

**PARTIES AND FEDERALISM
IN
AUSTRALIA AND CANADA**

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editor**

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INTRODUCTION

The interaction between federalism and the party system generates a wide range of questions for political analysis. Many of these issues stem from the effect that a federal structure of government has in providing multiple forums for partisan competition for political office. This can produce both a variety of institutional contexts and electoral rules for party activities, and the possibility of differing patterns of party competition in the various constituent elements of the federation. This, in turn, raises questions about the effect that a federalized party system has on public policy, and about national integration in a system that, in its nature, sets up governmental structures that have differing regional interests and rival views of the national interest.

Although there may be differences of opinion in assessing and explaining the effects that federalism has on the party system, there is little dispute that these effects exist and are important. The other side of the coin — the effects of the party system on federalism — raises issues which are both more elusive and more contentious.

Part of the reason for this is that federalism can be equated with a set of institutional arrangements which set the formal rules for partisan competition. Party, on the other hand, refers to a diverse range of phenomena which includes patterns of voting behaviour, the operation of party in influencing the operation of legislatures and governments, and party organizations as actors in the selection of key officials, the framing of public policies, and the mobilization of support to gain or maintain office.

Each of these can be seen to shape the operation of the federal system just as party influences the workings of most governmental institutions in liberal democracies. But an answer to the question of how party affects the distinctly federal aspects of a political system must give some indication of what aspects of party are the relevant ones, and specify the means by which party influence on the explicitly federal features of governmental activity can be assessed. Since there is likely to be a reciprocal relationship between a federal structure and the party system that operates within it, there is also the problem of dealing with a complex set of interactions, and deciding whether any particular characteristic can be attributed to a specific cause.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the question of how political parties affect the federal system is an important one. Parties, in spite of recent dissatisfactions with their operation and challenges to their role, retain a critically important place in the operation of liberal democracies. They clearly have a part in explaining the dynamics of a federal system.

Australia and Canada

It was a concern with these issues that led to a study, sponsored by a Canada Australia Bicentennial Institutional Research Award, of the role of parties in the federal systems of Australia and Canada. The attractions of comparing the federal systems of these two countries are that, while the constitutional histories and political development of the two systems have marked similarities, the operation of their federal systems have tended to diverge over the last fifty years. Even though both countries have experienced similar pressures for social and economic change since 1945, and both share the institutions of British derived parliamentary government, the Canadian federal system has seen provincial governments maintain or increase their autonomy in many areas of public policy, while Australian state governments have fought a losing battle against the continuing pressure for central government involvement in areas of state government activity. The significance of these differences may be difficult to assess, but the gradient of change in the federal aspects of public policy has clearly been in opposite directions in the two federations for much of the last half a century.

The description, analysis and explanation of these differences between the two federations is an established topic for research in the fields of intergovernmental relations, public policy, public finance, and constitutional law, but the role of party in the development of the federal system, particularly in a comparative context, has not been well studied. It was to encourage closer investigation of this topic that the colloquium 'Parties and Federalism in Australia and Canada' was arranged at University House by the Federalism Research Centre at the Australian National University in July 1992. A number of researchers studying party politics in Australia and Canada were invited to participate, and the papers presented at the colloquium form the basis of this edited collection.

The Studies in this Collection

Given the variety of perspectives and research interests of the participants of the colloquium, the brief given to paper givers was the broad one of relating aspects of their current research to the issue of the operation of the federal system in Australia and Canada. While direct comparison was welcomed, the limited nature of the secondary literature on the interaction between parties and the federal system in the two countries meant that studies focusing on one federation alone were welcome if they threw light on the role that party played in the dynamics of that federal system. The complexity of the interaction between the party system and federalism in any one political context creates a wide range of issues to be investigated, and the more such research is undertaken, the greater the opportunity for future comparative study.

In the event, three of the ten papers in this collection are directly comparative and the remaining seven deal with aspects of party and federalism in a single federation — four on Canada and three on Australia — but all except one of the single country studies can be grouped into three pairs dealing with similar themes in the two countries.

Each of the first two chapters in this collection applies a broad organizing theme to the question of the role of party in the operation of a federal system. Both start with reference to the work of the late William Riker whose vigorous assertions about the central role of the party system in maintaining federalism make him a natural point of departure for the examination of this issue. The first chapter, by Herman Bakvis, moves from the question of the extent to which Riker's analysis can aid in understanding the role of party in such parliamentary federations as Australia and Canada, to the notion of party and intrastate federalism in Canada. Bakvis argues that intrastate federalism — the extent to which regional interests are articulated directly within the national government rather than through provincial governments — explains the pressures for both cooperation and competition that characterize the relations between Ottawa and the provinces in the Canadian federal system. The operation of the party system, Bakvis contends, shapes both the operation of intrastate federalism and the nature of the governmental process in Canada in ways which do not always square with the conventional picture of public policy making.

In chapter 2, Campbell Sharman also takes Riker's work as his point of departure and attempts to set up a way of testing the utility of Riker's notion of partisan disharmony between the various governmental elements of the federal system by applying it to the Australian federation. The results are mixed in that Riker's broad proposition about party as the proximate cause of variation in the degree of centralization in a federation is not confirmed, but in showing this, several less ambitious propositions are substantiated, and a great many interesting questions are raised about the importance of party in bilateral relations between the states and the commonwealth, and the role of party in forming coalitions which affect intergovernmental relations.

The second pair of chapters, chapters 3 and 4, deal with parties of the left and federalism. Although these chapters do not set out to be comparative, they demonstrate a striking contrast between the politics of the two federations and the dramatic differences in the experience of left leaning social democratic parties. In chapter 3, Terry Morley charts the evolution of the present New Democratic Party in Canada from a party with a highly centralist ideology in the 1930s — a position consistent with its majoritarian approach to government — to a party with a commitment to protecting the influence of provincial governments in the 1990s. Morley explains much of this transition in terms of the relative

lack of success of the NDP at the national level when compared with its success in winning government in a number of provinces, but the central theme of his argument is the importance of shifts in the locus of power within the NDP as a complex federal organization.

Andrew Parkin and Vern Marshall show, in chapter 4, how the Australian Labor Party has responded to the federal system, using many of the same analytical assumptions employed by Morley in the previous chapter. As the largest party in most electoral contests at both state and commonwealth levels for most of the period since 1910, the ALP has a highly ambivalent attitude to federalism: its ideological predispositions and recent electoral successes in Canberra may push it towards centralism, but other considerations make it highly sensitive to the concerns of state branches of the party. Parkin and Marshall argue that in terms of party structure, party support and the operation of government, the ALP accommodates pressures working both to weaken and to strengthen the dispersal of power that underpins the operation of the federal system. In particular, these authors caution against simple analyses of the ALP which see the party as a single entity frustrated or reconciled with federalism, since the truth of the matter is that there is always a running compromise between the various centrifugal and centripetal elements that together comprise the Party.

While both deal with federalism and parties of the right, the following two chapters deal with widely differing phenomena. In chapter 5, Thérèse Arseneau examines the rise of the Reform Party as a new party of the right which makes use of the federal system in two respects. In the first place much of the drive for the establishment of the party came from Alberta, a province with a history of producing new parties on the right of politics. Secondly, the Reform Party, while attacking the then Progressive Conservative government in Ottawa, used regional dissatisfactions to establish a party that was committed to radical change of the political agenda at the national level, eschewing provincial politics. In this sense, the Reform Party described by Arseneau is a strange hybrid of regional and national components, drawing support from one element of the federal system but operating in another.

Clem Lloyd has interpreted his brief broadly, and summarizes the role that federalism has played in the parties of the right in Australia since the early days of federation: federalism as a philosophy of government, as an organizing principle, and as a component of party policy. In chapter 6 he sketches the fluctuations in the importance of the federal principle to the parties of the right, particularly to the Liberal Party and its precursors, and relates them to the ebb and flow of party success. His conclusion is that the 1993 federal election marks a low point in the importance accorded to the federalism in the policy commitments of the Liberal

Party. Whether this is a cause or an effect of its lack of partisan success is a question that is left open.

Chapter 7 by Ken Carty has no Australian pair. Perhaps this is appropriate since the variety in the organizational structure of Canadian parties at the grass roots level appears to be very much greater than in the Australian case. Carty shows how the distinction between mass and cadre parties can be used to examine the differing organizational styles of parties in Canada and, in particular, the fluctuations in partisan activity over time between parties and between provinces. When these differences are compounded by wide variations in the extent to which parties of the same name cooperate in provincial and national spheres, the great complexity of partisan activity in Canada is brought home to the reader. Carty's chapter also demonstrates that Australians have much to learn from the research commitment and sophistication that Canadians have applied to the study of their political parties.

The final three chapters all use Australia and Canada as forums for comparative study. In chapter 8, Ian Ward looks at the effect that new forms of political communication are having on the organization of political parties. In terms of the federal aspect of party organization, he argues that it is far from clear that the availability of sophisticated polling techniques and the use of television and direct mailing, for example, are bound to have a centralizing effect on the party system as predicted by some media theorists. The effects are sensitive to the political context and have had significantly different consequences for party organization in the two federations.

The final two chapters both analyze the party systems of the component elements of the two federations. David Stewart is concerned with the ways in which comparisons can be made between the party systems of the Australian states and the Canadian provinces using a battery of indicators. While chapter 9 confirms the conventional wisdom that there is greater regional variation in the Canadian federation, it indicates that this is not always as straightforward as might first appear. Stewart's chapter presents a great deal of useful data and shows how apparently straightforward comparative techniques need care and sensitivity in their application, and benefit from being put in their political context.

In chapter 10, Jeremy Moon and Michael Lusztig look at the party systems of the Australian states and Canadian provinces from a perspective that is often ignored: the frequency, duration and configuration of parties in office. These authors, using a variety of indicators to chart the number of parties in government as well as the sequence of change of regime, show that there are marked variations in the patterns of incumbency within and between the two federations. The chapter raises important questions about the factors than affect

patterns of incumbency, and the dynamics of partisan change in parliamentary systems.

Parties and Federalism

These ten essays demonstrate the range of issues generated by the intersection of a concern with party and an interest in federalism. As is clear from the collection, the intersection is far from complete, with much of the value of the essays deriving from the light they throw on aspects of partisanship, party organization, and party ideology that are at first glance independent of the federal structure of Australia and Canada. But the need to keep the federal aspect of party operation in mind has shaped all the essays in this collection, and demonstrated that combining a concern with these two central elements of our political system can generate benefits for all concerned. Those whose prime focus is the analysis of party can find a sharper appreciation of the extent to which the dynamics of federalism shape the evolution and operation of parties and partisanship, and those concerned with the federal aspects of the governmental process are reminded of the subtle, and not so subtle, effects of party on the federal system in the two countries.

The purpose of the original colloquium was to bring together people with a range of backgrounds in the hope that some synergistic effect would be created for an understanding of both parties and federalism. While this may have been the case for the participants at the colloquium, it is certainly true of this collection of essays. What is more, this applies as much to the interaction between the experience of Australia and Canada as it does to parties and federalism. The chapters that follow are a lively indication of the range of concerns, both analytical and conceptual, that are generated by examining the interaction of these two perennially controversial topics.

Chapter 1

POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY GOVERNMENT AND INTRASTATE FEDERALISM IN CANADA

Herman Bakvis

One of the more prominent themes in the literature on parties and federalism concerns the role of party systems either in exacerbating conflict between the different levels of government or in providing a measure of integration. And the most common model used to interpret this relationship is that developed by William Riker (1964). According to Riker, the more symmetrical the party system at the federal and provincial or state levels, that is, parties of the same partisan stripe in power, the more integrated the federation. This model, as refined by Donald Smiley (1980), has been used in analyzing Canadian federalism, and Campbell Sharman has applied the symmetry-asymmetry model to Australia (Sharman 1991; and see chapter 2). In both cases the model serves to highlight important aspects of the relative decentralization of the two federations.

The Riker model, however, deals with only one dimension — partisanship. Another aspect of the linkage between party systems and federal systems concerns the nature of the norms and rules embedded in the operation of both systems and the interaction between them. As William Chandler (1987, 156) notes: 'Where federal and parliamentary traditions are combined within one régime, two distinct sets of "rules of the game" will intersect'. While federalism depends upon consensus and accommodation for the resolution of conflicts, political parties lend themselves much more readily to competition and confrontation. 'This is especially so in the Westminster model, where the principles of parliamentary supremacy and party government stress conflict resolution according to majority rule' (Chandler 1987, 156). And further: 'The problem ... is not so much one of incongruence in ruling majorities at different levels but one of styles of governance' (Chandler 1987, 156).

In the case of the Canadian federation this incongruence has, according to Chandler and others, reinforced the interstate nature of Canadian federalism. Rather than bridging federal-provincial or interprovincial

differences by providing informal avenues for cooperation and consensus-building, or for representing regional interests directly in central institutions, the Canadian party system has served to segregate and sharpen conflict between levels of government. The end result is to ensure that most interaction between regions and the centre takes place within the institutions of executive federalism, such as first ministers' conferences and other conferences of ministers and senior officials.

It is the combination of incongruence in both partisan affiliation and styles of governance that appears to differentiate Canada from other federations and make effective collaboration much more difficult. In Germany, for example, the party system, which is both more integrated in Riker's terms (that is, partisan symmetry) and premised on the acceptance of coalition government, makes a substantial contribution to a more collaborative style of federalism. In Australia, party symmetry is much more pronounced, a state of affairs attributable mainly to the high degree of integration within the Australian Labor Party (ALP), although as Sharman (1991) points out this symmetry is tempered by the impact of strong bicameralism not only at the national level but also at the state level. The presence of bicameralism, however, and the use of proportional representation for the Senate and some of the state upper houses, blunt the impact of the Westminster model and induce a style of governance that is somewhat more consistent with the complexity of bargaining and consensus seeking inherent in modern federations. And while Australia cannot be characterized as an intrastate federation along the lines of Germany and the United States — the Australian Senate does not explicitly act as a 'states house' for example¹ — the presence of multiple parties in a number of the upper houses may to some degree reduce conflict between the state and commonwealth governments, and the existence of an integrated party system provides opportunities for 'intrastate' representation.

In brief, Canada stands out as an example where the lack of congruence on both dimensions — partisan symmetry and the 'rules of the game' — has a corrosive effect on the collaborative norms necessary for the proper functioning of federal systems and on the development of informal mechanisms for intrastate federalism.

But is this really the case? In a recent thought provoking piece Martin Painter has pointed to the contradictory nature of many writings on

¹ The Australian Senate is more generally regarded as a party house, although the balance and type of parties represented in that chamber may be rather different from that found in the House of Representatives. At the same time it does appear that Australian senators are somewhat more sensitive to state issues than members of the lower house: see Sharman (1977, 1987).

Canadian intergovernmental relations. On the one hand there is the 'image of competitive federalism, in which governments keep their distance and ... compete for public support'; on the other hand there is the 'contrasting image of collaborative federalism, in which governments come together to co-operate in the provision of public services, with the provincial governments seeking a close involvement in spheres of federal policy that are perceived to intrude on provincial jurisdiction' (Painter 1991, 269).

In this paper the aim is to apply Painter's notion of contrasting images to the role of the Canadian party system vis-à-vis federalism and, specifically, to explore ways in which the party system, despite institutional incentives to the contrary, does in fact lend itself to a range of collaborative practices. In doing so we may also understand better why the two contrasting images can exist simultaneously. To begin our analysis, however, some attention should be paid to sketching out two important concepts: intrastate federalism and party government.

Intrastate Federalism

The intra versus interstate distinction was first coined in the United States by Karl Loewenstein (1957), though as an analytical tool it has really only gained currency in Canadian political science circles (see Smiley and Watts 1985). By *interstate* federalism it is usually meant that the representation of regional views and interests is made *through* provincial/state governments to the national or central government. Thus resolution of regionally based disputes and accommodation of regional interests takes place *between* governments. In contrast, the major feature of *intrastate* federalism is that matters of regional concern are represented *within* the national government. Typically, in federations such as Germany, Switzerland and the United States, the second chamber is seen as a forum for the representation of local/regional interests and the presence of this chamber is often seen as a critical feature of federal arrangements. The Canadian Senate has never performed this function and hence Canada is usually presented as a proto-typical example of an interstate federation. The United States, given the role played by United States senators in articulating many of the concerns of regional constituencies, including but not restricted to those of state governments, is taken as a case of successful intrastate federalism.

Within the category of intrastate federalism, a distinction is sometimes drawn between centralist and decentralist intrastate mechanisms. According to Alan Cairns (1979), decentralist intrastate federalism involves the direct representation of state or provincial interests in central institutions through such instruments as direct appointment by state governments of appointees to the second chamber. The German Bundesrat

would be the best example of such an arrangement: the *Länder* governments have direct control over who sits in the second chamber. The centralist version involves by-passing state/local governments through means such as direct election of senators, as in the United States, where state governments lack the control over the views and behaviour of senators they enjoyed prior to the implementation of direct election in 1913. Whether the 'centralist' version really does provide national authorities with greater control is open to debate, but the distinction does point to different forms of intrastate federalism.

The party system can be seen as an intrastate mechanism, particularly in an integrated system. Although Riker would see a high level of integration/consistency as denoting centralization, it can be argued that such an integrated system does give opportunities for provincial/state parties to participate in party affairs at the national level, bringing local views to bear on the formulation of national policies. As well, mobility of party personnel from local to national levels, particularly on the part of those in elected office, may help inject a local perspective into national affairs. Conversely, the fact that politicians at the regional level may aspire to higher office via the national party may result in their playing down particularistic views for fear of jeopardizing their chances of moving to the national arena. Nonetheless, it is important to note that an integrated party system can work both ways: allowing local interests to influence party affairs at the national level and vice versa.

Parties are multifaceted organizations, however, and have varying properties depending upon their organizational strength and the context in which they operate. In particular it is important to examine the differences in the role parties play in the process of democratic governance. . . .

Party Government and Federalism

It is difficult to conceive of modern democratic governance in the absence of political parties. The functions we usually ascribe to political parties — structuring the vote, recruitment of leaders and candidates, the organizing of government, the aggregation of interests, and the formulation of policy — are considered so central that if political parties did not exist we would have to invent alternative organizations. The term 'party government' is often used as a shorthand form to describe the democratic process. As noted above, however, parties are multifaceted organizations and their importance in the governmental process does vary.

Parties typically encompass three basic elements: the party leadership (including elected and non-elected officials), the parliamentary wing, and the extra-parliamentary wing. The last includes the rank-and-file membership, which, in the case of mass parties, can be quite substantial. The relative weight of the three elements can vary. Cadre parties, for

example, are much less dependent on an extensive mass membership. The three elements can act as sources of power and influence and, in turn, conflict. As well, the extent to which parties are well-organized, cohesive and enjoy resources determines in good part how much influence they will have on the governmental process.

A further determinant is the context in which parties operate. Chandler and Siaroff (1991) have identified three different types of party regime and their associated contexts. First is the Westminster type, characterized by one-party cabinet government, a majoritarian electoral system, a powerful prime minister, a weak legislature and a clearly defined and formal opposition. This type of regime exists primarily in British derived parliamentary systems where the values of competition, adversarial roles and a pluralist policy-making style tend to predominate. Second is the hegemonic system where one finds a multi-party system but with one relatively permanent 'hegemonic' party continually in power. In such a regime, of which Japan is an excellent example, the ruling party is often factionalized and the prime minister relatively weak. The third, the coalitional regime, as found in many continental European regimes, is based on a multi-party system but the government is shared between two or more parties. It is characterized by underlying values of cooperation, corporatist style policy-making and an intertwining of parties with the bureaucracy and broadly based interest associations representing organized labour and employers. Presidential regimes operating under the separation of powers doctrine, as in the United States, are considered by Chandler and Siaroff to be non-party regimes.

According to Chandler and Siaroff, the coalition regime is where party government is strongest. In such regimes decisions are made primarily by elected party officials; policy is developed by the parties themselves, which then act cohesively to implement it; and officials are recruited and held accountable through the party. In contrast, in Westminster regimes parties are often considered weak because the parties usually lack the institutional capacity to develop and implement policy. The bureaucracy, while neutral in a partisan sense, at the same time has its own interests and agenda and, most critically of all, the knowledge and expertise necessary for the functioning of government and the implementation of government programs. Thus, while governing parties in Westminster systems may enjoy dominance of the legislature through mechanisms such as party discipline and the norm of cabinet solidarity, the decisions which are implemented may well have originated within the bureaucracy, ones over which neither the parliamentary party, nor the party as a whole, may have had much influence.

The extent to which party government is strong or weak has implications for federalism. If party government is weak then the extra-parliamentary party, and to a degree even the parliamentary party, become

much less critical as an arena in which federal-provincial differences can be worked out and accommodated. The incentive for provincial governing parties will be to deal directly with the federal government, specifically with those departments that have responsibilities of interest to the provincial governments. Secondly, since in British derived parliamentary systems parties tend to be leader centred, electorally oriented cadre type parties, there is a propensity for the key leadership to attempt to concentrate power in their own hands. This power is used to ensure maximum electoral advantage by promoting direct delivery and visibility of the government's programs, thereby making more difficult the sharing of program responsibilities with other levels of government and enhancing competition between them. To be sure, some variant of Michels' 'iron law' of oligarchy operates in all regimes; but insofar as the extra-parliamentary wings of the party are weaker in Westminster regimes, there are rather fewer constraints on party leaders. In short, under the Westminster model there is little in the way of incentives that would promote federal-provincial cooperation within parties; to the extent that an intraparty arena for resolving federal-provincial differences does exist it would be, in the Canadian case, at the level of cabinet.

Canadian Parties, Cabinet and Intrastate Federalism

At the level of partisan congruence there has always been considerable asymmetry in Canada. In the nineteenth century Conservative prime minister John A. Macdonald faced a hostile Ontario government under the premiership of Liberal Oliver Mowat. Battles between the two governments, primarily over jurisdictional issues, were conducted largely in the courts and fueled in good part by the patronage needs of the federal Conservatives on the one hand and the Ontario provincial Liberals on the other (Noel 1990). The period 1896 to 1911 under the Liberal stewardship of prime minister Wilfrid Laurier saw greater partisan consistency between the two levels of government and also greater harmony. This harmony, however, was in part the result of Laurier conceding to the provinces more in the way of power and autonomy and did not denote a greater degree of centralization.

The primary intrastate mechanism was found within cabinet (Bakvis 1991). From early on the norm was firmly established that each province should have at least one member in cabinet, and both Macdonald and Laurier recruited notables from the provinces, in many cases premiers, directly into their ministries. This became an important integrative mechanism as a number of ministers so recruited had initially been hostile to Confederation and the new federal government. Thus Joseph Howe, a well known opponent of Confederation from Nova Scotia, was recruited into cabinet by Macdonald. Howe then proceeded to use his

skills and connections, and a good deal of federal patronage, to make sure most other Nova Scotia MPs provided support to the government. Nearly 30 years later Laurier recruited William Fielding, Liberal premier of Nova Scotia who had run on an anti-confederation platform, into cabinet as Minister of Finance. In that position Fielding displayed both a strong national orientation and reasonable fiscal prudence with nary a hint of Nova Scotia bias.

It was under Mackenzie King who, in heading three separate ministries from 1921 to 1948, transformed cabinet into the single most important intrastate institution Canada has known. Well regarded provincial figures were persuaded to enter the federal cabinet with the promise of portfolios of relevance to their region. At various times cabinet contained former premiers such as J.G. Gardiner from Saskatchewan and Angus L. MacDonald from Nova Scotia, as well as powerful figures from other provinces, such as C.D. Howe from Ontario and Ernest Lapointe from Quebec. These figures represented important regional interests directly at the cabinet table; in turn they were able to make significant efforts to mobilize regional opinion and support behind the government, particularly at election time. They also represented an important connection between the provincial and federal Liberal parties. Gardiner, for example, as premier had constructed an impressive political machine in his home province, over which he retained considerable influence after leaving for Ottawa (Ward and Smith 1990). While the minister's own province was of primary concern, under King certain ministers came to dominate regions broader than their specific province. Gardiner, for example, was seen as minister for western Canada and not just Saskatchewan.

During the King era, regional ministers essentially enjoyed three sources of influence. Firstly, they invariably had a portfolio that could be used to good effect in their province, both in being able to respond to some of the needs of their province and for patronage purposes. Secondly, they had a free hand over most federal patronage matters and a semi-formal power of veto within cabinet over all issues that affected their province, including issues well outside of their portfolio. Thirdly, they usually enjoyed some prominence within the provincial party before entering cabinet; this prominence was both a reason for being recruited and a source of influence once within cabinet.

While the norm of having at least one minister from each province has not always been met, most prime ministers do try and achieve some kind of regional balance. One position has been considered of special significance — the Quebec lieutenantcy. The relative success of different prime ministers in managing the linguistic divide has been linked to their success or failure in recruiting an appropriate figure to this critical position.

