are integral to the historical trajectory of liberal capitalist society. Bryan Turner has argued that "the dynamic feature of capitalism is precisely the contradiction between politics and economics as fought out in the sphere of social citizenship."¹³ Similarly, Bowles and Gintis suggest that the historical trajectory of capitalist democracies can best be understood as resulting from the clash between the expansionary logic of personal rights and the expansionary logic of property rights.¹⁴

In chapter five, I argued that the desire to roll back social change by attacking the perceived power and privileges of minority special interests is a distinguishing characteristic of the Reform Party's neo-liberal populism.¹⁵ From Reform's perspective, it was collusion between the traditional political parties, welfare state bureaucrats and the minority special interests of the new social movements which produced, among many other things, the illiberal social rights and proactive equity policies which aim to attain a greater degree of substantive equality. To a significant extent, Reform's discourse on the meaning and rights of citizenship takes aim at these same developments, specifically the emergence of the notion of *social citizenship* and the illiberal ways in which citizenship rights have been applied as group rights.

While it can be argued that the social rights of the Canadian welfare state have only marginally equalized economic well-being, and do not fundamentally challenge competitive individualism or the assimilationist ideals of universal citizenship, Reform-style neo-liberals have perceived a serious threat in the postwar embrace of social citizenship rights. They view the social citizenship rights which emerged with the welfare state as a challenge to liberty, individualism and self-reliance. In fact, Brodie, Yeatman and others claim that the neo-liberal abandonment of the traditional discourse of social citizenship in favour of a narrower rhetorical appeal to *taxpayers* is a direct ideological response to the increasing effectiveness of claims made on social citizenship rights by social movements and equality seeking public interest groups.¹⁶

Until 1996, the Reform Party did not have an official statement of principle or policy position outlining the party's views on the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship. While many of the party's policies could be read as constituting elements of a neo-liberal discourse on the meaning of citizenship, the only explicit mention of citizenship in the 1995 *Blue Sheet* simply declared Reform's commitment to a "vision of Canada as a balanced federation of equal provinces and citizens."¹⁷ But at the party's 1996 Assembly in Vancouver, delegates from Comox Alberni called for a new statement of principle which would "set out in the most emphatic and unequivocal terms [the party's] determination that *there must be just one class of Canadian citizenship, bestowing equal rights and imposing equal responsibilities upon all.*"¹⁸ In response, the party's Legal, Secretarial and Constitutional Committee proposed a simple, but cautiously worded

Statement of Principle. It read: "We believe in *true equality* of Canadian citizens, with *equal rights and responsibilities for all.*"¹⁹

While this statement may first appear to be an innocuous expression of Reform's commitment to a core principle of liberal society, it is, in fact, a highly charged statement signifying the party's rejection of the understanding of citizenship and citizenship rights which is advocated by social movement organizations and equality seeking minority *special* interests. Moreover, to Reformers, the new Statement of Principle is a straightforward demonstration of the party's opposition to the conception of citizenship which is embodied in an array of (supposedly) misguided postwar public policies. As such, it connotes a policy agenda aimed at turning back recent trends in public discourse on the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship. It signifies Reform's support for new neo-liberal policies regarding the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship.

The Reform Party's efforts to shape the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship are best revealed through an examination of the party's interventions in debates regarding three areas of public policy: (i) the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, (ii) employment equity programmes, and (iii) the wisdom of amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation among the prohibited grounds of discrimination. In these three areas, the Reform Party's policies reveal a neo-liberal populist perspective on citizenship--a perspective which is rooted in the almost palpable anxiety Reformers have experienced with the spread of illiberal social citizenship rights, group rights and proactive equity policies over the past three decades.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

The Reform Party's policies regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms have been shaped by a narrow and classically liberal notion of citizenship rights as well as by an emphasis on property rights. The party's primary commitment is to the negative liberties embodied in civil and political rights. Thus, according to Reform, the primary objective of an entrenched Charter of Rights should be the guarantee of personal freedoms, such as the freedom of speech and religion. But, in addition, it is assumed that for individuals to fully assert their personal rights and individual freedoms, private property rights must also be thoroughly protected.

Reformers further believe that the use of rights as a means of protecting citizens from harm should be very limited, and benefits, or the positive entitlements associated with social rights, should never be considered an object of citizenship rights. From this perspective, the Charter of Rights should not be used to expand the reach of the public realm or promote collectivist notions of citizenship and the public interest. Reformers contend that in a democracy "there must be no special rights or privileges granted to any group"; accordingly, when rights clash, individual freedoms and rights should prevail over those of the group.²⁰ Indeed, in the process of preparing for the party's 1994 assembly in Ottawa, Reformers from the constituency of Capilano Howe Sound drafted a resolution which explicitly called on the party to formally commit itself to this line of classically liberal thinking on citizenship rights:

Resolved that the Reform Party believes that the only legitimate role of the

government is to protect the personal and property rights of individuals from violation by others, and that when in conflict, *property rights are superior to personal rights*. Implementation of this role requires that the government have police, courts of laws, a constitution, and national defence. All intervention into the personal and economic activity of persons and businesses does more harm than good. *Personal rights are limited to natural rights such as freedom of speech and religion, and do not include needs and desires such as health, housing, recreation, and education. There are no 'group' rights or 'social contracts'*.²¹

Although the party has never officially adopted such strong language, much of the discussion of the Charter and citizenship rights by grass roots Reformers at party assemblies has reflected the tone and substance of the Capilano Howe Sound resolution. It is evident that very few Reformers believe the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms conforms to their conception of citizenship rights: in 1992 only 17.6 percent of delegates to the biennial party assembly were willing to agree that "on the whole, the benefits of the new Canadian Charter of Rights outweigh the disadvantages."²² Moreover, in preparation for the subsequent party assembly in 1994, a number of constituency associations actually submitted formal policy resolutions advocating the revocation of the Charter.²³ At that assembly, the official rationale presented for these resolutions was quite striking, not only for its classical liberal reasoning, but also its populist imagery. It stated that "more than any other single document," the Charter "has enabled the not nice and wayward element of our society to twist, corrupt, and turn upside down seemingly every public interest and social advance to their own self-interest and advantage."²⁴ While the resolution calling upon the Reform Party to support a constitutional amendment revoking the Charter was tabled pending the outcome of an internal party task force, the heated

discussion in the convention hall highlighted the limited support the Charter has among Reform activists.

This negative assessment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not supported by the general public. The Charter Study, carried out by York University's Institute for Social Research in 1987, found that 72 percent of anglophone Canadians thought the Charter was a good thing for Canada.²⁵ But this stark difference of opinion regarding citizenship rights may be less than it first appears. While few Canadians have been politicized around anti-Charter politics the way Reformers have been, the basic concerns the Reform Party has expressed regarding the impact of the Charter on citizenship rights have been echoed in much of the political rhetoric of the 1990s. Reform's specific concerns regarding the Charter of Rights are tied to a broader political discourse about individualism, self-reliance and the *problem* of overly powerful minority special interests. These are the themes of neo-liberal populism, but they are also featured prominently in the political discourse of a wider variety of partisan, think tank and media organizations, not to mention the *ordinary Canadians* given voice through forums such as Keith Spicer's Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future. They are themes, in other words, with considerable, and increasing, popular resonance.

At bottom, Reform has three concerns with the Charter and the way citizenship rights have evolved in the context of the Charter. First, the Charter gives recognition to special group rights which, in the opinion of Reformers, "unreasonably protect certain segments of society at the expense of others"²⁶ Second, property rights were not included

when the Charter was entrenched in the constitution in 1982. Finally, the Charter can be used by minorities to overrule the liberal democratic principle of majority rule. Each of these concerns deserves further examination.

With regard to the first concern, the Reform Party has long been critical of those sections of the Charter which 'create' group rights that seem to grant special privileges and protections to identifiable, usually minority, segments of Canadian society. Reformers have actively opposed constitutional and statutory protections of minority group interests because they are concerned that these protections inevitably emphasize group rights over the rights of individuals. At Reform's most recent assembly, in Vancouver in 1996, the party adopted its most clearly worded policy on the question of individual versus group rights:

Resolved that the Reform Party affirm the equality of every individual before and under the law and the right of every individual to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law. *We believe that the granting of group rights negates this principle.* This policy should be reflected in all federal legislation.²⁷

It is on the basis of this now official commitment to individual over group rights, that the Reform Party has criticized, challenged or called for the repeal of one third of the sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Recently, for example, the party membership endorsed a party task force report which criticized Sections 16 to 23 of the 1982 Charter for 'creating' a "series of new rights related to the use of the French and English language." The report also called for the repeal of Section 27, which "creates the right to have the entire Charter 'interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation

and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada'."²⁸ But the task force's most aggressive criticism was levelled against Section 15, the equality rights section of the Charter. According to the Reform Party's task force on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Reformers are concerned that Section 15 has legitimized the notion of group rights and allowed for an illiberal interpretation of equality which does not conform with the *normal* use of the term:

the equality guaranteed under Section 15(1) of the Charter ought to be a guarantee of equality of opportunity (a constitutional prohibition on laws or other government actions that cause one person to face hurdles that are not imposed upon all citizens). Instead, the courts have increasingly edged toward an interpretation of Section 15(1) as permitting, or even mandating equality of outcome, in which the law for different groups of Canadians *must* be different, in order to ensure that different groups with different natural advantages all come out the same in the end.²⁹

Most disturbing to Reformers is Section 15(2), which affirms the constitutionality of affirmative action programmes designed to assist individuals or groups disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. According to a party document circulated at the 1994 party assembly, this "obnoxious clause" is the "legal loophole which allows governments to discriminate against [some] citizens," while offering special interest groups "preferential treatment."³⁰ Few issues raise the hackles of party members more than the use of the illiberal notion of *equality of outcome* as a justification for affirmative action programmes which Reformers consider blatant examples of *reverse discrimination*. The *Fresh Start* policy document prepared for the 1997 election commits the party to ensuring that the Charter of Rights

commits governments to *equality of opportunity* rather than *equality of outcome*:

A Reform Government will ensure that all human rights legislation, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, reflects these principles, which refer to equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome. Equality of outcome requires that the rights and freedoms of some Canadians are violated on behalf of other Canadians; equality of opportunity means respecting the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.³¹

Thus, while Reform has now retreated from calling for revocation of the Charter, the party has called for repeal of Section 15(2) and a rewording of Section 15(1) "to ensure that equality of *opportunity*, not equality of *outcome* is guaranteed."³² The party's aim is clear; Reformers wish to transform the Charter of Rights and Freedoms from what some have called a 'uniquely Canadian' document blending the protection of individual and group rights, into a document which focusses more narrowly on the negative liberties entailed in individual civil and political rights.

In light of Reform's individualistic and classically liberal discourse on rights and its rejection of Section 15 of the existing Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it is interesting that the party's Statement of Principles indicates that Reformers "believe *the interests of minorities* and the people of under-populated regions of Canada *should be safeguarded by constitutional guarantees*."³³ But, as is so often the case with partisan rhetoric, the apparent meaning of this statement and its actual intent are not one and the same. The Statement of Principles goes on to specifically call for "constitutional guarantees and parliamentary institutions which effectively balance representation by population with regional representation."³⁴ It thus appears that the Reform Party is willing to break with

the liberal principle of identical treatment of and strict equality for all individuals, but only in one instance: safeguarding the interests of *regional minorities*. For Reform, group identities are potentially dangerous and lack political legitimacy--with, of course, the important exception of regional political identities. Apparently, unlike others, the group interests associated with regionalism (or provincialism, as the case may be) are deserving of constitutional and parliamentary protection.

Reform's second major concern about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is that property rights were not included when the Charter was entrenched in the constitution in 1982. Indeed, the commitment to entrench property rights is a longstanding policy of the Reform Party. One of the first policy resolutions considered by delegates to the Reform Association of Canada's 1987 Western Assembly--the assembly at which the decision was taken to form a new political party--declared that the 1982 Charter "is deficient with respect to its treatment of the economic rights of Canadians" and proposed an "economic rights protection provision" be drafted for entrenchment within the Charter.³⁵ It was not surprising that Preston Manning had put forward such a resolution. A decade earlier, Manning was involved in what he describes as "a major effort" to secure the entrenchment of property rights in Trudeau's proposed Charter of Rights and Freedoms.³⁶ Working with the sponsorship of the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI), Manning's goal had been to secure federal and provincial agreement on a clause which would provide even "*greater* protection against confiscation of private property by governments than that provided by common law, or the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights, or the

draft Charter of Rights contained in the 1971 Victoria Charter.³⁷

In the end, the BCNI venture failed. As a condition of securing the support of the New Democratic Party, the federal government dropped the property rights provision from the Charter. At the time, Manning and other future Reformers felt that Trudeau's willingness to trade away property rights had entirely undermined the Charter's legitimacy. Indeed, years later, while introducing a private member's motion calling for the inclusion of a property rights provision in the Charter, Reform M.P. Mike Scott suggested that the long-term significance of Trudeau's actions has been larger and inappropriately interventionist government:

In 1982, quite casually, he traded away our *most fundamental right* in a slick and clever political calculation...Since 1982 things have gone downhill...we have somehow had the idea that government is the master and the citizen is the servant.³⁸

Scott, like many Reformers, is of the opinion that the Charter's deficiencies have distorted our conception of citizenship rights and allowed a degree of government intervention which tips the balance away from the possibility of maintaining appropriately limited government. The report of the Reform Party's task force on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms went so far as to declare that the 1982 decision to exclude property rights was perpetrated by a Prime Minister and leaders on the "political left" who did not want to see the institutions of capitalism or of individual autonomy to gain constitutional protection, which could then limit socialism and central government power.³⁹

Since 1988, every edition of Reform's *Blue Book* of party policies has contained a proposal for entrenching a property rights clause in the Charter. In 1996, delegates to the

biennial party assembly strengthened that policy. It now calls for a constitutional guarantee of

the right of every person to the ownership, use and enjoyment of property, including real, intellectual and personal property, and the right to engage in free uncoerced contracts, and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law. Furthermore...that in Canada no person shall be deprived, directly or indirectly, by any law...of the ownership, use and enjoyment of property and contract, unless that law provides for full, just and timely compensation.⁴⁰

Moreover, to further clarify the nature of this constitutional guarantee of property rights. Reform's new policy proposes that individuals engaged in matters of property, contract and commerce should be explicitly guaranteed the protection of those Sections of the Charter (7 to 14) which spell out the basic legal rights of individuals who have dealings with the state's institutions of justice.⁴¹

What effect would the entrenchment of these property and economic rights have on the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship? From a narrow, legalistic perspective it could be argued that since property rights are already protected by common law, entrenchment would not significantly alter citizenship rights. Moreover, since judicial decisions have established that corporations can be considered *persons* under the Charter, an important dimension of property rights is indirectly protected by the existing regime. But opponents of entrenchment have always expressed concern about the impact the constitutionalization of property rights would have on aboriginal land claims, women's equality rights and laws protecting the environment.⁴² Progressive public interest groups and social movement organizations have argued that when there is a clash between

property rights and various social or personal rights, constitutionally entrenched property rights would have the legal status necessary to impede the advancement of social citizenship rights. In a Caucus Issue Statement circulated in 1992, the Reform Party argued that these objections are "misleading" because whenever there is a clash between, say, judicable property rights and interventionist social policy legislation, the property rights clause would have to be interpreted in light of Section 1 of the Charter, which states that all rights are subject to such reasonable limits as can be justified in a free and democratic society.⁴³ Reinforcing this point, the Reform Party's Director of Caucus Research, Scott Reid, argues the wording of the party's property rights policy is specifically "designed to prevent the right from being interpreted by the courts to limit environmental or social legislation, to deny the right to collective bargaining, or to oppose native land claims."⁴⁴

But there is little in Reform rhetoric on property rights which would suggest that the party's advocacy of entrenchment is anything but an attempt to secure the virtual primacy of property rights and limit the capacity of any government which would consider interventionist social or economic legislation. As mentioned above, Reform M.P. Mike Scott has referred to property rights as "*our most fundamental right.*"⁴⁵ Similarly, party members from Capilano Howe Sound claim that "*property rights are superior to personal rights.*"⁴⁶ Indeed, over and over again, Reformers draw on market oriented libertarian logic to justify their emphasis on constitutionalizing property rights: Reform M.P. Garry Breitkreuz argues that "[t]he right to own and use property means the

right to live unmolested by government,"⁴⁷ and a policy resolution proposed by the Reformers of Etobicoke Lakeshore argues that enshrining property rights in the constitution is an important step toward protecting Canadians "from usury government taxation."⁴⁸ The controversial Reform M.P. from Nanaimo-Cowichan, Bob Ringma, has even argued that because Canadians are currently governed by Liberal politicians "who do not believe in basic property rights," a Cabinet Minister can introduce interventionist gun control legislation and "*arbitrarily...deprive law-abiding citizens of their property [simply] because he does not like guns.*"⁴⁹

During the Charlottetown referendum campaign, the Reform Party rejected proposals to include a charter of social rights in the constitution. Instead, the party advocated the entrenchment of property rights as the way forward in redefining citizenship rights. Thus, while opposing the extension of social rights, it is the party's position that "unless an individual has the right to pursue his business and to own and control property then all other rights are in danger."⁵⁰ While it is true that property rights are currently protected under common law and the authors of the Constitution Act were most certainly informed by pro-market liberal principles, it is also clear that Reform's plans to redesign the Charter to highlight the primacy of property rights would move a considerable distance from the intent of the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Reform's final concern with the Canadian Charter of Rights relates to the cultural and institutional minoritarianism and rights consciousness which has been fostered by the Charter. What seems to trouble Reformers is the way in which the Charter can be used by

minorities to override the liberal democratic principle of majority rule. To borrow the language of academic writings on the Charter's impact on Canadian political culture, the Reform Party is concerned by the fact that *Charter Canadians*--including women, Aboriginal peoples, official-language minorities, ethnic minorities and the disabled--are *politically privileged* by their inclusion in particular clauses of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.⁵¹ Reform's discourse on the Charter suggests that Charter Canadians have been claiming their rights at the expense of the rights of the silent majority of Canadians who are not similarly privileged by the constitution. Moreover, there is the further suggestion that the excessive rights consciousness of these Charter Canadians has been at the expense of any recognition of their *responsibilities* to other Canadians and to the broader society in which they live.

To counter these perceived trends and re-establish the implied majoritarianism of liberal democracy, many Reformers have called for a *Charter of Responsibilities* which would outline "the duties of each Canadian in relation to the rest of society."⁵² The intent is that such a Charter would act as a counterbalance to and thus reduce the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Short of entrenching a Charter of Responsibilities, however, the party's task force on the Charter of Rights recommended that

Section 1 of the Charter should be reworded to [explicitly] permit that rights may be limited by the need for individuals to respect the rights of others, and that *laws passed by referendum should not be subject to Charter challenge*.⁵³

This recommendation would, most certainly, result in a dramatic weakening of the

Charter. It is true that Section 1--which states that all rights are subject to such reasonable limits as are justified in a free and democratic society--already implies that citizenship rights *may* be limited when they clash with the rights of others, but stating this explicitly would certainly strengthen future Section 1 defences of offending legislation. Even more significant is the recommendation to protect all laws passed by referendum from Charter challenges; this would be a radical change to Canada's constitutional order. It would mean that a law outlawing affirmative action programmes or limiting minority language rights, would be *Charter-proof* so long as it was passed by a referendum. The explicit majoritarianism of this recommendation would mark a decisive step away from the principles underpinning the constitutional protection of minority individual and group rights. It would mark, in other words, a quite fundamental rejection of the constitutional order adopted in 1982.

Currently, beyond Section 1, only the notwithstanding clause allows governments latitude to enact laws which offend the Charter. The notwithstanding clause--Section 33 of the Charter--allows governments to enact laws which may offend Sections 2 or 7-15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by giving legislatures the power to postpone for a renewable five-year period the judicial review of such laws. With the exception of its widespread symbolic use by Quebec's Parti Québécois government in the early 1980s, this legislative override of Charter challenges to government legislation has almost never been used. As Ian Greene explains, there is a political consensus that the override will only be used in "extraordinary circumstances, such as emergency situations or to advance

important social policy goals that could be or are being blocked by judicial review.⁵⁴ The Reform Party has recommended that no government should be permitted to use the notwithstanding clause "unless the action has been approved or sustained by means of a referendum."⁵⁵ While it may appear that such a proposal is intended to limit the use of Section 33, the party's Director of Caucus Research, Scott Reid, has explained that this proposal is meant to *revitalize* and *re-invigorate* the legislative override.⁵⁶ Reid argues that appealing to the popular will--shifting the decision regarding the legislative override from parliament to the people--provides the political legitimacy which is necessary to make the use of Section 33 more palatable. This is true. But it also produces a situation where *only* popular majorities can override constitutionally entrenched rights. As a result, it would be less and less likely that the limited space for parliamentary supremacy which was protected by Section 33 would be used in defence of minority individual and group rights.⁵⁷ Of course, this change alone would not result in majoritarian tyranny, but in the context of Reform's neo-liberal populism and the party's broader discourse on citizenship rights, moves toward institutionalized majoritarianism could have a negative impact on minority citizenship rights.

Employment Equity Programmes:

Questions of freedom, rights and equality have been central to Canadian debates regarding employment equity programmes. So too have competing interpretations of the causes of social inequality in liberal capitalist society. Beginning in the mid 1970s, a paradigm shift in the academic and policy communities interested in labour market-based

inequality turned the attention of policy-makers to the importance of the structural constraints which limit social equality and perpetuate economic stratification.⁵⁸ Prior to this, the dominant liberal-functional paradigm had "emphasized individually based blockages, and stressed liberal conceptions of human nature and *laissez faire* strategies of action."⁵⁹ The newer structuralist paradigm argues that rather than understanding occupational inequality as the result of the overtly biased acts of individuals, policy-makers must recognize that there are subtle, but powerful constraints built into institutional frameworks, customary patterns of behaviour, as well as the social power relations which structure individual workplace interactions. From this perspective, equality of occupational opportunity will not result from policies which assume everyone is the same and treat everyone alike. Instead, structuralist perspectives call for interventionist policies which aim at transforming institutions and institutional processes, accommodating differences, and mandating affirmative action programmes. By the 1980s, the increasing influence of structuralist interpretations of social and occupational inequality was reflected in, among other things, the inclusion of an Equality Rights clause (Section 15) in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the path breaking nature of the 1984 report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (the Abella Commission), and the passage of the 1986 Employment Equity Act.

The Reform Party rejects structuralist interpretations of social inequality and the emphasis which has been placed on the systemic character of racism and sexism in the workplace. In opposition to the principles of affirmative action policies, the party has

adopted an official policy statement supporting "the right of all job applicants to be evaluated solely on the basis of merit."⁶⁰ Moreover, since coming to Ottawa following the 1993 election, Reform M.P.s have used Parliament and its committees to actively criticize federal employment equity programmes--and they have done so by drawing on neo-liberalism's individualistic and market oriented notion of citizenship rights.

At the core of Reform's attack on employment equity is the argument that such programmes undermine the freedom and the *true* equality of citizens. Speaking in the House of Commons, Reform M.P. Herb Grubel explained Reform's opposition to the interventionism of employment equity programmes in the following manner:

Reform believes that government should assure *equality of opportunity* in economic life, but it has no business using the labour market to assure *equality of outcome*. Doing so interferes with basic freedoms [including]...the ability of individuals to sell their labour services to the highest bidder and for employers to choose freely those whom they wish to hire.⁶¹

Echoing Grubel, the right-wing author and sometimes Reformer, David Frum, explained, that "[a]ntidiscrimination law may invoke the language of rights and freedoms, but its true function is to shrink the ambit of freedom in order to promote equality [of outcome]."⁶² From Reform's perspective this is patently unjust, and it is made even worse by the fact that employment equity programmes provide entitlements based on group membership and physical characteristics like race and sex, rather than on demonstrated individual need.⁶³ This offends the libertarian principles advocated by Reformers such as the one-time M.P., Stephen Harper, who argues that "the fundamental role of

government...is first and foremost to treat people *identically*.⁶⁴ Indeed, Reform has argued that the federal Employment Equity Act violates the principle of identical treatment of citizens by formally "legislating discrimination, particularly against white males."⁶⁵ In attacking this apparent example of *reverse discrimination*, Reform M.P.s embrace the rhetoric of the anti-feminist organization REAL Women by arguing that "it is inappropriate to fight racism or sexism by racist and sexist means."⁶⁶

From the neo-liberal perspective that citizenship is an individual political identity and the most basic of citizenship rights is the right to be treated the same as all other citizens, Diane Ablonczy, Reform M.P. for Calgary North, argues that employment equity "violates the principle of natural justice... It says we are not all equal before the law, that some of us are more equal than others."⁶⁷ Moreover, Ablonczy and her colleagues complain that laws such as the Federal Employment Equity Act actively "instruct Canadians to think about themselves as members of groups and to relate to others in that way."⁶⁸ Even worse, Reform members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons suspect that the appeal to group identities has been motivated by partisan attempts to seek political support: "we fear that the broader intention of the government is to make an emotional appeal to special interests and the designated groups."⁶⁹ Herb Grubel is even more blunt as to the government's motivation:

Public choice theory of government provides the answer. Such legislation serves the interests of politicians and parties. Identifiable groups are given benefits and they are expected to reward the donor at the ballot box and with financial support.⁷⁰

This emphasis on the role of interest group politics in the growth of employment equity programmes represents the more explicitly populist dimension of Reform's critique. Referring to the Equality Rights clause (Section 15) of the Charter which ensures that affirmative action and employment equity policies are constitutionally protected, Reform points out that Section 15 was included at the *behest* of the feminist lobby, and Section 15 (2) represents a verbatim incorporation of feminist proposals.⁷¹ The party also contends that affirmative action and employment equity are policies "demanded by *elites* and imposed on Canadians by the political establishment."⁷² This is a common theme for Reformers protesting apparently illiberal social rights policies and programmes. In an article titled "The Manufacture of Minorities," former Reform policy advisor Tom Flanagan contends that the expansion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in human rights codes (from primarily "ethnic group stigmata" to a range of "life cycle" and "life style" criteria) has been caused by bureaucracies "with vested interest in expansion" and "organized pressure groups who feel they can advance their cause if they can get accepted as a human rights issue."⁷³ And Reform M.P. Ted White echoed this neo-liberal populist analysis when he criticised the bureaucratic offices which support and administer affirmative action policies:

When we take a look at the employee make-up of several prominent groups that promote employment equity, we find some very disturbing situations. The Ontario government's office of employment equity in 1994 had a workforce made up of 90.5 per cent women, 52.9 per cent racial minorities, 5.6 per cent aborigines, and zero able-bodied white males.⁷⁴

The implications are clear. Employment equity programmes are the work of powerful

special interests who are not interested in protecting the basic citizenship rights of ordinary Canadians.