Furthermore, while connections with the provincial party was one source of influence, even under King this held true for only certain figures, such as Gardiner and the Maritime premiers. In Ontario, for example, the federal and provincial parties and their leaders, King and Liberal premier Mitch Hepburn respectively, were distinctly at odds with each other (Whitaker 1977, 61–66). C.D. Howe had to expend considerable energy in creating a separate organizational network in Ontario, primarily for fundraising purposes. The National Liberal Federation (NLF) was created by King in the 1930s primarily to lessen the dependency of the national party on its provincial brethren. As well, given that parties other than the Liberals were in power in many of the provinces, particularly in Quebec and the western provinces, this meant that the national party often played a role in propping up an out-of-power provincial wing of the party.

Thus, during the heyday of brokerage politics and strong regional ministers, the party in power for most of this period, the Liberals, had begun the process of loosening the ties between the national and provincial wings of the party. To the extent that the two levels were still integrated, it should be noted that the extra-parliamentary organization was important mainly for fundraising purposes and electioneering. The parliamentary parties in the early post-Confederation period were actually quite important avenues for regional influence. Staggered elections were the norm and candidates for office frequently did not align themselves with any political tendency until they could sense which party and leader was most likely to form the government. This meant that Macdonald had to engage in extensive negotiations with these 'loose fish' and 'waiters on providence' in order to put together a working majority in the Commons. In the course of these negotiations both individual MPs and regional factions were often able to extract advantages for their particular ridings (Stevenson 1992).² Certainly the prime minister was much more sensitive to regional predilections. Secondly, until the practice was abolished in 1874, it was possible for MPs to have a 'double mandate', that is to sit in both the federal Parliament and in a provincial legislature. It was seen by critics at the time as a device through which Macdonald could exert his political will on the provinces, but presumably it could work the other way as well.

In the event, the Liberal government of 1874 abolished the double-mandate, and the arrival of party discipline and a much sharper delineation of the two main parties after the introduction of simultaneous elections

² There were at least three identifiable groups of 'loose fish': a group of British Columbians, favouring construction of the transcontinental railway, a number of Quebec nationalists and a substantial group of Irish Protestants centred in eastern Ontario: see Stevenson (1992).

in 1878 reduced the scope of individual MPs or groupings of MPs to exercise influence. Particularly during the King era, regional ministers and some of the premiers came to dominate the candidate nomination process, making MPs more dependent upon these figures for favours and reducing further the role of grass-roots party organization at the constituency level (Carty 1988, 21).

The arrival of television in the late 1950s as a significant tool in electioneering, along with related developments in areas such as public opinion polling, wrought further changes in the nature of political parties and their capacity to represent regional interests. The regional minister system as inherited from the King era was essentially discredited following Liberal defeats in 1957 and 1958. Liberal Party reform focused on revitalizing political participation at the grass-roots level and in establishing direct links between the national leadership and the constituency associations. This had the consequence, in good part intentional, of by-passing both the 'regional barons' and provincial parties and in placing the candidate selection process more firmly in the hands of local activists. It increased therefore the tendency toward the separation of federal and provincial wings of the parties. Many of the traditional regional figures from the King era simply passed from the stage; those who remained found themselves with less of a regional role at election time, given the increasing importance of leader oriented national campaigns, and fewer opportunities for delivering patronage.

Changes in the administrative apparatus of the state and the management of cabinet affairs also made it more difficult for ministers to exercise influence over their portfolios for either regional or sectoral purposes. Under Trudeau, for example, who became prime minister in 1968, a system of regional desks housed within the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was created with the express purpose of gathering regional intelligence. For many, the Trudeau era in particular seemed to spell the end of the regional minister system. As Alan Cairns wrote, 'Although the regional basis of Cabinet appointment continues, the regional power brokers are gone' (Cairns 1979, 6). This period also coincided with the growing prominence of provincial governments and the process of executive federalism. The locus of power seemed to have shifted elsewhere and ministers had neither the time nor the opportunities to look after regional interests as they once had.

As has been argued elsewhere, pronouncements over the end of regional ministers may have been premature (Bakvis 1991). The near defeat of the Trudeau government in 1972 resulted in partial resurrection of the system after ministers complained that they lacked resources to be able to provide a Liberal presence in the regions. A 'political' minister was appointed for each province, who in turn enjoyed primary control over the dispensation of patronage. The PMO regional desks arrangement

was abolished, and the various experiments in grass-roots participatory democracy were placed on hold. By the 1970s the title 'Quebec lieutenant' had fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, one of Trudeau's most trusted colleagues, Jean Marchand, became the chief political organizer and election strategist for that province. Marchand was succeeded in that capacity by Marc Lalonde in 1980.

In 1984 the newly elected Conservative prime minister, Brian Mulroney, initially also tried to restrict the activities of regional ministers by centralizing the patronage appointment process and having more non-elected party activists involved. By 1986, however, Mulroney too felt impelled to appoint political ministers for each province, essentially making them responsible for patronage recommendations. As well, the term *Quebec lieutenant* has re-entered common usage. Benoit Bouchard, the current occupant of that position, has been seen as a major player in the constitutional negotiations, articulating the Quebec position both publicly and within cabinet.

At present the two major parties are either wholly or in good part segregated into separate federal and provincial parties (Dyck 1991). The New Democratic Party (NDP) is largely integrated, but it has never been in power at the national level. The Progressive Conservative Party is a wholly confederal party. That is, in each province there is a separate federal and provincial Conservative Party, except in the province of Quebec where there has been no provincial level party. There have been no formal links between the two levels, except that all Conservative provincial legislative members have enjoyed automatic convention delegate status and that provincial party leaders and certain executive officers have sat on the party's national executive. This body has rarely met, however.

With respect to the Liberal Party of Canada, in four provinces — Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia — the federal Liberal Party co-exists alongside the provincial Liberal Party with no formal links between them. In the remaining 'unitary' or 'joint' provinces the provincial organisation functions as a branch of the federal party. The term 'unitary' party really only has meaning in the four Atlantic provinces since in most of the western provinces the provincial party is relatively weak.

The NDP has an integrated structure in all provinces except Quebec. The party, however, has only a very limited presence east of Ontario and thus cannot be considered a national party along the lines of the Conservatives and Liberals. Provincial offices and executive officers serve both levels, and the main governing body of the party, the federal council, includes the executive officers and three additional representatives from each province. Except in Quebec, membership in the federal party is acquired through the provincial party. Philosophically the NDP has

always stressed the merits of an integrated party. An exception was made for Quebec in 1989, which resulted in separate federal and provincial parties, allowing individuals in that province to belong to a provincial party other than the NDP. The arrangement fell apart a year later when the provincial party chose to support the Bloc Québécois candidate rather than the NDP candidate in a federal by-election. It will be interesting to see how well the NDP's integrated structure will fare should the party ever come to power federally.

Except for the NDP, federal and provincial parties have largely separate sources of party finance, which is accounted for in part by the different regulatory regimes prevailing at the federal and provincial levels. Career paths also tend to be separate. As Barrie and Gibbins (1989) found in their examination of the political experience of MPs between 1867 and 1984, provincial experience of MPs declined from a peak of 23 per cent in the 1880s, to 17 per cent in the 1930s, to 7 per cent in the 1970s. Cabinet ministers were only slightly more likely to have had provincial experience.

Again, with the possible exception of the NDP, the extra-parliamentary party at all levels tends to be weak. The parties at base are mainly electoral machines; in between elections the bulk of party activists go into hibernation. Provincial associations lay down the rules to be followed by the constituency associations with respect to candidate nomination and convention delegates (including leadership conventions); raise money, and maintain membership lists (albeit in haphazard fashion). Real power, however, is split between the national party, which controls the national election campaign and decides which region, for example, should receive more or less emphasis in the campaign, and the constituency associations, which control the all important candidate nomination process (Carty & Erickson 1991; Pelletier 1991; and see chapter 7 below). Constituency associations guard their prerogatives jealously and brook little interference from either the provincial or national parties. The national party leader has the authority, in law, to veto a local nomination by refusing to sign the nomination papers. This veto is very rarely exercised. Essentially, the constituency associations control matters until the nominations are completed. At that point, national party headquarters takes over, providing the nominated candidates with instructions, election material and the like. Given the weakness of the personal vote factor, the importance of regional and national vote swings, and limits placed on candidate expenses, there is not that much opportunity for individual candidates to develop their own separate campaigns.

Despite the overall weakness of the legislature and the imposition of strict party discipline (much stricter than in the British House of Commons for example), the parliamentary parties have actually become

more significant players in recent years. Meeting in private on a regular basis, usually weekly, party caucuses focus not only on immediate parliamentary business and tactics but also on broader political goals. In the case of the government caucus, the prime minister and other members of cabinet are usually in attendance to address MPs and to face questions. Importantly, the national caucus is broken down into regional caucuses, which meet separately. It is here where distinctly regional or provincial perspectives, and specific agendas, are developed for presentation at national caucus meetings. The Quebec caucus has become especially influential both in the Liberal Party during its tenure in government (Quebec MPs constituted a slight majority in the government in the period 1980–84) and in the present Conservative caucus (constituting approximately one-third of government MPs). Its impact derives in good part from the singular cohesion with which it presents its views, backed with solid arguments. In contrast, the Ontario caucus traditionally has been ill-prepared and fragmented.

For Paul Thomas (1991) the party caucuses represent significant arenas for the airing, and conciliation, of regional grievances. The effectiveness of caucus lies in the fact that its meetings are confidential, hence MPs can be quite frank in making known their views. Party leaders, the PM and ministers treat caucus seriously, and the PMs effectiveness as leader is largely dependent on how well he or she manages dissension in this body. The departure of the Quebec caucus from the government party, for example, would be a major political disaster having import well beyond the immediate fortunes of the Conservative Party. The need to contain and manage caucus dissension makes the party leadership much more responsive to regional concerns than they might otherwise be.

One of the reasons for the success of caucus in reaching consensus on many issues is that deliberations are secret. But herein also lies the failings of caucus: it lacks public visibility and hence legitimacy. In an era that calls for more open government, greater public scrutiny, and improved citizen control over politicians this is a serious failing. Furthermore, since hard fought victories in caucus cannot be publicised, individual MPs or blocs of MPs find it difficult to obtain credit for their achievements in the eyes of voters. A crucial dimension of democratic representation, therefore, is lacking.

The most critical element of intrastate federalism still remains the cabinet. While ministers need to pay heed to, and indeed usually cultivate a base of support within caucus, the cabinet, and more crucially, key cabinet committees, are responsible for the final decisions. And it is the prime minister, a group of key cabinet ministers, and a few non-elected advisers who constitute the election team and the core of the party in between elections.

Overall, regional ministers have a much lower profile than their predecessors of forty years ago. Their connections with provincial parties are also weaker and in many instances non-existent; and even within the federal parties most ministers have only limited independent bases of support. Their power derives mainly from the portfolio for which they are responsible. If the minister is sufficiently adroit and creative in the use of staff and the program resources of the portfolio, he or she can over time succeed in constructing a formidable political machine. Typically it will be a machine based on alliances with other ministers and the largesse that the minister is able to dispense to local interests in their province or locality. It will likely also dominate the party apparatus in their province.

In one respect the influence of regional ministers has grown considerably, which compensates in part for the decline of party, and that is the expansion of government programs over the past two decades: in particular spending on infrastructure, such as airport and harbour facilities, defence procurement, regional development programs and other areas where expenditures are discretionary and can be targetted to specific geographic localities. In common parlance these are pork-barrel type projects, and it is important to distinguish 'pork-barrelling' from traditional patronage. The latter is generally understood to apply to favours conveyed to specific individuals for services rendered or about to be rendered. The pork-barrell is much less discriminate, involving favours to groups or geographically concentrated collectivities; but its form is not such that it can be easily given or withheld from specific individuals. With civil service reforms and conflict of interest regulations, patronage in a form that will satisfy large numbers of individuals is difficult to find. Pork-barrel in the form of projects such as a new park or bridge in one's riding, something that will enhance the incumbent in the eyes of their constituents, is used as the modern day substitute for traditional patronage at the riding level (Noel 1987).

One final point needs to be emphasized and that is the electoral vulnerability of all MPs, including ministers. In Canada personal incumbency as a factor in re-election is much weaker compared not only to the United States but also to the United Kingdom. The level of turnover in seats is much higher and the margins of victory much lower (Blake 1991; Ferejohn and Gaines 1991). For example in the elections in November 1988, in the United States the incumbency rate for the House of Representatives was close to 99 per cent; in Canada for the House of Commons it was only slightly over 60 per cent, even with the re-election of the incumbent government.

All MPs are well aware of the vicissitudes of the electoral tides and do all they can to protect themselves. They do so through constituency service and, more critically, by attempting to obtain lucrative

government projects for their riding — a new wharf, office building, a bail-out for a faltering local industry or financial support for a new enterprise under the rubric of regional development. Unfortunately, ordinary MPs, even government MPs, may have only limited success in obtaining such projects. The exceptions are those who are members of cabinet. These individuals can use their portfolios directly to funnel resources to their ridings (e.g. wharfs and airports by a minister of Transport) or indirectly through logrolling and horsetrading with fellow ministers.

For ministers, the first imperative is to protect their seat. As one minister put it: 'the constituency is where the rubber meets the road' (quoted in Savoie 1990, 291). The second concern is finding projects for fellow government MPs in the province. These concerns add a particularly parochial dimension to the behaviour of ministers as they continually search their departments and lobby fellow ministers for projects. A good part of their political staffs are preoccupied with these endeavours. In general, ministers and MPs place a high value on preserving and enhancing the visibility and profile of government programs and benefits, which entails a stress on safeguarding federal jurisdiction to ensure direct delivery of programs. Secondly, MPs and ministers have a particular interest in those discretionary programs that can be concentrated or physically located in specific geographic areas.

Conflict and Collusion

To summarize, at this stage, the presence of separate federal and provincial parties, separate federal and provincial career paths, relatively weak extra-parliamentary organizations, an electoral system that promotes a high level of competition and, in turn, a high concern with 'direct' delivery and preserving the federal prerogative, are all factors which would appear to reinforce the competitive side of Canadian federalism. Federal and provincial politicians from the same regions, therefore, will tend to find themselves locked in an adversarial relationship as they compete for the favour of the same electorate.

There is little doubt that both Liberal and Conservative federal governments have, over the past two decades, become embroiled in a variety of disputes with provincial governments across a wide array of policy domains. And given the greater distance, both geographically and psychologically, between Ottawa and citizens, the federal government has generally been more concerned with the issue of visibility and political credit for the programs it has funded or helped fund.

Yet despite this general thrust towards competitive federalism, one can also find numerous examples of collusion between federal and provincial politicians, even in instances where officially the program is solely

federally or provincially funded and delivered. What I have in mind here are not only those collaborative federal-provincial programs involving mainly non-elected officials, but also specific deals, often under the table, between ministers at the federal and provincial level.

The reasons for this collusionary behaviour relate in good part to the same party system considerations that are thought to promote competitive federalism. Let me elaborate. First is the prevalence of the confederal party system model. In Riker's terms this is seen as denoting a lack of integration. However, it should be kept in mind that an integrated party is of use only when the party is in power at both levels. If this condition is not met, then intra-party integration can be a positive hindrance in developing links with the provincial or state government. A governing party at the federal level may offend its brethren occupying the opposition benches provincially by cooperating with a provincial governing party of a different partisan hue. Here is where the confederal party model displays some advantages.

The best example is the Progressive Conservative Party. By and large it has minimal formal links with the provincial Conservative parties; in two provinces the provincial party is either absent or virtually extinct. This state of affairs limits the obligations of the federal Conservatives and provides it with a great deal of flexibility in developing links with provincial governments regardless of partisan affiliation. In British Columbia, where the provincial party is a mere shell with no representatives in the legislature, the federal Conservatives have always got on well with the provincial Social Credit Party. Indeed, many party activists will work for the Conservatives federally and the Socreds provincially (Blake 1985). In Quebec, the leader of the governing Liberal Party, Robert Bourassa, was much closer to Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, than to either the present federal Liberal leader, Jean Chrétien, or his predecessor, John Turner. Indeed, in the 1988 federal election Bourassa gave several signs that he preferred to see the Conservatives re-elected, much to the discomfort of Liberal leader Turner. In short, the confederal model allows federal and provincial parties of the same partisan stripe to put distance between themselves when it is electorally advantageous to do so. At the same time it allows parties of opposing partisan identities to develop closer links when it suits their purposes.

Secondly, separate federal-provincial jurisdictional authority and the imperatives of electoral competition can combine to create some curious alliances. In pursuit of visibility and direct delivery, the federal government often faces a dilemma: either it lacks clearcut constitutional authority to be the sole provider of a particular program, or, given the interdependence of so many of the activities of modern government, it is not administratively feasible to deliver a program without provincial

government assistance. In more specific instances, many ministers find that the projects they favour in their riding, for example, can be realized only with the help of provincial authorities. Or, alternatively, the provincial government proposes a project with benefits for a federal minister's riding of such value that the minister cannot resist helping in finding federal financial support.

Some examples are in order. Regional development is one field where both levels of government have been active and where jurisdictional authority is ambiguous. It is also an area where in the past there has been close federal-provincial collaboration. In the 1970s Ottawa struck a number of broad General Development Agreements (GDAs) with the provinces under which the federal government, through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE), provided most of the funding and the provinces, mainly through their departments of development, delivered most of the actual programs. Federal and provincial officials worked closely together, developing specific criteria and detailed plans without undue interference from politicians (Savoie 1981). By the early 1980s, however, the federal government, claiming that it was not receiving appropriate credit for the funds it was pouring into regional development projects, announced, first, that it did not plan to extend or renew the GDAs, and, secondly, that its flagship department in the area, DREE, was being abolished. Henceforth, federally funded regional development projects were to be delivered by the federal government's own line departments: provincial governments were free to coordinate their own projects with those of the federal government (Aucoin & Bakvis 1985).

However, when it came time to make good on direct delivery of regional development programs, the federal government found that many projects relating to agriculture, reforestation, highway construction and the like were matters where the provinces already had a significant role if not outright control (for example, forestry and silviculture is heavily dependent on provincially owned crown land). The end result was a series of Economic and Regional Development Agreements with the provinces that, while providing for more federal visibility and direct delivery, were not substantially different from the previous GDAs. One important difference was that the regional ministers from each province were directly involved in vetting individual projects and the overall package with each province. It is here where the paradox of simultaneous conflict and collusion is most evident: regional ministers, and cabinet as a whole, were keenest on the new direct delivery regime in regional development; yet when it came to specific proposals these same figures were often the ones arguing strenuously for exceptions to the direct delivery rule in order to allow a provincially delivered project favoured by the regional minister to proceed.

Both the Trudeau and Mulroney cabinets offer pithy examples of the dynamic between regional ministers and provincial governments.³ Lloyd Axworthy, the only elected minister from western Canada in the 1980–84 Liberal cabinet, developed a particularly comfortable relationship with the NDP Manitoba government, a relationship that saw several million dollars spent on urban renewal in the city of Winnipeg (a good part of it in Axworthy's own riding). In return, Axworthy helped in obtaining federal regional development money for northern Manitoba, including rebuilding the railway to the port of Churchill and improving harbour facilities there, all of which constituted a high priority for the Manitoba government. Federal Transport officials (Axworthy was Minister of Transport for a time) strongly resisted these initiatives but Axworthy was ultimately able to obtain cabinet approval for them.

In Nova Scotia, Allan J. MacEachen, for several years the senior minister for the province in both the Trudeau and Pearson cabinets, always had close affinity with his particular section of the province, Cape Breton. Over the years he succeeded in funnelling a variety of projects to the Cape Breton region — heavy water plants, an oil refinery and support for the coal industry and a faltering steel mill. In 1983 the federal government, with the aim of stimulating the economy, announced a capital works program for new federal buildings and projects. Ostensibly no provincial projects were eligible. MacEachen, however, was able to find in excess of \$20 million under the program, to provide new quarters and facilities for the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute, a provincial educational institution located in Halifax. The catch was that the institute was to be re-located from Halifax to Port Hawkesbury in Cape Breton, in the middle of MacEachen's riding. The Conservative premier was happy to have the federal government pay for something that was a provincial responsibility. Funding from the same federal program also paid for a new provincial park located in the riding of a powerful provincial Conservative minister from the Halifax area to compensate for the Nautical Institute's departure.

By 1984 the Conservatives had replaced the Liberals in Ottawa and Elmer MacKay, representing the riding of Central Nova, had become Nova Scotia's senior minister in cabinet. In that year the federal government agreed to transform a \$200 million loan to the province, part of the 1982 Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Agreement, into an outright grant. By 1986 it had come to light that a good portion of the money had been spent by the province on projects having only the remotest connection with offshore development. Included in this category was at least \$17 million spent on new roads in MacKay's riding. As the Nova

³ The examples following are drawn mainly from Bakvis (1991) especially chapters 8–11.

Scotia minister of development admitted, decisions on which projects were to be funded were subject to 'an informal type of arrangement' between the two governments (quoted in Bakvis 1991, 249).

MacKay was also involved in an example with more tragic consequences, but one which illustrated rather dramatically the alignment of political interests at the federal and provincial levels required to launch a project which, by rational criteria, would not normally receive support. The provincial riding that overlapped with MacKay's federal riding was held by the province's minister of industry, Donald Cameron, who harboured the ambition of constructing a new coal mine in his home riding. He was supported in this endeavour by the province's premier and the federal minister, MacKay; and the province began the ball rolling by providing \$15 million in loans and the promise of guaranteed coal contracts from the provincially owned power utility to Curragh Resources, operator of the proposed Westray coal mine.

Far more financial support was needed, however, to get the new mine into the ground, and MacKay began applying pressure in Ottawa. Officials in the Department of Industry, Science and Technology (IST) were opposed to the scheme on both economic and safety grounds: the new mine would compete directly with federally owned mines in Cape Breton; the location for the Westray mine was known to be in an area difficult to mine safely, with high levels of methane gas. By the summer of 1989 MacKay was complaining publicly about the obstinate officials in IST, 'a couple of bureaucrats who won't know a coal mine if they fell over one or fell into one' (quoted in Bakvis 1991, 286). Eight months later Ottawa announced an 85 per cent guarantee for a \$100 million bank loan to Curragh Resources. The mine opened a year later. Tragically, in the early hours of 9 May 1992 an explosion ripped through the mine, costing 26 lives and destroying all equipment. It is highly unlikely that the mine will ever re-open; and it is equally unlikely that the two governments will recoup their investment.

Conclusion

The foregoing examples were meant to illustrate the wide range of activities in which federal ministers are typically involved. They engage in extensive bargaining and logrolling not only with each other but also with their counterparts at the provincial level. Jurisdictional boundaries and partisan differences do not appear to be major obstacles to the formation of alliances between federal cabinet ministers and provincial governments. As in any bargaining situation, cabinet ministers aim to maximize leverage by initially emphasizing formal control by the federal government over those programs they wish to influence. Hence the preoccupation with direct delivery and visibility, and the consequent

reinforcement of the competitive dimension of Canadian federalism. However, in implementing those programs jurisdictional and practical considerations often force ministers to consider other means, such as closer collaboration or even provincial delivery of particular projects.

There is no doubt a variety of factors that determine both competition and collaboration in the Canadian federation. In this paper I have identified those factors relating to the Canadian party system and the pinnacle of party government, the federal cabinet, and have attempted to show how they simultaneously serve to reinforce both federal-provincial competition and collaboration. In this respect, the findings may help make sense of Painter's paradox: that competition and collaboration can co-exist together, are intricately related, and, indeed, are likely to sustain each other.

Certainly a plausible case can be made that the lack of an integrated party system, adversarial norms and the like do not prevent the development of informal mechanisms for intrastate federalism. In the beginning of the paper reference was made to Cairns' distinction between centralist and decentralist versions of intrastate federalism. The system of having ministers representing regional interests directly in cabinet, by-passing provincial governments, clearly falls under the centralist rubric. Yet in practice the regional minister system is in many respects profoundly decentralizing. Numerous initiatives by the federal government end up being fragmented by the particularistic predilections of regional ministers. Furthermore, even though provincial governments are not formally represented at the cabinet table, many of the projects supported by regional ministers are ones actively favoured by the provinces. In this respect ministers can be seen as spear carriers for provincial interests. Overall, it is striking the degree to which many of the projects that the federal government has been supporting financially are also high on the political agenda of provincial governments. Over the past two years, the Vancouver Island natural gas pipeline, the Husky heavy oil upgrader in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the Canadian space agency in Quebec, the Hibernia offshore oil development in Newfoundland, are all projects on behalf of which ministers from the affected provinces have made strong arguments within cabinet.

In many respects this appears to be a reasonably effective form of intrastate federalism, certainly for provincial interests. Yet there are also major failings. Primary among them is the fact that the process lacks both visibility and legitimacy. It is ironic that one of the main issues currently driving Senate reform is the alleged failure of central institutions, including the party system, in protecting and promoting the interests of the regions (McCormick et al. 1990). In discussions of senate reform, for example, there is no mention of the influence that provinces already enjoy in the cabinet through effective pressure brought to bear on

regional ministers. The role of regional caucuses in the government party also tends to be minimized.

The reasons for the absence of legitimacy and visibility lie in part in the rules and norms governing cabinet and caucus secrecy. It goes further than that, however. The ends being served by collaboration between federal ministers and provincial governments are not necessarily the interests of the province or broader regions but often the federal minister's personal electoral welfare: and it is frequently in the interest of both not to advertize their mutual good fortune too widely. The fact that much of this type of collaboration, therefore, is tainted by partisan self interest cannot but help undermine public confidence in the process. Additional points can be made about the quality of public policy resulting from this type of collaboration and the cross pressures to which civil servants are subjected; but the essential point at issue here is the major gulf between actual practices and the presumed logic of the institutional framework. It is in this sense that the traditional picture of the Canadian party system and cabinet government is deficient.

The federal system does indeed shape the party system, but the dynamics of party competition can concentrate or disperse power in ways which defy neat categories. As illustrated in this chapter, the interests of partisan gains at a regional level can foster collaboration in a system otherwise characterized by fierce partisan competition. Whether this is to be applauded is a matter of taste, but at the very least, it points to the highly complex, and sometimes contradictory set of transactions that can occur in a federal party system.

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Chapter 2

DISCIPLINE AND DISHARMONY

Party and the Operation of the Australian Federal System

Campbell Sharman¹

The essence of federalism is, of course, that bickering continue, ...'
(Riker 1987, 73)

The best known propositions about the relationship between the party system and federalism derive from work by the late William H Riker in the 1950s and 1960s which culminated in his book *Federalism: Origin Operation Significance* (Riker 1964).² One of Riker's concerns was to explain what maintains the dispersal of power that characterizes the federal form of government — the 'federal bargain' established by the founders.³

Riker saw federalism as an uneasy balance between centralizing and peripheralizing forces, each with a desire to exploit the institutional structure of the federation to advantage. The United States federal system was taken as the first of a new model of federalism: a centralized federation that, in spite of institutions designed to have the effect of dispersing power, gave the central authorities considerable potential to increase their influence and to overawe the other components of the federation.⁴

¹ I am indebted to Richard Miles, a graduate student in the Political Science Department of the University of Western Australia, for compiling the data on which much of figures 2.3 and 2.4 are based.

² A substantial portion of this book was reworked for Riker's contribution to the *Handbook of Political Science* (Riker 1975). Riker's work on American federalism, from which most of his propositions about federalism in general are derived, was republished in 1987 (see Riker 1987).

³ Riker held strong views that, for all federations, the bargain was entered into primarily for reasons of defence or imperial aggrandizement (see generally Riker 1964, chap. 2).

⁴ Riker's comparison is with earlier federal experiments such as the Dutch and, of course, the Articles of Confederation (see Riker 1964, 18–25).

After examining the American experience in some detail, and with some reference to other federations, Riker concludes that the preservation of a dispersal of power between the constituent components of a federation requires some factor in addition to the institutional structures that enshrined the federal bargain. Riker is not persuaded that this factor can be found in the growth of administrative arrangements between spheres of government, an explanation that Riker goes to some pains to dismiss.⁵ While a range of social and institutional factors is involved, '... the proximate cause of variation in the degree of centralization (or peripheralization) in the constitutional structure of a federation is the variation in degree of party centralization.' (Riker 1964, 129).

According to Riker, political parties become the key element in the operation of a federal system. A party system that is decentralized will maintain federalism, one that is centralized will undermine a federal dispersal of power. Riker summarizes his position as follows:

Whatever the general social conditions, if any, that sustain the federal bargain, there is one institutional condition that controls the nature of the bargain in all the instances here examined and in all others with which I am familiar. This is the structure of the party system, which may be regarded as the main variable intervening between the background social conditions and the specific nature of the federal bargain. (Riker 1964, 136)

Almost as an afterthought, Riker adds that '[i]t is theoretically possible but practically difficult to measure the structure of the party system' (Riker 1964, 136).

These contentions of Riker's are illuminating, provocative and frustrating.⁶ They are illuminating because they provide a well argued explanation for both the evolution and the operation of federal systems. They are provocative in the way that all monocausal explanations of complex phenomena are provocative: they simplify to the point of distortion. And they are frustrating because the central element of the explanation, the nature of the party system, is not specified in a way that makes it easily applicable, or its effects verifiable.

In the light of these characteristics, it is all too easy to dismiss Riker's argument as interesting but eccentric. Yet it provides one of the

⁵ 'I will be content if this essay has no other impact but to disabuse scholars of their faith in the clearly false administrative theory of federalism' (Riker 1964, 84).

⁶ These are characteristics that have made Riker among the most cited of political scientists in the many fields which have benefitted from his attention.

few attempts to pass beyond description to provide an explanation of the dynamics of federal systems. It was this feature that led the late Donald Smiley to use Riker's analysis as the basis for a typology of party characteristics to classify party systems as centralizing or peripheralizing (in Smiley's terms integrated or confederal). Smiley used this typology to good effect in his masterly analyses of the effects of the party system on Canadian federalism (for example, Smiley 1987, chap. 5 particularly 103–104).⁷

But there remains the option of trying to apply Riker's analysis directly to a federal system. The virtue of this strategy is that, whether Riker's explanation is validated or not, the process of thinking about its application can assist in understanding the nature and dynamics of the federal process.

It is for this reason that this chapter examines two aspects of Riker's use of party as an explanation of the operation of federalism in the context of the Australian federation.

A Party Based Theory of Federalism

In his search for explanations for the persistence of a federal dispersal of power, Riker considers two related questions: the nature of a federation's constitutional structure and the operation of its party system. The first of these issues turns on the relative ability of central and state governments to dominate each other. Riker is fond of the word 'overawe' which, we must assume, is synonymous with the ability to overwhelm or override the actions of the other. If either sphere of government can completely overawe the other, the federation disappears, becoming either a unitary system or a loose confederation of states. Riker asserts that the United States (and Australia) is in an intermediate category: one in which '[t]he central government cannot completely overawe the constituents [state governments], but it can keep them from overruling its own decisions' (Riker 1964, 86).⁸ Note that Riker argues that the American institutional structure has a bias towards the centralization of control particularly through the central government's taxing powers, a conclusion reinforced by his detailed

⁷ For an application of Smiley's typology to Australia, note Holmes and Sharman (1977, chap. 4).

⁸ The other, more peripheralized, intermediate position is one in which '[t]he constituent governments cannot completely overawe the rulers of the center, but they [the constituent governments] can significantly vary the behavior of officials of the center, though central officials cannot overawe them [the constituent governments]' (Riker 1964, 86).

examination of various aspects of American society, politics, and governmental institutions.

What, then, keeps the centre from complete domination of American politics? Riker concludes, after an examination of political parties in the United States, that '... the decentralization of the two-party system is sufficient to prevent national leaders (e.g. presidents) from controlling their partisans by either organizational or ideological devices. As such, this decentralized party system is the main protector of the integrity of states in our federalism' (Riker 1964, 101).

Riker returns to this issue in his section on the measurement of federalism and contends that effective opposition to central authorities depends on the partisan opponents of the central government controlling the state governments. This gives two dimensions to a party based theory of federalism: first, the extent and nature of partisan control of governments; and secondly, the frequency with which partisans of the same party control both national and state governments. The first of these raises the issue of party discipline as a measure of centralizing trends in federations, the second, the degree of partisan similarity between the constituent elements of a federation based on the patterning of party dominance of the institutions concerned.

The Federal Dimension of Party Discipline

Discipline in the sense of the maintenance of coherent coalitions to influence or control the operation of political institutions, is a familiar concept in political science. It is especially familiar in the treatment of partisan influence in legislatures, most notably in the role of parties in maintaining stable majorities to support executive control of parliamentary systems.

Riker suggests that, if a party system is to reduce the influence of the regional units in a federation, the more that the same parties compete for office in national and state forums, and the more disciplined those parties, the greater the potential reduction of regional autonomy. Riker examines the implications of varying degrees of party discipline in national and regional spheres, but the thrust of his argument is that, if the same, strongly disciplined parties exist at national and state levels, this will undermine the freedom of independent action of the regional components of the federation (Riker 1964, 129-35, particularly table 5.2). Party discipline, maintained either by patronage or ideological commitment, will remove the ability of state governments to exploit the institutional structures of federalism to oppose the centralizing policies of the national government.

At first glance, Australia would seem to be a perfect case of such a disciplined party system. We have, with the partial exception of the

National Party,⁹ the same parties controlling governments in state and national spheres, parties, moreover, which are notorious for the tightness of their discipline (Jaensch 1989, 112–15). Riker's conditions for central domination seem to be established.

On closer examination, however, there are three major problems with the notion of party discipline as a centralizing force shaping the operation of federalism in Australia. The first of these is the difficulty of deciding what is the precise entity to which party discipline is to apply. While it is true that control of both the lower house of parliament and the executive branch of government in Australia is usually the province of a single party or tight coalition of parties,¹⁰ this is not synonymous with the control of the whole of the machinery of government. At the national level, for example, it is now most unlikely that any Commonwealth government will have partisan control of the Senate (Sharman 1986). This is not to argue that the Senate sets out to protect the interests of the states, but simply to point out that any policy of the central government that requires legislation to give it effect involves a coalition of actors that is broader than the members of the governing party alone. To make formal changes to the constitutional structure itself, the coalition must include a majority of voters in a majority of states, a coalition that central governments have been singularly unable to discipline (see for example Sharman 1989).

As Riker demonstrates in his detailed examination of the American system, the more power is dispersed between institutions — the President, the Congress and the Supreme Court — the more complex the coalition required to coordinate them, and the weaker the potential for partisan discipline. Even though all governments in Australia have a parliamentary executive, all legislatures except those of Queensland and the Commonwealth territories, also have powerful upper chambers, most of which are likely to have non-government majorities for much of the time. This, coupled with the role of the courts and the special procedures for amending Commonwealth and state constitutions means that the potential for disciplined partisan control of all the relevant elements of government in Australia is considerably attenuated.

⁹ The National Party has been a key component of non-Labor coalition governments in Canberra, and has played an important role in the politics of four states since the 1920s. The party began its life as the Country Party, its current name being adopted in the 1980s.

¹⁰ It must be noted that for a period in the early 1990s, Australia has experienced in the unaccustomed position of having one or more state governments dependent on the support of independent members of parliament to maintain majorities in the lower house.

The second problem with the picture of Australia as an example of a federation with a strongly centralizing party system, lies with the organizational structure of the large parties. The centres of gravity of these parties have been firmly based in their state branches and it is at the state level that candidates are selected for both state and national office. In the case of the Liberal Party (LPA), there is no mechanism through which the national arm of the party can intervene in the affairs of state parties, a situation which has the effect of giving the state parties great autonomy in the conduct of their affairs and makes the national wing of the party dependent on their goodwill for many areas of national party activity (see Jaensch 1989, chap. 5; Rydon 1988, 164–7).

The structure of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), however, looks as though it is much closer to a nationally disciplined party. It is at the national level that key decisions about the structure of the party are decided and the broad ideological goals of the party are set, goals which have generally been antithetical to a federal form of government (but note Galligan & Mardiste 1992). In recent years, the central institutions of the ALP have become more influential in the conduct of national election campaigns, more prone to intervene in the conduct of state party activities and in the selection of candidates for national office, and less federal in the sense of being composed of delegates chosen to reflect the states more in proportion to their population rather than equally (Lloyd 1983, Rydon 1988, 164–5). Moreover, the growth of national factions with loyalties crossing state boundaries can be seen as shifting the locus of power from state based party machines to national factional elites (Lloyd & Swan 1987a, 1987b; and note Lucy 1985, chap. 17).

Notwithstanding these developments, it is far from clear that there has been much change to the importance of state branches of the ALP for the day to day operation of the party in each state, and there is little evidence that the national agencies of the ALP can intervene directly in matters of purely state politics (see chapter 4, below). What has changed has been the ability of the national party machine to control many aspects of national partisan politics that were denied them in the past: state party politics remains very much the preserve of state party elites. The consequence of this is that the neither of the national agencies of the two biggest parties controls a disciplined party in the sense of a single organizational hierarchy which can enforce loyalty to a single set of policies across national and state spheres of politics.¹¹ This is manifestly so in the case of the LPA, and true for the practice of ALP politics if not in the logic of its long term constitutional evolution.

¹¹ Riker (1964) gives the example of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as an example of such a system.

The final problem with the notion of party discipline as it affects the federal system results from the nature of the rewards and penalties that make discipline effective. There are two forums in which party discipline is most visible. The first of these is in the endorsement of candidates, the process by which a candidate can use the party name to compete for elective office in return for a promise to follow party policy if elected. The reward is a greatly increased chance of winning office, the penalty is the withdrawal of endorsement and loss of office at the next election if party rules are breached: both are powerful factors on which to base disciplined behaviour on the part of party candidates and elected representatives. This potent resource is, as we have seen, controlled by state elites for both state and national political contests, although ALP endorsement for national office has become increasingly a matter which involves the addition of selective participation by national party elites. The point is that this form of discipline for both parties is either entirely state based or, in the case of the ALP, involves a sporadic national presence.

This is even more the case with the most important manifestation of party discipline, the voting behaviour of members of parliament. While the penalty for not voting according to the wishes of the decisions of the parliamentary party may be loss of party endorsement for the next election,¹² a much more immediate punishment is loss of access to the rewards at the disposal of the parliamentary party and its leadership. When the party is in office, these rewards are considerable including the possibility of gaining ministerial office which, for most MPs, is their major career goal. The great attraction of being in government is to enjoy the perquisites of office, the most important of which is the opportunity to make critical decisions in the running of a powerful governmental instrumentality.

The consequence is that the discipline found in parliamentary parties is contingent on each parliament having the widest scope for autonomous political action so that the ambitions of parliamentarians can be indulged and the reward structure maintained. Members of state parliaments, whatever their partisan colour, thus have a very considerable interest in resisting the attempts of their partisan colleagues in Canberra from reducing the ambit of a state government's political discretion and patronage potential. In this respect, party discipline has an effect that strongly reinforces a federal dispersal of power.

¹² This is explicitly the case in the ALP where candidates are required to sign a pledge that they will abide by the decisions of the Party. For a comparison with the LPA, see Lucy (1985, chaps 17, 18).

These limits on the centralizing effect of party discipline in Australia can be summarised as follows: party discipline operates to bind the executive to parliamentary majorities in the lower houses of state and Commonwealth parliaments, but the involvement of powerful upper houses in the legislative process, together with the role of the courts and the machinery for constitutional change means that party control of these processes is greatly attenuated; secondly, the way in which Australia's largest parties are organized gives autonomy to state party elites in key aspects of state politics, and in several aspects of national politics, even though the state domination of party organization is diminishing in the case of the ALP; finally, the institutional forum in which party discipline is most important, the parliamentary party, creates powerful incentives to preserve the widest scope for state political autonomy.

In examining the Australian case, it is clear that the effects of party discipline on the federal system are both more complex and more elusive than might be thought, and that the net effect of party discipline in this federation is to reinforce the autonomy of state governments rather than to reduce it, a conclusion that is at odds with first impressions.¹³

An Index of Disharmony in the Federal System

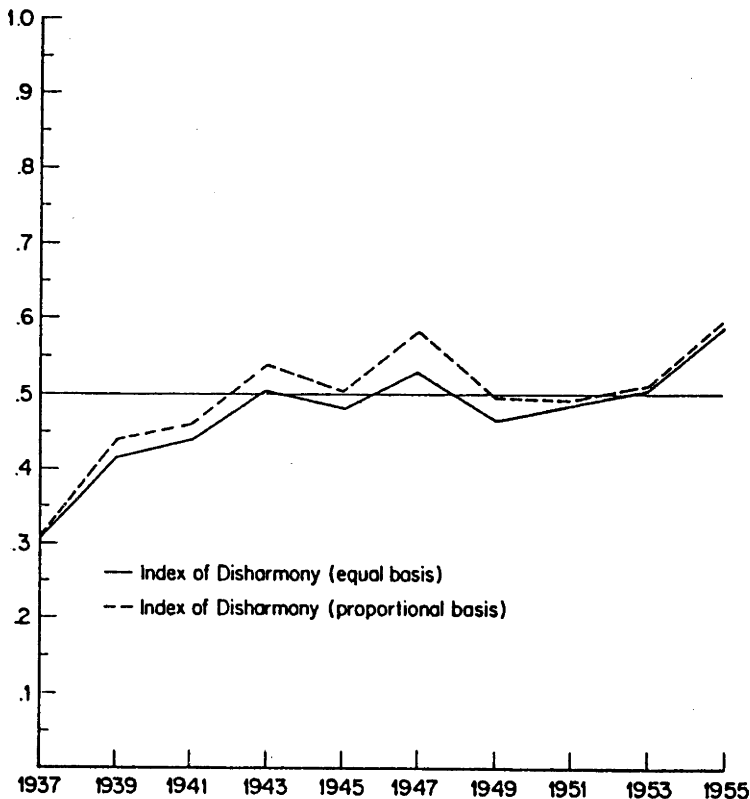
The second aspect of party influence on the operation of federations is the degree to which the constituent elements of the federation are controlled by the same political party. Riker and Schaps published an article in 1957 which set out to measure the extent of disharmony in the federal systems of United States, Canada and Australia by examining the pattern of partisan control of the governments of these federations.

The article is an ambitious one in that it attempts to accommodate the institutional subtleties of each system within an index of disharmony. This measure is based on the power index devised by Shapley and Shubik (Shapley 1953; Shapley & Shubik 1955) which indicates the probability that any member of a group will be in a pivotal position to decide the outcome of a vote within the group. Based on a variety of assumptions and subject to a number of caveats, Riker and Schaps sum the indices of the various players in the federal system that belong to the same party to produce an index of disharmony for a federal system.

¹³ This is also the conclusion of Wildavsky (1961) in an article written, however, long before major structural changes to the ALP and the greater professionalization of politics in all parties.

The result of applying the index to the participants in the federal process in the United States (the president, members of Congress, state governors, and members of state assemblies) for the chosen period (1937–1955) is to show a generally increasing index of disharmony ranging from a low of 0.3 in 1937 to around 0.6 in 1955 (figure 2.1). A score above the 0.5 level indicates that the party in control of the national level fails to control majority support in the states. The authors discuss the limitations of the measure as it effects the United States but express the belief that it nonetheless represents an accurate picture of the level of conflict within the federation.

Figure 2.1



Index of disharmony, United States, 1937–1955.

From Riker and Schaps 1957

The application of the index to Canada and Australia for the same period (figure 2.2) produces results that Riker and Schaps find 'startling' and 'extraordinary' (Riker & Schaps 1957, 285). This is because, in both federations, the index oscillates violently between periods with scores below 0.5 and periods above 0.5 (Riker & Schaps 1957, 286).¹⁴ Much of the explanation for this can, as the authors point out, be explained by the small number of component units in the two federations — there are only ten provinces¹⁵ and six states — and the effect of a parliamentary executive in making the partisan colour of the executive the same as that of the lower house of parliament, greatly reducing the number of autonomous players in the system. As a consequence, a changes in the party control of two or three provinces or states can have a large effect on the index (Riker & Schaps 1957, 287–8).

Riker and Schaps draw a number of conclusions from the erratic nature of the index in Canada and Australia, including ones that note the probable unsuitability of a parliamentary form of government for federal systems based on the United States model, and suggest that extent of disharmony in these federations must have a debilitating effect on government in comparison with the United States.¹⁶ But, as well as a number of acute observations about the federal systems of Canada and Australia and some suggestions for future research, the authors observe that:

Whether or not the index of disharmony validly represents political events in Canada and Australia, we are unable to say. We are quite certain, however, that the extreme variation in the Australian and Canadian indices is not an accident of the method of computation. (Riker & Schaps 1957, 286)

and,

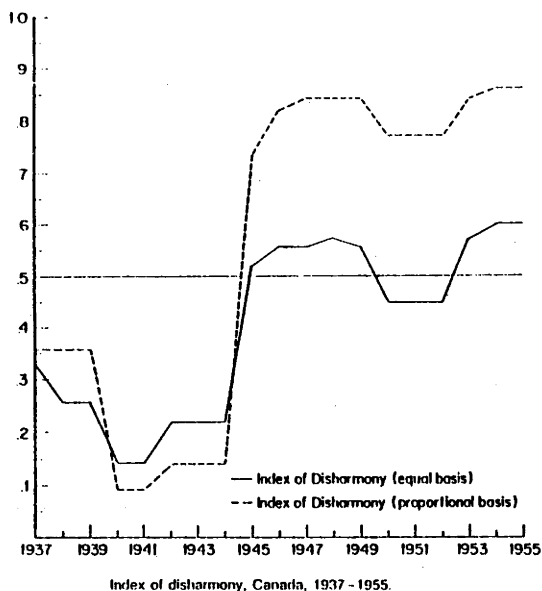
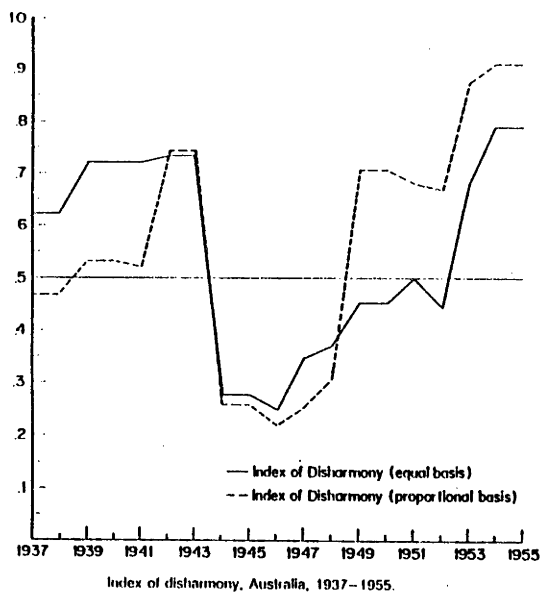
... we leave it to those more versed than we in the details of the operation of these two governments to devise a test of our index. (Riker & Schaps 1957, 286)

¹⁴ Riker and Schaps use two ways of computing the index of disharmony, one based on weighting the states equally (equal index), the other reflecting differences in the proportionate populations of the states (proportionate index). The proportionate index, while roughly following the general contours of the equal index, produces wider variations in both federations.

¹⁵ For much of the period covered by Riker and Schaps there were only nine provinces: Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949.

¹⁶ One of the themes of the article is the generally undesirable effects of a federal system, a view which prompted a reply from Pennock (1959) contending that a federal system enhanced rather than reduced harmony in the political process.

Figure 2.2



Party, Disharmony and the Australian Federal System

Riker and Schaps pose a challenge which, as far as can be ascertained by a search of the Australian literature, has never been taken up. Part of the reason for this is the complicated way in which Riker and Schaps devise their index. The use of the power index may have some justification in a system with many autonomous players in the federal process, but there are far simpler ways of constructing a plausible index of disharmony in the Australian context. If we assume that the dominant players in the Australian federal system are the executive arms of the state and Commonwealth governments (Sharman 1991), and that the major source of political disagreement in Australian politics is represented by the partisan divide between Labor and non-Labor, then an index which simply registers the number of state governments of the same partisan colour as the Commonwealth government will produce an index of partisan disharmony for Australia.

Riker and Schaps concede this when they observe:

In Australia the extreme variations in the index result from the fact that, in the period under consideration [1937–1955], the Labour party has usually controlled the sum of the states. Hence the index is low when the Labour party controls the Commonwealth, and high when it does not. (Riker & Schaps 1957, 288)

Hence, all that is needed is a way of indicating the degree of partisan similarity between Commonwealth and state governments.

This is the purpose of figure 2.3 which charts the number of state governments with the same partisan colour as the Commonwealth government since the present party system emerged in 1910. Although this does some violence to the subtleties of party politics, governments are dichotomized between Labor and non-Labor. For each year, the party with more than six months in office determines the partisan complexion of that year. The chart shows both the number of states with governments of the same party grouping as the Commonwealth, and the party in power in the national sphere. In 1960, for example, the Commonwealth had a non-Labor government, as did four of the states.

Table 2.1 indicates the distribution of states with the same party in government as the Commonwealth over the period of 83 years. The average number of states in any year is 3.5, with Commonwealth Labor governments having a slightly higher score (3.7 over 28 years) than non-Labor (3.4 over 55 years). For some 36 of the 83 years (43.4 per cent) there were three or fewer state governments with the same party in government as the Commonwealth — the Riker and Schaps (1957) measure of disharmony in a federation. Over the whole period, the balance is marginally in favour of harmony, with the mode being four states of the same party as the Commonwealth (32 years, 38 per cent of the period).