In place of the current employment equity policies, the Reform Party advocates a policy regime underpinned by a neo-liberal recasting of the liberal functionalist perspective on social inequality. Their solutions are individually oriented and place considerable faith in market mechanisms. Reform would not object to efforts to educate away prejudices, but is most committed to freeing up the labour market and enhancing equality of opportunity. These types of solutions are not aggressive or interventionist, but Reform does not see the problem as being as serious as it has been portrayed to be. As one group of Reform M.P.s explained: "Reformers believe that Canadian employers are fair and do not discriminate on a systemic basis, therefore there is no need for group redress."⁷⁵ Another Reform M.P. has gone even further; he contends "there simply is no statistical evidence to support the claimed need for employment equity programs."⁷⁶

It would be difficult to overstate the Reform Party's faith in the free market as the key to policing workplace and labour market discrimination.⁷⁷ On a number of occasions Reform M.P.s have drawn on the work of the economist and Nobel laureate, Gary Becker, whose writings in the 1950s and 1960s argued that "market economies automatically tend to reduce discrimination, not increase it, resulting in a general increase in the [supposedly disadvantaged] group's standard of living."⁷⁸ The economist and Reform M.P., Herb Grubel, has even argued that "free markets offer the *best* protection against discrimination."⁷⁹ Of course, this faith in free markets is not expected to end all overt

discrimination by individual employers; but that is not considered a problem because Reform wants to focus on 'personal justice' rather than group redress: "Claims of discrimination should be adjudicated on a case-by-case rather than a group basis... Relief from discrimination should only be awarded to identifiable victims."⁸⁰ With a free market (supposedly) allowing for equality of opportunity and with the opportunity for individual recourse to Human Rights Commissions in the event of overt discrimination, Reformers assume working people will be fairly treated and compensated by the labour market; and this assumption is at the core of the party's so-called 'policy of equality':

All Canadians are equal by virtue of their shared humanity, but not all are equal in terms of ability, preference and discipline. Canadians who wish to pursue a certain vocation should not face barriers of discrimination, and those with ability and discipline deserve the rewards of their hard work.⁸¹

On the other hand, Reform contends that interventionist affirmative action programmes which interfere with the free market have led to 'dependency' on the part of designated group members who have learned to avoid the rigours of competition, and this simply lowers standards and eventually hurts everyone.⁸² From Reform's perspective, then, there is no place for policies which utilize notions of social rights, substantive equality or group redress in a manner which detracts from an individualistic and market oriented perspective on citizenship rights.

Some Reformers have also argued state equity programmes are particularly unnecessary in the late twentieth century because the realities of globalization and cultural diversity will lead self-interested corporations to adjust their workforces to reflect

Canada's cultural diversity.⁸³ The argument here is that the dictates of market competition will enforce firm-specific equity policies, and thus there is no need for public policies which actively violate the boundary between what liberal market society considers to be the public and private spheres. There remains a significant distinction, however, between Reform's willingness to accept firm-specific equity as is dictated by market forces, and the desire to root a commitment to societal equity in a conception of social citizenship--and the structuralist perspective on occupational inequality which informs affirmative action programmes is clearly based on the latter.

Amending the Canadian Human Rights Act:

During 1996, Parliament passed into law Bill C-33. An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act. The purpose of the Act was to add sexual orientation to the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination. Reform Members of Parliament voted against Bill C-33 and put a considerable amount of political energy into challenging the wisdom of including sexual orientation among the prohibited grounds of discrimination. At the core of Reform's official critique of Bill C-33 was the party's familiar argument that it would inevitably extend group rights and special status rather than enhance the equality of all individuals. In the House of Commons, Preston Manning characterised the debate as one which pitted Reform's 'equality approach' against the Liberal government's 'special status approach'.⁸⁴ As with employment equity programmes and the equality rights section of the Charter, Manning's critique was that "what started out as categorizations of Canadians simply for the purpose of defining prohibited grounds of discrimination have become

special entitlements for groups.⁸⁵ In his opinion, this special status approach is "wrong headed and ineffective."⁸⁶ During the debate in the House of Commons, Manning declined to expand on how the Reform Party's equality approach would work in practice, but he subsequently expanded on his ideas for reporters from the press gallery:

Manning suggested the Human Rights Act might be replaced by an Equal Opportunities Act, which would mean the government wouldn't be trying to impose the outcome, just the opportunity. In place of the present Human Rights Tribunal, there could be an Equal Opportunities Tribunal, which would require landlords and employers to use "fair and reasonable criteria in assessing individuals for employment or accommodation or other services."⁸⁷

What is striking about this perspective is not merely the classically liberal emphasis on individualism and equality of opportunity, but, once again, the emphasis on moving away from any reference to groups or categories of citizens. The neo-liberal populist logic of emphasizing that which all citizens have in common while downplaying differences is central to Reform's critique of enumerating prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Human Rights Act. Nowhere was this clearer than in Manning's speech to the House of Commons. In his intervention in the Bill C-33 debate, Manning explained the 'ideal' to which Reformers wish to aspire:

In the Kingdom of Christ there would be neither Greek nor Hebrew, neither racial distinction nor discrimination based on race or religion, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but all would be one... *The Christian ideal is not only the complete eradication of prejudice and discrimination but the elimination of the very conceptualizations and categorizations, the end of categories, upon which prejudice feeds.* This of course in an ideal which cannot be fully achieved in this world but we can decide whether we press toward it or go in the other direction.⁸⁸

The goal, in other words, is to reject any emphasis on or valorization of difference. The ideal is to view all individuals *as if* they were exactly the same. Manning is suggesting that citizenship rights and state interventions to protect the human rights of citizens should be designed as would be appropriate for a society populated by liberalism's hypothetical universal man--that is, a society of citizens abstracted from social relations, in which each individual is conceptualized as the essential person which remains once the complexities and differences of real life are erased.

The contrast between Reform's equality approach and the approach taken by the Human Rights Act--which Manning calls the special status approach--is merely a variation on the classic debate between 'universality' and 'difference' which has animated numerous challenges to the assumptions which ground liberal democratic theory.⁸⁹ As was argued in chapter five, Reform's neo-liberal populism entails a commitment to the idea that there is a unifying lowest common denominator, a core sameness, which unites all citizens. This assumption is used to justify the equality approach. However, assumptions about the sameness of citizens implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) privilege certain groups over others. The result is that Manning's proposed Equal Opportunities Act would fail to address many complex, but important, dimensions of discrimination.

A second component of Reform's critique of adding sexual orientation to the prohibited grounds of discrimination was that enforcing this measure might infringe upon other freedoms. In particular, an interim policy statement issued by the Reform caucus in

early 1996 expressed concern that including sexual orientation in the Human Rights Act could affect freedom of religion, expression and association, as well as the right to security of person.⁹⁰ For example, Manning explained that he was concerned that there was no assurance that the amendment would not "infringe upon the freedom of any religious group to express or teach their beliefs [regarding] the morality or immorality of any sexual activity or relationship."⁹¹ Similarly, making reference to the case of a gay man from Edmonton who was fired from a teaching position in a Christian school, David Chatters, the Reform M.P. for Athabasca, argued that "[w]hen you go into the issue of homosexuals and lesbians, I think it is in the interests of society to discriminate against that group in [certain] areas... schools is one that comes to mind."⁹² Finally, the caucus' interim policy statement also suggested that with the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act, "health authorities could be constrained from distinguishing 'high risk' groups in matters such as HIV infection in blood donations, and prohibiting high-risk individuals from participation in the provision of patient care."⁹³

But in addition to all these (fairly) cautious references to the importance of freedom religion, expression and association, many Reformers were also fearful of the possibility that amending the Human Rights Act could infringe upon the freedoms associated with property rights, particularly the right of employers not to hire homosexuals if they felt it would harm their business. As the one-time Reform caucus Whip, Bob Ringma, put it in an interview with the *Vancouver Sun*:

Well, you know, don't you think *an employer should have that sort of*

*freedom--that if someone's working for him and responsible for his business failing, that he should be able to just say, 'Hey, I don't need you in my employ' or 'I'm going to switch you to the back of the shop.'*⁹⁴

Since the heated public and media controversy over Ringma's statement, few Reformers have been willing to publicly argue that an employer's common law property rights should prevail over the statutory protections from discrimination which are now included in the Canadian Human Rights Act. Nevertheless, the controversy around the Ringma affair—which, admittedly, focused more on the implicit racism and homophobia displayed by his comments—serves to highlight, once again, the importance Reformers place on the protection of citizens' property rights, even when property rights clash with human rights.

A final, sometimes implicit, but often explicit, dimension of Reform's critique of Bill C-33 and the move to include sexual orientation among the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act is the homophobic fear that recognizing and protecting the human rights of gay men and lesbians will, eventually, undermine the family. This is particularly important to Reformers because they consider the family--more specifically, the heterosexual nuclear family--to be one of the foundations of a properly ordered society. Sometimes referring to the *traditional* family, and other times to the *natural* family, Reformers have argued that "the family is the most fundamental institution in society."⁹⁵ As far back as the writing of *Political Realignment* with his father in 1967, Preston Manning referred to the family as "[t]he most fundamental unit of human association."⁹⁶ This discursive framework implies that individual citizens exist in the context of nuclear families, and society is constituted by a

network of such families. As Chuck Strahl, the Reform M.P. for Fraser Valley, argued when he introduced his private members bill calling for the establishment of a federal Auditor General for the family,⁹⁷ Reformers believe that "[f]amilies are the root of a prosperous and peaceful nation."⁹⁸ But today, according to Strahl, there is a "broad public perception that the family is in trouble"; and when "the family is under threat," Reformers such as Strahl believe "our future is also threatened."⁹⁹

In an attempt to shore up the family, Reform delegates to both the 1994 and 1996 party assemblies passed policy resolutions intended to draw attention to the party's (narrow) conception of a proper family: a family, according to Reform, includes "those individuals related by ties of blood, marriage or adoption"--and a legal marriage is limited to "the union between a man and a woman as recognized by the state."¹⁰⁰ The rationale for adopting these definitions as official policy was presented in a document circulated at the party's 1994 assembly:

The preservation of the purposes and sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman is crucial to preservation of the individual, the family, and society. The union of husband and wife assures the perpetuation of the race and the sanctity of that relationship is the very security and foundation of the family... The family setting with father and mother and children firmly committed to each other provides the best hope for avoiding many of the ills that afflict society... [T]he legal authorization of same gender marriages opens the door to the rise of family units that are even less stable and offer the least hope for avoiding those same ills. More importantly, the legalization of same gender marriages would constitute nothing less than the national trivialization and mockery of the institution of marriage which can do nothing but demean, undermine, and destroy. This is not merely a moral issue; it is a threat to the survival of family and nation at its very source-of-life roots.¹⁰¹

This line of thinking is important to Reform's discourse on citizenship, not only because it justifies their opposition to Bill C-33, but also because of the way it links the neo-liberal concern for "preservation of the individual" to the neo-conservative desire to protect a social order constructed around the primacy of the heterosexual nuclear family. It is important to note that Reform goes further than simply rejecting the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act; it challenges the legitimacy of gay and lesbian families, and constructs individual homosexual citizens as detrimental to society. Manning and other Reformers *claim* not to condemn individuals or be anti-homosexual, but Manning has declared his belief that "homosexuality is destructive to the individual, and in the long run to society."¹⁰² And when one Reform delegate warned at the 1994 assembly that the party's policies on the family would be viewed as anti-gay, other delegates applauded and cheered.¹⁰³

Reformers, as I argued in chapter five, are anxious about the erosion of the familiar foundations of society. Extending protection to gay men and lesbians through an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act troubles Reformers because it appears to be the 'thin edge of the wedge' in relation to legitimizing homosexuality and homosexual families. In the House of Commons, Manning argued that Bill C-33 would lead to the extension of spousal benefits to homosexual couples and, eventually, to family status for homosexual couples and their children.

The bureaucrats who will implement the amendment, the court that will interpret it and the interest groups to whom it will give standing are all out there greasing the slippery slope and making it abundantly clear they

intend to send Canada down that slope.¹⁰⁴

Manning and other socially conservative Reformers are obviously concerned that moving down this 'slippery slope' will further destabilize this already complex world by partially de-centring the heterosexual nuclear family. Clearly, the concern is that when sexual orientation is treated as a legitimate dimension of a political identity and human rights legislation is amended to protect gay men and lesbians from discrimination, then both the social institution of the family and Reform's individualistic neo-liberal understanding of citizens, citizenship and citizenship rights are being challenged. In other words, the debate around Bill C-33 has served to highlight the way in which the politics of 'family values' and the politics of citizenship rights are intricately intertwined. On this issue Reform's social conservatism and its neo-liberalism are clearly reinforcing one another.

Reviewing the Reform Party's interventions in debates regarding the Charter of Rights, employment equity and the Canadian Human Rights Act, demonstrates the extent to which neo-liberal populism, libertarian individualism and social conservatism guide the party's thinking on the meaning and rights of citizenship. Reform is committed to rolling back illiberal (even welfare liberal) social rights, group rights and proactive equity policies. The party's discursive interventions aim to enhance the popular resonance of neo-liberalism (and sometimes social conservatism) and to shape the meaning and rights of citizenship in a manner appropriate to an era of neo-liberal governance. Drawing primarily on an individualistic and market oriented notion of citizenship which narrows the range of legitimate citizenship rights to the negative liberties associated with political

and civil rights, Reform aims to depoliticize a variety of issues which have been politicized by postwar era notions of social rights. The party contends that true equality requires a new public consensus around the principle that there is just one class of citizens with the same rights and responsibilities. While their efforts to forge this new public consensus have not been entirely successful, it is clear that, over the past decade, the popular resonance of Reform-style discourse on citizenship has increased.

Defining the Canadian Political Community

The ideological and discursive processes which define a national political community can never, once-and-for-all, complete the task. Any delineation of the national political community is, by definition, contingent. It is true, as Anna Yeatman points out, that public policy tends to "presuppose a political community that is already defined."¹⁰⁵ But that predefined political community never *actually* exists. In fact, on an ongoing basis, state policies pertaining to citizenship, language, culture and immigration, among others, serve to (re)define who is Canadian and to (re)construct the social and discursive boundaries of our national political community.¹⁰⁶ There may be periods of apparent consensus regarding the nature of the national political community, but such consensus is always contestable, if not actively contested. Indeed, as was argued in earlier chapters, Reform's emergence has been closely tied to contestation of a particular partisan consensus regarding the Canadian political community. As Ken McRoberts pointed out during the 1993 election, the political significance of Reform is tied to the fact that the party has given voice to an alternative definition of Canada's national political

community. Reform's political discourse and the party's policy agenda challenge what McRoberts describes as "a consensus that the three established federal parties have maintained for decades over the nature of Canada and the policies (such as bilingualism and multiculturalism) needed to keep it together."¹⁰⁷

The process of (re)defining the national political community has far-reaching political consequences. Defining a nation places limits on membership in the political community, on who is inside and who is outside. It specifies the roles, privileges and powers of various segments of society. Similarly, the status of various political identities and the legitimacy of different interests which wish to make claims on the collectivity are matters which are determined, at least in part, by the social processes of defining the national political community. In the context of populist politics, the political and ideological act of defining the nation is also linked to the act of defining the people as one pole in the people/powerful interests antagonism, which was the focus of the discussion of Reform's neo-liberal populism in chapter five.

Reformers contend that Canada's national political community is a homogeneous community of individuals who share an essential sameness which is infinitely more important than any apparent differences. In such a community, subnational collective identities are rejected as artificial and divisive. Thus, Reform urges Canadians to resist a variety of policies ranging from official bilingualism to multiculturalism to the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. These policies, they argue, are highly divisive policies which have been forced onto the Canadian political agenda by powerful minority

special interests which lack a commitment to enhancing Canada's *natural* national character.

It could be argued that, contrary to the viewpoint held by most Reformers, Canada's postwar policy regime--including the policies of the Trudeau and Mulroney eras--never strayed far from traditional liberal conceptions of citizenship and political community--except *perhaps* for the embrace of cultural pluralism through multiculturalism policies which accorded public status and dignity to cultural diversity.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Reformers tend to consider *all* state policies which enhance cultural pluralism or foster greater recognition and valorization of other social differences as initiatives which lead to an illiberal framework of differentiated citizenship and expanding minority group rights.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Reformers argue that many of these types of policies have already been put in place; and, in the long run, they contend such policies will undermine Canada's *natural* political community.¹¹⁰ In the final analysis, this is the reasoning behind the Reform Party's insistence on advocating a policy agenda which would redefine the Canadian political community in more homogeneous terms.

Clearly, then, Reform's policy agenda in relation to the redefinition of the Canadian political community is a reaction against a series of language, cultural and immigration policies which officially valorize diversity and undermine what Reformers take to be Canada's *natural* national character. To explore this policy agenda and reveal the ways in which Reform has struggled to redefine Canada's national political community, it is useful to examine the party's policies regarding (i) multiculturalism and

immigration, (ii) bilingualism and the status of Quebec within Canadian federalism, and (iii) Aboriginal self-government. In each of these areas of public policy, the Reform agenda aims at advancing a neo-liberal conception of Canada's national political community.

Multiculturalism and Immigration Policy:

Reform's policies on immigration and multiculturalism are among the most discussed elements of the party's neo-liberal populist policy agenda. The Reform Party has been clear about the fact that their agenda in these areas is a reaction against government policies which undermine the *natural* identity of the Canadian nation. According to one party publication, Ottawa's current policy regime, particularly in relation to multiculturalism, has defined a "government-manufactured culture" which is not rooted in "national characteristics with which every Canadian can identify."¹¹¹ Moreover, as with employment equity and so many other public policies, Manning and his supporters contend that multiculturalism and immigration policies represent an ill-advised government response to the demands of an elite of powerful special interests. Echoing a well-known critique of Liberal policies, Reform M.P. Myron Thompson explained in the House of Commons that the Reform Party contends Liberal governments have been attempting to buy the ethnic vote by "funding special interest groups under the guise of multiculturalism."¹¹² Similarly, with regard to immigration policy, Reform contends that it is the wishes of special interests, not ordinary Canadians, which governments have been responsive to. Indeed, the party's 1988 election platform claimed there "is perhaps no area

of public policy where the views of *Canadians* have been more systematically ignored.¹¹³ In a speech to a party assembly that same year, Kim Abbot of the Immigration Association of Canada explained why ordinary Canadians have so little influence over immigration policy:

Today, immigration is completely out of control. We don't know who the people are that pour across our borders, and our political system has degenerated into an irresponsible power seeking morass managed by self-seekers. The interest of the man in the street, the constituent our politicians are elected to represent, are ignored. Instead the federal government and federal political parties, knee-jerk to every immigration lawyer, special interest group, social service agency involved in the immigration movement, and the whole array of people who live off the immigration traffic, because they think that these people can deliver the ethnic vote that guarantees power.¹¹⁴

With regard to multiculturalism, Reform M.P. Lee Morrison has characterized Canadian multiculturalism policy as a policy which is "divisive...encourages ghettoization and wastes tax dollars."¹¹⁵ The root problem, according to a widely circulated party policy paper, is the "politicization of ethnicity."¹¹⁶ Although there is considerable evidence to the contrary, Preston Manning argues that Reformers do not oppose diversity *per se*; instead, he claims the party's position is simply that multiculturalism is divisive because it politicizes ethnicity by getting the federal government involved in what should be a private matter--that is, the preservation of minority cultures and personal ethnic identities. Manning explains that once a country "starts down this road of granting special status to one or more groups based on race, language, or culture, it comes under increasing pressure to take the same approach to other groups."¹¹⁷ The inevitable result, he believes,

is "a hyphenated Canadianism that emphasizes our differences and downplays our common ground."¹¹⁸ In other words, multiculturalism frustrates the emergence of a homogeneous national political community because it focuses attention on differences between citizens, rather than on the essential sameness of all Canadians. Multiculturalism policy is thus responsible for both ethnic conflict *and* the apparent lack of a truly Canadian national culture based on the common characteristics of ordinary Canadians.

Although Manning was once quoted as incautiously saying "[i]t is a mistake to meet immigrants at the boat or plane and offer them a grant to preserve their culture,"¹¹⁹ he is usually quite careful in how he phrases his criticism of multiculturalism policy. Clearly, he is aware of the potential for accusations of racism. This is the likely reason for focusing the party's official critique of multiculturalism on the problems associated with the politicization of ethnicity. Often, Manning simply argues that "you cannot hold a country together with *hyphens*."¹²⁰ From his perspective, encouraging the development of hyphenated identities--such as English-Canadian, French-Canadian, Polish-Canadian, or Turkish-Canadian--has been a problem *merely* because it makes it difficult to build an overarching sense of Canadian identity. But most Reformers are more forceful in their condemnation of multiculturalism, its consequences, and the special interests to which the policy supposedly caters. Former Reform M.P. Jan Brown depicts multiculturalism as a divisive policy which fragments society and thwarts the potential for Canadian unity:

We all want the right to retain our roots, but what we have is Trudeau's enforced multicultural scam and the costs have been excessive. Ethnic group is pitted against ethnic group and the country is fragmented into a

thousand consciousnesses. Trudeau's ideas about multiculturalism continue to contribute as a primary factor in the erosion of federalism and Canada's unity....This destructive outcome is almost inevitable so long as we officially encourage large groups to remain apart from the mainstream.¹²¹

The Reform M.P. for Surrey-White Rock-South Langley, Val Meredith, echoes Brown's sentiment and adds that multiculturalism is, at bottom, another illiberal policy granting special status and subverting the equality of citizens:

I do not think the federal government should be encouraging programs such as multiculturalism and bilingualism that divide Canadians, that bring them up against each other in vying for superiority and power. It is time that the government realized all Canadians deserve equal treatment from the federal government, should be considered equal members of Canadian society and stop this fallacy, this obscenity of creating divisions based on language and ethnic background.¹²²

Reform's attack on Canada's immigration policies has been no less damning than its attack on multiculturalism. Reform Party members are quite uncomfortable with the fact that since the 1960s an increasing percentage of immigrants have come to Canada from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean or South and Central America, rather than Europe. In 1988, the party's election platform stated that "increasingly," Canadian immigration policy seems to be "explicitly designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada."¹²³ This troubles Reformers, largely because accepting a more diverse range of immigrants is inconsistent with efforts to build a homogeneous political community. In addressing the 1988 party assembly, Kim Abbot urged Reformers to oppose "the entry of massive numbers of newcomers, from any part of the world, if the numbers exceed our absorptive capacity and change our *cultural and ethnic balance*."¹²⁴ In 1990, the party

adopted as official policy a resolution stating that it is "the responsibility of the state to promote, preserve, and enhance the national culture" and, furthermore, that immigration and cultural policies "should encourage ethnic cultures to integrate into the national culture."¹²⁵

Of course party policy documents seldom elaborate on Reform's conception of Canada's *national culture*. Indeed, in attempting to explain his conception of *Canadian* to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Reform's caucus critic for immigration could only say:

I feel that just what is a Canadian is fairly well defined. However, there are many in our country...who want to look at a more multicultural process to things, which seems to me to be driving much of our immigration and citizenship policies.¹²⁶

Other Reformers, however, have been somewhat clearer about their vision of a Canada *not* driven by this "multicultural process to things." For example, one Reform activist explained that "[w]e are derivative of white European culture, this is our identity."¹²⁷ And the Reform M.P. for Wild Rose, Myron Thompson, stated the following in the House of Commons: "I still respect and will always believe, probably until I die anyway, that this is a Christian nation."¹²⁸ It is true that Reformers will admit that immigration built this (white Christian) nation. They will even declare, as Reform M.P. Jim Hart did in the House of Commons, that "[c]ultural diversity has and will continue to be beneficial to our nation."¹²⁹ But these vague gestures to embrace immigrants and cultural diversity do not necessarily translate into support for the pattern of immigration over the past three

decades. As Jim Hart said later in the same House of Commons speech in which he praised cultural diversity:

Whatever happened to the hard working, self-supporting immigrants who built this country, people who were admitted because they deserved to be here?...Since the Liberal heyday of the seventies when Trudeau and his obedient officials opened the floodgates to immigration, based not on the needs of the country, not on selectivity or high standards, but on some seemingly intangible set of feel good principles, Canada has been on a backward slide. The Canadian public demands a tougher approach as to who we admit into this country.¹³⁰

Under pressure from critics of the party, Reform has backed away from official references to ensuring that immigration policies preserve the *national culture* by not altering Canada's ethnic makeup. In 1991, the Party Policy Committee convinced delegates that a "clearer and more positive statement" was needed to replace the reference to the national culture. Guided by the Party Policy Committee, the party adopted a motion declaring that "the Reform Party stands for the acceptance and integration of new Canadians into the mainstream of Canadian life."¹³¹ But this has not stopped individual constituency associations from proposing a return to a more blunt, hard line policy. In 1991, Reformers from Calgary North proposed that the Reform Party commit itself to an immigration policy which would "maintain [Canada's] ethnic/cultural balance as of September 1990."¹³² Then, in 1994, a constituency association introduced a policy resolution calling on immigrants to "accept, honour and respect Canadian tradition and heritage." Another proposed the following:

Resolved that the Reform Party support a policy by which all future immigrants entering Canada must agree to embrace and adapt to the

Canadian culture rather than expecting the Canadian culture to conform to and accommodate their special cultural, philosophical and religious expectations.¹³³

The attention drawn to these essentially xenophobic policy proposals has concerned the more cautious members of Manning's inner circle. The party's *Green Book*, which 'further explains' policy to constituency association presidents, candidates and other party spokespersons, is extremely circumspect in its explanation and justification of party policies. It talks of a multiculturalism policy which ensures equal opportunity within the 'Canadian mosaic' and an immigration policy based on 'economic need'.¹³⁴ In his keynote speeches to party assemblies, Manning has called for a better approach to 'equality *and* diversity'. In one such address, he encouraged Reformers to commit themselves to "preserving Canada's multicultural heritage." but he then added:

let this be done by making this task the responsibility of citizens, private associations, and lower levels of government...This is how you get genuine *equality and freedom for diversity* without compromising either principle. If Canadians want unity and diversity--a mosaic rather than a melting pot--then let us have a mosaic. But let individuals, private associations, and lower levels of government be responsible for shaping and polishing the diverse pieces; let the national government be responsible for providing equal rights for all as the common background and glue which holds the pieces together.¹³⁵

Reformers support Manning's emphasis on the privatization of cultural protection, but they have not demonstrated widespread support for Manning's rhetoric on 'unity and diversity' or the Canadian 'mosaic'. In fact, a Manning-endorsed resolution advocating a multiculturalism policy which promoted the idea of a Canadian mosaic was rejected by delegates to the 1992 party assembly.¹³⁶ Former party insiders, such as Tom Flanagan,

concede "there is fairly wide support for a 'melting pot' concept, in which ethnicity is purely a private concern, and the public sphere is simply Canadian period."¹³⁷ As Art Hanger explained in the House of Commons, Reformers expect new immigrants to integrate into the 'mainstream' of Canadian life:

My understanding of what integration means is that an immigrant embraces the Canadian way of life and Canadian culture, while having the freedom to preserve his own culture, but if he chooses to do so *he should have to do so at his own expense, on his own time without government assistance.*¹³⁸

Regardless of differences between his views and those of the party membership, Manning has continued to argue that Reform's multiculturalism policy "does not mean necessarily an abandonment of the mosaic model of Canada."¹³⁹ He seems to believe that simply by depoliticizing ethnicity, political conflict and clashes of identity will wane until we enter what Richard Gwyn has called a "post-race Canada."¹⁴⁰ Until then, Manning places his faith in policies which simply allow Canadians the 'freedom for diversity', what Jan Brown has described as "allowing multiculturalism to flourish by giving individuals the *freedom* to pursue their own cultural ideals."¹⁴¹ For Manning and other like-minded Reformers, the problem with multiculturalism is that giving political recognition or support to minority cultural protection subsidizes the choices of some at the expense of others, rather than simply allowing for free competition in the 'cultural marketplace'--but, as Will Kymlicka explains, there is, in this argument, no recognition that "some groups are unfairly disadvantaged in this cultural marketplace."¹⁴² Because of the differential capacity of minority ethnic and cultural groups, Manning's notion of allowing 'freedom

'for diversity' appears as a ploy intended to reduce the possibility of offending those who support the goals of official multiculturalism. The end result, as Manning is aware, would be culturally homogenizing, if not aggressively so.