Figure 2.3
Number of State Governments with the Same Partisan Colour as the Commonwealth, 1910-1992

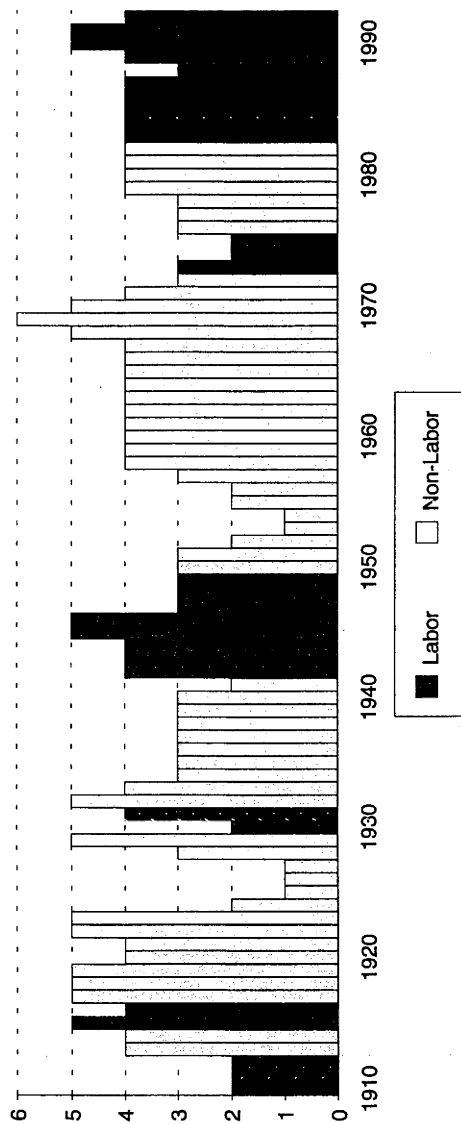


Table 2.1

Number of states with same party government as the Commonwealth 1901-1993	Number of years (percentage of period)
6	1 (1.2)
5	14 (16.9)
4	32 (38.6)
3	20 (24.1)
2	11 (13.3)
1	5 (6.0)
0	0

The profile of change presented in figure 2.3 has several features which deserve comment. The first is that the pattern between 1937-1955 is similar to that derived by Riker and Schaps (1957, 285) for the same time period from their index of disharmony (see figure 2.2).¹⁷ This confirms the general point that the simple indicator used for figure 2.3 discloses the same dynamic as was captured by the index of disharmony in the Australian context.

Another feature of figure 2.3 is the discontinuity in the pattern of partisan change around 1932. Before this date, there are large rises and falls with little pattern: afterwards there are long waves with highs in 1945-46, 1969, and 1990-91, and lows in 1941, 1953-54, and 1974-75. This appears to indicate some change in the way in which partisan change has occurred in the federation after the onset of the Depression in 1930. The steady drift towards highs and lows suggest that shifts in partisanship move through the federation with the Commonwealth leading (movement towards a high point) or lagging (movement towards a low) in a regular cycle. What drives these changes is an issue that falls outside the scope of this paper, but it is clear that overall pattern of partisan change for state and Commonwealth governments over the last sixty years has been a cyclical one in a way which is markedly different from the period preceding it.

A Test of the Index

This brings us to the question of a test for the index of disharmony. Does the fact of a large or small number of states with the same party in government as the Commonwealth correspond with changes in the

¹⁷ Note that the pattern has to be reversed: Riker and Schaps are measuring *disharmony*, figure 2.3 indicates partisan *similarity*.

level of conflict in the federal system, and what can be used as an indicator of conflict? Riker and Schaps (1957) suggest that one way of finding a independent measure of conflict in the federation is to look at the incidence of constitutional disputes before the courts, or, in the case of Australia, the flow of funds. Both of these are possible indicators but their application raises new problems of scaling, interpretation, and coping with the leads and lags of decisions affecting constitutional challenges and the transfers of funds.

Since the concern of this paper is to provide a general test of Riker's hypotheses, an appropriate measure of the level of conflict is the conventional wisdom found in the literature on the Australian federal process, the writings of those 'versed ... in the details of the operation of these two governments ...' (Riker & Schaps 1957, 286). To this end, the four peaks and troughs since 1945 in figure 2.3 provide a good test. The two low points, 1953-54 (only one state in line with the Commonwealth), and 1974-75 (two states in line) should correspond with periods of conflict. At the other end of the scale, the unanimity of 1969, and near unanimity (five states) of 1990-91 should indicate periods of harmony in the federation.

The period 1953-54 is at the bottom of a deep trough and near the end of a run of 11 years during which Commonwealth governments had less than a majority of states of the same party. In general terms, the index is accurate in pointing to a period of tension in the federation, particularly over the issue of finance (see Mathews & Jay 1972, 214-15). By the early 1950s, several states wished to withdraw from the uniform system of income taxation imposed by the Commonwealth in 1942, and resume levying their own income tax. This was prompted by financial stringency in part resulting from the economic dislocation of post-war reconstruction, inflation, and the effect of the Korean war. The states, however, were not unanimous in their willingness to scrap uniform taxation, the smaller states being much less enthusiastic than the more populous states of New South Wales and Victoria. Dissatisfaction with financial arrangements eventually prompted Victoria and New South Wales to challenge the uniform taxation scheme in 1955, a challenge which was unsuccessful. Financial arrangements with broad acceptability to all the states were not settled until 1959.

This is a substantial confirmation of the Riker and Schaps thesis, but it is hard to separate federal issues from the growing strife within the ALP and other contentious issues of national and state politics that were occurring at the same time. This contrasts with the period of the Whitlam Labor government, 1972-1975 which is notorious for its explicitly contentious relations with the states. The tension resulted in part because of the aggressive involvement of the Commonwealth government in areas previously the settled preserves of the states,

and partly because of the fierce polarization of party politics that developed during these years. The index of disharmony is clearly accurate in this instance.

The cases of 1969 and 1990–91 are more complex. In 1969, the only year since federation that all six states had governments of the same partisan colour as the Commonwealth, relations were severely strained between the Liberal Prime Minister Gorton and the Liberal premiers of New South Wales and Victoria. The tension sprang from disagreements over the allocation of financial resources, and resentment on the part of premiers Askin (New South Wales) and Bolte (Victoria) over what was seen as the centralist drive and political incompetence of the Gorton government. This hostility was a major factor in the removal of Gorton from the leadership of his party in 1971 (Reid 1971; Solomon 1971) and the installation of McMahon as a prime minister with a much more accommodating attitude towards the states. The general sense of state unease with the direction of Commonwealth policies and decisions of the High Court led to attempts to change the basis of financial allocations to the states (Premiers of all the States 1970), and to moves to set up a constitutional convention to check the growth of Commonwealth power (Ryan & Hewitt 1977, 2). In sum, the period around 1969–1970 corresponded with a time of great disharmony in the federal system, a finding at odds with the logic of partisan similarity in the federation.

A similar, if qualified, conclusion can be drawn from the period 1990–91. Even though the Commonwealth and all but one of the states had ALP governments, growing state financial stringency, frustration with the procedures for consultation between the Commonwealth and the states, impatience with what was seen as administrative interference on the part of the Commonwealth in areas of state responsibility, and the declining popularity of the Hawke government in the face of recession and a vigorous opposition, all led to pressures for substantial change to the relations between the two spheres of government.

Prime Minister Hawke attempted to use this dissatisfaction and turn it to his advantage by committing his government to reworking many aspects of intergovernmental relations with the cooperation of the states through a series of Special Premiers' Conferences in 1990 and 1991. But resistance from large sections of the Commonwealth bureaucracy and associated interest groups, opposition from a substantial portions of the parliamentary party and the ALP machine to the key proposal of giving the states greater access to tax revenue, and the leadership struggle with Keating, undid Hawke's plans. Hawke lost his job, and state frustrations remained.

In spite of the cooperation demonstrated at Special Premier's Conferences and much noted in the press (see Sharman, 1992), the force

behind the process was a well founded sense of grievance on the part of the states. While the hostility was not often as overt as in 1969–70, the drive for change was the same. Indeed, the commitment to substantial alteration of federal relationships across a broad range of policy areas was greater. This assertiveness on the part of the states does not sit well with the view that partisan similarity between the Commonwealth and the states will make for state subservience to the central government.

The results of this test of partisanship on the operation of the federal system are, to say the least, mixed. While the troughs in Commonwealth–state partisan similarity since 1945 correspond with intergovernmental disharmony, only in 1974–75 was there a period of extreme tension. At the other end of the scale, the uniform non-Labor partisanship of Commonwealth and state governments in 1969 coincided with a period of significant conflicts between the states and the Commonwealth over a broad range of issues. A similar period in 1990–91 also corresponded with a heightened level of conflict between the two spheres of government over, among other things, the ability of the states to increase their financial and administrative autonomy.

The score is thus only one decisive case of the level of partisan similarity corresponding with the predicted outcome (1974–75), one broadly confirming case (1953–54), one substantial contradiction (1990–91) and one complete contradiction (1969). This is not a good outcome for the Riker and Schaps thesis.

It could be argued that the evidence shows that partisan dissimilarity is consistent with Commonwealth state tensions but that similarity, far from reducing tensions, removes the force of partisan loyalty that will normally operate to restrain overt conflict when the governmental units in the federation are of mixed partisan colour. Partisanship, in other words, is a catalyst for coalition building. Once partisan differences between governments are removed, the states are less constrained from forming coalitions against the Commonwealth. This appears to be what happened in 1969 and, to a lesser extent, in 1990–91.

Before leaving the Riker and Schaps thesis, one further test can be applied using the data collected for figure 2.3. This is to the pattern of partisan affiliation of the most populous two states in the federation, New South Wales and Victoria, with a combined share of about two-thirds of the population.

The results are presented in figure 2.4 which shows the extent to which the governments of these two states were of the same partisan colour as the Commonwealth from 1910 to 1992, on the same basis as figure 2.3. As with figure 2.3, there is an interesting discontinuity in the results. Before 1950, both states had governments of the same party as the Commonwealth for most of the time: New South

Wales for 32 of the 40 years from 1910 (80 per cent), Victoria for 27 years (68 per cent), and neither of these states was out of phase with the Commonwealth for more than three years. After 1950, Victoria became much more consistent in matching the Commonwealth, with the same party in government for 36 of the 43 years (84 per cent of the time), but New South Wales moved strongly in the other direction, with only 13 years of similar governments (30 per cent of the time), and the periods in opposition are all longer than three years.

This picture makes little difference to an assessment of the general effects of partisan disharmony: the post war periods when both the most populous states were opposed to the Commonwealth do overlap periods of intergovernmental tension (1952-53-54, 1973-74-75, and 1981) but the problem of the nominally harmonious periods remains.

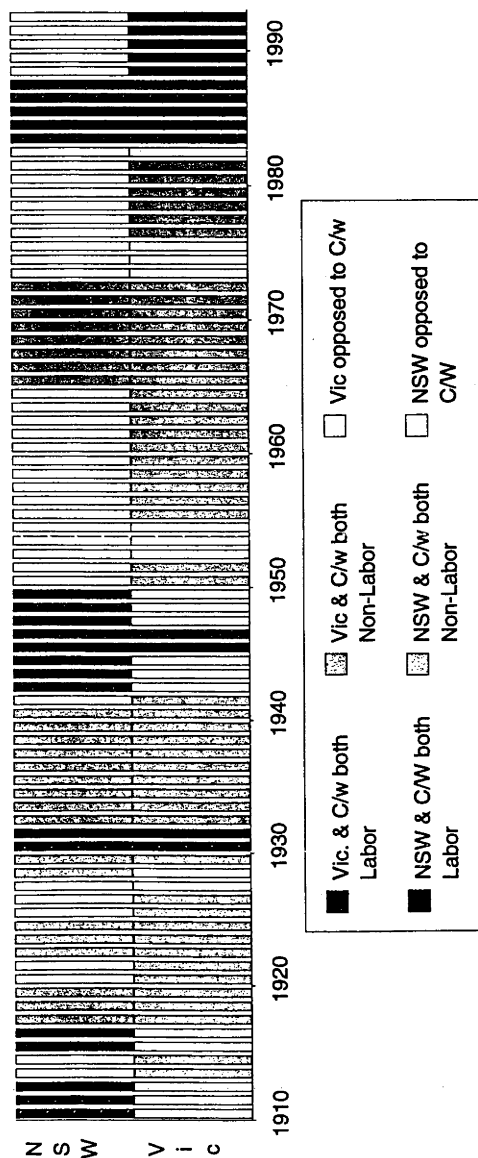
Again, the interest in figure 2.4 is not only in its application to Riker's general thesis, but in the patterns it discloses about changes in the federal process over time. To use Riker's terminology, New South Wales as the most populous state in the federation, moved into a disharmonious mode in 1950, both in comparison with the second most populous state, and with the pattern for both of these states for the period before 1950. This implies the maintenance of a strong force resisting the concentration of power, and continuing tensions between the two most populous components of the federal system.

Party and the Federal System

What remains of Riker's general proposition about party as the 'proximate cause of variation in the degree of centralization' in a federation (Riker 1964, 129)? The answer must be that his broad proposition is not confirmed, but in showing this, several less ambitious propositions are substantiated, and a great many interesting questions are raised.

This pattern is clearly seen in the attempt to measure disharmony in the federal system by examining the extent to which one party controls the various components of the federal system. In the Australian case, the measure was found to be of, at best, partial utility: while periods of disharmony as shown by the index did correspond with other assessments of tension in the federal system, so did periods of nominal harmony. But this finding leaves open the question of the importance of party in bilateral relations between particular states and the Commonwealth, and the role of party in forming coalitions which affect intergovernmental relations. The long term pattern of swings in the number of states with the same party in government as the Commonwealth since 1930 raises questions as to what drives the process of partisan change in Australia.

Figure 2.4
Governments of New South Wales and Victoria with the Same Partisan Colour as the
Commonwealth, 1910 to 1992



A similar result can be derived from looking at the partisan affiliation of the two most populous states since 1910: a simple dichotomy of harmony and disharmony is not particularly useful, but the position of New South Wales after 1950 raises the issue of what prompted this state's change to substantial periods of opposition to the Commonwealth, and what significance this has for the operation of the federal system.

As already discussed, the same situation applies to the notion of party discipline, although the problem is not the inadequacy of a measure but the vagueness of the key concept, party discipline. Application of a general proposition to Australia did not confirm the broad claims of Riker, but led to a number of conclusions about the role of party in the federal process.

Clearly, there is a large kernel of truth in Riker's claims about the key role of party in the dynamics of the federal system, but both the party system and the federal system involve highly diverse and complex sets of transactions. The search for explanations of political phenomena does not require that complexity be ignored, just that parsimony be exercised in the search for explanation.

But the greatest value of Riker's arguments is that, in the process of showing why his monocausal explanations are inadequate, attention is focused on a host of important issues. These include, the nature of the dynamics of the federal system, the importance of key components of the institutional structure of government, the importance of history as a source for comparison and the analysis of trends, and the critical examination of the nature of key concepts used to analyze the federal system. As with much of life, the important thing may not be the destination, but the journey.

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Chapter 3

FEDERALISM AND THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Terry Morley

Introduction: The Complex Party Organization

Allan Blakeney and Ed Broadbent were not speaking to one another. And this was odd for they had been fast friends. Yet in 1980 and 1981 each of them found the position of the other on various constitutional matters to be so unacceptable as to justify a certain incivility. Both of them had served long together in the righteous army known as the New Democratic Party (NDP) which was ever dedicated to brotherly love and to sisterly charity. This mattered not for they were both mad as hell.

At the time Allan Blakeney was the NDP premier of Saskatchewan. He had served earlier as the president of the federal organization of the NDP. Ed Broadbent was, at the time, the leader of the federal party and had been an NDP member of parliament since 1968. They knew each other well. But all the friendship, and all the renditions of *Solidarity Forever*, and all the years of hoping for the milk and honey of socialism, could not prevent a passionate disagreement inside the NDP over Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's plan to patriate the *British North America Act* and provide the country with a new constitutional arrangement.

A decade later, in 1992, as this is written, the NDP continues to be divided over plans and prospects for changing the Canadian constitution. It is true that Audrey McLaughlin, Broadbent's successor as federal NDP leader will gladly speak to Roy Romanow, once Blakeney's attorney-general, now the NDP premier of Saskatchewan. It is also true that Mike Harcourt, the NDP premier of British Columbia, can be found exchanging pleasantries with Bob Rae, the NDP premier of Ontario, at congregations of first ministers.

Nonetheless Harcourt, in the discussions leading up to the drafting of the ill-fated Charlottetown constitutional accord, made it clear that his government did not favour Rae's suggestion that a social charter, enforceable by the courts, should be entrenched in the constitution. Rae was compelled to state that his social charter need not be 'justiciable' —

another way of stating that he would accept a half loaf of piety because other New Democrats were not about to eat the full bread of the law so that social goals such as full employment and a clean environment could be stuffed full of judicial obiter. Audrey McLaughlin remains uneasy about the Saskatchewan government's support for an elected Senate and doubtful about the British Columbia government's desire for additional legislative power. It was not always thus.

Once upon a time, and in the beginning, Canada's democratic socialists could and did agree on the shape of the federation and on the details of constitutional reform. The party, formed in 1932 as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), conceived Canada as a country that was federal by necessity but necessarily guided by a strong central government. This view, with some modest amendments, continued to inform party policy until the party's organizational transformation of 1961 as the New Democratic Party. After 1961 questions of constitutional reform in Canada have continued to divide members of the NDP with a consequence that the national party's attempts to define a proper federalism have become significantly more ambiguous.

This shift in constitutional perspective will be set out in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. At the outset it is important to carefully ask why such a shift occurred. It is important to be careful because, for many students of the CCF/NDP, the answer seems obvious. They would answer that the policies defining proper constitutional change, along with other policies, economic, social and cultural, have inevitably become more ambiguous to reflect a gradual ideological drift to the right — a drift characterized in the literature as the underpinning of the dominant 'protest movement becalmed' analysis of change inside the CCF/NDP (Zakuta 1964; Whitehorn 1992b, 18–34).¹ In short the inability of the NDP to formulate a clear and unified constitutional platform is readily interpreted as a logical extension of a prevailing view that the party, in order to win a wider electoral following, has continued to modify the principles set out in the *Regina Manifesto*, the party's initial declaration of intent and principle.²

¹ A *Protest Movement Becalmed* was the title of Leo Zakuta's book on the Ontario CCF (1964). Alan Whitehorn (1992b) uses the phrase in the title of an historiographical article he has written as a means of setting out what he sees as the major theme developed in most scholarly dissections of the party.

² This perspective of a 'rightward drift' in CCF/NDP ideology is most starkly set out in *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea* (New Democratic Party 1974).

Yet there is another possible explanation for the post-1961 lack of consensus on the nature of the federation which, in my view, is more plausible. I wish to argue that the divisions and ambiguities inside the NDP over the proper form of Canadian federalism are an inevitable outgrowth of the institutionalization of the party as a complex organization. I argue further that the complexity of this organization is, in part at least, shaped by the decentralist realities of the Canadian federal system as it developed in the years following the end of the Second World War.

The notion of party as a complex organization is hardly new. In 1911 Robert Michels in his study of socialist parties in Europe, in particular the German Social Democratic Party, contended that the requirements of managing large scale organizations meant that all such party organizations, even those with professed democratic aims, were inevitably controlled by a small oligarchical leadership (Michels 1962, especially the introduction by S.M. Lipset). Certainly Michels' focus on party structure has influenced much writing on the CCF/NDP (see Whitehorn 1992b; and particularly Young 1969).

At the same time Michels has been much criticized by many students of parties (for example Epstein 1964) for proclaiming the tendency to centralized control in parties as a universal law which did not, and could not, adequately describe power relationships in large parties with disparate centres of authority. In his detailed study of the Michigan Democratic Party, Samuel Eldersveld (1964) demonstrated that Michigan Democrats were directed by a set of oligarchies that were autonomous, competitive and yet bound together within the institution of the Democratic Party. Eldersveld described this system of party governance as a stratarchy.

It is not, therefore, very important, whether Michels somewhat fulminating revelations about turn of the century European socialist parties are applicable to other parties such as the CCF/NDP. It is enough to take Michels' fundamental point that organizational structure is not at all subordinate to hopeful ideological language — not even to the stirring language of liberty and equality and fraternity — and that a proper study of a political party must take into account the morphology of party organization as well as the moralities of party ideas.

This insight does not need to manufacture scholarly hardship. There is, after all, an extensive literature on complex organizations to serve as a guide. It is true that most of this writing describes the fortunes of large scale entrepreneurial enterprise and the perceived misfortunes of larger scale government bureaucracies. But there is no logical reason to treat party organization as such a singular thing that an analysis of party cannot benefit from a knowledge of the rules that seem to govern business organizations and a grasp of the practices that seem to be associated with governmental organizations.

The literature that develops and makes use of organization theory, although its most proximate inspiration is a comprehending need to elaborate on Frederick Taylor's notions of scientific management (March & Simon 1958) is in large measure an intricate response to problems that arise from an embrace of Max Weber's typology of authority. Weber was at pains, as all know, to illuminate successive patterns of domination in social settings by providing an explanation for the practice of obedience. In certain settings individuals obey other individuals out of habit, because such obedience conforms with tradition. In other settings the habit of obedience is legitimated by a set of abstract rules which are believed to be designed to promote an understandable order. These rules, called laws when sanctified by government, are seen as rational because they relate to a perception of what is proper to the maintenance of order. And in some settings it is possible for certain personalities to command obedience because those who obey feel that the commanding personality represents their own desire for certainty.

As Amitai Etzioni argues 'this classification of authority may be applied on at least three levels' (Etzioni 1964, 52). It is, of course, most broadly, a theory of social transformation from traditional to bureaucratic society. It also applies to various institutions — the family, the church, the army, the civil service, and, to be sure, the political party — and can be used to explain, even justify, patterns of superordination, and subordination in particular organizations not excluding political parties.

As a theory of social transformation, Weber's analysis of legitimation is properly developmental and fits well with the Thomist idea of rationality and Calvinist notions about predestination. At the macro level of society Weber provides a kind of celebration of modernity. But Weber himself, as Etzioni states, 'was aware of the fragility of rational structure.. Not only are there constant pressures from outside forces to encourage the bureaucrat to follow norms other than those of the organization, but the subject's commitment to the bureaucratic rules tends itself to decline' (Etzioni 1964, 52). Thus the conceptual shifts from society to organization to individual relationships creates uncertainties about the typology which organization theory has attempted to resolve. Of course Weber himself was perfectly conscious that his ideal types were leaky conceptual vessels which needed the waterproofing of empirical research that would cement theory and practice. Unlike Marx, Weber was never a devout determinist.³

³ The commentaries on Weber and Marx are legion, and I do not pretend that my interpretation is a vital synthesis. It does owe something to Reinhard Bendix and Talcott Parsons but more to my own research on party organization, and in particular on the CCF/NDP.

In other words, theories of complex organizations help us compare patterns of dominance and power for the range of institutions and organizations that make up particular societies. The CCF/NDP is an institution with a particular organizational structure. It operates within a particular (and historical) setting. Its behaviour poses questions and the answers to those questions are appropriately found in such a theoretical context.

The Early Years: the CCF from 1933 to 1960

In the beginning were the words of the *Regina Manifesto*. In a section entitled *BNA Act* (found between sections entitled *Socialized Health Services* and *External Relations*) the CCF called for:

The amendment of the Canadian Constitution, without infringing upon racial or religious minority rights or upon legitimate provincial claims to autonomy, so as to give the Dominion Government adequate powers to deal effectively with urgent economic problems which are essentially national in scope; the abolition of the Canadian Senate.⁴

These vague pleasantries were fleshed out by an ancillary argument that the shift from an agricultural economy in 1867 to the industrial and commercial economy of the 1930s required the concentration of economic power in the hands of the central government. They were further elaborated in *Social Planning for Canada* produced in 1935 by the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR).⁵ A full chapter was devoted to 'Parliament and the Constitution' in which the intellectuals of the League developed the analysis that follows:

1. That since the last century there had been a concentration of power in the Cabinet and a reliance for governing on experts. The League, full of experts, and in favour of a powerful central planning mechanism, welcomed both trends. Not that the LSR wished to abolish Parliament. It was to remain 'the chief forum of the community' and

⁴ The *Regina Manifesto* can be found in many places. One of them is in Carrigan (1968, 119-27).