For many other Reformers, however, this position is not good enough. For them, belief in a unitary 'national culture' or a single way of living which can be identified as the 'mainstream' Canadian life, is very important. What is the nation without reference to the 'national culture'? Is it not, as the party's 1990 policy statement claimed, "the responsibility of the state to promote, preserve, and enhance the national culture"? And, moreover, shouldn't Canadian immigration and cultural policies actively "encourage ethnic cultures to integrate into the national culture"?¹⁴³ For many Reformers, it is obviously important to protect the Canadian culture and way of life from waves of immigrants and the social engineering policies demanded by minority special interests.

Bilingualism and the Status of Quebec:

The 'Quebec question' and the 'French fact' have been centrally important to debates regarding the nature of Canada's national political community. Since the 1960s, Quebec's Quiet Revolution and the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Canadian federalists have struggled to recognize Canada's two dominant linguistic communities--its two nations--in the policies and institutions which shape the national political community. From its birth, however, the Reform Party has rejected the dualist notion that Canada is a bicultural political community composed of two nations. The party has consistently opposed policies, ranging from the Official Languages Act to

the constitutional entrenchment of a distinct society clause, which aim to institutionalize a dualist conception of the Canadian nation. Reformers do not deny the distinctiveness of Quebec society, they simply dispute historical and political interpretations which treat either francophone or Québécois culture as one of two integral components of a broader and bicultural national political community.

As with so many other areas of public policy, Reform's discourse on bilingualism and the status of Quebec has placed considerable emphasis on liberal notions equality, freedom and majoritarianism. First, Reform is committed to the formal equality of all provinces and individuals--in particular, there should be no special status for Quebec or special group rights for francophone Canadians. Second, the party advocates the virtues of a decentralized federation in which the federal government would no longer enforce a nation-wide policy of official bilingualism, but would devolve responsibility for matters related to language and culture to the provinces and private individuals. Reformers stress that this would ensure all Canadians have the freedom to pursue what they call 'individual bilingualism', while also allowing provinces--such as Quebec, where the majority of citizens are francophone--to pursue language policies which respond to local majorities. At bottom, these principles allow the Reform Party to advocate a federal policy regime which treats Canada as an English-speaking political community characterized by a high degree of cultural homogeneity. These principles do not require the denial of subnational political identities rooted in language and culture; rather, they require that such identities be treated as either individual--and therefore private--political identities or 'local'

collective identities which are not properly extolled in public policies which shape the broader national political community.

In 1988, the first edition of the Reform Party's *Blue Book* attacked the year-old Meech Lake constitutional accord for "improving Quebec's position within Confederation without concurrent amendments improving the position of the Western Provinces, the Atlantic Provinces, and Northern Canada."¹⁴⁴ The Meech Lake Accord, Reformers argued, violated the principle of provincial equality by constitutionalizing asymmetrical arrangements which favour the province of Quebec. Since that time, the Reform Party has steadfastly maintained, as Stephen Harper explains, that there should be "no special status, formally or informally, for Quebec or any other province."¹⁴⁵ On bilingualism, the 1988 platform called for a language policy which is "fair to all Canadians, including the vast majority of unilingual Canadians." Instead of a national policy of official bilingualism, Reform advocated policies which recognize the core "demographic reality of the country"--the predominance of French in Quebec and English elsewhere.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, in a populist twist, the platform's critique of official bilingualism linked the language policies of the Trudeau-Mulroney era to the institutionalization of 'French power' and special status for Quebec nationalists:

[T]he power priorities of Official Languages policy have become blatant. Quebec will be encouraged to develop a unilingual French society (Bill 101). The status of French will be enhanced in English Canada (Bill C72). The architects and supporters of Quebec Nationalism will become the most powerful members of the Federal Cabinet, administering the policy and publicly stating their priorities.¹⁴⁷

Clearly, the Reform Party views French Canadians as a special interest which has benefited at the expense of the vast majority of unilingual English-speaking citizens. Indeed, the official justification for a 1994 party policy resolution calling for repeal of the Official Languages Act was, in part, that "the Act is of benefit *only* to French Canadians and franco-phones."¹⁴⁸ While Reform's rhetoric stops short of French power conspiracy theories, such as those advanced in Jock Andrew's *Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow*,¹⁴⁹ there is certainly the suggestion that bilingualism and Quebec nationalism are troubling examples of subnational political identities and group rights which have grown far beyond what is legitimate in a liberal society.

On the question of the proper relationship between Quebec and (the rest of) Canada, Reform's critique of dualism and biculturalism is severe. In his speech to the party's 1991 assembly, Manning argued that "it has been attempts to more tightly integrate the institutions, languages, and cultures of the English and the French by political and constitutional means which has been the *greatest single cause of political disunity*."¹⁵⁰ Reviewing two centuries of constitutional history, Manning attempted to build a historical argument to justify his analysis.¹⁵¹ First he argued that the integrationist character of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 so strained relations between the French and the English that the Quebec Act of 1774 had to be introduced to allow more space for separate and distinctive institutions and policies for the English and French political communities. But, Manning contends the lesson still had not been learned. A generation later, the 1840 Act of Union once again strained relations by attempting to force greater

integration. This time it was the 1867 BNA Act and the establishment of federalism which solved the problems associated with ill-advised integrationist policies. According to Manning, the "Fathers of Confederation worked to create new constitutional arrangements and structures, which sought to bypass and supersede the discredited concept of a partnership between the English and the French."¹⁵²

From Reform's perspective, the 1867 federal arrangements were a wise and proper solution to the problems associated with the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the French Canadians. As Manning explained, under the BNA Act's federal division of powers, "[i]t was essentially left to the Government of Quebec to deal with the 'two nations' problem at the provincial level."¹⁵³ At the national level, federal arrangements would allow Canada to be just a single nation--*One Canada*, to borrow Diefenbaker's rhetoric--where all citizens and all provinces are equal.¹⁵⁴ But, according to Manning, all did not remain well. In the 1960s, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism "revived the concept of Canada as an equal partnership between two founding races, languages, and cultures."¹⁵⁵ In doing so a fateful decision was made to nationalize the very issue the Fathers of Confederation had provincialized. From Manning's perspective, this was a "Great Leap Backward" for the Canadian political community, the "most serious challenge yet" to the constitutional vision of 1867.¹⁵⁶ In his speech to the 1991 assembly, Manning argued that attempts since the 1960s to integrate the institutions, languages and cultures of the French and English have produced a 'political crisis' which can only be resolved "by the establishment of a more separate

relationship within a broader political framework."¹⁵⁷ The Reform leader is usually careful to insist that this 'broader political framework' should be a decentralized federalism, but he has publicly stated that if Quebec can not accept the principles of symmetrical federalism, then "Quebec and the rest of Canada should openly examine the feasibility of establishing a better *but more separate relationship* between them."¹⁵⁸

There is an interesting paradox in Reform's position on the distinctiveness of Quebec. Preston Manning has spoken out against the dualist notion of Canada as a partnership between two founding nations.¹⁵⁹ His party's position seems to be that the character of Canada's national political community should be defined by the anglophone majority. Nevertheless, the Reform Party does not deny the realities of Quebec's distinctiveness; as was suggested above, Reform simply wishes to reject the 'national' importance of that distinctiveness. According to Manning, Reformers wish to devolve power for language and culture to the provinces. The virtue of this, he believes, is that it simultaneously allows Ottawa to get out of enforcing policies which party members are troubled by *and* recognize Quebecer's demands to be *Maitre chez nous*--and thus responsible for the two nations problem. But how can recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness be reconciled with Reform's desire to promote a view of Canada as an English-speaking political community characterized by a high degree of cultural homogeneity?

The answer lies in the majoritarianism of Reform's neo-liberal populism. After the death of the Meech Lake Accord, Manning called for a constitutional process which

would allow "the people themselves" to take ownership of the constitution and define a 'New Canada'. But as is characteristic of populist discourse, Manning's notion of the people was exclusionary; it would not include Québécois nationalists.

[W]e say, let Quebec define the New Quebec. But at the same time we say with even more vigour and insistence, let the Rest of Canada (and federalists in Quebec if they so wish) clearly define New Canada...We therefore propose that the first step toward developing the Constitution of New Canada should be the organization of regional Constitutional conventions--one in British Columbia, one for the Prairie Provinces, one in Ontario, and one for the Atlantic Provinces--to be followed by a National Convention.¹⁶⁰

Taking such a position has led to the accusation that the Reform Party would actually prefer a Canada without Quebec. But few Reformers would admit this is the case. Manning, himself, seems to have a naive populist faith in the fact that the New Quebec and the New Canada can be reconciled because, in his words, "rank and file people everywhere want more or less the same things."¹⁶¹ Many other Reformers, however, seem willing to enforce a strict majoritarianism which would force Quebecers to keep their distinctiveness at home.

Since the early 1990s Reform has searched for a way to combine its strict adherence to the equality principle of symmetrical federalism--including the rejection of any form of special status for Quebec--with a public image of the Reform Party as a truly national party which is ready to govern the entire nation. For a time, Manning attempted to be more conciliatory. In an open letter to Quebecers in July, 1993, the Reform leader stated that "[t]hose who tell you that Reform's vision of a new Canada does not include

Quebec are particularly misguided and malicious."¹⁶² In a similar open letter two years latter, Manning told Quebecers that Reformers from Western Canada share their disenchantment with federalism: "We appreciate your frustration, because we've felt it too. We've felt ignored, threatened and even angry."¹⁶³ The problem, Manning began to argue, is not federalism per se, but 'status quo' federalism. By late 1995, Manning was telling Quebecers who were frustrated with the status quo that Reform offered a new federalist option which is superior to both the status quo and to separatism. But, at the same time, Reform has carefully positioned itself as the party which is willing to get tough with Quebec if and when the province pursues sovereignty. The party's 1996 discussion paper on federalism and the place of Quebec in Canada detailed twenty proposals for a 'New Confederation', but it also outlined twenty "realities of secession"-- essentially these are terms and conditions Reform would insist upon to protect the interests of (the rest of) Canada in the event of Quebec separation.¹⁶⁴

Aboriginal Self-government:

One of the more complex challenges facing those engaged in debate regarding the Canadian political community is the question of the position and status of First Nations. Is there an inherent right to Aboriginal self-government? How can Aboriginal sovereignty be reconciled with the nation-state model of the modern Western world? Would sovereign Aboriginal nations best be conceptualized as nations within a nation, or can the federal principle of divided sovereignty provide a framework within which to design a new relationship? The Reform Party's policies on Aboriginal affairs suggest that most of

our efforts to grapple with these complex questions have been misguided. Drawing on a neo-liberal conception of citizenship and a populist critique of Indian leaders as special interests who have taken advantage of the Canadian state's generosity, Reform has attempted to refute the claim to an inherent right to Aboriginal self-government. As with multiculturalism and bilingualism, the party's goal is to privatize, rather than politicize, issues of difference. A Reform government would treat Aboriginal peoples as Canadians, virtually indistinguishable from other citizens in terms of rights and obligations. Certainly, space would be left for Indians--in the context of their own communities--to work to enhance Native languages and cultures, just as any local majority would be free to do in the context of liberal democracy. But, Reform's discourse and policies on Aboriginal peoples are, for the most part, assimilationist. The Reform Party would privatize difference and encourage Indian peoples to participate in our homogeneous political community as Canadian citizens, period.

With regard to the issue of Aboriginal self-government, the Reform Party has actively disputed the suggestion that there is an 'inherent' right to self-government. A 1995 policy document summarizing the conclusions of the party's Aboriginal Affairs Task Force stated, quite unequivocally, that "the Reform Party believes that the Constitution applies to all Canadians, including aboriginal Canadians, and does not include the inherent right to native self-government and sovereignty."¹⁶⁵ Of course, it was not a surprise that the party's Aboriginal Affairs Task Force came to this conclusion. Most forms of Aboriginal self-government are inconsistent with Reform's neo-liberal

conception of citizenship and political community. A caucus issue statement released in November, 1991, had declared Reform's willingness to "communicate the concept of aboriginal self-government to non-aboriginals," but *only* if the party could receive "satisfactory" answers to a number of questions about self-government. Prominent among these questions was the following: "Would self-government move us closer to a Canada in which all Canadians are treated equally?"¹⁶⁶ Obviously, from what we know of Reform's neo-liberal approach to citizenship rights and issues related to the equality of citizens, a fully 'satisfactory' answer to this somewhat disingenuous question could not be forthcoming.

Moreover, in the process of consulting party members to ascertain their views on Aboriginal affairs, the party's Aboriginal Affairs Task Force circulated a background paper which was clearly drafted to undermine any suggestion that Aboriginal self-government is an inherent right. For example, the background paper's discussion of the existing constitutional rights of Aboriginal peoples began with the following:

Many people talk about Aboriginal rights and treaty rights and to listen to Aboriginal leaders you would assume that their rights are unlimited. We have attempted to put these claims for unlimited "rights" and claims for unlimited funding from the Federal Government in perspective by quoting directly from the legal documents and jurisprudence.¹⁶⁷

The paper then reviewed some relevant constitutional documents. It offered the uncontentious observation that Section 91 of the BNA Act gave the federal Parliament power to legislate for Indians and Indian lands, and it quoted from the sections of the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms which affirm existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.

But it began, as one would expect, with an analysis of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.¹⁶⁸ The background paper stated that "[t]he Royal Proclamation of 1763 only allowed Indians to continue to use the land for purposes then held (i.e. hunting and fishing)" and, moreover, that "[t]he Crown has authority to extinguish aboriginal rights *by legislation* or treaty."¹⁶⁹ This minimalist interpretation of the Royal Proclamation is highly contentious. Some authorities might agree that, *at a minimum*, the rights which flow specifically from the Royal Proclamation include the right to hunt, fish, harvest plants, and occupy the land.¹⁷⁰ But Reform ignores the implications of the 'land rights' associated with occupancy when it focusses narrowly on the use of land for hunting and fishing. Other interpretations of the Royal Proclamation suggest that the document's recognition of land rights provides constitutional support to comprehensive land claims, not just the right to use the land for hunting and fishing. Fleras and Elliott, for example, describe the Royal Proclamation as the 'Indian Magna Carta' and argue that it "set boundaries to the power of the Crown and established Native sovereignty and land rights."¹⁷¹

Equally important, most legal and academic authorities would challenge the Reform Party's contention that the rights recognized by the Royal Proclamation can be extinguished *by legislation*. Reform is intent on arguing that the Royal Proclamation and subsequent Indian treaties "do not take precedence over federal legislation." Reformers are aware that treaty rights were affirmed within the Constitution Act in 1982--which suggests they can not be extinguished, save by treaty--but they persist in claiming that legal precedents suggest "treaty rights can be limited by reasonable regulations."¹⁷² In

challenging this interpretation, the political scientist and federal land claims negotiator, Michael Whittington, argues that the Aboriginal rights originally incorporated into the Constitution through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, "could not be taken away except according to the principles of British justice--in effect, by negotiated treaty."¹⁷³ Similarly, Cassidy and Bish contend that the Royal Proclamation, "made it clear...there were several 'Nations' of Indians which should be dealt with as nations and that the lands in these nations could not be purchased until the King's government reached agreements with them on a nation-to-nation level."¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, by rejecting the constitutional status of the Royal Proclamation and Indian treaties, Reform's Aboriginal Affairs Task Force could claim that federal legislation prevails over Aboriginal land rights, treaty rights and the right to self-government. It was not surprising, then, that party members told the task force the most desirable option for moving toward enhanced self-governance for Aboriginal peoples would be a delegated municipal-style of self-government. Reform's notion of self-government would be "roughly equivalent" to a municipality, the Charter of Rights would apply fully, and legally protected property rights would ensure individual (rather than collective) ownership of reserve lands.¹⁷⁵

The underlying theme of Reform's Aboriginal policies is the importance of rejecting any form of 'special status' for Indians. Reflecting the party's commitment to neo-liberal populism, the report of the Reform Party's Aboriginal Affairs Task Force outlined the party's desire to protect individual rather than collective rights, and to

eliminate legal and constitutional forms of discrimination which divide Canadians on the basis of race.¹⁷⁶ In response to the task force report, a new policy resolution was passed at the 1996 party assembly in Vancouver. It read:

Resolved that the Reform Party adopt as its ultimate goal in aboriginal matters that all aboriginal people be full and equal participants in Canadian citizenship, indistinguishable in law and treatment from other Canadians.¹⁷⁷

On the surface, this emphasis on the equality of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians represents a desire to improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples. The party's task force report says. "Native Canadians have been the worst victims of three centuries of racial divisions."¹⁷⁸ And Reformers publicly declare a desire to correct this deplorable situation. But once the surface is scratched it becomes clear that many Reformers view the Indian population as privileged special interests. As such, the motivation for integrating Aboriginal peoples into the broader Canadian community is to end the 'special' rights and funding that have favoured Aboriginal peoples relative to Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

The party's first *Blue Book* policy on Aboriginal affairs, in 1988, characterized Aboriginal peoples as trapped in a relationship of dependence--not unlike 'welfare dependence'--with the Canadian state. It stated that

native people should have rights and responsibilities for their lives and destiny within the structure of Canadian life, which would encourage their economic development and *loosen the terrible dependence engendered by Canada's first federal welfare state.*¹⁷⁹

In the context of neo-liberal discourse, this allusion to 'welfare dependence' is clearly

meant to undermine the legitimacy of state financial assistance for Aboriginal peoples and their communities. In 1990, the reference to Canada's Aboriginal policies as "Canada's first federal welfare state" was deleted from the *Blue Book*, but a newly added statement of policy explained that Reform "supports a revamping of the Department of Indian Affairs as a federal cost-reduction measure."¹⁸⁰ Similarly, the 1995 Aboriginal Affairs Task Force report noted that encouraging Indian economic development would "in due course eliminate dependence on the federal treasury."¹⁸¹ Obviously then, Reform's Aboriginal policy is motivated, to a significant extent, by a desire to realize cost savings associated with ending state obligations to Native peoples and their communities. It is true that on several occasions, the party has admitted to the obligations of the government of Canada toward Aboriginal peoples, but the party's goal has been to end those obligations. In fact, the party's Indian Affairs critic, John Duncan, recently told reporters that currently "it is clear that governments are providing much more than what is required by treaties."¹⁸²

But it was Herb Grubel who, while speaking in the House of Commons, made the most controversial comments regarding Indian dependence and the need to force a greater degree of economic self-sufficiency. Grubel likened Aboriginal peoples to an immature teen unable to recognize the damage done by having all their wishes and demands met.

All of us--it is a human condition--dream about having a rich uncle who pays us a guaranteed, generous income so we can retire somewhere on some south sea island and be happy ever after...[W]e have been misguided when in the past we have given in to the demands of the native community to give them more physical goods, to allow them to live on their south sea

island equivalent...These people have come to the Government of Canada and said: "it is our right"...[But the] meaning of life has gone because we were like the rich uncle who says: "oh my poor teenage nephew. He needs a steady flow of income"...[E]very year the answer is to give them more resources and they will be happy and will get rid of the problems...[However, s]ometimes the best thing we can do for our children is to say no.¹⁸³

Grubel's speech was attacked in the press, but at the 1994 Reform Assembly in Ottawa. party members defended the Reform M.P. for standing up to the forces of 'political correctness' and 'stating it like it is'. Certainly many Reformers would not want to see assistance removed from the most needy of Indians, but there is considerable suspicion that government policies have prevented Aboriginal peoples from assuming full responsibility for their own well-being. Party policy documents highlight a suspicion that due to "mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, political interference and nepotism." spending by the Department of Indian Affairs has primarily benefited the 'special interests' behind the "ever expanding 'Indian Industry'" rather than average Indians.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, calls by Reformers to end the Indian Taxation Exemption have gone beyond calls for a level playing field, and included the accusation that in some jurisdictions the exemption is "exploited by opportunists or the criminal element."¹⁸⁵

Reform's Native policy has been criticized by Indian leaders who emphasize, as the *Globe and Mail* reported, that the policy was "developed...without consultations with the national native leadership or significant input from Canada's 607 band councils."¹⁸⁶ While the party admits that Native leaders expressed little interest in their task force's consultation process, the report of the task force is peppered with references to 'rank-and-

file' Aboriginal Canadians and 'grassroots' Aboriginal persons who share Reform's perspective. In typical neo-liberal populist style, Reform claims that their party's perspective on Aboriginal issues is more in line with the opinions of ordinary Canadians--including ordinary Aboriginal Canadians--than are the policies of the current government or the Native leaders who form the core of the 'Indian industry'.

In an ironic twist for a party so driven by distaste for the Trudeau legacy, Reform's Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs quotes a contributor to the consultation process who quoted approvingly from Trudeau's 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy:

Prime Minister Trudeau said in his white paper for a Just Society in 1969: 'A just society in which all Canadians, whether they be French, English or Aboriginal and all races that make up Canada, will be treated the same under the laws of the land...with a statement of equal rights for all and special privileges for none.'¹⁸⁷

Like Reform, the Trudeau era authors of the White Paper were committed to liberal values and resentful of special status. They assumed formal equality and the protection of individual citizenship rights would be viewed as a step forward by Aboriginal peoples. But, as Fleras and Elliott explain, Aboriginal groups "condemned the White Paper as racist in its intent and potentially genocidal in its consequences."¹⁸⁸ After more than a quarter century of organizing, and with the recent report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in hand, it is doubtful Native leaders would respond any more positively to a government whose conception of citizenship and vision of the place of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian political community was the one articulated by the Reform Party.

As with the party's policies on multiculturalism, immigration, bilingualism and the status of Quebec, Reform's policies on Aboriginal affairs focus on reinforcing a notion of Canada's national political community as a homogeneous community of essentially similar individuals who are indistinguishable under the law in terms of their citizenship rights and responsibilities. Little room would be left in the public sphere for Aboriginal peoples to assert their collective political identity or pursue their destiny as 'a people'. Instead, the Reform Party wishes to overturn public policies and political discourses which politicize differences and create what Reformers consider to be artificial, and divisive, subnational collective identities. The party's policies aim to reconstruct Canada as a political community in which no group of citizens--neither Québécois, ethno-cultural minorities, nor Aboriginal peoples--has been accorded 'special status'. Reform wishes to privatize issues of difference, including responsibility for matters such as minority cultural protection, while simultaneously establishing a public policy regime which emphasizes equality and fosters cultural homogeneity.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the ways in which Reform's neo-liberal populist thinking has shaped the party's interventions in debates which are crucial to the social construction of citizenship and political community. Obviously, Reform's interventions have not determined the evolution of these pivotal political concepts. Nevertheless, Reform has been important to the process of enhancing the popular resonance of a neo-liberal discourse on citizenship and political community.

With regard to the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship, Reform's discursive interventions in policy debates have aimed at rolling back illiberal social rights, group rights and proactive equity policies. The party has argued in favour of limiting the range of citizenship rights to the negative liberties associated with civil and political rights. Group rights and equity policies have been attacked by Reform because they are inconsistent with the neo-liberal notion that equality requires one class of citizens sharing the same rights and responsibilities. Preston Manning has characterized this perspective on citizenship rights as the 'equality approach', and he has championed it in opposition to what he calls the 'special status approach' which influenced Section 15 of the Charter and the decision to add sexual orientation to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. Reform's 'equality approach' demands the erasure of difference--individuals are to be conceptualized as abstracted from social relations so that the essential sameness of all citizens becomes the focus of popular thinking on citizenship. At bottom, this perspective is individualistic and market oriented; citizens are simply *taxpayers* who deserve to have their personal freedoms and property rights protected by constitutional law.

The definition of the Canadian political community which Reform embraces builds on this neo-liberal conception of citizens. The party advocates a conception of Canada as a homogeneous political community which is strengthened when policy-makers reject artificial and divisive subnational political identities rooted in language, culture, ethnicity, or national identity. Reform's rhetoric about allowing 'freedom for

diversity' and supporting 'individual bilingualism' while rejecting 'official' multiculturalism and bilingualism as forms of 'special status', clearly aims at privatizing difference and personalizing cultural and linguistic protection so that in the public sphere all citizens are Canadians, period. Hyphenated political identities are rejected. The aspirations of the Québécois and Aboriginal peoples who wish to define new and unique places for themselves within the Canadian political community find no support in Reform's definition of Canada. According to Reform, 'true equality' requires a political community in which citizens are indistinguishable under the law. And to the extent that such a conception of citizenship and political community is gaining popular resonance, Reform's political and ideological interventions are contributing to the hegemony of a discursive framework appropriate for an era of neo-liberal governance.

Endnotes

1. The language used here borrows from Andrew F. Johnson, Stephen McBride, and Patrick J. Smith, eds. *Continuities and Discontinuities: The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), particularly the Introduction.
2. Janine Brodie, "Gender, the New Citizenship and the Neo-Liberal State," Public Lecture at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, October 17, 1995, p. 3.
3. This phrasing follows D. Macdonell, cited in Robert Miles. *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. v.
4. Jenson has made the same basic point in her discussions of the 'universe of political discourse' and the social construction of a hegemonic 'societal paradigm'. See: Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction: Or, Babies and the State." in *Studies in Political Economy*, 20 (Summer, 1986); and, Jane Jenson. "All the World's a Stage: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy," in *Studies in Political Economy*, 36 (Fall, 1991).
5. Jane Jenson, "Understanding Politics: Contested Concepts of Identity in Political Science." in James P. Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon, eds. *Canadian Politics* (2nd edition; Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1994), p. 55.
6. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 14-16.
7. Bruce W. Foster, "The Canadian 'New Right' and Ethno-Cultural Pluralism: Ideologies and the Limits of Public Diversity," A paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June, 1994. Calgary, Alberta. pp. 3-6.
8. While the citizen as *taxpayer* dominates neo-liberal discourse, citizens are also conceptualized as (i) *shareholders* to whom the government of the day (acting as the Board of Directors) are responsible, and (ii) *consumers* of government services who wish to optimize quality and service at a low price.
9. Richard Sigurdson, "First Peoples, New Peoples, and Citizenship," A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, June, 1996.

10. One of the clearest statements of this perspective is offered by William Gairdner. See: William D. Gairdner, *The Trouble with Canada*, (Toronto: General Paperbacks, 1990).

11. This is not to suggest the existence of clear cut material forces determining individual ideological orientations. Obviously that is not the case. There are cultural, ideological and political determining factors which intervene in the process of identity formation and individual political behaviour. It is merely to suggest that individual 'perceptions' of self-interest regularly play a role in determining how individuals insert themselves in ideological struggle.

12. It is not my intention to suggest that Reform's neo-liberal ideological orientation can be *simply* and *directly* attributed to the distinctive character of the party's social base. Certainly, individuals do recognize and respond to the material realities of their daily lives, and thus it is significant that Reform Party activists are older, less urban and more likely to be male than their counterparts in other parties. It is also significant that the Reform Party has not represented less well-to-do members of the working class or non-white Canadians, particularly those who are recent immigrants. But, with that said, ideological and partisan mobilizations are never a simple expression of social, economic or class interests. Political representation is, as Stuart Hall explains, "an active and formative relationship." The process of representation gives meaning to the political identities a party speaks for; that is to say, the party helps to provide its supporters and activists with a discursive framework within which to define their political identity and interests. As a result, the full significance of Reform's social base is only revealed through a critical examination of how the party's ideology and political appeals discursively construct that social base. How does the party perceive its supporters and those within the political community with whom their interests are in conflict? What is the relationship between the party's demographic profile and the party's ideological construction of the broader political community? The answers to these questions help to reveal how the social base of the Reform Party is significant to the way in which the party has inserted itself in debates regarding citizenship and political community.

13. Bryan S. Turner, *Citizenship and Capitalism: The Debate over Reformism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 12.

14. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986), p. 29.

15. As one observer said of a recent Reform Party Assembly: "The overriding theme of the policy proposals was that Reformers feel left out by recent social changes and wanted to roll them back." See: Tu Thanh Ha, "Manning spoiling for a fight on unity," *The*

Globe and Mail, October 17, 1994, p. A1.

16. See: Janine Brodie, "Restructuring and the New Citizenship," p. 20; and, Anna Yeatman, Postmodern Revisions of the Political, (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 83.
17. Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet: Principles and Policies, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1995), p. 2.
18. Reform Party of Canada, Untitled Delegate Information Package, Assembly '96, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996), Amendment #2. Emphasis added.
19. Reform Party of Canada, Official Record of Assembly '96, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996), Amendment #2., Emphasis added.
20. Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions." (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1994), p. 6.
21. Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions," p. 5. Emphasis added.
22. Faron Ellis, "Constituency Representation Issues in the Reform party of Canada," A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994.
23. Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions." pp. 5-6.
24. Reform Party of Canada, "Part I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1994), p. 17.
25. Paul M. Sniderman, et al., The Clash of Rights: Liberty, Equality, and Legitimacy in Pluralist Democracy, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 169.
26. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force: Executive Summary, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996), p. 1.
27. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force, Resolution #1. Emphasis added.
28. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force, pp. 1 & 6.
29. Ibid., p. 2.

30. Reform Party of Canada, "Party I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate," p. 17.
31. Reform Party of Canada, "A Fresh Start for Canadians: A 6 Point Plan to Build a Brighter Future Together" (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996), p. 19.
32. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force, p. 6.
33. Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet: Principles and Policies, (1995), p. 2.
34. Ibid.
35. Reform Association of Canada, Draft Resolutions for the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future, documents provided to participants in the Western Assembly on Canada's Economic and Political Future, Vancouver, B.C., May 29-31, 1987. Resolution 1.2.
36. Manning, The New Canada, p. 80.
37. Ibid., p. 81. Emphasis added.
38. Canada. Parliament, House of Commons. 35th Parliament, 1st Session, Debates, Volume 133, Number 159, February 24, 1995. p. 10024. Emphasis added.
39. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force, p. 3.
40. Reform Party of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996). Handout Ballot 5.1, Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force Report.
41. Ibid.
42. Canada, Parliament, Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on a Renewed Canada, Report of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1992), p. 35.
43. Reform Party of Canada, The Green Book: Issues and Answers, (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1992), Issue Statement #21.
44. Scott Reid, "Penumbras for the People: Placing Judicial Supremacy under Popular Control," in Anthony A. Peacock, ed., Rethinking the Constitution: Perspectives on Canadian Constitutional Reform, Interpretation, and Theory, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 198.

45. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, 35th Parliament, 1st Session, *Debates*, Volume 133, Number 159, February 24, 1995. p. 10024.
46. Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions." p. 5.
47. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, 35th Parliament, 1st Session, *Debates*, Volume 133, Number 159, February 24, 1995. p. 10024.
48. Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions," p. 5.
49. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, 35th Parliament, 1st Session, *Debates*, Volume 133, Number 159, February 24, 1995. p. 10030.
50. Reform Party of Canada. "Party I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate." p. 17.
51. Ian Brodie and Neil Nevitte, "Evaluating the Citizens' Constitution Theory." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XXXVI:2 (June, 1993), p 233.
52. Reform Party of Canada, *Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force*, p. 3.
53. Ibid., p. 5. Emphasis added.
54. Ian Greene, *The Charter of Rights* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1989), p. 56.
55. Reform Party of Canada, *Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force*, p. 6.
56. Reid, "Penumbras for the People: Placing Judicial Supremacy under Popular Control."
57. Reid disagrees with this claim. See: Ibid., pp. 206-209. He has faith in the capacity of referendum processes to temper majoritarianism by creating a forum for compromise as well as the temporal space required to defuse highly charged political conflicts. While I too have faith in such a 'democratic dynamic' resulting from participatory processes, I am not at all confident that periodic referenda regarding the use of a legislative override would produce such a dynamic.
58. This description of the paradigm shift which occurred between the 1970s and 1980s follows Agocs and Boyd. See: Carol Agocs and Monica Boyd, "The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic Recast for the 1990s," in James E. Curtis, Edward G. Grabb and L. Neil Guppy, eds. *Social Inequality in Canada: Patterns, Problems, Policies*, 2nd edition (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1993), pp. 339-344.

59. Ibid., p. 340.
60. Reform Party of Canada, *The Blue Sheet: Principles and Policies*, (1995) p. 6.
61. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, 35th Parliament, 1st Session, *Debates* Volume 133, Number 143, p. 9008. Emphasis added.
62. David Frum, "How far do we take gay rights," in *Saturday Night* Vol. 110, No. 10 (Dec., 1995/Jan., 1996). p 75.
63. Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, 35th Parliament, 1st Session, *Employment Equity: A Commitment to Merit* Issue #51, p. 68.
64. Della Kirkham, "The Reform Party of Canada: A Discourse on Race," A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994, p. 11.
65. Reform Party of Canada, "Part I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate," p. 16.
66. Reform's Minority Report to *Employment Equity: A Commitment to Merit* quotes REAL Women's presentation before the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. See: Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians." p. 72.
67. House of Commons, *Debates* Volume 133, Number 241, p. 15458.
68. Michael Walker of the Fraser Institute quoted by Reform members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. See: Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," p. 78.
69. Ibid., p. 83.
70. House of Commons, *Debates* Volume 133, Number 143, p. 9009.
71. Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," p. 67.
72. Ibid., p. 75.

73. Thomas Flanagan, "The Manufacture of Minorities," in Neil Nevitte and Allan Kornberg, eds.. Minorities and the Canadian State (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1985) , pp. 119-120.
74. Canada, Parliament. House of commons, Debates, April 6, 1995, p. 11638.
75. Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," p. 74.
76. Canada, Parliament, House of commons, Debates, April 6, 1995, p. 11636.
77. Ibid.
78. Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," p. 74.
79. House of Commons: House of Commons, Session. Debates Volume 133, Number 143, p. 9008. Emphasis added.
80. Reform Party of Canada, "Reform Minority Report: Employment Equity--An Act Against Canadians," p. 72.
81. Ibid., p. 67.
82. Ibid., pp. 78-79.
83. Thanks to Reg Whitaker for making this point.
84. Undated reproduction of House of Commons, Debates, distributed at the 1996 Reform Party Assembly in Vancouver, pp. 2581-2584.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Rosemary Speirs, "Manning still has a lot to answer for on rights issue," The Toronto Star, June 8, 1996, p. A2.
88. Undated reproduction of House of Commons, Debates, distributed at the 1996 Reform Party Assembly in Vancouver, pp. 2581-2584.
89. Anne Phillips, Engendering Democracy (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), pp. 53-59.

90. Reform Party of Canada, "Interim Policy/Issue Statement: The Inclusion of Sexual Orientation as a Protected Category in the CHRA," (Ottawa: Reform Party of Canada, 1996).
91. Undated reproduction of House of Commons, Debates, distributed at the 1996 Reform Party Assembly in Vancouver, pp. 2581-2584.
92. Anne McIlroy, "Reform suspends Alberta MP for statement on gay workers," The Globe and Mail, May 3, 1996, p. A1.
93. Reform Party of Canada, "Interim Policy/Issue Statement: The Inclusion of Sexual Orientation as a Protected Category in the CHRA."
94. Anne McIlroy. "Ringma resigns as whip after 'unequivocal apology'," The Globe and Mail, May 2, 1996, p. A1. Emphasis added.
95. Sharon Hayes, as quoted in: House of Commons, Debates, p. 16394.
96. E.C. Manning, Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 65
97. Bill C-322, An Act respecting the office of the Auditor General for the family. First Session. Thirty-fifth Parliament. 42-43-44 Elizabeth II, 1994-95 ?????
98. House of Commons. Debates, p. 16390.
99. Ibid., p. 16388.
100. Reform Party of Canada. "Official Record of Assembly '96." Resolution #35.
101. Reform Party of Canada, "Part I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate," p. 14.
102. Miro Cermetig, "Preston Manning and his faith," The Globe and Mail, December 2, 1991, p. A1.
103. In addition to my own observation, this reaction was noted by Tu Thanh Ha: "Manning spoiling for fight on unity," The Globe and Mail, October 1, 1994, p. A1.
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people be full and equal participants in Canadian citizenship, *self-supporting and* indistinguishable in law and treatment from other Canadians." But a motion from the floor had the reference to '*self-supporting*' removed from the policy statement.

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179. Reform Party of Canada, "'The West Wants In!' Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada." Emphasis added.
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181. Reform Party of Canada, "Aboriginal Affairs Task Force Report," p. 11.
182. Rudy Platiel, "Reform's native policy called arrogant." The Globe and Mail November 2, 1995, p. A6.
183. Debates, Number 082, pp 5071-5072.
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Chapter Seven

A Policy Agenda for the Emerging Neo-liberal State Form

Introduction

State governing practices and public policies are shaped by ideas, institutions and interests which interact within a given political economic context. To oversimplify a complex dialectical process which is partially determined by the parameters of the political economic conjuncture, ideas shape interpretations and analysis of policy issues, institutions establish the rules of political struggle and define the processes of decision-making, and social interests--ranging from class forces to social movements and organized interest groups--struggle to influence the political agenda and enhance the legitimacy of particular policy options. Political parties are implicated in all this as institutions of policy development, vehicles for social interests, and advocates of ideas which shape the discursive framework within which policy is made. While the Reform Party obviously acts for a range of social interests, and its political project will benefit some social interests at the expense of others, the party is not the partisan vehicle of any particular class or group project. My starting point, therefore, has been an exploration of Reform's political ideas and the party's discursive interventions in significant policy debates. In the previous chapter I explored Reform's efforts to shape the meaning and rights of Canadian citizenship and the definition of the Canadian political community.

The present chapter examines Reform's social and economic policy agenda, an agenda clearly intended to advance a neo-liberal discursive framework which values limiting the role of the state and enhancing the role of the private sector and market mechanisms.

It is widely recognized that the Reform Party has been a vigorous advocate of a policy agenda for the emerging neo-liberal state form. It is commonly agreed, for example, that the Reform Party's discursive interventions have been in opposition to the governing practices of the Keynesian welfare state. What is less often noted (although this is changing) is the extent to which Reform is, in fact, in step with the current policy trends in Canada. Once characterized as 'extreme' and out of step with the mainstream, the governing practices and public policies promoted by Reform are increasingly often accepted as essential to social and economic prosperity in the context of a globalizing post-Fordist political economy. Of course, the importance of Reform to this ongoing transformation in Canada's dominant public policy paradigm should not be overstated. Even without Reform, the existing balance of political and economic forces would favour the emergence of a Reform-style neo-liberal policy agenda, and that is why I have often referred to the Reform Party as both a *consequence* and a *cause* of the neo-liberal turn. Nevertheless, Reform's social and economic policy agenda is of interest because the party's agenda may be indicative of the future course of public policy in the emerging neo-liberal era.

To be sure, we must be cautious about assuming the inevitability of neo-liberalism's continued ascendance. To talk of the neo-liberal era is to talk of an era which

is still emergent. Even as neo-liberal governing practices are embraced and the distinguishing characteristics of a neo-liberal state are manifested in state policies, the policy legacies of the postwar Keynesian consensus are still very apparent. As Paul Pierson has shown in his study of the Thatcher and Reagan assaults on the welfare state, retrenchment is a difficult political enterprise.¹ Institutionalized policy legacies and popular constituencies with interests in established programmes are major challenges to the neo-liberal project. Labour, feminist and other social movements continue to struggle against the neo-liberal agenda, and a serious economic downturn prior to any improvement in rates of joblessness and real family incomes could turn public opinion against neo-liberal policies by illuminating the inadequacies of neo-liberal thinking on public policy.²

For the foreseeable future however, the political tide is running in a neo-liberal direction, and Reform's interventions in public policy debates are a part of this neo-liberal political tide. My purpose in this chapter is to examine the Reform Party's neo-liberal economic and social policy agenda. Many dimensions of this agenda will, by necessity, be treated fairly cursorily in the context of an examination of Reform's economic and social policy philosophy. Following that discussion, however, I will turn to a detailed discussion of Reform's policy agenda related to (Un)Employment Insurance, health care and income security for seniors. These public policies have been central to the character of Canada's Keynesian welfare state, and changes to these policies remain controversial as neo-liberalism is established as the hegemonic policy paradigm.

Reform's Neo-liberal Social and Economic Policy Philosophy

Survey data has shown Reform Party members to be "strongly, distinctively, and unanimously anti-government" and "anti-social welfare," and the principles which underpin Reform's social and economic policy agenda reflect these convictions.³ On a wide range of issues Reform is committed to reversing the interventionism of the postwar Keynesian welfare state. Indeed, Reform's official statement of principles and policies explicitly frames the party's social policies as "alternatives to the welfare state."⁴ and the party's 1997 election platform promises to create economic growth, new opportunities and lasting jobs through smaller government and lower taxes.⁵ Caucus policy documents reinforce the anti-state character of Reform's policy agenda by offering Canadians a choice between the 'welfare state' and the 'secure society'.⁶ The expression 'secure society' is meant as a rhetorical signification of the extent to which Reform represents a neo-liberal alternative to past governing practices. In the secure society, Reform promises that state run social programmes which "largely displaced personal responsibility and family reliance," will be superseded by initiatives to "empower" individuals, families, communities and charitable organizations to care for those in need of assistance.⁷ In the secure society, economic policy will be 'depoliticized', and the government will work from the assumption that economic growth and productive jobs can only be achieved through the "operations of a responsible, broadly-based, free-enterprise economy in which private property, freedom of contract, and the operations of free markets are encouraged."⁸ The anti-statist and pro-market character of Reform's neo-liberal public

policy philosophy is evident in the party's perspective on both social and economic policy. The discussion in this section will begin with an examination of Reform's economic policy philosophy.

Economic policy:

The school of political economic thought known as neo-liberalism (or sometimes as neo-conservatism) combines the pre-Keynesian laissez faire assumptions of neo-classical economics, including its marginalist analysis of the way in which the dynamics of supply and demand ensure a tendency toward general equilibrium in free and competitive markets, with the more recent strains of political economic analysis associated with monetarism and supply-side economics.⁹ While the Reform Party's economic policy philosophy draws on a wide range of the ideas associated with neo-liberal political economy, it downplays monetarist analysis and policy prescriptions in favour of the economic analysis and policy prescriptions associated with neo-classical and supply-side economics. Prominent right-wing monetarists, such as former Tory Finance Minister Michael Wilson, have advocated monetarist policy prescriptions to tackle inflation. Reform's economic policies, on the other hand, have not been dominated by a concern with inflation. In the late 1980s, when the federal government was fighting inflation with high interest rates, the Reform Party's policy platform stated that Reform was "opposed to the recent high interest rate, high exchange rate, tight money policy of the Bank of Canada, supported by the Minister of Finance."¹⁰

Like the Conservative government of the 1980s and early 1990s however, Reform

has consistently rejected demand-management and the Keynesian enthusiasm for the state's active fiscal policy tools. In the context of the recent history of political economic thought, *neo-liberalism's* rejection of Keynesian inspired government spending and targeted tax cuts is considered *new*--it is new in that it represents a repudiation of the postwar economic policy consensus. What is *not new* about neo-liberalism, and thus Reform's economic policy philosophy, is the fact that Keynesianism is rejected in favour of the older pre-Keynesian free market orientation of neo-classical economics. On a range of policy issues Reform embraces neo-classical policy prescriptions. Indeed, the Reform Party's central policy document is clear about the party's commitment to the free market:

The Reform Party supports depoliticizing economic decision-making in Canada through the long-term elimination of grants, subsidies, and pricing policies...the long-term removal of all measures which are designed to insulate industries, businesses, financial institutions, professions, and trade unions from domestic and foreign competition...[and] vigorous measures to ensure the successful operation of the marketplace, through such means as the promotion of competition and competitive pricing.¹¹

With regard to trade policy, for example, these free market commitments have led the Reform Party to advocate the removal of virtually all interprovincial and international barriers to trade. The party is committed to the wisdom of exposing Canadian industry to the 'discipline' of more competition. Drawing on neo-classical analysis, Reform's 1995 alternative budget--known as "*The Taxpayers' Budget*"--claimed that eliminating trade barriers would result in "increased productivity...higher real incomes and reduced unemployment."¹² Clearly, Reform is not alone in supporting freer trade. Since 1993, even the Liberals have come around to support the free trade agreements they once

campaigned against. But the party's faith in markets is even stronger than that demonstrated by the other parties.

Reform's commitment to market mechanisms and an enhanced role for the private sector is also notable in the party's approach to infrastructure development, an issue which featured prominently in the 1993 election when the Liberals promised job creation through government sponsored infrastructure programmes. Interestingly, Reform's *Taxpayers' Budget* claimed that the party considers infrastructure development to be a "legitimate venue for public investment."¹³ Nevertheless, the details of the policies proposed in that document clearly reveal an economic policy orientation which rejects public investment in infrastructure development. For example, the *Taxpayers' Budget* argued that given the current fiscal climate and the immutable wisdom of basing infrastructure spending on 'investment-type analysis', it is time to "change the traditional view of government-dominated infrastructure provision by encouraging greater private sector involvement."¹⁴ According to Reform, encouraging greater private sector involvement in infrastructure development should include the privatization of airports, allowing the private sector to build and maintain roads, encouraging competitive forces in the railway system, and privatizing the St. Lawrence Seaway operation. Similarly, with regard to the infrastructure needed to carry, transmit and process the information which is increasingly central to postindustrial economic development, Reform argues that private industry is capable of developing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure, thus government subsidies and regulations which limit market competition should be

discouraged.¹⁵ Indeed, virtually absent from the Reform Party's approach to infrastructure development is *any* role for the state. Even in the area of 'intellectual infrastructure' development--which is essentially education and training--Reform is "convinced that government-directed training is unlikely to be successful."¹⁶ Instead, the party advocates the use of federal training vouchers so that market mechanisms can determine where federal training dollars should be spent.

This perspective on infrastructure development marks a clear rejection, not only of Keynesian interventionism, but of Canada's 'positive state' tradition. But policy trends are in this very direction. It is true that the Liberal government reversed the Tory's Pearson airport deal with private developers. But at the same time, the federal government is exploring the potential for private contractors using tolls to fund the refurbishing of sections of the Trans Canada Highway. A major toll highway in Ontario is just being completed by a private firm; and that same firm will soon be operating a highway in the Maritimes which is to be funded exclusively by tolls--the company rather than the government is collecting the toll, and the profitability of the endeavour will depend on the volume of traffic.

The best known aspect of Reform's economic policy agenda is its commitment to eliminating the federal deficit. The party's "Zero in Three" deficit elimination plan was the centrepiece of Reform's 1993 election platform, and there is little doubt that Reform has been an important force behind the now largely successful struggle to force even a reluctant government to take action on the deficit. Reform's desire to balance the budget

reflects, in part, the party's anti-Keynesian philosophical commitment to free markets and smaller government. But it also reflects the analytic commitments of Reform's embrace of supply-side economics. At bottom, the mainstream of supply-side economics is concerned with expanding the availability and flexibility of the factors of production so that output (the supply of goods and services produced) is maximized. Supply-side analysis suggests two primary reasons for worrying about big government and deficit spending. First, with regard to deficits in particular, supply-siders are concerned that government borrowing 'crowds out' private sector investment. Assuming, first, that there is no slack in the economy and, second, that government spending can not have a positive impact on the rate of wealth and job creation--both of which are theoretically and empirically debatable assumptions--it is argued that government borrowing uses up resources which then can't be invested in the economy. Moreover, since government borrowing will limit the volume of funds available for lending, interest rates will rise and private borrowing and investment will be further restricted. Second, big government and deficit spending will result in higher taxes. Obviously, for a political party such as Reform, reducing taxes serves as a useful platform issue because people don't like paying them. But the supply-side economic analysis behind Reform's long-term commitment to reduce taxes is rooted in the contention that taxes are a disincentive to work and invest; in other words, they reduce, rather than expand, the availability of labour and capital (as factors of production).

It is only recently that the media has been focussing on the Reform Party's

commitment to lowering taxes, but 'tax relief' for both individuals and businesses has been a part of Reform's economic policy agenda since the party was formed.¹⁷ What *has* changed since Reform released its 1997 campaign platform is the prominence given to tax cuts and the increased emphasis which the party has put on playing up the stimulative capacity of tax cuts. Reform's *Fresh Start* campaign platform quotes Manning as saying that "[h]igh taxes...threaten the financial security of Canadians, kill jobs, hurt the ability of our entrepreneurs to compete internationally, and reduce the disposable incomes of families."¹⁸ Tax cuts, Reform claims, will spur economic growth and create new jobs.

But two years earlier, in the party's less well-known *Taxpayers' Budget*, Reform went even further with its rhetoric about tax cuts. That document echoed, as usual, the supply-side economists' concerns regarding the adverse effects of taxes on the supply of investment capital. What was striking was that it also embraced the analysis of the American supply-side economist, Arthur Laffer, by arguing that tax rates are already at their revenue-maximizing level. As a result, Reform argued that increasing progressivity or raising taxes would actually reduce the state's revenue generation: "Under current conditions, tax increases are unlikely to generate anticipated revenue growth and may even lower revenues...[as] Canadians seek out tax loopholes, move their capital offshore, engage in tax-avoidance or evasion, or merely reduce investment and entrepreneurial activity."¹⁹ In developing this line of analysis, Reformers have not gone as far as the radical supply-siders in the Reagan administration of the early 1980s who argued that tax cuts would actually *raise* total revenues, but clearly their economic policy philosophy is

rooted in similar analysis.