⁵ The LSR was a colonial version of the British Fabian Society. As Michiel Horn (1980) points out in his comprehensive history of the group, 'although a score of people had contributed to the volume *Social Planning for Canada* only seven members of the research committee signed their names to the preface and thus assumed responsibility for the book. They were Eugene Forsey, King Gordon, Leonard Marsh, J.F. Parkinson, Frank Scott, Graham Spry and Frank Underhill (Horn 1980, 68) The book, of course, was intended as a detailed elaboration of the *Manifesto* which had been particularly influenced by Scott and Underhill (who wrote most of the final draft).

would 'continue to perform one indispensable function ... of sifting out leaders from the mass of public men (sic), of distinguishing the mere windbags from the men of sound and shrewd counsel ...' (LSR 1935, 496).

2. That the Senate should be abolished because it did not and could not represent the regions as had been intended and instead always took the part of big business. In making this point the League authors⁶ asserted that it was not their intention to 'weaken or undermine the security of the provinces in our federal system' (LSR 1935, 500).
3. That the fathers of Confederation intended the distribution of powers should be altered from time to time as evidenced by the declaratory power⁷ and by obiter from the *Local Prohibition Case, 1896* seemingly favourable to justifying certain federal legislation on the grounds that it has a 'dimension as to affect the body politic of the Dominion' (LSR 1935, 502).⁸
4. That a socialist government of the Dominion 'carrying out the wishes of an electorate asking for change' has sufficient economic powers combined with the treaty making power and emergency powers to undertake almost all that would be necessary (LSR 1935, 503).

⁶ The colourful style employed in this chapter suggests much of the authorship here was from the pen of Eugene Forsey, a man devoted to the belligerent possibilities of the English language. Forsey, born in Newfoundland, was a Rhodes Scholar, a McGill professor (until his dismissal), a labour union functionary, a great admirer of the arch-Tory and former prime minister, Arthur Meighen, a confidant of another Conservative prime minister, John Diefenbaker, a constitutional expert of some renown who almost singlehandedly persuaded the scholarly establishment that Lord Byng was right to refuse Mackenzie King a dissolution in 1926, a CCF candidate and, before the end, a Liberal Senator. At the end Forsey remembers his life in an amusing memoir *A Life on the Fringe* (1990). He died in Victoria shortly after its publication at the age of 86.

⁷ Section 92(10)(c) states that even though works and undertakings are under provincial jurisdiction Parliament can 'declare' them 'to be for the general Advantage of Canada or for the Advantage of Two or more of the Provinces' thereby asserting jurisdiction over them.

⁸ It ought to be noted that the League authors forbore from informing their readers that the *Local Prohibition Case* was the most far reaching decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in favour of provincial legislative power. But why bother the good folk with detail?

5. That many provinces could be persuaded by a central government willingness to spend money to agree to allowing Ottawa to legislate concurrently in areas of provincial jurisdiction.
6. That if 'reactionary courts' refused to interpret the BNA Act in this light then amendments could be sought. The key amendments needed would give the Dominion 'unquestionable power to establish a national labour code', the necessary powers to 'enable the national economic plan to be centrally adopted and carried out', power to control all forms of trade including intraprovincial trade and power to oversee the whole taxation system. The League argued that past practice means that the consent of the provinces to amendments is not necessary and they asserted that the 'compact theory of Confederation' is 'utterly untenable'. They concluded therefore that amendments could be made, as in the past, by 'the action of the Dominion Parliament.
7. That to reassure minorities, including French Canadians, certain sections of the BNA Act could only be amended with the consent of all provincial legislatures. These were sections 51 and 51A, providing for a form of proportionate representation in the House of Commons from the provinces; section 92, subsection 1, giving provinces legislative jurisdiction over governmental structures which do not touch on the office of the Lieutenant Governor; section 92, subsection 12, dealing with the solemnization of matrimony; section 93 giving the provinces jurisdiction over education, and; section '135' (actually section 133) providing guarantees for the use of the English and French languages in Parliament, in the Legislature of Quebec and in federal and Quebec courts. The League would not give provincial jurisdiction over property and civil rights found in section 92, subsection 13 this 'entrenched' status unless it was clearly understood that such jurisdiction could not interfere with Dominion control over trade and commerce and labour conditions.⁹
8. That minorities should be further reassured by also entrenching a Bill of Rights in the Act to protect 'the individual's right to freedom of speech, of associations, of public meeting and of the press' (LSR 1935, 508).
9. That an amending formula which does not require a vote by the provinces as do the amending procedures in other federations is justified by the fact that the BNA Act gave the federal government the power

⁹ The reasoning for the repossession of Sir John A. Macdonald's centralist vision as described in sections 6 and 7 above, is outlined in LSR 1935, 505-8.

to appoint, instruct and dismiss the Lieutenant Governors of the provinces, to appoint superior court and other senior judges, to appoint senators, and the power to disallow provincial laws. The League authors conclude that Canada was 'intended to have a particularly unified form of federalism' (LSR 1935, 509).

The LSR's constitutional views did not simply reflect and reinforce the CCF's constitutional platform. These views also helped create a CCF perspective on the federation which shaped not only a party platform but, more importantly, a context, cultural in its reach, for CCFers so that they more firmly believed that fundamental constitutional reforms must proceed hand in hand with fundamental economic change. *Social Planning for Canada* provided the intellectual underpinnings for this constitutional ideology which was further extended by the writings of Forsey, and more notably, those of Frank Scott. Scott, the scion of a prominent English speaking family from Quebec and a law professor at McGill (and a noted poet) wrote extensively through the 1930s and 1940s and into the 1950s on constitutional matters from the centralist perspective (see Scott 1977). Scott published his views in both academic and popular journals.

It is little wonder, given the attractions of a strong central government for socialist planners, combined with Scott's range of argument and prestige (and with Forsey's acerbic wit) that provincial sections of the CCF espoused similar views to those of the League. Of course Scott's constitutional conceptions became more urgent for the CCF following the Privy Council decision in the *Labour Conventions Case* making a nullity of the treaty-making power in a self-governing Canadian federation¹⁰ and after the Privy Council struck down key social insurance and marketing board programs first proposed in the dying days of R.B. Bennett's government (these reforms were known as the Bennett New Deal).

Thus in 1938, in a brief to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations¹¹ the British Columbia CCF argued as follows:

1. The Dominion government should have the power to enforce international agreements in areas within provincial jurisdiction.

¹⁰ The treaty making power in section 132 of the BNA Act specifically referred to 'Treaties between the Empire and ... Foreign Countries' and the Board in this case insisted that this did not include treaties entered into by the Dominion Government on behalf of Canada.

¹¹ This came to be known as the Rowell-Sirois Commission after its two chairman, Newton Rowell, the Chief Justice of Ontario and Joseph Sirois, the Secretary of the Commission who succeeded to the duties of the chairman as a consequence of Rowell's illness.

2. The Dominion government should only extend tariff protection to industries that did not 'exploit' employees.
3. The Dominion government should have the power to set minimum national standards in such areas as housing, wages, pensions and unemployment benefits.
4. The Dominion government should have the power to establish programs that would equalize access to social benefits for all the provinces.
5. The Dominion government should have the sole power to levy income taxes.
6. The Dominion government should, at least initially, have the sole power to levy inheritance taxes but in return it should assume some provincial debts.
7. The Dominion government should have the power to intervene in the economy in areas under provincial jurisdiction if the matter 'affects the national economy'.

This brief, presented on behalf of the British Columbia CCF by Bert Gargrave and Wallis Lafeaux, would have effectively stripped provincial governments of any significant independent authority. Similar views were put forward by the Ontario CCF in a policy document issued just prior to the 1943 provincial election in support of the Rowell-Sirois Commission's proposal to give the Dominion a monopoly on levying and collecting major taxes such as the income and corporation tax in return for national adjustment grants to compensate provinces for spending on health, education and welfare.¹²

The formal position of the CCF, arrayed in its national and provincial costumes, does not begin to change until the 1950s. In the 1953 platform, the CCF continued to argue for federal government intervention in the economy, particularly in setting minimum national labour standards. It also continued to promote a Bill of Rights. Yet this CCF Bill of Rights, in addition to guaranteeing freedom of speech, of worship, of expression and 'the right of minorities to promote and develop their own individual cultures' would also protect 'the right to maintain provincial jurisdiction over education' and 'the right to maintain provincial jurisdiction over the administration of social welfare touching family life'. This new sensitivity to the fears of those concerned with provincial rights, particularly French Canadians in Quebec, was echoed in the short section on 'Canada as a Nation'.

¹² The details of the Ontario CCF's proposal can be found in (Morley 1984, 147-50).

Full recognition must be given to the fact that Canada is a bicultural and bilingual nation. A CCF government will give equal protection to both cultures and both languages.

Canada has the doubtful distinction of being the only member of the Commonwealth which does not have complete freedom to amend its own constitution and which does not have its own national flag. A CCF federal government will adopt a distinctive Canadian flag and national anthem and will give the Canadian people the power to amend their own constitution (Carrigan 1968, 204).

The concern with finding non-threatening words was almost an obsession for CCF leaders during the fifties. The party was at pains, in the aftermath of McCarthyism and at the height of the Cold War, to dissociate itself from the Communists. It was, as a consequence, very sensitive to any rhetorical flourishes which might be interpreted as advocating revolution. A six year process led to substituting the mild concoction of the *Winnipeg Declaration* for the heady brew of the *Regina Manifesto* with its ringing finale that 'no CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth'.¹³ In the *Winnipeg Declaration* the CCF murmured that it 'has confidence in Canada' and 'is proud of our country's origins in the British and French traditions which have produced our present parliamentary and judicial systems'.¹⁴ The party pledged itself as a believer in 'Canada's federal system' and promised that 'in a spirit of national unity it can safeguard our national well-being and at the same time protect the traditions and constitutional rights of the provinces' (Carrigan 1968, 217).

The Organizational Development of the CCF

This shift in CCF rhetoric (often accompanied by an actual shift in policy towards provincial rights if not a real shift in attitude about provincial power) occurs at a time when the party experiences a profound organizational transformation. Until 1950 the various provincial sections of the CCF had few organizational resources and were dependent on the national party for direction. It was the case that the party had formed a government in the province of Saskatchewan in 1944 and this provided the Saskatchewan CCF with a certain prestige and enabled it to employ several organizers. At the same time David Lewis, the party's driving

¹³ A full discussion of this process is found in Whitehorn (1992a, chap. 3).

¹⁴ The contributions of the Six Nations Confederacy to democracy had not then been discovered or invented.

force as the National Secretary, was very free with his advice for the Saskatchewan Cabinet most of which was invariably followed (see Young 1969, 148; Whitehorn 1992a, chap. 6; Lewis 1981; Smith 1989). It is also true that David Lewis was not always pleased with the pronouncements of the British Columbia CCF but this was not because they favoured provincial autonomy but rather because the party in British Columbia was a comfortable home for radicals and leftists who opposed Lewis and other national party leaders on ideological grounds (see Lewis 1981 especially chap. 20).

In 1950 Lewis left the national office in order to make enough money to raise his family by practising law in Toronto. Lorne Ingle, his successor, was not particularly assertive and the national office's capacities were further reduced in 1953 by the departure of Donald C. MacDonald (a Lewis protege) for the more conspicuous chore of leading the Ontario CCF. And while Lewis remained the central figure in the national party apparatus as the senior officer elected by convention, the burdens of his growing labour law practice did not allow him to devote the same energies to controlling the activities of CCF activists scattered through the country. Resources began to be appropriated by the larger provincial sections with Saskatchewan and British Columbia hiring more full time organizers, while the Ontario CCF became the happy recipient of largesse from the Steelworkers Union in the form of two Steelworker organizers assigned to work for the party in Canada's largest province.¹⁵

These organizational changes are not surprising. Even before Lewis discontinued his ceaseless work for the party, the fact of a government in Saskatchewan had created a cadre of CCF leaders in that province who felt it necessary to be mindful of public opinion as well as heedful to David Lewis' compelling propositions.

This was certainly the case with Tommy Douglas, the Saskatchewan premier.¹⁶ Douglas continued to favour aggressive federal intervention in economic matters. At the infrequent meetings of first ministers, he always had made a point to regret the fact that the Rowell-Sirois reforms were never instituted (a safe enough debating point since the three premiers who had ensured the demise of Rowell-Sirois in 1940 were all out of office by 1943), and another to praise the benefits of the wartime tax rental agreements which gave the federal government sufficient funds

¹⁵ One of the organizers C.C. 'Doc' Ames was assigned to work in northern Ontario from Kirkland Lake and the other, Fred Young, a former national director of the YMCA in Canada, was based in Toronto. Young had lost to MacDonald the Ontario CCF leadership and later became a member of the provincial parliament (MPP).

¹⁶ See Whitehorn (1992a chap. 6).

to fight the war and, in Douglas' view, sufficient funds to fund the peace. In that light he argued that the Liberal government's reconstruction program proposed in 1946 should have been implemented and that the federal government was generally responsible for ensuring that provinces and municipalities had sufficient funds to carry out their responsibilities in the areas of health, education, welfare and recreation.¹⁷ But these propositions were couched in the pragmatic language of cost and benefits to individual Canadians, particularly those from Saskatchewan, rather than as being necessary for the creation of a socialist state.

Moreover, the Douglas government was busy in these years creating crown corporations, regulatory boards and other emanations of the provincial state in order to carry out and institutionalize its program. These provincial agencies had two effects on the CCF. First, as was the case in other jurisdictions, the proliferation of agencies led to inter-agency rivalry and to a recognition that governments, even CCF governments, would not (some would say could not) march in lockstep toward the New Jerusalem. Secondly, many of these agencies provided an institutional setting quite apart and autonomous from the CCF national office (and sometimes autonomous from the CCF provincial office and the Saskatchewan cabinet) where CCF activists were able to learn and hone organizational skills.

The New Democratic Party in a time of (Quiet) Revolution

The growth of somewhat autonomous centres of power within the party became more pronounced in the 1960s with the translation of the CCF into the NDP. As well, the party's vision of the federation was substantially altered as the theme of a bilingual and bicultural Canada came to be played front and centre on the national political stage.

In 1960, when the CCF leadership was working hard at cementing the alliance with the major trade unions and hopeful that many 'liberally-minded Canadians' would join in to swell the ranks of the so-called 'new party' there was also an election in Quebec. That election brought the Liberals to power under Jean Lesage and inaugurated what is known as the 'Quiet Revolution'. The Quiet Revolution was a defining force in Quebec and in Canada and, not surprisingly, a powerful strategic constraint on the political arrangements of the fledgling NDP.

¹⁷ In particular Douglas' formal presentations to the 1950 and 1955 Federal-Provincial Conferences in which he provides a comprehensive argument for a federation dominated by a powerful central government (Canada, *Proceedings of Dominion-Provincial Conferences, 1950 and 1955*. pp. 43-53 and pp. 80-91).

At the founding convention of the NDP held during the summer of 1961 a major controversy erupted over the substitution of the word 'federal' for 'national' in the party constitution. In the CCF constitution there had been a national leader and national officers and a national council. The NDP was to have a federal leader and federal officers and a federal council. The use of national was felt to be politically incorrect by the party leadership because they had been told that it would be interpreted in Quebec as implying that the party did not accept that there were two nations in Canada — one English speaking, the other French speaking — and would be seen, therefore, as unsympathetic to the reforms of the Quiet Revolution.

The party leadership was not in the least unsympathetic to the reforms of the Quiet Revolution and secretly felt that some Quebec Liberals, notably the Quebec energy minister Rene Levesque, had more in common with their ideas than with the views of the federal Liberals. Anxious not to send the wrong signal to Levesque and other seemingly sympathetic Quebec reformers, it took but a moment to frogmarch 'national' to the historical documentary ashcan.¹⁸ Many delegates to the convention were incensed by the change. Eugene Forsey found the change to be so mistaken that he stormed from the convention and resigned from the party.¹⁹

The convention paid no heed as it passed a constitutional program far different than the one Forsey, Scott and others had framed for the CCF in the 1930s. Some fundamental points remained. The NDP still called for an entrenched bill of rights and still demanded the abolition of the Senate. It still wanted to relieve the British of any responsibility for amending the BNA Act, though it was now pledged to 'work out a reasonable method of amendment with the provinces' (Carrigan 1968, 280).

More importantly the NDP was prepared to acknowledge that 'social and economic planning must take place at all levels of government', that the major tax field should be shared with the provinces, that wealth and income should be redistributed through unconditional grants to provincial governments, that provinces should be able to opt out of shared cost programs and in 'areas affecting education, language and similar rights now in the British North America Act, where a province does not participate in a joint program it will not forego its right to equivalent funds' (Carrigan 1968, 280).

¹⁸ With apologies to Leon Trotsky.

¹⁹ A tough decision for an employee of the Canadian Labour Congress which was very much committed to the new party concept. Forsey's views on this incident are related in Forsey (1990).

Various party leaders reinforced this new commitment to the logic of 'two nations' in speeches lauding the idea of 'co-operative federalism'. David Lewis, now an MP and the party's Deputy Leader (and also still the most powerful figure on the party's federal council) put the NDP position to an early sitting of the new House of Commons elected in 1962.

As everybody knows, Canada was founded to a great extent by two distinct nations ... it is not always easy to reconcile the two cultures ... we have to seek the means of co-ordinating our economic objectives, as well as our economic resources throughout Canada, without resorting to centralization and so as to ensure for each province, as well as for the federal government, full respect of their particular rights. (Hansard 4 October 1962, 186)

All this was a far cry from the views expressed by David Lewis and Frank Scott in 1943 in their book *Make This Your Canada* (Lewis & Scott 1943).

Yet it would be wrong to conclude from this that the NDP had completely abandoned the CCF affection for a strong central government. Tommy Douglas would often make commendatory references to the Rowell-Sirois report, and in 1965 he argued that 'concessions' were made to the provinces which, 'wise or unwise' it needed to be remembered that 'if Canada is to continue as a viable economy there are powers which the government of Canada must retain ...' (Hansard 30 June 1964, 4873). Andrew Brewin, the party's critic on constitutional matters, made a number of eloquent speeches opposing the Fulton-Favreau amending formula as too rigid because it gave all the provinces a veto on the most important constitutional changes.

The most obvious means for the NDP to reconcile its centralist roots and desires with decentralist demands from Quebec was to advocate some form of special constitutional status for Quebec. Successive governments in Quebec in the 1960s promoted the idea of special status. For New Democrats the idea seemed a way of placating Quebec reformers without giving up on having an interventionist federal government play the role of senior partner in managing the economies of the other nine provinces. The centralist cake could still be displayed on Parliament Hill after the government in Quebec City had eaten its fill. New Democrats could thereby have their gâteau and eat it also.

The 1968 NDP platform, with echoes from 1933, stated that 'Canadian federalism needs a central government able to give overall direction to our economy and overcome regional disparities of wealth', and went on to declare that:

Our federal system must also have the flexibility to recognize the particular position accorded to Quebec since 1867 as the centre of the French speaking community in Canada. She must have the right and

the funds to fulfil government responsibilities which affect the community — such as social security, education, town planning and community development.

By accepting this particular situation, Canadians elsewhere can seek federal action in these fields without creating misunderstanding, frustration and intolerable strains to our Confederation. (Carrigan 1968, 343)

It seemed a happy solution, just a shade bolder than the federal Liberal government's policy of treating Quebec differently from other provinces in the management of social and economic policy initiatives such as the Canada Pension Plan, universal health insurance, hospital insurance, welfare programs and others. Then Lester Pearson retired as prime minister and was succeeded by Pierre Elliott Trudeau who had very different views on the proper nature of Canadian federalism.

The New Democratic Party and Pierre Trudeau

There is too much written on Trudeau to require any rehearsal here of his life and times, except to say that the NDP were surprised, both by his shining popularity in the 1968 election, and by the crushing logic of his case against special status. Trudeau had been a sometime CCF/NDP activist (though never formally a member) who had been asked to write the essay on federalism and the constitution for *Social Purpose for Canada*, a book designed as a latter day version of the LSR volume to provide an intellectual stimulus at the formation of the NDP. In his piece Trudeau (1961) admonished the party to focus on winning power in Ottawa and to recognize that under the Canadian constitution much radical reform could be undertaken by provincial governments.

As recently as 1963, Trudeau had campaigned vigorously against Pearson's decision to accept nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, supporting his friend Charles Taylor's failing bid for election in Montreal's Mount Royal constituency. Two years later Trudeau handily defeated Taylor to become the Mount Royal MP. He was appointed as Pearson's parliamentary secretary, in 1967 he became Minister of Justice, and in 1968 he capped his whirlwind political ascent with victory in the contest to succeed Pearson as Liberal leader and prime minister. Trudeau was driven by a compelling desire to defeat all the forces that were advocating special status for Quebec. He argued that if the Quebec government were given powers not available to other provinces it would mean that the writ of Ottawa would not run far in Quebec and that Quebecers could not legitimately play a full role in the government of Canada. For all his 1961 advice to the NDP, Trudeau did not want himself, or his compatriots in Quebec, to forego the joys of governing from Ottawa (Trudeau 1968).

And joy he had. He won a sweeping victory in 1968 and this triumph made it impossible for the NDP to continue to advocate special status, even during the years 1972 to 1974 when Trudeau, in a minority position in Parliament, was dependent on NDP support to stay in office. Lewis, elected as federal leader in 1971, was able to extract various concessions on social and economic policy from Trudeau but did not attempt to move the Liberals on any constitutional question. This is not surprising since the concept was not popular in the country, particularly in western Canada where, during much of this period, the NDP formed governments in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

This led to further confusion for the country, and for the NDP. A confusion intensified by Trudeau's defeat in the 1979 general election; by the Parti Québécois' hope that a referendum held during the tenure of a Conservative government (the Conservatives were long unpopular in Quebec and in 1979 could only manage to win two of the seventy-five seats there) would produce a narrow win for negotiating sovereignty; by the Clark government's precipitate defeat; by Trudeau's return to power and glory; and by the defeat of the referendum in the wake of Trudeau's promise to once and for all bring about a new constitutional arrangement. The final element of confusion was a second victory for the Parti Québécois in the 1981 Quebec election, fresh though they were from the referendum defeat.

Trudeau took advantage of all the confusion by declaring he would proceed to bring the constitution to Canada by finding an amending formula that would cut the formal tie with Westminster and that this constitution would contain a bill of rights binding on both federal and provincial governments²⁰ and that if he could not get agreement from the provinces on these reforms he would proceed unilaterally to demand that the British Parliament give him what he asked.

Trudeau announced this strategy in early October 1980 and within hours Ed Broadbent, the party's federal leader since 1975, pronounced his blessing. As Whitehorn points out, this for Broadbent, 'seemed reasonable' since an entrenched bill of rights and patriation had been advocated by 'Canadian social democrats for several decades' (Whitehorn 1992c, 193). Broadbent had neglected to consult his caucus or NDP provincial leaders on his stand and soon found that he had unleashed a firestorm in the party. He had thought that he was only agreeing to support what the party had always advocated. He had not understood that the party was no longer what it had been. If the constitutional questions

²⁰ John Diefenbaker, in 1960, had produced a Bill of Rights out of Parliament which could not bind provincial legislatures and, as a consequence of judicial decision, had almost no impact on federal laws.

facing Canada were increasingly complex so too was the organization known as the New Democratic Party.

The Complex New Democrats

Alan Whitehorn and others argue that Broadbent's great mistake was not to consult his colleagues in caucus and in the major provincial parties, particularly Allan Blakeney in Saskatchewan which, according to Whitehorn, was 'a surprising omission given the fiercely democratic culture of NDP politics' (*ibid.*). Yet Broadbent's predecessors as leader had often taken important decisions without consultation — Woodsworth disbanded the Ontario CCF organization without giving anyone notice of his intention and M.J. Coldwell, bolstered by the dominating Lewis intellect, supported Canada's participation in Korea to the dismay of many party regulars. In 1970 Douglas announced to the caucus that he was personally going to oppose the invocation of the War Measures Act whatever they, or the people of Canada, might think or do, and Lewis, a master of arbitrary action, forced a very unwilling caucus to cause the 1974 election by withdrawing support from the Liberal government, in circumstances that would seem to do much greater damage to the party myths of obedience to convention decision and caucus collegiality than Broadbent's declaration. Yet Broadbent was pilloried in a fashion that was never the lot of his predecessors. In attempting to understand this it is helpful to consider the following:

1. In 1961 the new NDP constitution declared that provincial parties were autonomous. This was not to say that the federal council could no longer disband a provincial party. It could.²¹ But this draconian measure was now the only means that the federal organization had for controlling the activities of provincial parties, and since it was so obviously a weapon of last resort, the 1961 constitution effectively gave provincial organizations, particularly those which did not rely on subsidies from the federal organization, a real freedom to take independent policy positions and to pursue particular fundraising and election strategies.
2. NDP governments were formed in three provinces during the 1970s, and are again found in three provinces (Ontario Saskatchewan and British Columbia) in 1992. It would not be correct to say that this

²¹ The New Brunswick NDP council was disbanded by the federal party in 1982 and in 1991 the Quebec party formally renounced its constitutional ties with the federal organization and the federal organization made it clear that this group of individuals were no longer to be considered part of the NDP.

was a consequence of party activists paying attention to Pierre Trudeau's 1961 prescription, but it is evident that this meant that New Democrats were forced to pay attention to the desires of voters in different sections of the country. Those voters in the different regions and provinces have rather different interests and therefore expect different policies from their governments.