Also of American inspiration has been the Reform Party's enthusiasm for the 'flat tax'--that is, one single rate of taxation for all business and personal income, with only one basic personal exemption (to protect the poorest of earners) and no taxes on personal income from interest, dividends or capital gains (this is meant to avoid double taxation and remove tax system-based disincentives to investment). For some time the party has had an official commitment to "work toward a simple, visible and flat system of taxation."²⁰ In fact, it had been the intention of the party's Taxation Task Force to present a flat tax proposal to the 1996 Reform assembly in Vancouver, but apparently Reformers involved with the task force were unable to come up with a proposal which works economically and would sell politically. In early 1995, Jim Silye, the Reform M.P. for Calgary Centre, circulated a discussion paper suggesting that a flat tax rate in the 15% to 20% range would bring in new revenue by encouraging people to move out of the underground economy, and also provide tax savings to most Canadians (Currently there are three basic federal tax brackets--17%, 26% and 29%--and two surtaxes which are applied to higher income earners).²¹ Since then, however, more detailed analysis carried out by Silye and Reform's Caucus Research Office has revealed that a flat tax of the sort proposed the Fraser Institute and popularized by Steve Forbes' 1996 bid for the Republican nomination--that is, a single tax rate for personal and business taxes, and no taxes on personal income from interest, dividends or capital gains--would result in tax *increases* for middle-income earners and politically unpalatable tax *decreases* for high-

income earners who are currently in the top tax bracket and also subject to surtaxes.²²

Thus, while the flat tax is consistent with Reform's economic policy philosophy and remains a longer term policy commitment, a political decision was made when preparing the party's 1997 campaign platform to commit the party to the more modest objective of "simplifying and flattening the Canadian tax system."²³ In practice, Reform admits this might mean little more than moving from three to two tax brackets for personal income tax and eliminating some loopholes and tax deductions. This less radical course of action is exactly what Jean Charest's Tories have recently proposed.²⁴ It too will primarily benefit the well-to-do, but it won't have the same adverse consequences for middle-income earners.

It is clear that Reform's economic policy philosophy is rooted in neo-classical economics and directly influenced by the supply-side economists' commitment to reducing taxes and shrinking government as a means of expanding the availability and flexibility of the factors of production. As is suggested above, supply-side tax reform is primarily oriented toward freeing up investment capital. Nevertheless, supply-siders also argue that progressive taxation and high rates of taxation are a disincentive to work. As a result, it is argued that tax cuts will reduce existing disincentives to work. But more central to the concerns of supply-siders are the disincentives to work which they claim result from the social security benefits which were put in place in the context of the Keynesian welfare state. These concerns, however, lead us to consider Reform's social policy philosophy.

Social policy:

Since its birth as a political party, Reform has argued that "too much of the resources of social policy are ultimately directed to those who do not require help."²⁵ For that reason, the party's core policy commitments have underscored a commitment to "greater focusing of social policy benefits."²⁶ But the party has gone much further than advocating targeting over universality in the design of social welfare programmes. At the core of the party's social policy agenda is a commitment to reduce the role of government, free up market forces, and "actively encourage families, communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to reassume their duties and responsibilities in social service areas."²⁷ According to the Reform M.P.s on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, almost all party members agree with the following approach to social policy reform:

- (1) 'As a general principle, social program reform should focus on giving people the tools to provide for their own needs through such initiatives as personal RRSPs, registered unemployment savings plans, and tax-sheltered savings accounts for education and training', and
- (2) 'As a general principle, where governments must be involved in delivering social services, those programs should be directed by the levels of government closest to the people (i.e. municipal and provincial, rather than federal).'²⁸

In the context of postwar governing practices, these neo-liberal principles of social welfare programme design are a clear and radical break with the principles which underpinned the Keynesian consensus. They are not, however, without precedent. As Dennis Guest explains in his review of the emergence of social security in Canada, a

Reform-style conception of social welfare--what Guest calls a 'residual' conception of social welfare--dominated what was considered 'informed opinion' prior to the Great Depression and the Second World War.²⁹ This was the era of the laissez faire state form, when public social welfare assistance was considered properly 'residual' to assistance from the family and the private market. Few Canadians accepted the legitimacy of the active state or substantive social rights. Individuals were expected to take responsibility for their own personal well-being. In fact, unless an individual was disabled, extremely aged, or otherwise unable to care for themselves, it was assumed that requiring social assistance was proof of personal incompetence or failure. In the early part of this century, charities and public service agencies often advocated public assistance provided as 'in kind' assistance in the form of food, fuel or clothing, rather than cash. Those in need of emergency relief were considered suspect, not to be trusted with cash assistance. Similarly, as a precaution against the possibility that public assistance would undermine individual initiative, social service agencies in many municipalities required applicants to pass a 'worktest' (sawing wood or breaking rock) as a condition of receiving assistance.³⁰ And this was in an era when public social assistance was extremely minimal and temporary. Indeed, the widely accepted principle of 'localism' (which made municipalities responsible for social welfare) ensured that social assistance was provided by the level of government which could least afford it, and the result was an extreme unevenness in the availability of public assistance.

With the emergence of a welfare liberal mode of governance after the Second

World War, what Guest calls the 'institutional' conception of social welfare came to dominate the social policy field. While never fully abandoning the liberal notion of personal responsibility, Canadian policy-makers began to accept that the need for social welfare assistance is, at least in part, a result of the nature of social organization in an urbanized industrial society. Between the introduction of Unemployment Insurance in 1941 and the establishment of Health Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan in the mid 1960s, social policy-makers and the Canadian public began to endorse the 'socialization of risk', the extension of substantive social rights, and the institutionalization of social welfare programmes within the state. Not only did the state come to be viewed as a legitimate channel for social welfare assistance, but levels of public assistance became more generous. By 1971, when the last provinces implemented their health insurance plans and the federal government introduced its most generous Unemployment Insurance reforms, the institutional conception of social welfare was clearly dominant. Three decades of growth in the Keynesian welfare state had, it seemed at the time, entrenched a social policy regime which marked a clear break from the governing practices of the prewar era.

However, since the mid 1970s, the influence of the residual conception of social welfare has again been felt. Between 1975 and the mid 1980s, there were moves toward greater 'selectivity' in the design of social welfare programmes.³¹ Then, following the re-election of the Tories in 1988, policy-makers began a concerted assault on many of the postwar social welfare programmes. Universality in income security was ended with the

decisions to 'claw back' Old Age Security payments in 1989 and end Family Allowances in 1993. Even under the Liberals, the federal government's commitment to financing and enforcing national standards in health care and social assistance has been dramatically weakened by the creation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) to replace the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and Established Programs Financing (EPF). At the provincial level, social assistance rates have been reduced, residency requirements have been reintroduced, and policy-makers are again experimenting with workfare.

The rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s has meant a turn away from the logic of the Keynesian welfare state and the institutional conception of social welfare. To some extent, recent social policy developments are even reminiscent of the prewar 'residualist' social policy regime. Reform's social policy agenda is not out of step with these recent developments; in fact, the neo-liberal principles and reasoning behind Reform's social policy agenda would extend current trends, creating a social policy regime which even more vividly recalls the essence of an earlier laissez faire state form. An examination of the broad principles underpinning Reform's neo-liberal social policy philosophy will make clear the extent to which the party's agenda represents a logical endpoint in the ongoing paradigm shift in governing practices.

There are four key principles guiding Reform's approach to social policy.³² First, Reformers want to reestablish an emphasis on self-reliance. Second, they want to limit the role of the state in social assistance funding and delivery. In fact, Reform caucus members express concern that in the postwar era "[f]ormal social programs have largely

displaced personal responsibility and family reliance."³³ The caucus wants to end what Reformers view as the 'crowding out' of families, communities and charitable organizations from the delivery of personal security. Recently the party explained that at "the heart of the Reform Vision of a Better Social Security system is a desire to empower individuals, communities and local organizations to both fund and deliver forms of support."³⁴ Within this framework, an individual's personal resources should be the first line of defence to protect personal security. The second line of defence should be the family, followed by local community charitable organizations. Only after these supports are exhausted should the state be involved. And the state, according to Reform, should be limited to providing public assistance "to those who, by reason of physical disability or advanced age are incapable of providing for themselves." For the able-bodied and youthful, the system should merely "be designed to deliver a sufficient level of income to ensure that nobody lives in *absolute poverty*".³⁵ Moreover, Reformers would like to demand that able-bodied recipients of assistance who are not engaged in job training or education, be required to perform community service work, or workfare (the modern day 'worktest').³⁶

The third principle guiding Reform's approach to social policy combines a commitment to the financial sustainability of social welfare programmes, with their commitment to reduced taxes. In their 1988 election platform Reform argued that with regard to social policy, "[l]ong-term sustainability must be looked at as an issue of fairness to taxpayers."³⁷ More recently, the party's contribution to Parliament's social

security review observed that "[w]hat was intended as a system based on the virtue of generosity has become a system of entitlements and *confiscation*."³⁸ In other words, not only does the party have concerns about the expansion of welfare 'entitlements', they are also disturbed by the 'confiscatory' nature of the taxes required to fund social welfare programmes. In fact, Reform links the two issues together by arguing that high taxes actually induce welfare dependency by 'depriving' Canadians "of the means by which to provide for their own security needs."³⁹ By reducing taxes, Reform believes the government could make it possible for Canadians to use private insurance and RRSP-style savings plans for eventualities ranging from unemployment to sickness and job retraining.

Reform's fourth guiding principle for social policy reform involves a commitment to creating new opportunities for the private sector. While Manning often talks about empowering individuals, communities and local charitable organization to fund and deliver social service support, the *Blue Sheet* continues to include the private sector in the list of institutions which should "resume their duties and responsibilities in social service areas."⁴⁰ For some time it was not entirely clear how the Reform Party would involve the private sector in social policy delivery. Manning had once written a paper titled *Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts: A Strategy to Advance the Role of Private Enterprise in Canada*, which advocated the use of tendering techniques for the contracting out of such services as health care, education and regional development; and his party has always been committed to privatization.⁴¹ Nevertheless, it was only when Reform began

to unveil their proposals for providing income security to seniors and the unemployed, that a full picture emerged regarding how Reform's privatization strategy would work in the social policy field. In addition to contracting out the delivery of social services, Reformers would like to see individuals using registered private sector savings accounts to provide for their own needs following retirement, as well as during bouts of unemployment or other similar circumstances.

Reform's Plans for Targeting and Privatization in Social Policy

To achieve the transition from a welfare state to Reform's neo-liberal vision of a secure society, the Reform Party advocates two basic forms of social policy reform: targeting and privatization. Privatization, in particular, is at the heart of Reform's long-term policy agenda. Reform has always been committed to the privatization of crown corporations, such as Petro Canada. But in recent years, the party has explored proposals to privatize a range of income security programmes, including the Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance. Reform has also suggested amendments to the Canada Health Act which would increase the role of private insurance in the Canadian health care system.

In practice, the privatization of the state's social welfare functions could involve devolving responsibility to non-profit community-based charities, contracting out to the for-profit private sector, or some combination of these basic strategies. Publicly, Manning and other party spokespersons usually couch the party's strategy for reducing the social policy function of the state in terms of increasing 'self-reliance' and 'empowering'

communities and private charities to play a greater role in the provision of social services. Less central to the public face of Reform's privatization strategy is the party's commitment to enhancing the role of the private sector in the provision of social security.⁴² In practice however, the party has actually gone considerably further in developing proposals to enhance the role of the private sector than it has with plans to empower individuals, communities and private charities. For example, while Reform's 1995 alternative budget argues that providing "immediate help for those who have not been able to provide for themselves...is the proper function of charity," the only proposal offered to 'reinvigorate' the capacity of private social services is an "enhanced tax credit to individuals contributing to charitable organizations or to community groups engaged in the delivery of social services."⁴³

There is good reason to be sceptical about the potential of enhanced tax credits as the primary vehicle for preparing private charities to take on increased responsibilities when government services are reduced. But even this modest proposal is one to which the Reform Party seems less than firmly committed. Indeed, a party discussion paper on the flat tax states that "[t]he proposed Pure Flat Tax does not permit tax-breaks for charitable and political contributions." It goes on to state that "the entire system is endangered by the granting of any tax-concessions. If one is granted, others will follow and quickly the [tax] system is again used for economic and social engineering."⁴⁴ When I asked Preston Manning about this contradiction and requested that he outline how the Reform Party would empower communities and charitable organizations, he said the party would do

"two big things." First, by getting the deficit down, they will provide long-term tax relief which will "leave more dollars in the pockets of more Canadians...so charitable giving will be easier." Second, decentralization will help by "driving both the dollars and the powers to deliver social services to the community."⁴⁵ But considering the inability of a federal government to determine how Canadians use the funds made available through tax relief, or to control the local implications of decentralization, there is little here that is *directly* empowering of the local communities and charitable organizations Reformers call the 'third line of defence' (after individuals and families) in providing social security. Reform's agenda for privatization in the field of social policy may devolve responsibility to community-based charities, but it would do little to prepare these institutions for this increased responsibility.

In contrast to the party's plans to empower communities and charitable organizations, those dimensions of Reform's privatization strategy which aim to enhance the role of the private sector in the provision of social security are fairly detailed and, much to the chagrin of critics, realistically achievable. At the core of these proposals is the suggestion that a system of tax-sheltered capital accumulation accounts, administered by private sector financial institutions, could be used to provide for the aged, the unemployed, post-secondary education, job training, and some dimensions of health care.⁴⁶ Reform has been very careful to stress that the widespread use of such accounts--sometimes referred to as Registered Personal Security Plans (RSPPs)--is only being considered for the longer term. Nevertheless, in 1996 the party officially approved the

principles underpinning a caucus discussion paper which outlined a detailed four-point plan to replace the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) with a mandatory system of RPSPs, or 'super-RRSPs'. And it seems increasingly likely that the party will soon commit itself to the use of such accounts as a means of providing income support to the unemployed.

Greater targeting in Unemployment Insurance:

When compared to Reform's privatization proposals, the party's plans for greater targeting in social welfare assistance are certainly not as dramatic; however, the party is more definitively committed to targeting as a manageable near-term social policy reform. Of course, greater targeting and selectivity in social welfare assistance has been in vogue for over a decade. The decision, in 1993, to create the child tax benefit to replace the Family Allowance programme and the child tax credit was perhaps the most obvious example of the trend toward targeting, and away from universality.⁴⁷ But other programmes, such as Unemployment Insurance (UI)--renamed Employment Insurance (EI) in July, 1996--have also been made considerably more selective.⁴⁸ The qualifying period for UI eligibility was gradually increased from 8 weeks in 1971, to 12 to 20 weeks (depending on the unemployment rate in the applicant's region of residence) in 1994. Since January, 1997, eligibility has been based on hours rather than weeks of work. This has made EI benefits available to more part-time workers; however, those who were already covered by UI/EI, but working less than 35 hours per week, now need to work more weeks to be eligible for benefits.

For over two decades, the maximum duration of UI benefits remained stable at 50

weeks. In July of 1996, however, the new EI system was introduced with a maximum of only 45 weeks of benefits. Moreover, in recent years, workers who have worked less than 52 weeks in the past year and/or reside in regions with lower unemployment, have often been ineligible for this maximum. Currently, for example, a worker who has been employed for only 40 weeks (that is, 1400 to 1434 hours) during the past 52 weeks, and resides in a region with a 9% unemployment rate, would be eligible to receive EI for a maximum of 30 weeks—prior to 1994 that same worker would have been eligible for 39 weeks of benefits. The benefits themselves have also been reduced. In 1971 UI recipients received 66% of their average insurable earnings; today the figure for EI benefits is 55%.

What is significant to us here is the extent to which the Reform Party's policies regarding UI/EI call for even tighter restrictions in the programme's design. According to Reform, the established trend in UI/EI reforms needs to be extended; even after a decade of tightening eligibility requirements and reducing benefits, the party argues that "generous UIC benefits offer a strong incentive to delay rejoining the workforce."⁴⁹ Moreover, the party is opposed to the 'non-insurance' dimensions of EI. Following the policy prescriptions of the Macdonald and Forget Royal Commissions, Preston Manning has suggested that UI be run like a private sector insurance scheme, with rigorous actuarial principles, and perhaps even risk-adjusted premiums. According to Manning, this might mean ending both maternity benefits and extended benefits for seasonal workers in the fisheries, but he contends it will return the programme to "what it was supposed to be... (a programme) essentially for alleviating temporary unemployment."⁵⁰

Regarding benefits and eligibility, Reform's proposals include extending the qualifying period from the current 420 to 700 hours (that is, 12 to 20 weeks) to 26 weeks, and reducing the maximum duration of benefits from 45 weeks to only 25 weeks.⁵¹

Reform has also been an advocate of reducing the benefits of those who make more than three claims in any given five year period. Of course the concept of penalizing 'frequent' users of UI is not unique to Reform: the Liberal government began actively considering such a scheme with the release of Lloyd Axworthy's 1994 discussion paper on social security.⁵² Then, with the launch of the new EI system in 1996, the government began reducing benefits by 1% for each 20 weeks of benefits in a five year period (to a maximum of a 5% reduction). Reform's proposals would reduce benefits by 5% to 10% for each claim beyond three in a five year period. The difference between the two approaches to penalizing benefit recipients is that EI currently penalizes based on the duration of claims (what the government calls 'intensity') and Reform would penalize 'frequency' of claims. In any case, it is clear that Reform has taken a harder line than the Liberal government on the question of reforming Unemployment Insurance, but many of the proposals advocated by the Reform Party are rooted in reports and proposals commissioned under the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives, specifically the Macdonald and Forget Royal Commissions and Lloyd Axworthy's recent social security review. Moreover, the Liberal government's 1996 EI system moves in the very direction advocated by Reform.

Creating opportunities for private involvement in health care:

When Reform released its 1997 campaign platform, the only surprise was the promise to increase federal spending on health and education by \$4 billion. The political motives behind this promise were clear; working and middle class Canadians are committed to the Canadian health care system and worried about maintaining the services they have grown accustomed to. According to the *Fresh Start* platform, the revenue required for this new expenditure will come from savings obtained through "government restructuring."⁵³ What Reform does not make explicit is that almost 90% of the revenue required for this new expenditure will come from the complete elimination of federal transfers to the provinces for social assistance programmes.⁵⁴ Currently, under the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) Ottawa transfers funds to the provinces for health care, post-secondary education and social assistance. Federal spending on social assistance has been central to provincial welfare programmes since the establishment of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in the mid 1960s. Ending these transfers--currently about \$3.5 billion per year--would be a massive shock to Canada's provincially-based system of welfare assistance, but it is consistent with the principle of 'localism' which is so influential with neo-liberal social policy thinkers. In any case, since most of the extra funding for health and education would come from simply changing the CHST from a three- to a two-programme focussed transfer programme, the proposed increase in federal funding for healthcare represents a political decision to focus social spending on the broad middle class rather than on the poor. There is no evidence that it represents a rethinking of the Reform Party's approach to health care policy.⁵⁵

The Reform Party's near-term health care agenda would involve narrowing the range of health services which are funded by federal transfers and covered by national standards. It would also create new opportunities for private involvement in health care. The result, it will be shown, would be a two-tiered system of health care. Of course, the party often tries to downplay this reality. Policy documents released by the Reform caucus stress the party's commitment to "establish national standards for 'core' services which would be available to all Canadians regardless of ability to pay."⁵⁶ Similarly, during the 1993 election campaign, Manning emphasized his desire to "make it absolutely clear that the Reform party is not promoting private health care, deductibles or user fees."⁵⁷ He has also publicly advocated the preservation of the key principles of the Canada Health Act. But a closer reading of Reform's health care policy illustrates the somewhat disingenuous nature of these carefully worded defences of the party's position. First, while the party presents itself as being in support of the principles underpinning the existing health care system--including universality, interprovincial portability, non-profit public administration, and comprehensive coverage of medically necessary services--Reform's recently adopted health care policy uses language which is cleverly similar to, but *not* identical to, the language of the Canada Health Act. Rather than commit to comprehensive coverage of medically necessary services, Reform commits to a "comprehensive set of essential national health care services." And rather than commit to non-profit public administration, Reform simply commits to "public funding."⁵⁸ Second, while it may be true that Reform has not officially engaged in *promoting* private health

care, deductibles or user fees, the party is committed to amending the Canada Health Act to give the provinces "more flexibility to innovate and refinance the health-care system as they...see fit."⁵⁹ Manning has admitted this "would enable them to experiment with options such as user fees, deductibles and private delivery services, if they choose to do so."⁶⁰

Third, Reform has made a clear commitment to reduce cash transfers in favour of providing the provinces with additional tax room for health care funding. According to the party caucus, a Reform government would allow cash transfers to fall to zero by approximately 2010.⁶¹ In light of provincial reaction to the 1990 cap on CAP for the 'have provinces' and the more recent introduction of the CHST, it is reasonable to assume that Ottawa would find it difficult to maintain its influence over the provinces and preserve the principles of the Canada Health Act while reducing cash transfers to zero. The party's response to this criticism is that a Reform government would maintain national standards by demanding that provinces agree to annual consultations on standards for core health services before any additional tax room is transferred.⁶²

But this response merely draws attention to the question of what Reform means by core services. While the party continues to stress its belief that "[m]eaningful national standards can be preserved and improved by redefining them to cover 'core' or essential health service,"⁶³ little is ever said about which health services are 'core' and which are 'non-core'. Manning has said that core services include anything that "makes the most demonstrable contribution to improving the health of Canadians."⁶⁴ However, caucus

members on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development have admitted that their health care agenda "would mean that a *narrower* set of basic health services would be covered by federal transfers."⁶⁵ It is difficult to know exactly what to make of these comments; nevertheless, as figure 7.1 indicates, the Reform Party is committed to ensuring that greater selectivity in public health care financing will see private insurers and individual Canadians sharing primary responsibility for funding non-core health services, including some services which are considered medically necessary under current interpretations of the Canada Health Act.

Figure 7.1: Shifting Responsibility for Health Care Funding

Health Care Funding Matrix The darker the shading, the greater the funding responsibility			
Source of Financing	Type of Service		
	Core	Non-Core	Other
Federal			
Provincial/Local			
Private Insurance			
Patient			

Source: Adapted from: Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, p. 308; and, Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 48.

Manning consistently emphasizes that his party's health care agenda is not about "promoting American-style health care or deductibles or user fees."⁶⁶ But Reform's plans

for loosening the Canada Health Act and reducing federal cash transfers for health care do provide the space for the eventual emergence of a two-tiered health care system. In 1996 the party officially adopted a policy resolution supporting the "freedom" of Canadians to access services outside Medicare,⁶⁷ and a published statement of the Reform caucus' opinion on the matter quotes from neo-liberal health care specialists who argue, first, that the Medicare model is "intolerably expensive" and, second, that "[c]onsumers should be allowed to stay outside of the publicly funded system completely if that is their wish, or to supplement publicly funded care with additional private care if that is their wish."⁶⁸

Targeting Old Age Security pensions:

During the 1993 election, one of the most controversial dimensions of Reform's commitment to greater targeting and selectivity in social policy was the party's proposals regarding the Old Age Security Programme. The Old Age Security Programme--which includes, among other closely related programmes, Old Age Security pensions (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)--forms the first of three 'pillars' in the complex of programmes which provide income security to Canadian seniors.⁶⁹ Canada's contributory public pension plans, the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans (C/QPP), form the second pillar. The third pillar is a series of tax-assisted pension plans and tax-sheltered capital accumulation accounts. These Registered Pension Plans (RPPs) and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) are nominally private, but as long ago as the mid 1980s tax subsidies for RPPs and RRSPs totalled \$5 billion per year.⁷⁰ With somewhere in the range of 45% to 65% of the Canadian workforce covered by

employment-related pension plans,⁷¹ and about one in five tax filers making RRSP contributions, approximately 40% of Canada's pension income (or \$32 billion) is provided by tax-assisted RPPs and RRSPs. The remaining 60% of pension income is provided, in equal proportion, by the two public pillars (\$22 billion each by C/QPP and the OAS/GIS).⁷²

During the 1993 election, Reform argued that all financial assistance provided under the Old Age Security Programme (OAS/GIS) should be administered through a carefully targeted system of means-tested assistance. Currently, this is not the case. The OAS pension is a universal monthly benefit available to Canadians over 65 years of age. The exact size of an individual's OAS benefit is determined by a residency requirement; however, the current maximum is approaching \$5,000 as it is indexed to the consumer price index on a quarterly basis. Income from OAS is taxable and, since 1989, is 'clawed back' at a rate of 15 cents for every dollar of income above a certain threshold (approximately \$53,000). High income seniors (earning something over \$75,000) have their entire OAS benefit clawed back.⁷³ The GIS, on the other had, is the type of income-tested benefit favoured by Reform. The GIS provides additional income to OAS recipients who have little or no income beyond their OAS pension. Seniors with absolutely no income beyond OAS receive the maximum GIS (approaching \$6,000), however an individual's GIS is reduced by 50 cents (25 cents for couples) for every dollar of income beyond that received from OAS.⁷⁴ Together the OAS and GIS provide a guaranteed minimum income to lower income seniors, and the Reform Party seems to

accept that this is a valid objective for the Old Age Security Programme. The party's critique is directed primarily at the fact that OAS benefits are currently available to seniors with sufficient alternative sources of income.