3. Since 1961 the provincial organizations have been completely responsible for enrolling members. Until the 1974 election expenses reforms, membership drives were a major source of funds for the NDP. Moreover, the skills and infrastructure needed to run membership drives developed by some provincial parties, notably those in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and later in Manitoba and Alberta, were the same skills and infrastructure needed to manage other fundraising activities.
4. Although provincial parties shared membership fees and other donations with the federal party, they were able to keep the largest proportion for themselves and, equally important, were able to control the cash flow which they used to expand their own complement of organizers and other staff. Party bureaucracies grew at both federal and provincial levels, partly as a result of more public monies being spent on research and other assistance for MPs and MLAs in the 1970s and 1980s, and partly as a result of the flow of money generated by the tax credit scheme in the 1974 Election Expenses Act; but the growth was greater for provincial party bureaucracies than at the federal level.
5. Indeed, because the provincial parties had control of most party fundraising efforts, by 1974 the monies raised through the use of the federal tax credit continued, for the most part, to flow through provincial party offices, and much of it was used for provincial party purposes, in particular for the expansion of provincial party organizational capacity.²²
6. Broadbent himself had no opportunity to portray himself as one of the founders of the movement. He had never supped with J.S. Woodsworth. Now Woodsworth, the party's first leader, was a true charismatic. He had been ordained a Methodist minister at a time when clergymen in Canada, particularly eloquent clergymen, were

²² Bill Stanbury, the author of a major study on party finance for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Finance, was so incensed at the federal provincial transfers within the NDP that he strongly urged the commission to recommend that they be made illegal (see Stanbury 1993). For more information on current NDP financial practices see Morley (1992).

seen to speak the word of God and to represent divine providence, harsh though that providence might seem in prairie Canada. Woodsworth's successor, M.J. Coldwell was the secular equivalent of the clergyman — a school principal. And a devout Anglican layman to boot. Tommy Douglas²³ was a Baptist minister and it was often said that he spoke with the tongues of angels, a trait associated with charismatics. David Lewis was certainly not a clergymen, yet he spoke with such passion and conviction that it was hard to doubt that he was inspired by forces unseen.²⁴ He and Douglas were both present at the creation and had supped often with Woodsworth. Broadbent was not born when the CCF was founded. He was no preacher. When he was elected as an MP he was an assistant professor of political science at a fledgling university. Such a post does not give its possessor of it the same authority as a school principal from the 1930s. What all this meant was that Broadbent was the first party leader who did not own a charisma to allow him to transcend the party's embrace of rational-legal bureaucratic norms.

7. The fact that the party's national officers and executive came to be selected by provincial and regional caucuses at federal conventions in the 1970s, rather than through the predictable outcome of the struggle between right and left in the organization, indicates that this bureaucracy was, if not pluralist, at least manifold in its sins and wickednesses. Before the provincial caucuses became dominant at federal conventions, the choices for executive posts were made by a small group of party leaders who controlled the naming of the 'official slate', a device used by the leadership to maintain its control of the organization.²⁵ After 1975 the official slate was simply a compendium of provincial slates and those named to these slates were elected by provincial caucuses at the convention.

²³ Hazen Argue, an MP from Saskatchewan was elected the last CCF National Leader in 1960. He achieved this prize as a gesture to the small caucus that had survived the electoral rout of 1958 (only eight CCF MPs were elected and Coldwell and Stanley Knowles, the Deputy Leader — and another preacher — were defeated in seemingly impregnable seats. Argue did not win the affection of the party and was fortuitously defeated by Douglas for the NDP leadership in 1961. He quit the party in 1962, joined the Liberals, served briefly as a cabinet minister and ended his career as a Liberal senator.

²⁴ Cameron Smith (1989) suggests that those forces were the memories of Russian pogroms and the Jewish Bundist response that had brought Lewis' family to the new world.

²⁵ For more detail on the intricate workings of slatemaking see Morley (1984, 188, 189).

8. Once David Lewis stepped down as leader and ceased to have the dominant influence he had commanded for almost forty years in the party, no other individual was able to stitch the labour movement into the embroidery of the party leadership's strategy.²⁶ The labour movement acted as yet another province or region, selecting its own representatives on the federal executive in caucus and challenging party decisions, sometimes in public, when annoyed. In a sense the labour bureaucracy in those unions affiliated with the NDP saw itself serving the same movement as the party bureaucracy. But it was a movement that marched to a cacophony of drumbeats and exhibited a variety of perspectives.

The NDP and the 'Canada Round'

These changes in organization and structure parallel the change in the party's attitude to the federation: an attitude which, in its most contemporary form, may be described as disjointed.

Yet after the collapse of the Meech Lake accord, intended to reconcile Quebecers to the Trudeau constitutional reforms of 1982, New Democrats, like other Canadians, were concerned to develop a coherent and consensual policy on constitutional change that would satisfy Quebecers and be accepted in the rest of Canada.

The 1991 federal convention workshops were set up to discuss various ideas for reform being considered by the federal caucus, by a party committee chaired by Audrey McLaughlin established at the 1989 convention,²⁷ and by several provincial caucuses and parties. The workshops focused on the process for achieving constitutional change after Meech, on the perceived need for an accord on the economy; on the perceived need for an accord on the environment, on the perceived need for an accord on social policies and on the need for an accord on the constitution itself.

In drafting a resolution to summarize these workshop discussions, the delegates took refuge in ambiguity. Thus while the delegates agreed that changes to the division of powers were needed they preferred not to provide any specific changes which the party might advocate instead asserting that whatever changes were made should 'benefit the Canadian

²⁶ Stephen Lewis, David's son and leader of the Ontario NDP from 1970 to 1976 might have been able to broker the slightly different interests of the party leadership and the trade union leadership if he had enjoyed a more robust sense of his own political destiny.

²⁷ That convention featured a leadership contest and most delegates, therefore, had even more pressing concerns than constitutional reform.

people and not simply governments'. They did agree that certain basic principles should 'guide the participation of New Democrats in the constitutional debates'. These were listed as:

1. Cooperation in the exercise of collective responsibility for economic, social and environmental well-being;
2. Accommodation of diversity — French and English speaking, multi-cultural and multi-racial, regions, provinces, territories, minorities;
3. Respect for the full equality of women;
4. Quebecers' right to determine freely their future;
5. Aboriginal rights and self-government;
6. Parliamentary democracy;
7. Improvement of the human condition to achieve equity of result for Canadians;
8. Individual and collective rights;
9. Empowerment of local communities and peoples;
10. Equal access for all Canadians to programs of health, education and welfare;
11. Respect for the full equality and guaranteed accessibility to full political participation of disabled persons.

Yet even these warm sentiments provided the convention with problems. A fierce debate raged on whether to call for the removal of section 33, the 'notwithstanding clause', from the constitution, and in the end the delegates agreed to the temporizing measure of instructing a committee to review the point.²⁸ The convention agreed to recognize 'the right of Quebecers to self-determination' and to 'respect the outcome of a democratic exercise of that right', but did not attempt the hard task of reconciling this respect with 'the inherent right of aboriginal peoples to self-government' to include 'negotiation of control by Aboriginal people of their land and resources'. No one wanted to talk about the future of the James Bay project set in the 'territory' of the Cree should Quebecers choose the outcome of independence. And while the party in convention 'reaffirm[ed] its longstanding commitment to abolish immediately the unelected, unrepresentative Senate' it also 'recogniz(ed) the need for new

²⁸ In order to achieve consent from most provinces for the inclusion of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the constitution Trudeau, in 1982, agreed that certain important guarantees in the Charter could be overridden by Parliament or by provincial Legislatures passing a declaration stating that 'notwithstanding' the provisions of the Charter a law would, for a renewable period of five years, not be subject to the Charter guarantees.

federal institutions which will give provinces, territories and regions a democratic voice'.²⁹

The ambivalent language of convention resolutions reflected the ambiguous and diverse impulses among New Democrats about post-Meech constitutional reform. And yet, in the end, a consensus of sorts was achieved — the Charlottetown Accord. It was supported by the federal leader, by the federal parliamentary caucus, by the three provincial premiers and their followers and by the provincial NDP leaders and party executives. The consensus failed — for New Democrats and for Canada following a national referendum which saw the Accord rejected by the majority across the country and in six of the provinces, including British Columbia and Saskatchewan. And it was ratified by only the barest of majorities in Ontario. That defeat, in part and in turn, reflected the reality in the NDP that the consensus of sorts was cobbled together out of fundamental disagreements about critical items of Canadian constitutional concern. The particular concerns were:

1. The ratification process. The convention resolution called for 'a forum such as a constituent assembly of Canadians to develop and recommend constitutional amendments'. The British Columbia and Saskatchewan NDP governments were not at all keen about this proposal and, since Quebec and the federal government also were displeased with the idea, the federal NDP had to live with the abandonment of this popular device.
2. The Social Charter. When this was first proposed in 1990 by the Ontario Government and some sections of the labour movement it was intended that this charter, to include rights to health care, employment, income security, including pensions, education and a clean environment, would be enforceable by the courts. The 1991 federal convention resolution is silent as to enforceability, but clear opposition to using the courts from the British Columbia NDP caused the federal party to seek another means of overseeing the application of the Charter. After considerable discussion it was agreed that a reformed Senate could perform this task. Party leaders felt that one of the advantages of this proposal was to justify New Democrat support for a reformed Senate by giving it this 'social democratic' task³⁰ and Audrey McLaughlin announced this policy on 5 February 1992. In some sense a consensus was bought on the issue by the expedient of

²⁹ Taken from the text of the resolution passed by the 1991 NDP Federal convention N.1.8.

³⁰ Minutes of the federal NDP Canadian Constitution Committee, 30 January 1992.

leaving it unclear whether the Senate would have any powers of enforcement beyond moral suasion.

3. Senate reform. After much agonizing the federal party was able to accept the idea of a reformed upper house. But provincial NDP governments were certainly not of one mind on what this upper house would be like.³¹ Bob Rae was initially reluctant to support any reform other than abolition and has been very much opposed to the notion of a triple 'E'.³² Senate with each province having the same number of members. Roy Romanow was officially a supporter of triple 'E' and equal representation, though he has recently proposed that while each provinces should have the same number of senators those from the larger provinces should have more votes on certain issues.

Mike Harcourt, the premier of British Columbia, stated that he would prefer equal representation from the regions, not the provinces, provided that there were five not four 'regions' in Canada — British Columbia to be one of them. British Columbia's constitutional affairs minister, Moe Sihota, proposed that the second chamber should be a house of the provinces where the members, 'elected' in after a fashion, most likely as MLAs seconded to do double duty, would clearly represent the interests of provincial governments, or, possibly, provincial legislatures, in Ottawa.

4. Aboriginal self-government. All sections of the NDP agreed that the words 'inherent right to self-government' should be inserted in the constitution without need for clarification. This also became the consensus of constitutional affairs ministers representing the federal government and all provincial governments. After agreeing to this, Moe Sihota, sensitive to the problem that in British Columbia the package, including the clause on aboriginal self-government, was necessarily to be voted on by the people of the province, subsequently argued that some clarification was needed to assuage fears of non-natives in BC about land claims and ownership of resources being affected by such a self-government clause.
5. Quebec as a distinct society. The different sections of the NDP agreed that this should not be made an issue and that a formula of words likely to get the most widespread support possible from all partisan sides should be accepted. New Democrats, and others, feared that if

³¹ But then, when any two or three are gathered together in Canada, they cannot agree on the details of Senate reform.

³² So-called because the reformed senate was to have 'equal representation from each province, sufficient powers to make it 'effective, and its members were all to be 'elected.

emotions were set loose on the notion of 'distinct society' then, what would be said in debate, and would be done by voters in referenda, might well result in the fracture of the country. There were, nonetheless, significant differences within the party concerning Quebec's constitutional place in the *fédération*. The federal caucus and party did not state an outright opposition to some form of asymmetrical federalism which would allow Quebec to exercise certain powers that other provinces would not exercise in the interests of maintaining a strong central government. This view was given brief encouragement before the Charlottetown meeting at the federal government's first constitutional conference in Halifax on the division of powers. There, most participants, including 'ordinary Canadians' embraced the idea of some special status — with another name — for Quebec. Bob Rae also made encouraging noises at different times, but Harcourt and Romanow were vehemently opposed and insisted that they would not agree to any constitutional package which gave to Quebec legislative powers not given to other provinces.

Certainly the various sections of the NDP agreed on a number of constitutional proposals. They all agreed that property rights should not be entrenched in the constitution³³ and all agreed on the necessity of ambiguous language. Yet on the issues central to the Charlottetown round of constitutional negotiations, on those issues where various elements in the country were divided, so too were the various sections of the NDP. New Democrat leaders preferred to use the rounds of negotiations leading Charlottetown to promote constitutional schemes which they felt would unite the party itself, such as a proposal that if there is to be a reformed Senate then half the senators should be women, even though such schemes were not part of the wider debate on constitutional change among governments in Canada.

Conclusion: The Complex Party Organization

There have always been divisions and policy differences in the CCF/NDP. In the early years these were primarily ideological, with the minority favouring nationalization and neutrality and the majority favouring a mixed economy and multilateral alliances dominated by the United States and Britain. There were also differences over electoral strategy, with the minority favouring political education to raise the consciousness of working people and the majority favouring election

³³ Although the BC NDP caucus in 1986 supported a Social Credit motion in the legislature to initiate a formal amendment to the Constitution Act 1982 to do just this.

campaigning to gather sufficient votes to form governments that would undertake programs for working people. Of course these fractions were themselves often divided; but, as external circumstances forced the party to make policy and strategic choices, it was invariably the case that a council or convention or caucus decision would determine the matter and confirm the direction that the party was embarked upon.

The evidence provided here shows that the differences within the NDP over constitutional reform and over the 'inherent' nature of the Canadian federation cannot be resolved in this manner. Indeed they cannot be resolved at all, and party leaders are at great pains not to attempt such a resolution for fear that those in the party who are defeated on these issues will see the defeat as a repudiation, not only of themselves and their views, but also of the views of their constituents. Party leaders prefer obscure language and ambiguous action to a declaration of intent that will never be accepted by those elements of the party who intend something else.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that the party, shaped by its environment, can no longer define issues in terms of ideology in a culture which celebrates the end of ideological debate, all the while proclaiming the virtues of detailed understanding and technical dexterity in overcoming the problems of the public weal. Moreover, it is not necessary to accept the debatable tenets that ideology is irrelevant in the world today to recognize that the NDP is necessarily affected by the perception that ideological warfare is no longer acceptable. In this light it is to be expected that no ideological inspiration is available to permit contemporary NDP leaders to transcend the various interests — provincial, regional, sexual, linguistic, cultural, ethnic and racial — which inform the various positions on the constitution preferred by different parts of the party.

Perhaps more important is a realization that these various and different elements of the party do not simply represent the ephemeral emotions that surround public issues of the hour or the deeper feelings that might link those issues with a coherent view of the world. The point is that the party has various and different elements because it is such a complex organization that variety is ubiquitous and difference inevitable.

This can be put another way. The CCF, formed to provide a political *organization* to serve socialist and other radical understandings about the nature of society, became *institutionalized*. This distinction between *organization* and *institution* was first used by Philip Selznick to explain why there are 'defaults of leadership' in organizations that have been transformed as institutions. For Selznick, organizations are 'technical instruments designed to meet definite goals ... they are expendable. ... Institutions ... may be partly engineered, but they also have a "natural" dimension. They are products of interaction and adaptation; they become

the receptacles of group idealism; they are less readily expendable' (Selznick 1957, 21, 22).

The CCF was created as an instrument to bring together disparate elements of the left in Canada for the purpose of seeking power through the electoral process rather than by means of revolution. In the beginning the party membership was inspired by the prophetic countenance of its first leader, J.S. Woodsworth, and controlled by a handful of individuals on party councils, most notably by David Lewis. As Selznick observes, 'institutionalization is a process ... it happens to an organization over time' (Selznick 1957, 16). For the CCF the transformation from charismatic authority and oligarchical hegemony to conciliar authority and bureaucratic order was a process that took place over many years. There was no magic moment when the party became institutionalized, not even the moment when the CCF became the NDP, for some of the formative practices and assumptions persist even into the present.

Yet the party was inevitably transformed by its need to interact with, and adapt to, the environment in which it lives ... or operates.³⁴ A powerful and shaping feature of that environment is the federal nature of Canada and, from 1960, the devolution of responsibilities and authority to the provinces.

The application of Selznick's analysis to the CCF/NDP suggests: first, that organizations which are institutionalized are necessarily complex organizations, and second, that a complex organization, constrained by the realities of Canadian federalism, will necessarily make it very difficult for leaders at the centre of the party to follow Selznick's prescription to set goals and define the organization's mission.

All complex organizations have a multiplicity of goals and a variety of understandings about the mission of the organization. This particular complex organization, framed by the Canadian federal reality, cannot permit leaders at the centre to define the mission for fear that the definition will be unacceptable to so many elements of the party. Thus they are reinforced in their particularities by the Canadian federal character, that any clear definition will only yield dissent and potentially, a disintegration. Perhaps this is true for Canada itself.

For a time this outcome of CCF/NDP institutionalization was obscured by the persistence of earlier practices and assumptions, most notably by the selection of party founders as federal leaders until Ed Broadbent's election to the post in 1975. But the success of several provincial NDP organizations, themselves institutionalized, in forming governments now makes such concealment impossible.

³⁴ A fuller analysis of this process of organizational adaptation analogous to the adaptation of the human personality to its *milieu* is found in Morley, (1984, chaps 1, 9).

In short, the startling change in the party's attitude towards constitutional reform as it has developed over the years is not simply a result of the emergence of new ideas about the proper nature of the Canadian federation. The change is an outgrowth of the logic of the development of a complex organization in this particular federal setting. The party has had to make choices about constitutional reform, including the choice not to frame a consensus. And these choices have, in large part, been natural outgrowths of the party's own organizational development, not simply resultants of sociological change in Canada.

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Chapter 4

FEDERALISM AND THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY¹

Andrew Parkin and Vern Marshall

It has been frequently observed that federalism has historically bedevilled the Australian Labor Party (ALP), frustrating its basically centralist ideological mission and impeding its organisational coherence. It is also now a commonplace observation that the party has, in part for pragmatic electoral reasons, moderated its approach to federalism in recent decades, just as it has moderated its programmatic stance generally: forced to accept the reality of the Australian federal system, the ALP now strives to work within it. There is thus a conventional story about a party historically frustrated by, but now reconciled with, federalism.

While there is insight in these 'frustration' and 'reconciliation' arguments, this paper argues that this conventional story exaggerates the historical degree of hostility displayed by the ALP towards federalism, and conversely exaggerates the degree to which there has been a recent reconciliation. Rather, the ALP has always been — and remains — a complex entity which encompasses within itself both centralist/national and decentralist/federal interests and values. There are good reasons to expect that fundamental tensions will persist among these interests and values.

The 'Frustration' and 'Reconciliation' Theses

For the purposes of this paper, the 'frustration thesis' refers to the common observation that there has been a fundamental tension between the ALP's basic ideological thrust and the character of the Australian federal system, leading to a frustration of Labor's reformist policy

¹ A modified version of this chapter has appeared as 'Federated, Reconciled or Divided? The Australian Labor Party and Federalism', *Australian Journal of Political Science* 29(1), 18–39.

intentions and quixotic attempts to change the federal structure of the national polity. The 'reconciliation thesis' encompasses more recent observations to the effect that Labor has now accommodated itself to federalism, to the point where it has abandoned its futile goals of abolishing or by-passing the system and instead accepts the need to work within it.

Both theses have been advanced, in a particularly coherent and compelling form, in the work of Brian Galligan, and it is to Galligan's arguments that this paper draws particular attention. Variations on the same theses can also readily be found elsewhere (such as Jaensch 1989, 98–124; Maddox 1991, 158–9). It should be emphasised at the outset that, to the extent that Galligan and others are aware of and make clear the limitations of their arguments (as they indeed at times certainly do), then it is not the intention of this paper to attribute fault to them. Nonetheless the paper contends that these limitations have been given quite insufficient emphasis in the general literature, leading to the strong danger, quite probably contrary to the intentions of these analysts, that the dominant interpretation in the literature will be misleadingly partial.

Writing in the early 1980s, Galligan (1981) presents a fine statement of the 'frustration thesis'. 'Much of Australia's political and constitutional history', he writes, 'is the history of struggle between the Australian Labor Party and the federal Constitution'. Federalism by its very nature, and particularly in the American-style guise adopted in Australia, 'has proved a powerful institutional means of taming the populist and social democratic challenges of the Labor movement'. It 'neutralises the Australian Labor Party (ALP) by dispersing its energies and restricting its scope for radical reform' by means of 'the structural barrier that federalism provides against centralism, socialism and reformism'.

The philosophical rationale for federalism is to disperse and limit to scope for purposive and coherent government intervention and to enhance instead a liberal-capitalist vision of individual rights and freedoms. This is achieved in practice by the division of powers between levels of government, by the existence of a Senate which checks the majoritarian House of Representatives, and by the exercise of judicial review by the High Court over the constitutionality of government action. The ALP, with its rationalist and collectivist ideological foundations, is thus frustrated. 'The Australian federal system has allowed the main disruptive and reforming attempts of Labor governments to be tamed or terminated and their more serious attempts at controlling private enterprise to be scotched' (Galligan 1981, 133, 129, 138). Examples of this frustration cited by Galligan include the actions of the hostile Senates confronting the Scullin (1929–1932) and Whitlam (1972–1975) governments, and the High Court decisions overturning legislation with

respect to private enterprise under the Fisher–Hughes (1910–1913) and Chifley (1945–1949) governments (see also Galligan 1987).

Near the end of this 1981 analysis of Labor's frustration with federalism, Galligan presents an embryonic form of the 'reconciliation thesis'. The accession of Gough Whitlam to the national parliamentary leadership, he argues, initiated a preparedness within the party 'to exploit existing powers rather than hanker after preferred but non-existent ones' (Galligan 1981, 138). Whitlam had earlier been a vigorous proponent of the 'frustration thesis', arguing in 1957 that 'the Australian Labor Party ... has been handicapped ... by a Constitution framed in such a way as to make it difficult to carry out Labor objectives and interpreted in such a way as to make it impossible to carry them out' (Whitlam [1957] 1977, 16). By 1978, after his experience in government pursuing a 'new federalism' principally through the device of section 96 conditional grants to the states, Whitlam's conclusion had changed: 'the major obstacles against a program of reform are not constitutional but political. Even the federal system itself, for all its restrictions, limitations and frustrations, need not prevent reform' (Whitlam 1978, 6; cited Galligan 1981, 139).

Ten years later, writing in the early 1990s, Galligan presents, in collaboration with David Mardiste, an elaborated and contemporary version of the 'reconciliation thesis'. Galligan and Mardiste (1992) explore in detail how the transformation from 'frustration' to 'reconciliation' is reflected in the ALP's changing national platform over the years and in 'changes in the policy orientation of Labor governments'.

The 1948 platform called for 'the clothing of the Commonwealth Parliament with sovereign powers and with authority to create states or Provinces possessing delegated constitutional powers' and for the abolition of the Senate. Starting in the 1960s, with Whitlam playing a leading role, there were persistent attempts at National conferences to change this 'antifederal platform' which had become 'publicly untenable' (Galligan & Mardiste 1992, 77). In 1971, the reference to the states having only 'delegated constitutional powers' was dropped while the Senate-abolition plank was finally removed in 1979. By the end of the 1970s, the national Labor leadership was acknowledging 'the primacy of the states in key policy areas and the need for the Commonwealth to work with them' (Galligan & Mardiste 1992, 83), paving the way for the cooperative approach to be adopted under the Hawke government after 1983.

Meanwhile on the policy front, the influence of first Keynesianism and then economic rationalism has meant that Labor's old radical aspirations with respect to nationalising industry have fallen into disrepair and irrelevance. The Whitlam and Hawke governments recognised the realities of the federal system, culminating in Hawke's

'new federalism' initiatives with which Galligan and Mardiste were very impressed. The action arising from Hawke's desire for 'a closer partnership with the states' (Hawke 1990) constituted, argue Galligan and Mardiste (1992, 74-5), 'the most ambitious attempt at the practical overhaul of intergovernmental arrangements that has ever been attempted in Australia's near-century of federation' and demonstrate 'the extent of Labor's practical reconciliation with federalism'.