While the Reform Party has never released a detailed explanation of their plan for reforming the OAS/GIS system, the party's *Blue Sheet* contains both a general commitment to a greater targeting of social policy benefits, and a more specific commitment to move toward a "family or household-oriented" social security system.⁷⁵ Reflecting these commitments, the party's 'Zero in Three' deficit elimination strategy promised, among other social security system savings, the reduction or elimination of OAS benefits for seniors in *households* with above average *family* incomes.⁷⁶ During the 1993 election Preston Manning explained that this would mean ending OAS payments to seniors from households with an income above approximately \$54,000. The universality of OAS had ended in 1989 when the Conservative government began clawing back OAS pensions at a rate of 15% for *individuals* with incomes above approximately \$53,000. Reform's proposal appeared to go further in two important ways: first, it would base the claw back on family rather than individual income; and, second, it would claw back pensions at a rate much higher than 15%.⁷⁷ Moreover, for seniors with family incomes under the national average, Manning had merely promised to preserve total funding at 1991-92 levels over the next three years. Factoring in both the growing number of seniors and inflation, such a freeze on funding would have reduced individual OAS pension benefits for lower income seniors by as much as 4.5% per year, or 13.5% over three

years.⁷⁸

Citing a Fraser Institute Study, Manning claimed that his party's proposed OAS reforms would save the federal government \$3.5 billion per year.⁷⁹ At the time there was considerable scepticism regarding this estimate of the potential savings to be had from such a change to OAS pensions. Brian Mulroney's former Chief of Staff, Stanley Hartt, and Liberal party economist Patrick Grady argued the savings would be closer to \$1 billion. In their strategic attacks on Manning, Hartt and Grady noted that in 1993 OAS pensions paid to couples with pretax incomes averaging \$54,000 or more totalled \$1.4 billion. Of that, approximately \$316 million was clawed or taxed back. Thus, they argued Reform's proposed claw back of OAS pensions paid to seniors with family incomes above \$54,000 would only save \$1.094 billion per year, less than a third of Manning's estimation.⁸⁰ Former Reform Party policy advisor Tom Flanagan has suggested that Manning knew the projected savings were inflated. The Fraser Institute study from which Reform's policy was borrowed based its estimated savings on 'economic households' (which would include, for example, the adult children with whom an elderly parent might live) rather than the more common understanding of family and, even then, it put the annual savings in the range of \$2 billion. According to Flanagan, Manning created the controversy by arbitrarily "raising the OAS taxback target from \$2 billion to \$3.5 billion after it became clear that the federal deficit would be larger than predicted."⁸¹

Flanagan's is a telling observation because it raises the question of which was more important to Reform's proposal, the claw back threshold of average family income

(\$54,000) or the savings of \$3.5 billion. The fact that the party's policy on OAS reform was released as part of a deficit elimination strategy suggests it might be the latter. In fact, during the 1993 campaign Manning commented that "(i)t's not our problem if the economists can't agree on where the cut-off point is to get a few billion in savings from old age security."⁸² If the party's policies regarding the targeting of social policy benefits are driven by deficit elimination targets, how aggressive would their targeting of OAS have to be to meet the target? In 1993, the Reform Party's policy coordinator, Dimitri Pantazopoulos, admitted that clawbacks would actually have to begin at \$45,000 per couple, not \$54,000. But the Liberal Party's Patrick Grady estimated that to achieve \$3.5 billion dollars in savings the government would have to claw back the full OAS pension of every elderly couple with combined non-OAS income of \$35,000 or more.⁸³ In 1995, Reform revised their estimate of the saving which could be realized downward to \$3 billion and eliminated reference to a specific income threshold.⁸⁴ It seems clear, however, that Reform's claw back would have to kick in somewhere below the average family income for Reform to realize the savings to which the party is committed. It seems clear, in other words, that Reform's OAS reform would take targeting and selectivity considerably further than the Tories' 1989 claw back policy.

As recently as the mid 1980s, Reform's proposed OAS reforms would have been viewed as a radical and provocative nonstarter. In 1985 when the Conservatives' annual budget announced the partial de-indexing of OAS payments (inflation less 3%) there was "a swift, strong and widespread public outcry by seniors' groups, social policy groups,

provincial governments and even business lobbies.⁸⁵ The government was forced to back off and look elsewhere for revenue to meet their deficit target, and it seemed for a time that with regard to seniors pensions the level of benefits and the principle of universality could not be tampered with by a politically astute government. However, this fact of political life had apparently changed by 1989 when the Mulroney Conservatives implemented the existing OAS claw back.

Since 1989, think tanks, such as the Fraser and C.D. Howe Institutes, and political columnists, such as Andrew Coyne, have been calling for an even more radical overhaul of the Old Age Security Programme. Coyne, for his part, concluded an influential series of *Globe and Mail* articles on public pensions with a call to combine OAS, GIS and the Spouse's Allowance (SPA)⁸⁶ into a new means-tested programme which would be clawed back at a rate of 33% for every dollar of income a senior received over \$15,000 (\$18,000 for couples).⁸⁷ In the context of such a proposal, Reform's plan for reforming OAS no longer appears radical; in fact, the Liberal government's 1996 budget announced a new Seniors Benefit--a somewhat more generous version of the Coyne proposal--which seems to indicate that Reform's OAS policy is quite in keeping with current trends in the social policy field.

The Liberals' new Seniors Benefit will replace the existing OAS/GIS benefits beginning in 2001.⁸⁸ It will be designed as a means-tested benefit. Seniors who would, under the current system, have incomes (including OAS/GIS) up to almost \$38,000 (\$43,000 for couples) will receive slightly more in their net annual government pension

income. Seniors with incomes of between \$38,000 and \$51,000 (\$43,000 and \$77,000 for couples) will receive reduced government pensions. And seniors with incomes of \$52,000 or more (\$78,000 for couples) would no longer receive a government pension.⁸⁹ By promising lower income seniors benefits above those currently available through OAS/GIS (about \$120 above), the Chrétien government has avoided the net pension decreases which would have resulted from Manning's proposed three year freeze on total OAS funding. But beyond that, the Liberal government has moved in very much the same direction Reform had proposed three years earlier.

Privatizing the Canada Pension Plan:

Reform's proposals for reforming the second public pillar of the income security system for seniors--the contributory public pension plans--are significantly more radical than its proposals for OAS. The party advocates scrapping public pension plans in favour of a mandatory and fully funded pension system which is privately and competitively managed. If implemented, this move toward privatization would mean that the only difference which would remain between Reform's new second pillar of mandatory private savings plans and the existing third pillar of RRSPs and RPPs would be the voluntary nature of existing pension and retirement savings plans.

Currently, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) are contributory pension plans which provide earnings-related pensions to retired workers who have previously contributed to the plan.⁹⁰ While Canadians are employed, they and their employers contribute a designated percentage (1996: 2.8% each) of their

pensionable earnings to the CPP.⁹¹ When they retire, contributors receive pensions equal to 25% of their average career earnings, up to a maximum of 25% of the average Canadian wage. In 1996, with an average wage of approximately \$35,000, the maximum CPP retirement pension was close to \$8,750 per year.⁹² Since it was created in 1966, the CPP has functioned as a partially funded hybrid of a pay-as-you-go pension plan. Until 1997, the objective has been to maintain a CPP reserve fund equal to about two years' worth of benefits. Since a fund of this size (1996: approximately \$40 billion) is not large enough to earn a return capable of covering benefits, today's workers have essentially been paying for the CPP pensions of today's retirees, and thus the CPP is commonly referred to as a pay-as-you-go pension plan.

The CPP is not, however, only a retirement pension plan. A variety of other benefits are funded through the CPP. For example, over 250,000 Canadians under the age of 65 receive disability pensions through the CPP; and disabled contributors with children under 18 years of age (25 years of age if enrolled in school) also receive disabled contributors child benefits. There are also survivor benefits in the form of the surviving spouse's pensions and orphan's benefits which are paid to the spouses and children of deceased contributors. And, finally, there is the CPP's lump sum death benefit--equal to approximately six months of CPP pension benefits--which is paid to the estate of a deceased contributor. While these aspects of the CPP are often referred to as 'peripheral' programmes, their current cost to the CPP is approximately \$6 billion per year, or one third of total CPP expenditures, and they provide assistance to more than one million

Canadians.⁹³

During 1995 and 1996 there were a number of news reports suggesting that without fairly drastic reform the Canada Pension Plan would be at risk of becoming either unsustainable or unaffordable.⁹⁴ As is required by the statute governing the CPP, the federal government and the provinces have an agreed upon 25 year schedule for contribution rate increases. However, the 1995 actuarial report showed the existing schedule to be inadequate for maintaining a CPP fund equal to the targeted two years worth of benefits. The Chief Actuary reported that under the existing schedule the CPP fund would be exhausted by 2015. He went on to explain that in light of current demographic trends, slow economic growth and past benefit enrichments, the combined employee/employer contribution rate of a sustainable CPP would need to rise from the current 5.6% to 14.2% (7.1% each for employers and employees) in 2030.⁹⁵ Since the Chief Actuary's 1995 report, the consensus has been that urgent action is required if the CPP is to remain both affordable and financially sustainable. While opinions varied on how drastic CPP reform needed to be,⁹⁶ federal and provincial finance ministers recently agreed on a schedule which would see CPP contributions rise from 5.6% in 1997 to 9.9% in 2003.⁹⁷

On the possibility of long-term success in the effort to design an affordable and sustainable CPP, Reform has taken a pessimistic view. According to Reform, an initially flawed funding arrangement, subsequent programme changes and Canada's changing demographic profile, have put the CPP in a crisis from which it can not easily be saved.

Instead of reforming the CPP, the Reform Party advocates replacing Canada's public pension plan with a system of privately managed tax-deferred capital accumulation accounts, sometimes called Registered Personal Security Plans (RPSPs) or super-RRSPs.⁹⁸ The Reform Party's advocacy of the privatization of the CPP is, in part, motivated by problems it sees with alternative CPP reform proposals. For example, the party rejects cuts to CPP pension benefits because of the "strong moral claim" seniors have to these promised benefits; and they reject increases in contribution rates because they fear a "revolt" against the "unbearable tax burden" which would result from contribution rates in the 10% to 14% range.⁹⁹ According to Reform, the CPP can not be saved because each of the reform proposals inevitably pits contributors against beneficiaries: "Pay-as-you-go schemes (like the CPP) set the stage for divisive and devastating inter-generational conflicts."¹⁰⁰ But this explanation of Reform's scepticism about the possibility of saving the CPP through reform partially masks what motivates Reform's wish to scrap the CPP. As Monica Townson, Vice-Chair of the Pension Commission of Ontario, recently argued, proposals to privatize public pensions are "driven by two main forces: a desire to reduce payroll taxes...and a political viewpoint that believes in the superiority of market-based solutions and prefers individual initiative to collective responsibility."¹⁰¹

The Reform Party's proposal for privatizing Canada's public pension plan is not entirely original. Chile's pay-as-you-go public pension plan was privatized in the early 1980s and now the Chilean case serves, according to Reform, as "the model of greatest

success" for Canadian advocates of privatization.¹⁰² The *Globe and Mail* also champions the Chilean experiment as a model which deserves to be copied,¹⁰³ and a recent World Bank report on income security for the aged relied heavily on evidence from the Chilean experience in its advocacy of privately managed funded pension plans over public pay-as-you-go plans such as the CPP.¹⁰⁴ But much of the language and political strategy underpinning Reform's proposals comes from American neo-liberal privatization strategies published in the 1980s. Peter Ferrara and Stuart Butler of the American Heritage Foundation have, for example, argued that once the 'welfare' dimension of income security for seniors has been hived off into a means-tested programme financed by general revenues, then the public pension and insurance dimensions of the income security system for seniors should be performed by 'super-IRAs'--an expanded version of Individual Retirement Accounts (the American version of the RRSP).¹⁰⁵ While this policy prescription is similar to the Chilean example, it was Butler's proposal which apparently provided Reform policy-makers with a political strategy for implementing such a monumental change to the social welfare system.

Butler advised privatizers never to forget there is a "firm coalition" behind the existing system of public social security pensions. He argued it is important to devise "methods by which elements of the coalition could be detached," while also diffusing the emotion typically associated with changes to programmes which provide income security to seniors.¹⁰⁶ Specifically, Butler suggested i) that "privatizers should seek constitutional protection for benefits" being paid to the current generation of seniors, ii) that middle-

aged contributors should be offered "a bond that would entitle each worker to a retirement annuity in proportion to the tax contributions he or she has made into the system," and, finally, iii) that young workers should be promised that "a private plan would provide many times the return they could expect from" the existing public pension plan.¹⁰⁷ The Reform Party's four-point CPP privatization plan follows Butler's advice to the letter.

The plan begins with a call for a constitutional amendment stating that it "shall not be lawful for the Government of Canada to reduce the retirement benefits payable under the Canada Pension Plan to persons aged 65 or older."¹⁰⁸ Clearly, Reform's hope is that this constitutional guarantee will bring seniors on side for the eventual privatization of the CPP. But not only current seniors would be threatened by privatization. Reform calculates that if the new system of privately managed capital accumulation accounts (super-RRSPs) started in 1997, mid-career CPP contributors born before 1962 (i.e. workers who in 1996 were between age 35 and 65) would be unable to build a fund large enough to provide retirement benefits equal to a CPP pension.¹⁰⁹ Since the support of these workers is essential to the privatization plan's success, Reform has accepted Butler's advice and promised to provide mid-career contributors with 'recognition bonds' to make up the difference. With this promise, however, comes the dilemma of funding the recognition bonds; CPP contributions would no longer be coming into the federal treasury, and the existing \$40 billion CPP fund will not be enough to cover the constitutional commitment to seniors, let alone the recognition bonds. Once again, Reform turns to the Chilean example and suggests funding the recognition bonds "with

revenues generated by the privatization of Crown Corporations and other government assets."¹¹⁰

Canadians born after 1961, including future generations, would, under the Reform proposal, have no further relationship to the CPP once the mandatory private system began operation. Instead of contributing, via a payroll deduction, to the CPP, workers would have a percentage of their income (likely in the range of 8.5% to 10%) paid directly to privately-run, government-regulated financial institutions which manage RRSP-style capital accumulation accounts. According to Reform, a Canadian who paid into such an account for a full working life of forty years, would retire with a pension "substantially higher than the 25% of final salary promised by CPP."¹¹¹

It should be stressed, however, that the potential for a fully-funded plan to eventually pay higher pensions is only one of the benefits Reform expects to result from the privatization of the CPP. The party also trumpets the implications of an RRSP-style private pension system for both the level of payroll taxes and the availability of investment capital. Regarding payroll taxes, Reform has expressed concern about a revolt against the CPP contribution rate increasing from the current 5.6% to 10%, or as much as 14%, of pensionable earnings, as the Chief Actuary has warned may be necessary to sustain the CPP. When the finance ministers announced their February, 1997, deal to gradually increase CPP contributions to 9.9% in 2003, Manning characterized the plan as a \$10-billion-a-year tax grab.¹¹² According to Reform, such an increase in "payroll taxes is as good a way as any to depress employment prospects."¹¹³ Reform's plan would mean

a massive reduction in payroll taxes paid by Canadian businesses; in fact, if their plan was introduced in 1997 Canadian business would save in the range of \$5 billion in payroll taxes.¹¹⁴ Workers, on the other hand, would likely see their contributions almost quadruple (from 2.8% of pensionable earnings in 1996 to 8.5% or even 10% in 1997¹¹⁵). The difference--and this is significant--would be that workers would no longer be contributing to the pensions of the current generation of seniors: instead, they would be contributing to their own capital accumulation accounts, and would therefore continue to 'own' the money which is contributed.

Regarding the availability of investment capital, the Reform Party stresses that an "increase in total investment wealth" is "key" to their plan.¹¹⁶ Reform rejects the Keynesian notion of demand management which assumed that social programmes such as public pensions could be an economic stimulus because they increased spending for personal consumption. Indeed, in an example of Reform's anti-Keynesian rhetoric, the party argues that CPP contributions are currently "*removed from the economy* in the form of immediate consumption rather than being reinvested."¹¹⁷ Their concern is that the pay-as-you-go structure of the CPP "reduces the stock of capital available to business and forces up interest rates, making Canada less competitive."¹¹⁸ Of course, it would be possible to increase savings and amass a large pool of investment capital without actually privatizing the CPP. As David Slater, the former Chair of the Economic Council of Canada, has argued, the funding issue is "fundamentally the same for a reformed CPP or replacement by a mandatory retirement savings plan."¹¹⁹ But business leaders and neo-

liberal ideologues have rejected expanding the CPP on a funded basis "because it means pools of capital in public hands."¹²⁰ The C.D. Howe Institute and the World Bank, among others, have expressed concern regarding the "political flaws" of fully-funded public pensions plans. According to the World Bank, "market motivations" are superior to "central planning," and "(p)rivately managed pension funds beat publicly managed funds hands down."¹²¹ The Reform Party shares these neo-liberal convictions and promises significant positive economic consequences will result from the privatization of the CPP; in a moment of hyperbole, the party even contends that "the changes to the (Chilean) pension system were *the* most important element of the Chilean 'economic miracle' of the 1980s and early 1990s."¹²²

It is important to remember, however, that the CPP is more than a pension system, it is a social programme. Not only does the CPP provide a virtually universal defined-benefit system of pensions based on an ongoing redistribution of income between generations, but the CPP incorporates a range of peripheral programmes which socialize specific risks and provide financial assistance to over one million Canadians each year. The largest of these peripheral programmes is the disability pensions programme, which has a current annual expenditure of close to \$2.5 billion. There may be some legitimate questions to be raised regarding the efficiency and legitimacy of linking disability benefits to the CPP,¹²³ but the fact remains that this social programme serves over 250,000 Canadians annually. Nevertheless, the Reform Party's CPP privatization plan involves privatizing disability benefits as well as the retirement pensions. Under Reform's proposal

for replacing the CPP, "every working Canadian would be required to purchase *private* disability insurance."¹²⁴ Reform would return Canada to a situation where individuals and the private market are responsible for ensuring the well-being of workers who, under the current system, would otherwise be eligible to claim publicly funded disability benefits.

Following through on the Reform Party's proposal to scrap the CPP and its peripheral programmes would mark a significant step away from the concept of socialization of risk and toward the use of private market mechanisms to protect average people who are in need of financial assistance. This is intentional; indeed, it is the essence of Reform's planned transition from a welfare state to a secure society. The Reform Party's caucus has argued that there are three broad classes of personal security needs which must be dealt with in any modern society. First, is "protection against personal catastrophe." In a secure society the need for such protection "can be dealt with by means of private insurance." Obviously Reform believes the needs of those who are currently receiving CPP disability pensions fall within this first class of personal security needs. Second are "needs that will arise reasonably far in the future, but are predictable." In a secure society this second class of needs "would be taken care of by means of a system of personalized tax-sheltered capital accumulation accounts." Economic security in retirement falls into this second class. The third class of need is for "immediate help for those who have not been able to provide for themselves." According to Reform, responding to this third class of needs is "the proper function of charity or, in its absence, of government transfers."¹²⁵ The state, in other words, should only be involved in the

provision of inescapable welfare needs, not the socialization of risk or the maintenance of generalized social well-being.

Applying capital accumulation accounts to unemployment and health care:

In the longer term, the Reform Party contemplates a social policy regime designed on the assumptions underpinning this framework for meeting personal security needs. A potentially significant element of this agenda would be the complete privatization of Employment Insurance and health insurance along the same lines as proposed for the CPP. The party has purposefully avoided including such proposals in their near-term social policy agenda, but the Reform caucus is openly contemplating proposing a system of personalized tax-sheltered capital accumulation accounts to provide financial assistance to individuals experiencing periods of unemployment and sickness. Stuart Butler, the American neo-liberal who influenced Reform's proposal for privatizing the CPP, claims that Registered Personal Security Plans (RPSPs) for health insurance are "a distinct possibility on the horizon."¹²⁶ And the Reform Party's 1995 *Taxpayers' Budget* confirms that over the long-term Reform considers RPSPs as "the most promising" of "a number of options (being considered) for renewal of Canada's UI system."¹²⁷

The implications of privatizing UI and health insurance through RPSPs would vary between individuals. Those who are seldom sick and experience no more than a few brief bouts of unemployment during their working lives would be able to accumulate sufficient funds in their RPSPs to cover expenses and replace lost income. On the other hand, individuals who experience a chronic illness or are forced to make multiple claims

on their unemployment RPSPs over a short period of time, would be unable to build up sufficient funds to cover their needs. Similarly, young people just entering the workforce--a category of workers with a rate of unemployment much higher than the national average--would not have sufficient protection in their newly opened RPSPs. But Reform seems to have ignored these rather obvious realities. Borrowing data from the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, Reform argues that while the maximum number of weeks of benefits allowable under UI is 50 weeks (45 weeks since July, 1996), a ten year old RPSP for unemployment (with no previous claims) would be large enough to provide benefits similar to those provided by UI for a full 84.4 weeks. A fifteen year old plan would provide benefits for 140.1 weeks, and so on. What the party fails to point out is that the Canadian Institute of Actuaries' data also indicated that workers who became unemployed within five years of establishing an RPSP would not have accumulated enough capital to provide benefits equal to what was then provided by the UI system. Similarly, repeat users may never be able to establish a personal account capable of providing the level and duration of benefits which are available when risk is socialized through a system like UI/EI.

Since a similar pattern would result for those making frequent claims on RPSPs for health care, one wonders where the chronically ill and chronically unemployed would turn for assistance in Reform's secure society. As individuals "who have not been able to provide for themselves," the chronically ill or unemployed would have to turn to "charity or, in its absence...government transfers."¹²⁸ But these government transfers would no

longer be through social programmes which, like UI/EI and health insurance, are significant to the vast majority of Canadians. As a result, those who find they are unable to provide for themselves with personalized tax-sheltered capital accumulation accounts may soon find they no longer have clear and substantive social rights; instead, they would be marginalized, eventually viewed as failures in light of market oriented values which emphasize individual initiative and self-reliance. As provincially administered social assistance is today, the government transfers which would provide for those who are unable to provide for themselves with private RPSPs would be an easy target during periods of government restraint. In other words, privatizing social programmes which currently socialize risk is very likely to further undermine welfare liberal notions of collective responsibility. Such developments would take us a considerable way toward the logical endpoint of the neo-liberal trajectory which governing practices have been following over the past decade.

Conclusion

From its inception the Reform Party has been characterized as 'extremist', as out of step with the mainstream. When the Reform Party emerged during 1986 and 1987, the party's fiscally conservative neo-liberal agenda was still less than wholeheartedly embraced by society's influential agenda-setters. At both the federal and provincial levels, the neo-liberal rhetoric of the New Right was becoming more popular, but political and bureaucratic leaders had not provided considerable concrete evidence of their willingness to embrace neo-liberal policy solutions as being essential to social and economic

prosperity. Indeed, it was the federal Tories' apparent unwillingness to aggressively attack the deficit and reduce the size of government which drew many of the early Reformers to the party. Since that time, however, federal and provincial governments have begun to introduce a post-welfare state social policy regime which builds on the very neo-liberal political rationality articulated by Reform. Across Canada, governments have embraced the goal of restricting the role of government in society. An apparent consensus has also emerged around the need to subordinate social policy to the requirements of structural competitiveness. From the Liberal government in New Brunswick, to the Conservatives in Ontario and Alberta, official discourses have shifted from an emphasis on social rights and collective responsibility toward market oriented values which emphasize individual initiative and self-reliance. Lower cost and market-based solutions are now trumpeted as the key to an effective and sustainable social welfare system, and promises of tax cuts seem to be the order of the day.

In this chapter I have argued that Reform's call for a clear and decisive break from the governing practices of the Keynesian welfare state is no longer out of step with the course of Canadian social policy. Particularly with its calls for greater targeting and privatization in social policy fields ranging from health care to income security for seniors and the unemployed, Reform has been a harbinger of an emerging era of neo-liberal governance. While some dimensions of Reform's longer term social and economic policy agenda may still appear fairly radical--including, for example, the call for a flat tax and the proposal to privatize the CPP--the party's notion of a 'secure society' may reveal a

logical endpoint of the ongoing paradigm shift in governing practices and state form.

It is not my intention to overstate the importance of Reform to the sidelining of Keynesian economics and welfare liberalism in favour of neo-liberalism. Canada's neo-liberal turn has been a local manifestation of a global trend. We have witnessed Liberal and NDP, as well as Tory, governments move to the right as the balance of power between markets and states has shifted in the context of globalization. My purpose has simply been to shed light on the Reform Party's social and economic policy agenda and to illuminate the extent to which Reform's interventions in policy debates are a part of the neo-liberal shift in political discourses and state governing practices.

Endnotes

1. Paul Pierson, Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
2. Thanks to William Walters and Trevor Harrison for reminding me of these important dimensions of contingency in the advance of the neo-liberal project.
3. Trevor Harrison, Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 205.
4. Reform Party of Canada, Blue Sheet: Principles, Policies & Election Platform (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 6.
5. Reform Party of Canada "Fresh Start", pp. 6-11.
6. See: Reform Party of Canada. The Taxpayers' Budget: The Reform Party's Plan to Balance the Federal Budget & Provide Social and Economic Security for the 21st Century (Ottawa: Reform Party of Canada, 1995); and, Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development." in Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians renewing their social programs (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1995), pp. 293-314.
7. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development." p. 306.
8. Reform Party of Canada. "The West Wants In!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988), mimeo without page numbers.
9. A good overview of political economic thought is found in Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, The Political Economy of Canada: An Introduction (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992).
10. Reform Party of Canada, "The West Wants In!", mimeo without page numbers.
11. Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet: Principles, Policies & Election Platform (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993), p. 4.
12. Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget: The Reform Party's Plan to Balance the Federal Budget & Provide Social and Economic Security for the 21st

Century (Ottawa: Reform Party of Canada, 1995). p.13.

13. Ibid., p. 14.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 15.

17. See, for example: Reform Party of Canada. "The West Wants In!"; and, Preston Manning, "Stop Digging! A Plan to Reduce the Federal Deficit to Zero in Three Years (Phase III: Tax Relief and Reform of Government Operations, Programs, and Structures)." Notes for an address to a Reform Party luncheon, Ottawa, Ontario, April 22, 1993.

18. Reform Party of Canada, "Fresh Start" p. 10.

19. Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget, p. 9.

20. Reform Party of Canada, Blue Sheet 1993, p. 5.

21. Jim Silye, "The Flat Tax" Introductory comments to The Flat Tax Conference convened by the Fraser Institute, Toronto, Ontario, October 31, 1995.

22. This would particularly be the case if Reform kept its promise to eliminate the GST as the flat tax was implemented. See: Ken Boessenkool, Herb Grubel and Jim Silye, "A Flat Tax for Canada," A paper presented to The Flat Tax Conference convened by the Fraser Institute, Toronto, Ontario, October 31, 1995.

23. Reform Party of Canada "Fresh Start", p. 11.

24. See: Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, "Let the Future Begin: Jean Charest's Plan for Canada's Next Century," (Ottawa: Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 1997), p. 7.

25. Reform Party of Canada, "The West Wants In!" Election Platform of the Reform Party of Canada (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1988), mimeo without page numbers. Interestingly, as another example of Reform's populist construction of those who have benefited from the postwar welfare state, the 1988 platform does not merely claim that targeting is necessary because social policy resources have been directed at too many high and middle income earners, it also claims that these resources have been directed at "bureaucrats, social activists, researchers, political professionals, [and]

pressure groups."

26. Reform Party of Canada, *Blue Sheet: Principles, Policies & Election Platform*, p. 6.
27. Ibid.
28. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 299.
29. Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada* (second edition; Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), chapter 1.
30. For example, in 1915, as a means of making public assistance less favourable and separating genuine cases of hardship from fraudulent cases, the House of Industry in Toronto required applicants for relief to break 650 pounds of rock prior to receiving assistance. See: Ibid., p. 37.
31. For a good overview of this period, see: Allan Moscovitch, "The Welfare State Since 1975," *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), pp. 77-94.
32. While these four principles correspond closely to the five principles which the Reform Party claims are the guiding principles behind their social policy vision, they are specified by the author, as a critic of the party, rather than by the party itself. See: Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 20.
33. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 306.
34. Ibid., p. 302.
35. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 305. Emphasis is added to highlight the Reform Party's hard line on the definition of poverty. Reform has attacked those who "misinterpret" the problem of poverty by relying on the Low Income Cut Off (LICO), which is a relative measure of poverty. According to the Reform caucus poverty, when understood in "real terms,...has to do with lacking food, clothing, or shelter." See Ibid., p. 298.
36. See: Reform Party of Canada, "Part I: Reform Party Policy Resolutions for Debate," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1994), p. 13; and, Reform Party of Canada, "Part III: Reform Party Proposed Policy Resolutions," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1994), p. 24.

37. Reform Party of Canada, "The West Wants In!".
38. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 297. Emphasis is added to highlight the use of the term "confiscation" in reference to taxes. This libertarian notion is popular among Reformers. It is not uncommon for Reformers to refer to taxes as 'confiscatory'. Similarly, while debating a private members motion to entrench property rights in the Canadian constitution, Reform M.P., Garry Breitkreuz, stated that the right to own property "means the right to live unmolested by government." He then went on to explain that "being molested by government" means "the government taking our hard earned tax dollars, our property." See: Canada. Parliament. House of commons, Debates, February 24, 1995, p. 10029.
39. Reform Party Caucus. "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 297.
40. Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet (1993). p. 6.
41. Preston Manning, The New Canada (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992), pp. 56-57.
42. See: Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet (1993). p. 6.
43. Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget, pp. 21 & 23.
44. Ken Boessenkool, Herb Grubel and Jim Silye. "A Flat Tax for Canada," A Reform Party discussion paper presented to The Flat Tax Conference convened by the Fraser Institute, Toronto, Ontario, October 31, 1995, p. 12.
45. Preston Manning on CBC Radio's "Radio Noon," Toronto, February 15, 1996.
46. See: Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 299; and, Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget, p. 52.
47. Ken Battle, "The Politics of Stealth: Child Benefits under the Tories," in Susan D. Phillips, ed., How Ottawa Spends: A More Democratic Canada...? (1993-1994) (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).
48. The data regarding Unemployment Insurance benefits was taken from the following sources: Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Unemployment Insurance: Regular Benefits (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1993); Canadian Institute of Actuaries, "Task Force on Unemployment Insurance," (Ottawa: Canadian Institute of Actuaries, 1994); and, James J. Rice and Michael J. Prince, "Lowering the Safety Net and

"Weakening the Bonds of Nationhood: Social Policy in the Mulroney Years," in Susan D. Phillips, ed., *How Ottawa Spends: A More Democratic Canada...? (1993-1994)* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

49. Reform Party Caucus. "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 302.
50. Cited in Miro Cernetig. "Run UI system like private plan, Manning urges," *The Globe and Mail*, October 8, 1993, p. A4.
51. Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 45.
52. Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, *Improving Social Security in Canada: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1994), p. 44.
53. Reform Party of Canada, *Fresh Start*, p. 18.
54. Ibid., p. 19.
55. Reform's proposals to cut federal funding to welfare have always been based on sweeping, but not convincing, generalizations. The 1997 *Fresh Start* platform justifies the complete elimination of federal funding on the fact that "social assistance is an area of provincial responsibility under the constitution." But so too is health care. The 1995 *Taxpayers' Budget* justified a proposed 34% cut to welfare assistance provided by CAP on the observation that "[i]nternational comparisons and many studies reveal that the level of our welfare benefits contribute both to dependence and increased unemployment." See: Reform Party of Canada, *Fresh Start*, p. 19; and Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 49.
56. Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 48.
57. Editorial Board, "Reforming medicare," *Toronto Star*, November 17, 1994, p. A30.
58. Reform Party of Canada. "Official Record of Assembly '96," Handout Ballot, resolution 12.
59. Preston Manning, cited in Derek Ferguson, "Manning prescribes user fees to 'cure' health-care system," *Toronto Star*, November 9, 1994, p. A14.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.

62. Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget, p. 48.
63. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 307.
64. Susan Delacourt, "Manning sets out health-care plan," Toronto Star April 6, 1995, p. A4.
65. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 307. Emphasis added.
66. Editorial Board, "Medicare reform, but not Reform's," The Globe and Mail, September 30, 1993, p. A26.
67. Reform Party of Canada, "Official Record of Assembly '96." Handout Ballot, resolution 12.2.
68. Jane Fulton and Ralph Sutherland, cited in Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development," p. 307.
69. While this overview of income security programmes for seniors is informed by a variety of sources, there are two sources which provide particularly brief and accessible introductions to these programmes. See: Canada, Human Resources Development, Overview: Income Security Programs (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994); and, Frank McGilly, An Introduction to Canada's Public Social Services: Understanding Income and Health Programs (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), chapter 5.
70. John Myles and Les Teichroew, "The Politics of Dualism: Pension Policy in Canada," in John Myles and Jill Quadagno, eds., States, Labour Markets, and the Future of Old-Age Policy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 91.
71. While McGilly claims the percentage is between 50% and 66%, "depending on how one counts," Myles and Teichroew put the figure at only 46%, and shrinking. See: McGilly, An Introduction to Canada's Public Social Services, p. 137; and, Myles and Teichroew, "The Politics of Dualism: Pension Policy in Canada," p. 91.
72. The \$76 billion in pension income in Canada in 1996 comes from the following sources: \$22 billion from the OAS/GIS pillar; \$22 billion from the CPP/QPP pillar; \$32 billion from the RPP/RRSP pillar. See: Canada, Department of Finance, The Seniors Benefit: Securing the Future (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services, 1996), p. 21.

73. See: Michael J. Prince, "From Meech Lake to Golden Pond: The Elderly, Pension Reform and Federalism in the 1990s," in Frances Abele, ed., How Ottawa Spends: The Politics of Fragmentation (1991-92) (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991).
74. In most provinces seniors relying only on OAS and GIS are eligible for provincially administered social welfare assistance.
75. Reform Party of Canada, The Blue Sheet (1993), p. 6.
76. See: Reform Party of Canada "Look at the national debt hole Canada is in," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1993); and, Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget.
77. The Reform Party has never specified a formula by which they would, in the party's words, "reduce and eliminate OAS benefits for households **above** the Canadian average income of \$54,000/year." During the campaign Manning talked as if OAS pensions would simply be eliminated for those with family incomes above the national average. More recently, the party explained its proposal as "a taxback on the current Old Age Security based on a formula which considers an income threshold, an age requirement, a definition of household and current tax policy." The claw back would almost certainly be at a rate greater than the current 15%, but it is unclear whether it would mean reducing OAS payments by 50 cents, or perhaps a dollar, for each dollar of household income above \$54,000. Without a detailed formula, it is not entirely clear at what level of family income OAS pension payments would be fully eliminated. See: Ibid.
78. Alan Freeman, "Reforms figures don't work," The Globe and Mail, September 30, 1993, p. A8
79. Jonathan Ferguson, "Manning's plan would change fabric of Canada," Toronto Star, Oct 7, 1993, p. A23.
80. See: Freeman, "Reforms figures don't work"; and, Stanley Hartt, "The trouble with Reform's reductions," The Globe and Mail, October 21, 1993, p. A35.
81. Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, Co. Limited, 1995), p. 129.
82. Ferguson, "Manning's plan would change fabric of Canada."
83. Freeman, "Reforms figures don't work."
84. Reform Party of Canada, The Taxpayers' Budget, pp. 44-45.

85. Prince, "From Meech Lake to Golden Pond: The Elderly, Pension Reform and Federalism in the 1990s," p. 319.
86. The SPA was added to the Old Age Security Programme in 1975 to address the financial difficulties of OAS recipients whose spouses are between 60 and 64 years of age (as well as widowed persons between 60 and 64 years of age). To ensure that such couples are not trying to survive on the OAS benefits of one person, the SPA essentially allows the younger spouse to be treated as if he or she was eligible for OAS.
87. Andrew Coyne. "Let's create a nation of savers," *The Globe and Mail*, August 17, 1994, p. A5. Although Coyne does not make this clear, one can presume that there would also be a sliding scale of benefits for those with incomes up to \$15,000. If that sliding scale was similar to that which exists under the current OAS/GIS regime, seniors would no longer receive a public pension when their income reached approximately \$30,000.
88. Canadians 60 years of age or over in 1996 will be given the option of opting out of the new benefit and maintaining their OAS/GIS benefits if that will be financially more beneficial. See: Department of Finance. *The Seniors Benefit: Securing the Future*, pp. 28-29.
89. Ibid., particularly pp. 66-74. In the year 2001 the Seniors benefit for a single senior will work as follows. The maximum benefit for a senior with no income will be \$11,420, or \$120 more than the maximum net benefit would be under OAS/GIS. For every dollar of income up to \$12,520, the Seniors Benefit will be reduced by 50 cents. Seniors earning between \$12,520 and \$25, 921 will receive a Seniors Benefit of \$5,160. Seniors with incomes above that threshold will have their Seniors Benefit reduced by 20 cents for every dollar of additional benefits. Thus, seniors with incomes above \$51,721 will not receive the Seniors Benefit.
90. CPP pension benefits ordinarily begin when a workers retires at age of 65. However, contributors who retire up to five years earlier (age 60) or later (age 70) can apply to have the amount of their CPP pension adjusted to account for the lengthening or limiting of the number of years they are likely to collect benefits.
91. Contributions are calculated on earnings between the year's basic exemption, or YBE, (currently approximately \$3,500) and the average Canadian wage, which in CPP terminology is referred to as the year's maximum pensionable earnings, or YMPE (currently approximately \$35,400). Thus, in 1996, employees earning above the YMPE would contribute approximately the following: $(\$35,400 - 3,500) \times .028 = \893.20 . And their employers would contribute the same.

92. Canada, Federal/Provincial/Territorial CPP Consultations Secretariat, An Information Paper for Consultations on the Canada Pension Plan (Ottawa: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments of Canada, 1996). pp. 20-1 & 31 of ANSI version on World Wide Web.
93. These figures are borrowed or calculated from data presented in the following: Ibid., pp. 22-24; and, Reform Party of Canada, Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan (Ottawa: Reform Party of Canada, 1995).
94. See, for example: James Daw, "Huge cost calculated to save pension plan," Toronto Star, November 17, 1995, p. D1.
95. Cited in: Federal/Provincial/Territorial CPP Consultations Secretariat, An Information Paper for Consultations on the Canada Pension Plan, pp. 36-40 of ANSI version on World Wide Web.
96. Contrast, for example, the views of Andrew Coyne and Monica Townson. See: Andrew Coyne, "The burden of our pensions." The Globe and Mail, August 15, 1994, p. A9; and, Monica Townson, "Expose Myths behind CPP Reform Proposals," Policy Options (September, 1995)
97. See: Shawn McCarthy, "Ottawa, Ontario each claim victory with changes to CPP." The Toronto Star, February 17, 1997. p. A10; and, Andrew Coyne, "Pension investment plan needs to be closely monitored." The Toronto Star, February 23, 1997, p. F3.
98. Reform Party of Canada, Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan.
99. Ibid.. p. 5.
100. Ibid., p. 4.
101. Townson, "Expose Myths behind CPP Reform Proposals," p. 14. Partially echoing Townson's observation, Bob Baldwin of the Canadian Labour Congress linked Reform's proposal to privatize the CPP to "payroll-tax phobia." Cited in: Susan Delacourt, "Reform proposing mandatory RRSPs," The Globe and Mail, September 5, 1995, p. A3.
102. Reform Party of Canada, Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan, p. 7.
103. Editorial Board, "Towards a renewed pension system," The Globe and Mail, March 11, 1995, p. D6. An earlier article, by Editorial Board member Andrew Coyne, argued "(t)he Canadian government might be able to learn a few things from Chile, which has

worked an economic miracle since deciding to privatize its pension plan in 1981." See: Coyne, "Let's create a nation of savers."

104. World Bank, *Averting the Old Age Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

105. See for example: Stuart M. Butler, *Privatizing Federal Spending: A Strategy to Eliminate the Deficit* (New York: Universe Books, 1984); and, Peter Ferrara, *Social Security: The inherent contradiction* (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980).

106. Butler, *Privatizing Federal Spending*, pp. 143-144 & 155-156.

107. Ibid., pp. 156-159.

108. Reform Party of Canada, *Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan*, p. 10.

109. Calculated from Appendix B in Ibid., pp. 31-34

110. Ibid., p. 13.

111. Ibid., p. 8.

112. Barrie McKenna, "CPP deal will haunt Grits, Manning says," *The Globe and Mail*, February 18, 1997, p. A4.

113. Andrew Coyne, "How the CPP can be fixed," *The Globe and Mail*, August 16, 1994, p. A6.

114. This is not a figure provided by Reform. In 1994, however, when the employee/employer combined contribution was 5.4% of pensionable earnings rather than 5.6%, total payroll deductions for CPP (paid by both employers and employees) were \$8.92 billion. The current schedule for contributions has the combined contributions increasing to 5.85% of pensionable earnings in 1997; thus, even if total pensionable earning remained stagnant from 1994 to 1997, employers would save \$4.83 billion from what they would have paid to the CPP in 1997.

115. Again, although Reform has not specified a 10% rate of contribution, this is the level which is most often mentioned in discussions of adopting Chilean-style reforms in Canada.

116. Reform Party of Canada, *Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan*, p. 2.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
118. *Ibid.*
119. Cited in, Editorial Board, "Save the CPP, reject Reform ideas," *Toronto Star*, February 8, 1996, p. A22.
120. Myles and Teichroew, "The Politics of Dualism: Pension Policy in Canada." pp. 93-94.
121. World Bank, *Averting the Old Age Crisis*, p. 95.
122. Reform Party of Canada, *Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan*, p. 7. Emphasis is added to stress the central importance Reform attributes to the privatization of Chile's public pay-as-you-go pension plan.
123. Shawn McCarthy, "Architect of CPP says plan a must for Canada," *Toronto Star*, April 15, 1996, p. A2.
124. Reform Party of Canada. *Responsible Social Reform: Reforming Canada Pension Plan*, p. 25. Emphasis added.
125. Reform Party Caucus. "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development." pp. 304-305.
126. Stuart Butler, *Privatizing Federal Spending*, p. 164.
127. Reform Party of Canada, *The Taxpayers' Budget*, p. 46.
128. Reform Party Caucus, "Reform Party Dissenting Opinion for the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development." p. 305.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation has been to explore and explicate both the *fact of* and the *significance of* the rise of the Reform Party of Canada. The starting point for my explanation of Reform's emergence was an examination of the relationship between the political economic context and the processes of party system change. I argued that the political economic context influences the strategic maneuverings of existing parties and the dynamics of the broader politics of representation. With this in mind, it is significant that Reform emerged during a period of dramatic social and economic restructuring in which there occurred significant transformations in the material conditions of life for working and middle-class Canadians. I argued that such periods of social and economic restructuring create opportunities for the emergence of new political parties, particularly parties which offer distinctive interpretations of the causes and solutions to the hardships associated with rapid social change and economic restructuring. The Reform Party's neo-liberal populism is just such an attempt to define a future beyond the current period of tumultuous social and economic restructuring.

Of course, the political economic context alone does not explain Reform's emergence. The rise of Reform can only be understood in the context of the strategic maneuverings of competing partisan actors, the institutional conditioning variables which shape the opportunity structures of the party system, and the various issues which animate

the politics-of-the-day. Moreover, reflecting on the importance of what I call the politics of representation, I argued that the rise of Reform and the popularization of Reform's neo-liberal populist discourse and policy agenda is directly linked to the earlier rise of a group of progressive social movements and public interest groups now known as the new social movements--including feminism, environmentalism, and the gay and lesbian rights movement. In developing this dimension of my explication of the rise of Reform, I explained that populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between *the people* and *the powerful interests*. But since the content of this antagonism is not objectively given, populism serves as an ideological instrument which Reform has used in a direct challenge to the new social movements. More concretely, Preston Manning and the Reform Party construct the populist antagonism as one that pits ordinary working and middle-class taxpayers against the bureaucracy and the minority "special interest groups" of the new social movements. Reform trumpets neo-liberal policy solutions as being in the interest of the ordinary Canadians which the party defines as *the people*, while simultaneously using populist discourse to delegitimize the interventions of public interest groups and social movement organizations which defend the Keynesian welfare state or advocate progressive alternative perspectives on and solutions to social and economic restructuring.

I stated on several occasions that the significance of the emergence of the Reform Party is rooted in the fact that the party represents a new and distinctive intervention in

the struggles defining the party system's discursive framework. Reform's significance, then, lies not in its impact on the distribution of power within the party system or seats within the House of Commons, but in the fact that the party's ideas have contributed to a broad cultural process which has transformed Canadian political discourse and public policy. I am cautious not to overstate the importance of Reform to the success of the discursive struggles which have advanced the neo-liberal project. A variety of social forces have engaged in furthering this new right-wing agenda. Nevertheless, I do demonstrate the extent to which Reform has participated in advancing the neo-liberal paradigm shift in state governing practices; and I make the case that this is the real significance of the rise of Reform.

Clearly, the present is a moment of turbulence, of political and economic restructuring. Old assumptions and understandings are being rejected in favour of a new, neo-liberal consensus. My argument has been that the Reform Party represents an important political and ideological intervention in this process of trying to define a future. Indeed, I contend Reform's populist discourse and neo-liberal policy agenda may telegraph the mode of social and economic regulation which will stabilize an emerging new accumulation regime. The contours of the neo-liberal state form are still taking shape; nevertheless, over the past decade Reform's populist political appeals to working and middle-class Canadians have enhanced popular support for the exclusionary practices of a neo-liberal mode of governance. By blazing the trails for neo-liberalism, Reform has made it easier for a variety of neo-liberal politicians--from Mike Harris to Paul Martin--

who have had the opportunity to directly reshape public policy and state governing practices.

The party system is always a potentially important mediating institution in the processes which establish consensus, construct identities, and formulate a common sense capable of making sense of the material conditions of peoples' lives. While party systems are always influenced by the changing political economy, the parties of this system also have a significant impact on the capacity of an accumulation regime to remain "in regulation." For most of the postwar era, a pattern of brokerage politics helped to stabilize Canada's Fordist regime of accumulation. But brokerage politics is an activity of parties most compatible with periods of consensus, when there is a shared common sense based on a hegemonic mode of social regulation. Over the past two decades of restructuring, the potential for an end to brokerage politics was opened. For a time--particularly between 1988 and 1993--it appeared that non-brokerage politics could come to dominate the Canadian party system. Today, however, I would argue that the success of Reform's populism is one factor which may be serving to re-establish brokerage politics around a new neo-liberal consensus. Through its particular construction of "the common sense of the common people," the Reform Party's populism is helping to entrench neo-liberalism within the Canadian party system.

What about the future? Reform's long-term electoral success is certainly not assured. Nor, for that matter, is the continuation of the current neo-liberal trajectory in public policy and state governing practices. With labour, feminist and other progressive

social movements struggling against the neo-liberal agenda, a serious economic downturn prior to any improvement in the rate of joblessness or real family incomes could illuminate the inadequacies of neo-liberal analysis and turn public opinion against the neo-liberal project. Within the partisan arena, however, the hegemony of neo-liberalism seems almost complete.

With regard to the Reform Party's electoral future, the party faces a number of obstacles. Reform's failure to break into Ontario in 1997, the continued strength of the Tories in Atlantic Canada, and worries about the capacity of a young, leader dominated party to survive beyond the reign of its first leader, are all matters which should concern Reform strategists. But such matters have not been my focus. If we conceptualize political parties as discursive moments in the processes of ideological debate which shape the political culture, these concerns regarding the Reform Party's future electoral success may be partially missing the point. In only a decade, Reform has had a significant impact on the Canadian political culture. The party has helped to reshape the discursive framework of the Canadian party system. Most importantly, Reform has transformed the ideological make-up of the right-wing of the partisan political spectrum. The party's neo-liberal policy agenda has, to a significant extent, been embraced by Ralph Klein, Mike Harris and Jean Charest. Little is heard in the late 1990s from traditional or red tories who once were significant to the discursive content of the Canadian party system's right-wing. The focus of Reform's ideological interventions has been delegitimizing left-liberal and Keynesian analysis and undermining the influence of various progressive social

movement organizations. But Reform's lasting legacy may be its contribution to the death of Canadian toryism.

Admittedly, as is the case with the New Right more broadly, Reform's ideological profile combines neo-liberalism and socially conservative traditionalism. However, the party's social conservatism is of secondary importance in that its influence is contained within a framework which is compatible with fundamentally neo-liberal policy objectives. Thus, whether or not the Reform Party is electorally successful well into the next century, the party has served to advance neo-liberalism, and this agenda is now being carried forward by a party system which is thoroughly defined by a neo-liberal discursive framework.

Appendix A

The Reformers: A Profile

Introduction

Political parties are never simple expressions of social, economic or class interests; moreover, neither a party's ideological orientation, nor its approach to controversial political questions can be *simply* and *directly* attributed to the character or distinctiveness of its social base. Nevertheless, it is useful to have an awareness of who has supported and become active within the Reform Party. The analysis in this dissertation--particularly chapters five and six--is well-served by this background information. This appendix is provided for those who are less familiar with the Reform Party's demographic profile.

The discussion of Reform's neo-liberal populism in chapter five emphasizes the way in which populism is a discursive representation of power and politics which constitutes political subjects in relation to a supposed antagonism between *the people* and *the powerful interests*. What is interesting to us here is the extent to which the political discourse of the Reform Party equates *the party* and *the people*. As the Reform Party's former director of Policy, Strategy and Communications, Tom Flanagan, explained during an interview, Preston Manning and his followers view the Reform Party as a cross-section of the whole population:

Preston's mythical party is in fact a representative cross-section of the whole people. In fact, it is not anything like that, but in his fantasy world of populism that is what it is. So he can sort of shuttle back and forth as it

pleases him between *party* and *people*, since he doesn't draw boundaries it can keep this populist myth afloat.¹

But, if it is only a "populist myth" which allows Manning to equate the party and the people, who are the Reformers?

The Reformers

It is now fairly easy to provide a descriptive profile of the Reform Party's social base, particularly if we focus our attention on the period of the party's emergence and electoral breakthrough in 1993. The data is readily available in a number of studies which have detailed who the Reformers are and what they believe.² But it is important to be cautious about how we make use of that data. Informal and journalistic accounts often portray the Reform Party's support base as aging white men who reside in the West and share upper-middle class business, professional or agrarian backgrounds. The suggestion is that Reform represents a narrow slice of Canada, and, as a corollary, that it most certainly does not represent youthful urban voters, the working class, or non-white Canadians (particularly those who are recent immigrants). The evidence to support such a portrayal is certainly available. At the 1992 Reform Party Assembly in Winnipeg 37.8 per cent of the delegates were over sixty years of age, and 71.1 per cent were men. A quarter of the delegates were retired, 26.6 per cent were professional employees or self-employed professionals, 19.9 per cent were business owners, and 8.2 per cent were farmers.³ However, such portrayals overstate the uniqueness of the Reform Party's social base and can lead to a number of potentially spurious conclusions.

Before dissecting the quantitative data on Reform's social base, it is important to raise the question of what one means by references to *the party*.⁴ At one level, it could be argued the party includes the full coalition of electors who would support Reform in the context of a general election. In addition to dues paying members, this definition would include a range of passive supporters, members of the electorate who self-identify as Reform supporters but choose not to become active in partisan politics. However, since the party's political discourse and policies are shaped by high-level activists and the party elite, perhaps *the party* should be equated with the actual dues paying membership, or possibly an even more exclusive subset of Reformers. Unfortunately, more exclusive definitions of the party can make cross-party comparisons difficult; not only have Canadian parties never shared a common approach to organizing their memberships,⁵ but studies of activists and elites attending party conventions or holding party offices have shown that the composition of the inner circles of Canadian parties does not reflect the electoral coalitions which underpin those same parties. In fact, with regard to social class, income and occupation, activists in *all* of Canada's major parties tend to have similarly privileged backgrounds, backgrounds which are unrepresentative of the electorate at large.⁶

Thus, it is important to examine the data on a number of levels. To avoid problematic depictions of Reform, we must differentiate between Reform supporters within the electorate and Reform members, particularly the activist and elites who attend party assemblies. Comparisons should be made between Reform activists and the general

population, but since all parties are somewhat exclusive, the profile of Reform members and activists should also be compared with other parties. In the end, a careful and balanced study of the Reform Party will show, as Trevor Harrison has observed, "that the profile of Reformers is somewhat distinctive, though certainly not peculiar."⁷

Gender:

Virtually every profile of Reform has noted the extent to which the party is male dominated. There is a persistent gender gap in both support for and involvement in the Reform Party. This phenomenon is most pronounced with party members and activists, but remains significant even among passive supporters. Insight Canada's survey data from the 1993 election showed that 53.1 per cent of Reform Party supporters were men, while only 46.9 per cent were women--a spread of over seven percentage points.⁸ Similarly, using an index of party support for which a score of 100 means members of a group (such as men) supported Reform at the same rate as the whole sample--in other words, a score of 50 means they are half as likely, and 200 means they are twice as likely--Harold Clarke found men's index of support for Reform in 1993 was 122, while for women the index of support was only 78.⁹

With regard to party activists in other Canadian political parties, it is usual that more men than women will become activists.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the extent to which this is the case in the Reform Party is striking.¹¹ Early surveys of the party membership found that roughly 70 per cent of Reform members were men (72% in 1989 and 67% in 1991), and only 30 per cent were women (28% in 1989 and 33% in 1991). As comparisons of

the percentage of male and female activists attending various party conventions show, the gender gap within the Reform Party is significantly greater than within the other major parties.¹²

Table A.1: Gender representation at party conventions

	Liberal 1993	NDP 1989	PC 1989	Reform 1991
Men	55%	63.4%	63%	71.1%
Women	45%	36.6%	37%	28.9%

Source: Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Reform Party Activists."