A Confederal Party

These 'frustration' and 'reconciliation' theses contain much of insight. This paper argues, however, that they should not be misinterpreted as providing anywhere near a complete or comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between the ALP and the federal system. They provide only a partial interpretation, essentially because their focus is on the Labor Party as a national entity. Any assertion or assumption that, by simple argumentative extension or generalisation, the theses apply to the party *per se*, would represent a crucial and prejudicial prejudgement.

The ALP is not simply — *or even primarily* — a 'national' entity, and this status is of great significance in explaining the relationship between the party and the federal system. The ALP is a complex and dynamic amalgam of interests and values. One dimension of this complexity needs to be understood as a tension between centralist/national and decentralist/federal interests and values, with the decentralist/federal elements not only embedded within and nurtured by the federal system but in many ways, and for many years, thriving within it.

An appreciation of the ramifications of organisational structure is an important aspect of the analysis of any party, but it is particularly germane to a party with some classical mass party characteristics (Parkin 1983). With the ALP, as with all major Australian political parties, party structure in many ways mirrors the federal political system in which it is a major actor. The ALP's structure is not, strictly speaking, 'federal' if that term is understood as a system of shared sovereignty between two levels of governance. Its national organisational entities — the National Conference (which meets biennially) and the National Executive (which meets more frequently) — enjoy absolute legal dominance over the constituent state branches, confirmed when the courts in 1981 refused to overturn the intervention by the National Executive into the affairs of the Queensland branch. In recent decades these national bodies have become less reluctant than before to intervene in the affairs of state branches and to prescribe rules for those branches.

Nonetheless, Rawson's observation in 1966 that '[t]he A.L.P. ... [is] a federation of parties which were founded separately and have retained

much of their independence' (Rawson 1966, 19) remains essentially valid, though 'quasi-federation' or 'confederation' would be more appropriate terms (Holmes & Sharman 1977, 105–11; Rydon 1988, 159). As Crisp (1975, 204) observed, 'there are in fact not one but seven parties: the six state Branches and the federal structure surmounting them'. The state branches enjoy a kind of sovereignty over their own affairs, with intervention from the national level very infrequent and, when it occurs, usually a reaction to the impact of circumstances in particular states on the party elsewhere.

The basic membership units of the party are local branches, ranging in size from a few to many hundreds of members, along with affiliated trade unions. Party members do not directly register with the national ALP (though, rather like citizens in a federation, they can be regarded as belonging nationally as well as locally). Indeed mostly party members do not even directly join a state branch, though it is apparently possible in some states to bypass local branch membership (Warhurst 1983, 258). Likewise, trade unions do not affiliate with the national ALP but at the state level. Within each state branch, state conferences (normally annual) are the supreme policy-making bodies. Local branches carry into state conferences a voting power reflecting their relative membership sizes, while affiliated trade unions register a nominal membership number as a capitation basis both for the payment of their affiliation fee and for their voting power at state conferences. The relative voting strength between local branches and affiliated unions has been a matter of contention, but since 1986 there has been a nationwide standard weighting state conference voting power at 60 per cent in aggregate for unions and 40 per cent in aggregate for local branches.

These then are the state based organisational units upon which the quasi-federal ALP is based. This quasi-federalism is even more readily apparent in the parliamentary sphere. All Labor members of parliament — Commonwealth and state — are pledged to uphold the party's national platform and rules (Jaensch 1989, 101) but, in practice, the implied tight integration of all branches and all members of parliament to a single national coherent platform is significantly attenuated in several ways.

First, the parliamentary wings of the party inevitably exercise considerable autonomy in responding to the electoral and policy issues as they arise in the course of public life. In particular, Labor governments — at both the Commonwealth and the state level — have shown themselves to be fairly adept at side-stepping platform prescriptions. It is telling how frequently in recent years the national party platform was flouted by decisions of the Hawke/Keating governments, and how frequently it has been amended to provide a post hoc reconciliation with the implemented policies or clear policy preferences of that government

(for example, grants to wealthy independent schools, recognition of Indonesian occupation of East Timor, fees for tertiary education, national uniform land rights, uranium mining, export of uranium to France, privatisation of public enterprises, competition arrangements within telecommunications, and so on: see Maddox 1989, chap. 4). The same sort of tensions between official party policy and the actions of Labor governments are also readily apparent in recent years at the state level (Parkin & Warhurst 1983; Marshall 1992; Hudson 1992).

Second — and this point has been less frequently appreciated — the political sovereignty ascribed to the Commonwealth and state levels of government through the Australian federal system flow through to a significant extent to Labor governments and Labor parliamentary caucuses at the Commonwealth and the state levels respectively. A state Labor government governs a polity which in important senses is a sovereign political system: each state embodies 'the Crown', features its own institutions of government based on direct election by its own citizens, promulgates its own policies and administrative practices with respect to services and programs over which no other government can claim constitutional superiority, all within a largely autonomous state defined political system. The result for the Labor Party, inevitably, is an important degree of political independence in practice between different components of the party. The implications of this for the 'frustration' and 'reconciliation' theses are considerable.

Frustrated?

It is true that the national ALP platform featured, for many decades, solemn official declarations about the party's national purposes and, in particular, about the necessity for the primacy of the national government in pursuing those purposes. Through all those decades, however, the ALP exercised power only rarely at the national level. On the other hand, Labor governments were common in many states. In the 92 years after federation, Labor's 29 years in national government compares unfavourably with 62 years in Tasmania, 48 years in New South Wales, 45 years in Western Australia, 42 years in Queensland and 33 years even in historically malapportioned South Australia. Only the 19 years in Victoria presents a worse record than the national experience. Furthermore, some of the states have experienced quite long and sustained periods of Labor dominance in a way not experienced at the national level until the 1980s: consider the unbroken spells as long as 35 years in Tasmania, 25 years in Queensland and 24 years in New South Wales. These periods of sustained dominance are significant for the opportunities which they presented for consolidating and entrenching various policies and programs. In some of the states, in stark contrast to the experience at

the national level, 'Labor showed that it could effectively employ the strategy of the long haul' (Hagan & Turner 1991, 195).

Galligan, whose articulation of the 'frustration' and 'reconciliation' theses was highlighted earlier, maintains his analysis at the national level. He makes only a tangential reference in his 1981 paper to the organisational and governmental history of the Labor Party at the state level. The main contribution of the state branches to his argument is the role which they played, through their very existence, in contributing to the frustration of the party's national agenda: '[t]he ALP's platform to abolish federalism was effectively reduced to an impractical slogan by powerful state Labor parties and effective state Labor governments' (Galligan 1981, 135).

If the simple conceptual distinction between the ALP as a putative national entity and the ALP as a real and complex quasi-federal entity is overlooked — and in academic as well as journalistic analysis, this is sometimes easy to do for the sake of simplicity of argument — it is possible to misapply such observations to give a quite misleading impression. It is easy to lapse into the conceptual presumption that the national platform and the national image describe what the ALP 'is': these 'powerful state Labor parties and effective state Labor governments' can be rendered somehow external or peripheral to the party's purpose and existence. They are impediments and problems for 'Labor', an example of the federal structure working by 'dispersing its energies and restricting its scope for radical reform' (Galligan 1981, 129). Thus 'Labor' can too readily be equated with its national purpose or national platform or national parliamentary members, whereas in reality the 'powerful state Labor parties and effective state Labor governments' have in large measure *constituted* the Labor Party as a living entity and as an organisation recognised by citizens.

Clearly, Galligan does not intend to claim for his arguments that they describe the Labor Party in this more comprehensive sense, and his arguments are interesting and legitimate interpretations within their recognised limitations. Yet the common shorthand modes of expression and identification which political analysts are inevitably led to use seem to leave the arguments open to an unintended and unwarranted generalisation.

It is worth noting that Galligan does imply that the state Labor governments have been somewhat peripheral to Labor's programmatic thrust, and thus presumably discountable in an analysis of its ideological development. He remarks that '[t]he initiative for reform legislation soon passed to the federal party because of the superior resources of the federal government and the national sweep of its legislation' (1981, 135). This view is consistent with Whitlam's more combative 1957 analysis:

State Labor governments have not done much in recent years to temper the winds of capitalism to the shorn lambs but have been able to give some of the modified raptures of capitalism to their most loyal followers.

... I hope I will not give offence if I say that there is more difference in policies between a Liberal Federal government and a Labor one than there is between a Liberal State government and a Labor one. The Curtin and Chifley governments did more to advance Labor policy than the State Labor governments which have been in office during and since their time (Whitlam [1957] 1965, 23-5).

Such a dismissal of the programmatic significance of the state Labor Parties is thoroughly contentious. As their frequency and longevity in office attests, state Labor governments have been in a position to use the powers of the states to implement policy measures and to administer significant public institutions in the name of the Labor Party. While their performance in this regard is a matter on which more historical research and debate would be very valuable, there is a useful literature which provides some illumination.² It is not difficult to construct from this literature an argument that the state Labor governments have conscientiously and often effectively pursued genuine 'Labor' programs of reform.

In the period up to the 1950s, encompassing the period over which Whitlam made his acerbic judgement of 1957, state Labor governments almost everywhere pioneered important reforms with respect to industrial regulation, the rights of trade unions and the protection of blue-collar workers, including progressive reductions in the length of the working week, regulation of trading hours, preference to trade union members, and, in some cases, workers' compensation schemes and the payment of unemployment benefits. In fact, it is quite clear that 'unions have had considerable success in influencing state Labor governments [to an extent] which exceeds any comparable achievement at the national level' (Cole 1982, 86). Some made major advances in the protection of tenants and in social welfare — New South Wales Labor governments in the 1920s introducing family endowment and widow's pensions — and sponsored the gradual expansion of educational opportunities to working class Australians through building new high schools and technical schools. Many state owned enterprises were established, from insurance

² Setting aside more narrowly specific or quite contemporary evaluations and focussing only on monograph-length studies, see for example Murphy (1975); Radi and Spearritt (1977); Murphy, Joyce and Hughes (1980); Wanna (1981); White (1982); Davis (1983); Moss (1985); Nairn (1986); Fitzgerald and Thornton (1989); Freudenberg (1991); and Hagan and Turner (1991).

commissions, coal mines and smelters to clothing factories, butchers' shops, hotels and brickworks. Labor in Queensland abolished its upper house in 1922 in the name of a radical majoritarianism and, in recognition of its important rural electoral base, pioneered the kind of agricultural marketing boards and price stabilisation schemes that later became ubiquitous around Australia. In 1944, Queensland Labor introduced the free public hospital system using salaried medical staff, which was long unique to the state (and has frequently complicated various Commonwealth plans for uniform national arrangements). Labor in Tasmania sponsored the whole system of hydro-industrialisation as the basis for the state's economic development.

In the past twenty to thirty years, more recent state Labor governments could likewise claim to have advanced programmatically the basic policies and goals of the party. The Dunstan government in South Australia in the 1970s has been described as 'in the vanguard of change', taking 'the lead with reform initiatives in many fields: the electoral system, administrative reorganisation, community welfare, industrial relations, the arts, urban planning, equal opportunities, consumer protection, education and so on' (Parkin 1981, 19–20), though in comparison the Bannon government of the 1980s practised 'the politics of restraint' (Parkin & Patience 1992). In its own distinctive way, the Wran government in New South Wales also stood squarely in the Labor tradition (NSWALP 1988; Hagan & Turner 1991, 228–51). In Victoria, the Cain government was widely applauded within Labor circles nationally, at least until its financial disasters, for innovations in administrative reform and in the delivery of community services and for its pioneering work on social justice strategies, later imitated by other Labor governments (Jupp 1985; Considine & Costar 1992).

Scepticism about a generalised 'frustration thesis', however, does not depend on a definitive resolution of the debate about the performance of state Labor governments, but on the significance of their existence, their frequent longevity, their identification with the party and their authority within it. It is also important to stress their relative independence — each state Labor history is in many ways a separate story. Shaping and sharing these separate Labor parliamentary stories are colourful and, in many ways, independent organisational histories in the state Labor branches (Parkin & Warhurst 1983). For example, an understanding of how the DLP split in the mid 1950s differentially affected the various state branches — some rent asunder and others little affected — requires an appreciation of the particular histories of each branch: how particular membership characteristics, leaders, experiences in and out of government, sectarian influences and other factors interacted to produce different stories (Murray 1970).

The fact that the ALP's national platform consistently demanded that state level powers, frequently controlled by Labor, should be subordinate to those of the national government, far more often than not controlled by the non-Labor conservatives, is an irony too little appreciated or perhaps too easily forgotten in the light of the party's national successes after 1983. The maintenance of strong and viable states was so clearly in the interests of important components of the Labor Party, that their apparent support for statements in the national platform which wanted to weaken the states probably needs to be interpreted in much the same way as their support for the socialist objective: as a ritualistic expression of correct sentiment with little practical meaning because Labor was so rarely in the national position to pursue these matters.

Certainly, Crisp — writing in the mid 1950s — readily recognised what he called a 'states' rights outlook' within the party and could understand 'the self-interest of many who have made their political career in the state sphere, of many associated with the state 'machine' and of those dependent on the patronage of such leaders' (Crisp [1955] 1978, 258). Crisp's somewhat condescending and disapproving language gives insufficient recognition to the principled arguments put by some of those state level politicians for the maintenance of strong state level powers (see, for example, the evaluation of W.A. Holman by Freudenberg (1991, 89–92)).

The state level affiliation of trade unions has also historically been a strong factor underpinning the party's quasi-federalist tendencies. Trade unions themselves have been strongly federal or confederal in structure, with the national umbrella organisation, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, described as recently as 1982 as having 'little political weight' and being 'virtually ignored' by the Labor Party (Rawson 1982, 116).

Until well into the 1960s, the 'national ALP', to the extent that it made any sense to conceive of it in organisational terms, was in many ways of only intermittent significance. On the parliamentary side, Labor had experienced national government only rarely, and even then the experience had twice contributed directly to damaging internal splits. On the non-parliamentary side, Labor had no permanent national secretariat until 1962 and has had a full time National Secretary continuously only since 1973. The National Conference and Executive were strictly confederal in structure, with each state branch equally represented, and each delegation generally under the firm control of the dominant forces in its state branch. Even the reforms of 1967, for which Gough Whitlam fought so strongly and which added Commonwealth and state parliamentary leaders, did not fundamentally alter the resolutely federal basis of the National Conference and National Executive; and, as late as 1981, Senator John Button

could describe the National Conference as 'like seven football teams' (Lloyd 1983, 232–3).

Thus it is clear that, historically, any generalised claim that 'Labor' was frustrated by 'federalism' would be misleading. This point was certainly clear in 1957 to Gough Whitlam ([1957] 1965, 23): '[i]t is regrettable but true that the Labor objective of a unitary and decentralized system in Australia runs up against strong vested interests in the Labor Party itself'.³

Reconciled?

Likewise, any proposition about 'Labor's reconciliation with federalism' certainly needs to make clear — as its principal proponents (Galligan & Mardiste 1992) do in the detail and elaboration of their argument — that 'Labor' here refers to the 'national ALP'. To suggest that the state Labor governments of the 1980s and 1990s needed to go through a process of reconciliation with their own existence and their own powers is to stretch credulity and is clearly not the intention of the proponents of the 'reconciliation thesis'. Again, however, it is easy to lapse into a common shorthand which can, cited outside of its argumentative context, mislead. For example, the observation by Galligan and Mardiste (1992, 72) that 'Labor's reconciliation with the federal constitution' is reflected in 'changes in the policy orientation of Labor governments' can only claim *prima facie* credibility if 'Labor' and 'Labor governments' are both understood to be preceded here — as is clearly the intention of the authors — by a limiting adjective 'national' or 'Commonwealth'.

The 'reconciliation' thesis generally dates the beginnings of the national ALP's reorientation towards acceptance of the structural constraints of the political system from the advent of Whitlam and his allies. There is no doubt that Whitlam worked hard to convince the party that Labor's national goals could and should be pursued within the confines of the existing Constitutional framework. This is not, however, synonymous with an argument that Whitlam laid the basis for a reconciliation of the party with the prevailing limits on the Commonwealth's policy reach over the states. The opposite would more closely reflect his intentions. As Galligan has argued elsewhere (1989, 49), Whitlam 'remained at heart a rational centralist' and, likewise

³ While Whitlam refers here to 'a unitary and decentralised system', his argument is unambiguously, indeed ferociously, an attack on the states. Decentralisation as he envisaged it meant bypassing the states. Much of the later programmatic thrust of Whitlam's 1972–1975 government was consistent with this.

at heart, it is doubtful that he ever really retreated intellectually from his lofty 1957 prescription that the 'role' of 'Labor members of the State Parliaments ... is to bring about their own dissolution'. In retirement, Whitlam has continued to maintain the inappropriateness of federalism (Whitlam 1983), though he has also maintained that the claims that his government was unduly centralist are exaggerated (Whitlam 1985, 726).

Whitlam's advocacy of Commonwealth involvement in the human services and in quality of life issues necessarily resulted in an intensification of conflict between the Commonwealth and the states. These were issues under the previously unchallenged constitutional jurisdiction of the states. The successful passage in 1946 — under the previous Commonwealth Labor government — of the constitutional amendment to produce section 51(xxiii)(a) had provided the basis of an important expansion of the Commonwealth role into the social security area, but this was largely confined to the provision of income support to designated welfare and other recipients and not the provision of direct services (Graycar 1977; Graycar & Jamrozik 1989, 108–11). In this and other fields of interest to the Whitlam government — primary and secondary education, urban infrastructure, minerals and energy, regional policy, and so on — the Commonwealth's direct role had previously been minimal.

The story of the Whitlam government's new federalism policy initiatives — and in particular the intensification of Commonwealth–state conflicts — has been told elsewhere (Jaensch 1977; Peachment & Reid 1977; Groenewegen 1979). These conflicts are commonly identified as major contributors to the Whitlam government's policy frustrations and, through the refusal of the New South Wales and Queensland governments to follow convention with respect to filling casual Senate vacancies, to its ultimate downfall.

Less well appreciated is the tension caused *within* the Labor Party. Part of Gough Whitlam's armoury of arguments in support of his campaign for a greater Commonwealth role in the human services and in other quality of life issues was a critique of the performance of the 'inadequacy of the States' (Whitlam [1957] 1965, 20) and of 'the growing inadequacy of the schools, hospitals, law enforcement agencies and other public facilities' under state jurisdiction (Whitlam 1971, 7). Yet, as noted earlier, the state governments which had shaped and directed these state services were frequently state Labor governments. Whitlam's position was, among other things, a critique by a national Labor politician of the performance of many of his state Labor counterparts and predecessors.

This intra-party tension was less intense and less visible than it otherwise might have been because the Whitlam tenure in Canberra coincided with non-Labor control of government in the most populous

states. Thus Commonwealth-state conflict was often subsumed under a partisan Labor versus non-Labor conflict.

There were, however, important and revealing exceptions. In South Australia, for example, the Dunstan Labor government had come to office prior to the Whitlam government in Canberra and shared many of its reformist, human service oriented ideals. While this produced some advantages for Labor in South Australia — including receiving far more than a per capita share of some new Commonwealth funding programs with the non-Labor states pondering their participation — it also produced friction between the national and the South Australian Labor governments. Within the Dunstan government, 'despite the rhetoric of the ALP's federalism policy, the regional resilience of South Australian political interests frequently overrode the centralist aspirations at the heart of that policy' (Patience 1981, 246–7). Conflict arose over specific policy differences — with respect to tariffs, control of mineral and energy resources, welfare services, local government, and urban policy — and the more general reluctance of the Whitlam government, at least as perceived from Adelaide, to consult with the state Labor government on matters within the state's clear jurisdiction. Similar dissatisfaction was clearly expressed by state Labor parliamentary leaders in Queensland and Western Australia (Peachment & Reid 1977, 14–15).

There is a strong case for arguing, indeed, that pressure from the state branches was a major factor behind the revisions to the ALP's national platform which reconcile it with federalism. In the midst of intra-party Commonwealth-state tensions in the last year of the Whitlam government, the South Australian State Conference of the ALP forwarded a resolution to the 1975 National Conference which, among other things, stated that, 'democracy requires decentralization of legislation and executive power. The states must for the foreseeable future be used for this end', and that, 'the Australian Government shall seek to involve and work in concert with state administration and work through state administration where this already covers the field concerned (cited in Peachment & Reid 1977, 14).

In the context of the times, this resolution constituted a pointed and unambiguous criticism of the Whitlam government's policies. It is notable that the National Conference (held at Terrigal in New South Wales in February 1975) adopted an amended version of the South Australian resolution which endorsed its spirit while adding 'local government and regional structures' to 'the states' as appropriate loci for the 'devolution of legislative and executive power' (Peachment & Reid 1977, 15).

It would thus be very misleading to locate the beginnings of 'Labor's reconciliation with federalism' among the actions and strategies of the national parliamentary leadership in the late 1960s and early to mid

1970s, except in an inverted sense. Undoubtedly, the experience of this period was an educative one. A Commonwealth Labor government made a serious attempt to act according to the spirit of the party's longstanding centralist national platform but in the process came to grief. Meanwhile some state based Labor interests discovered that this attempt to implement the spirit of the platform conflicted with Labor governments at the state level, which could claim continuity with Labor's most consistent electoral successes and most enduring experience of putting party policies into effect. What became obvious were the divisions of interest and perspective within the ALP. As Peachmont and Reid observe:

it was criticism within the A.L.P. of the Whitlam Government's policies on inter-governmental relations, and the projection of that criticism within the policy-making machinery of the party that demonstrated best the nature of the checks and balances within the Australian federal system of government and the political party systems related to it.

... In retrospect, the initiatives of the Whitlam Government, the outbursts of state political leaders, the resolution of the Conference of the South Australian branch of the A.L.P., its adoption, albeit amended by the Party's Federal Conference and its subsequent incorporation in the A.L.P. Platform illustrated the dialectical quality of federal politics in Australia. (Peachmont & Reid 1977, 16-17)

It is also misleading to invoke the reform of the national ALP's policy towards the existence of the Senate as unambiguous evidence of a reconciliation with federalism. The motives and interests at work in party debates about the abolition of the Senate were complex and varied. That the Senate rarely operates as a state's house is well appreciated, so that its retention or abolition is of relatively little significance as a federal issue, though the implications of the disproportionate representation of the smaller states which it produces in national parliamentary caucuses are worthy of note.⁴ As Galligan and Mardiste

⁴ The existence of the Senate, allied with differential House of Representatives electoral performances between states, has produced a national Labor caucus consistently unrepresentative on a state-by-state population basis, as demonstrated in table 4.1 below. Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania are consistently over represented, a bonus to the smallest states which is precisely the outcome that the existence of the Senate is presumably designed to produce. The implications of this are worth exploring. A beginning is being made, from a South Australian small state perspective, in a research project now in progress. Among the points to ponder is the effect on factional balance: the Centre Left, for example, is arguably very much sustained by small state over-representation, while the Left in general seems better represented in the Senate than in the House of Representatives.

(1992, 80) acknowledge, Whitlam himself opposed changing the party's abolitionist policy during the debate at the 1969 National Conference. The main proponent of change at this conference was Senator Lionel Murphy, Labor's Senate leader, for whom a strong and legitimate Senate was both a desirable check on the power of a government which had been in non-Labor hands for the previous twenty years and, presumably a personal career interest. The abolition plank was not in fact removed until 1979, four years after the Senate — emboldened in part by its rejuvenated role in which Murphy was a leading figure in the late 1960s — had brought down Whitlam's government.

One paradoxical effect of the Whitlam government's centralist impulses was its contribution to the political renaissance of the Australian states (Wiltshire 1977; Parkin 1980; Birrell 1987). The impact of this on the Labor Party was considerable: the new managerial and policy dynamism now associated with the Australian states has largely, though not exclusively, been a Labor phenomenon. When the national level of the party was still recovering from the shock of Whitlam's 1975 dismissal and defeat, the Wran-led Labor Party in New South Wales wrested back control of the state government after a brief Liberal interregnum. Labor control continued in South Australia except

Table 4.1: Distribution by state of the ALP national parliamentary caucus relative to population distribution, after House of Representatives elections, 1946–1990

Election year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1946	96.1	67.0	72.7	183.4	177.8	268.1	-	-
1949	89.2	84.9	41.4	178.3	153.2	309.7	-	-
1951	93.2	92.7	60.3	126.4	143.3	247.2	-	-
1954	90.5	88.5	63.2	144.8	142.2	262.1	-	-
1955	90.4	76.7	72.6	146.3	161.5	263.1	-	-
1958	98.4	80.4	55.1	110.0	158.7	302.6	-	-
1961	95.7	66.1	111.9	114.3	136.6	268.2	-	-
1963	91.1	69.7	91.1	109.6	169.3	306.5	-	-
1966	86.1	66.9	89.2	155.1	136.4	358.3	-	-
1969	83.8	65.2	94.0	142.8	169.9	324.0	-	-
1972	99.4	69.8	93.3	103.6	138.5	317.8	-	-
1974	89.0	81.8	70.0	128.1	138.9	358.2	-	-
1975	98.4	81.5	53.8	95.5	174.2	215.3	221.7	237.3
1977	96.1	79.7	71.8	90.6	169.8	210.6	204.0	211.0
1980	81.2	102.4	75.8	105.2	146.0	180.2	254.9	162.5
1983	79.2	101.6	82.9	139.6	131.1	135.6	185.7	218.4
1984	86.7	98.6	74.9	145.3	128.9	153.4	165.0	96.6
1987	81.0	95.0	92.6	128.5	128.6	184.7	154.9	176.0
1990	93.3	67.4	106.9	123.6	129.6	204.1	163.5	197.8

Note: The figures presented are the ratio of the state's proportion of the national Labor parliamentary caucus to its proportion of the Australian population, as applicable immediately after each House of Representatives election. By-elections and Senate-only elections mean that these figures are not always stable throughout the life of a government.

for a brief three year lapse in 1979–1982. In Victoria, John Cain led Labor to victory in the Liberal Party's heartland.