Admittedly, the rule structures for delegate selection in Canada's other parties diminish the extent of any representational bias in favour of men. However, since Reform is aware of such practices and has *consciously* chosen not to put such rules in place, these institutional factors which alter gender representation at party conventions do not delegitimize the cross-party comparison.

Age:

As with gender, the age profile of Reform is somewhat distinctive. Most often commented on is the large percentage of Reformers who are in later middle age or beyond. In 1991, the average age of Reform Party members was 56.3 years; among British Columbian members it was even higher, 59.3 years.¹³ Surveys of members and activists have consistently found over a third of Reformers are senior citizens. In fact, a survey of party members in 1989 found nearly 48 per cent of Reformers were 60 years of

age or older.¹⁴ Equally uncharacteristic of the general Canadian population is the lack of youthful Reformers. In 1991 less than 7 per cent of the party's membership was under 35 years of age.¹⁵ A year later, at the Reform assembly in Winnipeg, only 4.8 per cent of the delegates were under thirty. The Liberals and Conservatives, with their rules guaranteeing representation to youth associations and campus clubs, consistently ensure that over a third of the activists participating in conventions are under thirty.¹⁶ Even the 1989 NDP convention, without aggressive rules protecting youth representation, had a delegation of activists under thirty that was almost three times larger than Reform's.

In what Archer and Ellis call the "core age group" for activists in most political parties--from 30 to 49 years of age--Reform counted only 34.3 per cent of its 1992 delegates, compared to 55 per cent for the NDP.¹⁷ With strikingly few activists under 30, and fewer than usual aged 30 to 49, Reform has become a party dominated by activists who are later middle aged and older--fully 60.8 per cent of delegates to the 1992 assembly were at least 50 years of age, and 37.8 per cent were aged 60 or beyond.

Early survey research exploring Reform's support within the electorate revealed an age profile which was skewed in a similar, but somewhat less dramatic manner. In April, 1991, Gallup Canada reported Reform Party support to be at 16 per cent nationally. At the time, these results were considered a major breakthrough. Reform was now in third place, behind the Liberals and NDP, but slightly ahead of the governing Tories. Among voters 65 years of age and over, Reform was doing even better: they were comfortably in second place with the support of 27 per cent of Canadian seniors. But among voters under 30

years of age, Reform stood fifth, with only 6 per cent support.¹⁸ In Alberta, a 1991 study found similarly skewed results. In that province, the Reform Party was, at the time, five to ten percentage points ahead of the three major parties among decided voters. However, this lead was not consistent across all age categories. With voters under 30 years of age, Reform actually trailed the three more traditional parties. With those aged 60 and over, Reform's lead was three times stronger than for the sample as a whole, ranging from approximately 18 to 30 percentage points depending on the party to which Reform is compared.¹⁹

Since early 1992, Gallup polls have reported Reform's support as being much more consistent across various age groups. In November, 1993, shortly after the general election, there was no age cohort which deviated more than 2 percentage points from the party's 19 per cent standing in popular support.²⁰ According to Tom Flanagan, the only group to over support Reform in the 1993 election was those aged 46 to 55, an observation he explained by reference to the fact that this is the period of most people's lifetime earnings peak. Flanagan claims that this "makes sense in light of the Reform Party's message of economic independence and reduced reliance on government."²¹ In the final analysis, it would appear that while Reform continues to be a party dominated by activists who are middle aged and older, the age profile of the party's electoral coalition has gradually become more consistent with the age profile of the population as a whole.

Language & religion:

Across a range of variables, Reformers are distinctive. However, the demographic profile

of the party does bear similarities to the traditional profile of the Progressive Conservatives and other right-wing parties which have formed outside of Quebec. For example, Reform activists are overwhelmingly English speaking (99.7% of 1992 assembly delegates), and there was a moderate negative correlation (-.26 overall, and -.4 in Ontario) between the percentage of French speaking homes and the percentage of Reform votes in constituencies during the 1993 election.²² In Alberta in 1991, Protestants were almost twice as likely to support Reform (21.1%) as Catholics (11.6%).²³

Previous partisan affiliation:

These similarities between Reformers and the traditional Tory social base are certainly not surprising. In the early 1990s, almost three quarters (73%) of Reform Party members had previously supported the Progressive Conservatives,²⁴ and over three quarters (79.3%) of Reform activists had voted for and supported the Tories in the past.²⁵ It is true that Reform has mobilized a considerable number of Canadians who were not previously active in partisan politics. In fact, party organizers proudly proclaim that only 38.3 per cent of delegates to the 1992 assembly were active in another political party prior to joining Reform; but over two thirds (67.9%) of those activists were formerly activists within the Conservative party (12% Liberal, 11.4% Socred, and 4.1% NDP).²⁶

Within the electorate a similar pattern of shift in partisanship from Tory to Reform has been noted. According to an Insight Canada survey, the Conservatives held only 24.4 per cent of their 1988 vote in the 1993 election. Fully 26.1 per cent of those in the sample who voted Tory in 1988, voted Reform in 1993.²⁷ As a result, there was a

strong positive correlation (.60) between the percentage of Tory vote in constituencies in 1988 and the percentage of Reform vote in 1993.²⁸

Table A.2: Shifts in partisanship toward Reform, 1988 to 1993

Party of 1988 vote	Percentage of 1988 support which shifted to Reform in 1993		
	All of Canada	Omitting Quebec	West only
P.C.	26.1%	38%	55%
Liberal	8.6%	15%	28%
NDP	16.4%	11%	9%

Source: Tossutti, "From communitarian Protest Towards Institutionalization"; and, Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*.

Certainly the Reform Party was not the only party to benefit from the Conservative decline in 1993; of Tories who abandoned their party in 1993, over a third (34.5%) voted Reform, but 38.3 per cent voted Liberal and 20.1 per cent voted B.Q.²⁹ Importantly however, as Table A.2 demonstrates, Reform gains from Tory switchers outside of Quebec--particularly in the West--were even greater. In the West, 55% of 1988 Tory voters switched to Reform in the 1993 election.³⁰

Region & community size:

It is clear from the evidence presented above that Reformers are disproportionately male, older (at least this is the case with party activists), Protestant and English speaking. For the most part, they are also former supporters of--even activists within--the Progressive Conservative party. What about the perception that Reform is a rural dominated and

primarily Western party which remains largely unattractive to Eastern and urban voters?

With regard to the party's regional base, it is certainly true that Reform's roots and greatest strengths are in the West. Until 1991 the Reform Party was even constitutionally bound to organize only in the four Western provinces. Since then however, Reform has developed a significant base of support in Ontario; and the constituency-based system for selecting voting delegates to party assemblies has ensured that Reformers from the more densely populated province of Ontario are a force with notable influence on the evolving character of the party.³¹ In fact, as early as 1992, the Ontario delegation at the Reform Party's Assembly was almost as large as Alberta's (29.2% of the delegates compared to 30.7%), and considerably larger than British Columbia's (21.9% of the delegates).³²

In the 1993 general election, Reform was most successful in Alberta and British Columbia: the party won an absolute majority of the popular vote (52%) in Alberta, and 36.1 per cent in British Columbia. Forty-six of the party's fifty-two M.P.s were elected in these two most westerly of the provinces. It is true, and it is often stated, that the Reform Party elected only one M.P. east of Manitoba. Nevertheless, 20.1 per cent of voters in Ontario supported Reform, and the party's candidates finished second in fifty-six of the province's ninety-nine constituencies. In fact, fully 38 per cent of the 2.5 million votes Reform received in the 1993 general election were cast in Ontario; in contrast, B.C. and Alberta each provided just under 25 per cent of Reform's votes in 1993. Thus, while regional fairness remains central to Reform's policy agenda, and the party has not been able to shake much of its Western character (even when long-term strategic

considerations recommend doing so), the party no longer bases its strategic political appeal narrowly on regionalism or Western alienation.

If it is a mistake to overstate the Western character of Reform's social base, it is still correct to state that "the party is less urban than the population at large."³³ In 1993 there was a strong correlation between the percentage of Reform Party votes in constituencies and the percentage of rural and suburban polls (.7 in B.C., .65 in Alberta, and .4 in Ontario).³⁴ Similarly, using his index of party support (for which a score of 100 means members of a community supported Reform at the same rate as the whole sample, a score of 50 means they are half as likely, and 200 means they are twice as likely) Harold Clarke found that communities with populations ranging from 1,000 to 30,000 had an index of support for Reform of approximately 135. Communities of over half a million had an index of support for Reform of only 89.³⁵ While Reform's social base is not strictly agrarian, the party's "non-urban character stands out clearly."³⁶ In 1993 the party did sweep all six seats in the city of Calgary; but in Edmonton the Liberals took four seats to the Reform Party's two. The Liberals also dominated the most urbanized constituencies in Vancouver, and no Reformers won in Victoria, Saskatoon, Regina or Winnipeg.

Social economic status:

The data on the social economic status and class origins of Reform supporters and activists is more of a challenge to interpret. In particular, navigating the data on occupation and class position is made difficult by differences between researchers in their definitions of various occupational groups and classes. But this is not the case with the

data on educational attainment and income. With regard to these two indicators of social economic status, researches generally agree that Reform members and activists are highly educated and earn above average salaries. Of course, this is not surprising; for some time it has been known that activists in all major political parties are more highly educated and earn higher incomes than the population as a whole.³⁷ Thus, we should not be surprised to learn that the mean income of Reform members in the early 1990s was approximately \$44,000.³⁸ Nor should we be surprised that 52 per cent of delegates to Reform's 1992 national assembly earned over \$60,000 annually, or that 35 per cent earned over \$80,000. These figures are well above the national average; but, as Archer and Ellis point out, this socio-economic profile is "similar to activists in other parties."³⁹

The distribution of income levels among Reform's electoral coalition, on the other hand, is not particularly uncharacteristic of the population at large. The same can also be said about the educational attainment of Reform voters: Reform's supporters within the electorate do not deviate greatly from the norm with regard to education and income.⁴⁰ It is true that Reformers tend to be under represented among voters earning below \$40,000 annually, but the statistical trends are less than absolutely clear--in 1993, for example, Reform was over represented among voters earning between \$40,000 and \$60,000, as well as over \$80,000, but they were under represented among voters earning between \$60,000 and \$80,000.⁴¹

Interestingly, with regard to educational attainment, while Reform activists are, when compared to Canadians generally, more likely to have completed a post-secondary degree,

the data is *not* as skewed for Reform as it is for the other major parties. The comparison with the NDP in Table A.3 is quite telling.

Table: A.3 **Educational Attainment of Party Activists**

	Educational Attainment		
	Canadians 1991	NDP Activists 1989	Reform Activists 1993
Secondary or less	57%	20%	27%
Some postsecondary	31%	27%	29%
postsecondary degree	12%	53%	44%

Source: *Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists"; and Statistics Canada, The Daily (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, May 11, 1993).*

In his study of voters who supported the Reform Party in the 1993 election, Harold Clarke found two occupations substantially over represented: sales and farming had indexes of support for Reform of 150 and 156, respectively.⁴² While it is not surprising that voters involved in such "highly individualistic occupations" would support Reform,⁴³ it is somewhat surprising that the occupational group with the third highest index of support for Reform--an index of support of 116--was unskilled labour. It is difficult to know exactly how to interpret this data, particularly since it partially conflicts with the findings which emerged from Harrison and Krahn's attempt to determine the class basis of Reform support. Their study of the Alberta electorate in 1991 found that "workers" were less likely to support Reform than voters from all other class positions--while 18.4 per cent of voters surveyed supported Reform, only 13.9 per cent of workers

(not including farmers and semi-autonomous workers) supported the party.⁴⁴ Harrison and Krahn did not measure Reform's support among those working in sales; this occupational category was folded into a class position which supported Reform only slightly (approximately 2%) more than the provincial average.

Table: A.4 **Occupational Profile of the Reform Party**

Occupation	Members 1991	Occupation	Activists 1992
Business	18.8%	Business Owner	19.9%
White-collar Worker	16.9%	Professional Employee	13.5%
Agriculture	14.8%	Self-empl. Professional	13.1%
Labour or Trade	13.4%	Farmer	8.2%
Professional	9.7%	White-collar Worker	5.5%
Management	8%	Homemaker	6.5%
Clerical	6.1%	Blue-collar Worker	3.4%
Public Service	5.9%	Student	2.8%
Health Care	3.7%	Unemployed	1.1%
Education	3%	Other	.7%
Retired	(35.1%)*	Retired	25.4%

Source: Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists"; and, Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada."

* Note: The 35.1% of Reformer *members* who are retired were excluded from the calculations for the other occupational categories. Thus, the "Members, 1991" column totals 135.4% and the "Activists, 1992" column totals 100.1%.

However, like Clarke, they did find that farmers supported Reform far more strongly than the general population: over 40 per cent of Alberta farmers expressed support for the Reform Party at a time when only 18.4 per cent of Albertans were willing to do so.⁴⁵

While Harrison and Krahn found that there were other class positions which over-supported the Reform Party--such as owners at 27.2 per cent--their analysis of the class base of Reform's support concluded "the most pronounced class support for Reform came from farmers."⁴⁶

But these observations can distort our perceptions of the Reform Party. Farmers, particularly in the West, may have demonstrated a greater willingness to support Reform. but this does not mean the party is actually dominated by individuals employed in agriculture. The number of Canadians working in the farming sector is too small for this to be the case. As Table A.4 indicates, depending on how the occupational categories are defined, it is actually business owners, white collar employees and professionals who dominate the Reform Party's membership and the ranks of party activists. Students of the New Right will not be surprised by this; it has long been argued that the private sector elements of the middle class provide fertile ground for the economic liberal and socially conservative messages of the New Right. But once again we must be cautious about drawing conclusions; as Harrison points out, the differences between the occupational profile of Reform and the other major parties are "not significant."⁴⁷ All of Canada's major political parties tend to be dominated by middle class professionals and business people.

Conclusion

In the end, it is clear that while the Reform Party's social base is somewhat distinctive--members and activists are older, less urban and more likely male than their counterparts

in other parties--the party's demographic profile is certainly not peculiar. Moreover, it is important to be cautious about reading too much into the distinctiveness of Reform's demographic profile. Neither the party's basic ideological orientation, nor its approach to controversial political questions such as the legitimacy of various conceptions of citizenship rights or the proper role of the state in the economy, can be *simply* and *directly* attributed to this distinctiveness. There is no doubt, as is argued in chapters five and six, that the social characteristics which many Reformers share are privileged by the conceptions of citizenship and political community which the Reform Party advocates; and it is true that this is, at least in part, due to the fact that individuals often recognize and respond to the material realities of their own daily lives. Nevertheless, as was stressed in chapter five, we must be vigilant about remembering that ideological and partisan mobilizations are never a simple expression of social, economic or class interests. The material reality of Reform's demographic profile has obvious consequences, but party supporters require a discursive framework within which to construct their political identities and define their political interests. Importantly, I argued in this dissertation that the party's ideological and political appeals help to provide this discursive framework.

The purpose of this appendix has been to examine the question of *who* supported and became involved in the Reform Party during the period leading up to the party's electoral breakthrough in 1993. From the evidence provided, it would seem that informal and journalistic accounts which portray the Reform Party's support base as aging white men who reside in the West and share upper-middle class business, professional or

agrarian backgrounds are not off the mark. It is true, at a purely descriptive level, that Reform represents a fairly narrow slice of Canada. But, again, the full significance of the party's social base will only be revealed through a critical examination of how the party's ideology and political appeals discursively construct that social base. This is a task which is undertaken, in two quite different ways, in chapters five and six of this dissertation.

Endnotes

1. Author's interview, Tom Flanagan, Calgary, Alberta, November, 1994.
2. See, for example: Keith Archer and Faron Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXVII:2 (June, 1994); Faron Ellis, "Constituency Representation Issues in the Reform Party of Canada." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, Alberta, June, 1994; Thomas Flanagan and Faron Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Charlottetown, PEI, June, 1992; Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn. "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol 32, No. 2 (May, 1995).
3. Archer and Ellis. "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada."
4. This point has been made by numerous observers. For example, see: Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and, A. Brian Tanguay, "Canadian Party Ideologies in the Electronic Age." in Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton, *Canadian Politics: an introduction to the discipline* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1990), p. 130.
5. The NDP, for example, has an integrated membership system in which individuals join the provincial party and automatically become members of both the federal party and their local constituency association. The Tories, on the other hand, leave the coordination and sale of party memberships almost entirely in the hands of local constituency associations; thus, the Tories are without an integrated national membership list. For more details on the organizational structure of the various party memberships see Joseph Wearing, *Strained Relations: Canadian Parties and Voters* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), chap. 6.
6. Conrad Winn and John McMenemy, *Political Parties in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), chap. 9.
7. Trevor Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 204.
8. See: Livianna S. Tossutti, "From Communitarian Protest Toward Institutionalization: The Evolution of the Canadian Reform Party and the Italian Lega Nord," Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, Quebec, June, 1995.

9. See: Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1995), p. 158.
10. Sylvia B. Bashevkin, "Political Parties and the Representation of Women," in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989).
11. For a less pessimistic perspective on the under representation of women in the Reform Party see: Suzanne Zwarun, "Women and the Reform Party," Chatelaine (March, 1992), pp. 46-48 and 132-133.
12. Flanagan and Ellis downplay this difference. They claim the gender gap found within Reform is "no greater" than within the NDP and only "slightly larger" than within the Tories. But the convention data they use is not the most up-to-date. Comparing the 1983 NDP convention with the 1989 Reform assembly, Flanagan and Ellis note that 69 per cent of NDP delegates and 68 per cent of Reform delegates were men. They fail to note that the NDP's 1989 convention was only 63.4 per cent male. Moreover, writing in 1991, they could not have known that while the NDP trend was toward a reduction in male representational bias, the proportion of men at Reform assemblies would increase by 3.1 per cent to 71.1 per cent in 1992. Averaging the two conventions for each party, the difference between the percentage of male and female delegates is 32.4 per cent for the NDP and 39.1 per cent for Reform. See: Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," pp. 11 & 16.
13. Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," p. 16.
14. Ian Pearson, "Thou Shalt Not Ignore The West," Saturday Night (December, 1990), p. 43.
15. Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," p. 14.
16. At recent leadership conventions the Liberals and Conservatives have had youth delegations (under 30 years of age) comprising 36% and 40% of the total number of delegates. See: Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists." pp. 286-288.
17. Ibid.
18. Gallup Canada Inc., The Gallup Report, April 25, 1991, p. 2
19. Calculated from data presented in: Harrison and Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," p. 137.
20. Gallup Canada Inc., The Gallup Report, November 11, 1993, p. 2

21. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 160.
22. See: Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists," p. 286; and, Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 157.
23. Harrison and Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," pp. 134-135.
24. Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, p. 202.
25. Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists," p. 290.
26. Ibid.
27. Cited in: Tossutti, "From Communitarian Protest Towards Institutionalization," p. 16.
28. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 156.
29. Cited in: Tossutti, "From Communitarian Protest Towards Institutionalization," p. 16.
30. Parenthetically, to put the many shifts in partisanship into some perspective and avoid the perception that momentum was primarily toward Reform, it is worth noting that, according the Insight Canada, the Liberal victory of 1993 was a coalition of 75.9% of 1988 Liberals, 29.3% of 1988 PCs, 32.8% of 1988 NDPers, and 45.2% of 1988 non-voters who voted in 1993.
31. On the rules regarding the selection of voting delegates to party assemblies, see: Reform Party of Canada, "Constitution of the Reform Party of Canada," (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1992), Sec. 7. (d) (i).
32. Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists," pp. 284-285.
33. Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," p. 5.
34. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p 157.
35. Ibid., p. 159.
36. Ibid., p. 158.
37. Winn and McMenemy, *Political Parties in Canada*, chap. 9.

38. See: Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, p. 202; and, Flanagan and Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," p. 6.
39. Archer and Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Party Activists," p. 288.
40. On the educational attainment of Reform's electoral coalition, see: Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 158; and, Harrison and Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," p. 137.
41. Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave*, p. 159.
42. Ibid. As was discussed above a score of 100 means members of an occupational group supported Reform at the same rate as the whole sample, a score of 50 means they are half as likely, and 200 means they are twice as likely.
43. Ibid., p. 160.
44. Harrison and Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," p. 135.
45. It is worth noting that the numbers among *decided voters* were considerably higher: 30 per cent of decided voters, and 62 per cent of decided farmers, supported Reform in Alberta in 1991.
46. Harrison and Krahn, "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta," p. 134.
47. Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity*, p. 203.

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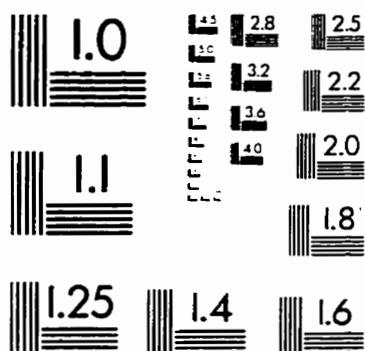
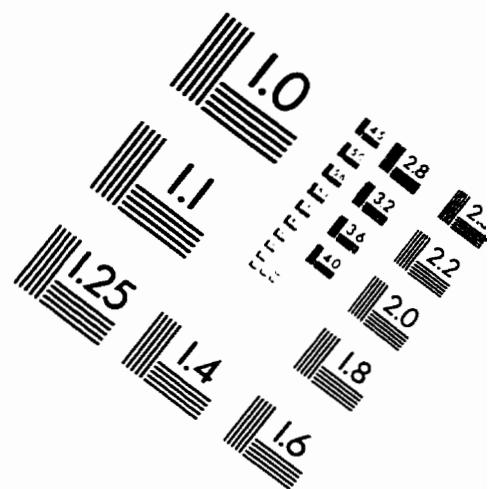
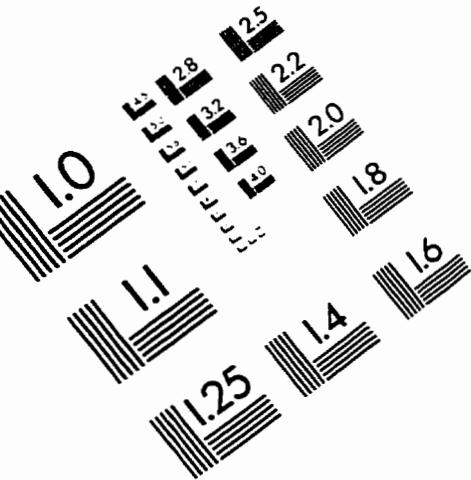
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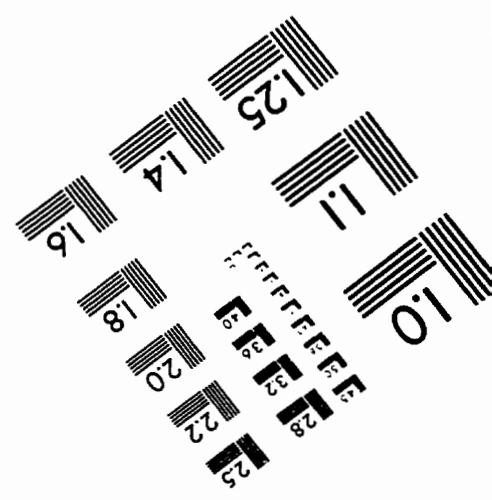
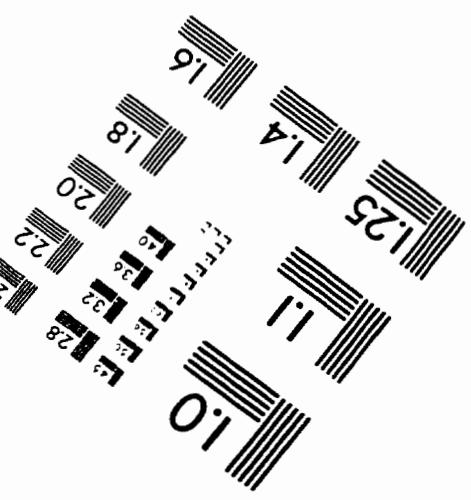
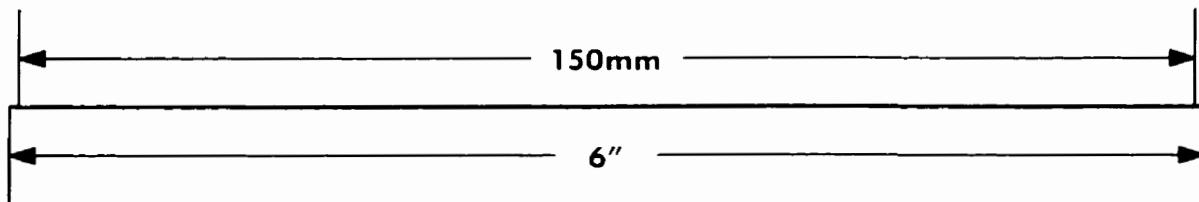
Zwarun, Suzanne. "Women and the Reform Party." Chatelaine. (March, 1992).

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)



150mm

6"



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