Since the 1970s, state Labor governments have collectively enjoyed a sustained and successful period of policy innovation, producing a record whose assistance in laying the foundation for consistent national level success in the 1980s should not be underestimated. At the same time the national ALP has been developing a presence that has assumed a greater degree of autonomy from the state branches than ever before.

The National Secretariat has been built up in personnel, resources and organisational capability to provide a permanent national administrative and campaign management capability whose professionalism in recent years had been widely acknowledged. In 1981, in a major reform, the National Conference was restructured to remove much of its confederal basis. No longer are the state branches equally represented, though the new arrangements, which supplemented the old conference with additional delegates proportional to the number of House of Representatives seats in each state, still falls short of a per capita representation. In the same year, the National Conference also imposed a mandatory proportional representation basis for state branch representation to National Conference and National Executive, the latter initially left unchanged from its 1967 reformed basis, though several years later also expanded to include members chosen by conference.⁵

The proportional representation decision weakened considerably the control over state delegations by state level power brokers. What has emerged as the new organising basis for these national forums — and for the national parliamentary caucus — are cross state factional alliances. As explained by Lloyd and Swan (1987), the national factions are an interesting innovation in Labor's organisational history: 'a national faction, although firmly founded on the state organisational model ... bypasses the conventional state Branch machinery. Thus, traditional accounts of ALP [national] structure have largely been superseded by the development of national factions'. This means that the actions of the National Executive 'increasingly reflect cross factional alliances and enmities rather than coalitions of state machines' (Lloyd & Swan 1987, 103). The role of the Senate in nurturing factional activity is also interesting: senators, presumably because they have fewer electorate duties, than their House of Representatives colleagues, and are much more dependent on factional support at the state branch level to ensure preselection, appear to be disproportionately active in factional politics (Lloyd & Swan 1987, 103).

⁵ In fact the National Executive had already imposed proportional representation in four state branches — Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland — as a result of specific interventions.

It is in this political and organisational context that the argument for the apparent reconciliation between the ALP and federalism needs to be analysed. To the extent that there is policy related evidence for this reconciliation, it comes from the period since the election of the first Hawke government in March 1983. However, care needs to be taken before basing firm general conclusions on developments in the rare circumstances of the 1980s, when a relatively long lasting Commonwealth Labor government coexisted with Labor governments, again generally long-lasting, in most states. In this period, it is very difficult to disentangle developments within the Labor Party *per se* from developments in the intergovernmental politics of Australian federalism.

It is true that the Hawke government did not follow the Whitlam government's centralist approach, and its relationship with the states was far less fraught with overt tension. It clearly backed away from some possible confrontations with the states, with the abandonment of the concept of national uniform Aboriginal land rights in the face of opposition from the Burke Labor government in Western Australia being a classic example. The new federalism initiatives of the early 1990s were genuinely innovative and genuinely promised a more cooperative and sensible basis for Commonwealth-state relations.

These developments, however, are capable of several interpretations along different — though not necessarily contradictory — lines to the reconciliation thesis.

The contrast between the Hawke and the Whitlam governments on Commonwealth-state relations is consistent with differences between the two governments in many policy fields. It might, therefore, be best interpreted as highlighting the particularly pragmatic and electorally conscious character of the Hawke leadership period, rather than as some sort of permanent resolution to enduring structural tensions within the Australian polity. Pragmatic partisanship can take on an intergovernmental flavour when deals can be done, as was frequently possible in the 1980s, between Commonwealth and state Labor governments. Thus the back-down on land rights to help state Labor in Western Australia, rather than being indicative of any considered attitude towards the principles of federalism, might be of no more enduring structural or intellectual significance than other deals between national and state Labor actors for their mutual partisan advantage. The land rights back-down was designed to help shore up Labor's vote in Western Australia: likewise such oddities as the illogical 'three mines' uranium policy and Prime Minister Hawke's 1985 reassurance that his government would not remove the 13.5 per cent ceiling on home mortgage interest rates were expressly designed to help state Labor in South Australia. This sort of intergovernmental electoral assistance is consistent with Rydon's analysis of the effect of the frequency of elections in Australia, the problem that 'sections of a party

cannot disown each other' and the constant electoral intermixing of Commonwealth issues and state issues in election campaigns at both levels (Rydon 1988, 169). (It is also consistent with the interpretation that the later new federalism initiatives were crucially dependent on an unusual election free zone in the 1990–1992 period (Bannon 1992).)

No national level partisan strategist wishing to maximise the electoral popularity of an incumbent Commonwealth government would, if aware of the validity of Sharman's observation that 'in most political contests, the states continue to outpoint the commonwealth' (Sharman 1990, 102), recommend a confrontation with a state government. The Franklin Dam decision of 1983 is an exception which perhaps proves the rule. The Hawke government was prepared to impose its will on Tasmania arguably because the risk was much lower: it is possible, as Labor proved, to win national elections despite losing every Tasmanian House of Representatives seat. In all other states — matters of principle regarding Queensland rain forests and Western Australian land rights notwithstanding — the political cost benefit ratio is almost certainly reversed.

It would be a mistake in any case to suggest that Commonwealth–state relations during the Hawke period were uniformly harmonious, though Groenewegen (1989, 241) is correct in describing those relations as 'more peaceful' under Hawke than under the governments which preceded his. Familiar intergovernmental tensions permeated various policy fields. Within housing policy, for example, the intergovernmental consensus which marked the first few years under Hawke had dissipated by the late 1980s into disputes over the funding and conditions of the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement and, at the 1990 Housing Summit, over which level was most to blame for the housing crisis (Parkin 1992). Within the field of Aboriginal affairs, the intergovernmental confusion which has prevailed in various forms since the 1967 referendum continued manifest, for example, in disagreements over responsibility for implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. With respect to the regulation of corporations, many years of intergovernmental negotiation culminated with the Hawke government 'in frustration ... unilaterally introduc[ing] a Corporations Act in 1989' (Emy & Hughes 1991, 285). The states — including the Labor states — had been unwilling to cede state powers over corporations entirely to the Commonwealth level; this had been reinforced by what they saw as erratic changes in the Commonwealth's policy stance, first accusing the states of impeding necessary deregulation and then, in the wake of the stock market crash, accusing the states of being too lax in regulating companies.

There were also recurrences of the perennial conflicts over Commonwealth–state financial relations. These conflicts were muted in the first few years under Hawke, when the states benefited somewhat

from the Commonwealth's expansionary fiscal strategy and from the prime minister's consensus mode. It is notable, however, that a Commonwealth Department of Finance officer, reviewing the intergovernmental financial relations in the 1983–1986 period predicated that 'Commonwealth assistance to the states will come to be governed more and more by Commonwealth Government policies and priorities. Far from being bound to the Commonwealth's chariot wheels, the states may simply become spokes in the wheels' (Maskell 1988, 114). Certainly by the end of the 1980s the states were again complaining about Commonwealth induced budgetary stress. The Commonwealth was imposing relatively tight restraints on its overall level of grants to the states; it was increasing the proportion of tied grants back to Whitlam-esque levels. By 1991–92 tied grants were back to 46 per cent of Commonwealth payments to the states compared with just 34 per cent in 1985–86; it was imposing strict global limits on state borrowings and its policies were fixing high interest rates to those borrowings.

Anticipating the inter-state cooperation which was to be a feature of the Special Premiers' Conference process in the early 1990s, the state premiers — most of them Labor premiers — were notably united in their criticism of Commonwealth financial policies. Their collective outrage at the shabby treatment accorded to them at the 1990 Premiers' Conference was probably an important facilitating factor in inducing Hawke's 'closer partnership' invitation soon afterwards. Meanwhile, the partisan implications of the premiers' criticisms did not escape Treasurer Paul Keating: on at least one occasion he was reported to have complained that Premier Bannon's blunt responses to the Commonwealth on behalf of all premiers were 'politically damaging to the Labor Party' (*Advertiser* 30 June 1991).

Premier Bannon's national role as President of the ALP in the 1988–1991 period provides an interesting example of a leading Labor figure unapologetic about giving, where necessary, first priority to his state responsibilities. The Presidency, he announced after reluctantly accepting it, 'will in no way interfere with my duties and responsibilities as Premier of SA. ... It will enable me to put SA's case more forcibly in a wide range of areas. ... My priority will continue to be to fight for the interests of this state' (*Advertiser* 8 April 1988). While such statements need to be interpreted with some caution as clearly designed for local political reassurance, Bannon's behaviour in office was consistent with it (Parkin & Marshall 1992).

According to Galligan and Mardiste (1992), the new federalism initiatives of 1990 and 1991 exemplified 'Labor's [i.e. the national ALP's] reconciliation with federalism'. It was unfortunate for the authors that their analysis was completed before the collapse of the Hawke new federalism as a by-product of the Keating leadership challenge and before

Keating's subsequent accession to the prime ministership. This collapse demonstrated how vulnerable and feeble was the adherence of at least one important component of the national ALP — the national parliamentary caucus — to the philosophy of the 'new federalism'.

Keating's important speech to the National Press Club in October 1991, Whitlamesque to its core, was a direct challenge to the reconciliation thesis:

I believe that one of the gravest dangers we face as a nation today is the dismembering of the national government, which would inevitably follow from surrendering revenue and other national responsibilities to the States.

... There is no case for the Commonwealth to injure its ability to manage the national economy or for it to diminish its ability to remedy national shortcomings.

There is no case for the Commonwealth to renounce its interest in education or housing or any other area where there is a national dimension as well as a state and local dimension.

And there is no case to allow a state a veto over Commonwealth actions in areas of concurrent interest, such as the environment or be compromised in areas like Aboriginal affairs.

... We in the Labor Party could not welcome such a repudiation of all our party has stood for in a century of nation building. (Keating 1991)

The phrase 'we in the Labor Party' is grandly and broadly inclusive, but presumably even Mr Keating did not believe that it encompassed all those elements in the party — including all the state Labor premiers — who were strongly supporting the 'new federalism' initiatives. Rather it was clear from the political context that 'we in the Labor Party' meant one group in particular: the members of the national Labor parliamentary caucus. The discomfort within the national caucus with aspects of new federalism had been apparent for some time (*Financial Review* 16 & 18 October 1991), and can be attributed both to concern about matters of principle and to a reluctance to trade away electoral advantages: 'federal backbenchers can claim credit for public works — new roads, overpasses and roundabouts — the 'names-on-plaques' syndrome [and t]hey are horrified that the Commonwealth may be on the verge of giving the credit to their state counterparts' (Gray et al. 1991). So strong was the reaction among caucus members that Prime Minister Hawke was forced in effect to scuttle his own initiative (*Financial Review* 12 November 1991). Leading the cries of outrage and betrayal at the Keating attack and the Hawke back-down, and taking full responsibility for the decisions to cancel the Special Premiers' Conference, were the Labor premiers (*Australian* 24 October 1991, *Financial Review* 7 November 1991).

While something resembling the Special Premiers' Conferences' process eventually resumed under Prime Minister Keating, after the hiatus caused by his successful challenge to Hawke's leadership, it was clear that there was no longer any intention of pushing for the scale and depth of change envisaged in the 1990-91 period.

Divided?

The Labor Party remains what it always has been: a complex and dynamic amalgam of interests and values. An important dimension to this organisational complexity remains the tension between centralist/national and decentralist/federal interests and values. The 'frustration' and 'reconciliation' theses draw attention to some elements of this tension and to their changing configuration over time, but do not encompass — indeed, in their more careful formulations they are not intended to encompass — other important elements. As a result, they do not draw attention to the *divisions* within the party, broadly conceived, with respect to federalism.

The ALP was and is divided between interests favourably predisposed to centralism and interests favourably predisposed to federalism. Analysis of the changing national platform, as well carried out by Galligan (1981) and Galligan and Mardiste (1992), might provide an insight into changing ideological prescriptions at the national level, and perhaps into the legitimisation of values, but will not address the deeper interest based divisions.

These divisions tend to be an embodiment of what might be called Allison's Aphorism: 'where you stand depends on where you sit' (Allison 1971, 176). Those components of the party located in and dependent upon federalist arrangements tend to be more favourably inclined towards federalism, while those located at the national level and whose interests would be served by centralist arrangements tend to favour centralisation. This division, whose salience within the party varies according to the prevailing political agenda, can cut across other factional, regional and ideological divisions. The fact that leading senators were prime movers in the removal of the Senate abolition plank, and in the renaissance of the Senate's behavioural norms in the late 1960s, is quite consistent with it.

Changes among the trade unions have also introduced new factors and interests into Labor politics. The increased prominence of the Australian Council of Trade Unions since the 1980s and the amalgamation of unions into larger national conglomerates have considerably enhanced the national level voice of the trade union movement. To a greater extent than ever before, union officials whose reputation has been made at a national rather than a state level are exerting influence in the Labor Party, the advent of Prime Minister Hawke being an obvious example. This

development adds a further complexity to the centralist–federalist tension within the party.

The Party seems destined to a continuing need to manage these tensions and divergent interests. Over time, their configuration can change in response to social, electoral and managerial developments; and political science should continue to explore the dimensions of this reconfiguration. There is unlikely, however, to be a simple pattern. Consider the complex intra-party politics of several events in the 1990–1992 period:

- In 1990, members of the Socialist Left faction within the Victorian parliamentary caucus, where they constituted a majority, supported the sale of the Victorian state Bank to a partially privatised Commonwealth Bank. Non-parliamentary members of the faction in Victoria denounced the privatisation dimension but otherwise endorsed the Commonwealth takeover of the ailing state institution. Members of the Left faction outside Victoria — parliamentary and non-parliamentary — appeared to resent the whole process, being reportedly 'angry at what they saw as the Victorians making the feds carry the can' (Grattan 1990, *Age* 25 & 28 August 1990). Meanwhile, the then Treasurer Paul Keating's sponsorship of the deal was attributed in part to the claim that he 'loathes the Socialist Left in Victoria' (Davidson 1990), and analysts observed that 'the broader political ramifications extend beyond state boundaries with the Socialist Left's opposition to privatisation of federally controlled public assets seriously undermined' (Towie 1990).
- In May 1992, Jeannette McHugh was elected to the federal Ministry, against the apparent wishes of Prime Minister Keating and of her own national Left factional leaders, primarily as a tactical manoeuvre against the Right faction in New South Wales to protect her endorsement as a preselected Labor candidate. Earlier, a campaign by the Queensland branch of the ALP, through Premier Goss and State Secretary Swan for a Queenslander to be elected to a the ministerial vacancy had come to naught when reportedly 'a meeting of the [national] Caucus put factional loyalty before state loyalty' (*Australian* 23–4 May 1992).
- In June 1992, the then Victorian and South Australian Labor premiers united in criticism of federal Labor's policy on tariffs (*Financial Review* 22 June 1992) and were very promptly rebuffed by the federal minister for Trade, a senior Labor senator from Victoria (*Australian* 23 June 1992).
- The same Victorian Labor premier was happy to associate herself with the then New South Wales Liberal premier in pursuing a re-examination of the 'fiscal equalisation' principle in order to re-allocate

Commonwealth untied grants away from Labor governments in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia (*Australian* 12 June 1992; *Financial Review* 15 June 1992).

- Labor Prime Minister Keating (from New South Wales) threatened to create a parallel Commonwealth controlled technical and further education system (TAFE) system unless the states were prepared to cede control of TAFE to the Commonwealth. This general position was supported by state ministers in New South Wales (Liberal) and Victoria (Labor) but was criticised by Labor state ministers in Western Australia and South Australia (*Advertiser* 1 June 1992). Negotiations led by the relevant federal minister (from Western Australia) ended up accommodating the critics (*Australian* 13 May 1992, 3 June 1992), for which the minister was denounced by centralist oriented commentators (*Australian* 24 June 1992).

What is probably distinctive about recent decades is that federalist interests within the Labor Party are more comfortable in explicitly identifying themselves as such, leading to a legitimisation within the party of the federalist values and interest which it has always, in reality, embraced. This may help to explain the changes in the party's national platform. While there is now a national ALP organisational structure and identity which is stronger and more permanent than ever before, this development has had the effect of reorganising the balance of interests around the centralist/federalist division rather than weakening that division itself. Allison's Aphorism remains at work on both sides. As Sharman has observed (with respect to Labor *and* the Liberals), there are now 'much more substantial central party machines, yet, at the same time, there is a greater degree of differentiation between the party systems at state and national levels'. The effect has been to make the parties 'less confederal and more federal' (Sharman 1989, 110–11).

This all means that federalism will continue to irritate some important elements of the ALP while other important elements will continue to be at ease with it. With respect to federalism, Labor is likely to remain a divided party.

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Chapter 5

FEDERALISM AND 'NEW' PARTIES OF THE RIGHT IN ALBERTA

From the Progressives to Reform

Thérèse Arseneau

Canada, unlike its neighbour to the south, has had numerous third parties this century many of which enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, relative success. But what has made Canada so conducive to the growth of third parties? On the surface, the Canadian parliamentary federal system elected by a single-member plurality electoral system would seem to have mixed benefits for new parties. Parliamentary government, for example, is a majoritarian system with a propensity for strict party discipline in which the government rules through the weight of its party's numbers. In such a system it would appear that a new party would have to gain significant parliamentary representation before it could hope to have a serious impact. Yet, as McMenemy points out, in practice the present parliamentary system has, in some ways, aided the development of third parties:

Under the Westminster parliamentary system employed in this country, the focus of electoral activity is the constituency election. The election of only a handful of Members of Parliament [or members of provincial legislatures] gives minor parties a certain legitimacy and credibility. The government is obliged to respond to their criticism and to their procedural motions in ... debate. (McMenemy 1976, 29)

Similarly the first-past-the-post electoral system employed in federal and provincial elections rewards the winning party and penalizes the second placed and most third parties. It creates majority government out of a minority of votes. Yet even here the system can work to a third party's advantage, if the party's base is regionally concentrated. In this circumstance, and it is the situation for many of Canada's minor parties, the plurality system can over-represent the regional party. The almost thirty years of Social Credit representation in the House of Commons was based on such a regional exaggeration.

There is no contesting the significance, both positive and negative, of the parliamentary form of government and the plurality electoral system on the genesis of new parties. The focus of this paper is assessing the

impact of the other major structural component of the Canadian governmental system, that of federalism, on the formation and support of third parties. Of particular interest is the formation of right wing minor parties. Since Alberta has been a seed bed for these parties, both federally and provincially, it will serve as the case study. The paper is divided into four sections. The first examines the extent to which federalism provides a nurturing environment for new parties. In this section a general framework is developed which loosely establishes the connection between a diverse federal system like Canada's and the inception and support for new parties, particularly regionally based third parties. The second section attempts to, albeit briefly, apply this framework to the third parties which have had the greatest impact in Alberta: the Progressives, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and Social Credit. Although these older parties are of interest here, they have already been the subjects of numerous studies. The main emphasis will be on the latest, and less studied, new party making an impact in Alberta: the Reform Party. In studying this contemporary party, the third section of the paper examines the party's policies and the mood of the Albertan electorate since the time of the party's inception. The final section of the paper will bring the general examination of the Reform Party back to the topic of this paper: how has Canadian federalism affected the party's growth and development?

Federalism and New Parties: a Friendly Environment?

The common thesis is that federalism provides some special opportunities for political opposition to form new parties (see Chandler 1987, 154; Fredrich 1968; Pinard 1975). As William Chandler (1987, 154) states:

The argument is not that federalism is a fundamental cause of new parties. It is rather that federal arrangements afford opportunities for minor parties, especially for those that do not represent immediate threats to the ruling party or coalition at the federal level.

The simplest and most obvious advantage of the federal system is that it provides multiple sub-national arenas where new parties may find it easier to gain access and to become the government. This is especially true of parties based in provinces outside the Ontario/Quebec axis: in federal contests they may constitute a small minority but in a provincial election they could represent a majority. What makes this particularly significant in Canada is the fact that provinces are powerful entities and provincial elections are worth winning. Third parties have recognized this and have had considerable success at the provincial level.

The Canadian federal system ought to provide some opportunities for new parties to influence the federal government. Canada has two houses of Parliament, one based on representation by population, the other on

the representation of regions. But the house which is based on the liberal democratic principle of one person one vote — the House of Commons — is all powerful while the Senate, which was meant to be the house where the federal principle was protected (Bercuson 1977, 6), has never acted as an effective counterbalance to the popularly dominated House of Commons. The second structural feature limiting the incorporation of the federal principle in the central government is the parliamentary cabinet system of government. The backbone of this system is the primacy of party discipline over all other considerations, including regional loyalties. According to Denis Smith (1972, 208-9):

In Canada, western politicians realized that the parliamentary system imposes on regional groups restraints that cannot be overcome within the major parties. In the congressional system, regional interest groups have better opportunities for enforcing their wills in primaries, and in Congress by log-rolling that avoids party lines, by filibustering, or by seeking a presidential veto... But the need for party discipline in a parliamentary system limits regional interests to only two opportunities to put their cases: in the privacy of cabinet and in party caucus. Prairie members of the old parties found it impossible to persuade their supporters that they were acting in their interest, when the dominant eastern sections of the parties were able to force their policies through in private.

In such a system territorial interests, particularly those of the scantily populated hinterlands, cannot take precedence.

It can be argued that the blend of heightened expectations of regional representation and sensitivity engendered by the federal system on the one hand, when combined with the lack of regional representation at the centre caused by the cabinet system of government minus an effective house with equal or equitable provincial representation on the other hand, helps to generate third parties. First, it tends to spawn parties of reform, parties dedicated to reforming the Senate and/or the parliamentary system of government. Since these reforms are not commonly advocated by either of the major parties, the reformers have often felt the need to form their own, new party. As is discussed below, there are numerous examples of this type of third party generation in Alberta.

Secondly, the unfulfilled expectations of regional representation cause a sense of grievance. The structural factors at the root of this sense of grievance also prevent the region or province from making an effective protest: they lack the demographic weight in the lower house, the upper house is ineffectual and the tradition of party discipline in the House of Commons hinders the expression of regional protests.

Vital to the explanation of the formation of new parties is the territorial diversity of the federation. As Chandler (1987, 153) states, 'federal multi-partism depends on regional grievances and identifications'.

Douglas Rae (1971, 94), when attempting to explain why Canada's first-past-the-post system did not lead to a two-party system as is the norm, discovered that 'the intense hostility between overlapping regional, cultural, and linguistic groups [has] produced a strong base of support for locally strong minority parties'. When these strong regional forces are combined with weak means of representation at the centre, the stage is set for new parties to develop (Gagnon & Tanguay 1989, 240). An extra push is needed to actually spark the regional forces into action.

Gagnon and Tanguay (1989, 239) theorize that the most significant prompt is likely to be 'the non-representation of interests' by the traditional parties. Rosenstone, Behr and Lazarus (1984, 129) characterize this as 'issue unresponsiveness'. This argument raises a new emphasis: the failure of the traditional national political parties to represent the various cleavages. According to this argument, in a diverse federation like Canada where the majority of the population resides in the central region, political parties are apt to become brokerage, centre based parties in order to be successful. In some countries this has led to very loose, catch-all formations capable of accommodating disparate regional interests (Chandler 1987, 153). In Canada the trend has been somewhat more complex. These large, catch-all parties have formed, but have failed to accommodate, the divergent regional interests resulting in uneven spatial support for the major parties, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives. In practice, no federal party has managed to consolidate, on any long term basis, a national support base. Overall, the pattern in Canada is for these parties to be strong in certain regions and weak in others.¹

The regional unresponsiveness of the Liberals and Conservatives has had two important repercussions on the Canadian party system. The first is the tendency of provincial wings of the major political parties to segregate themselves, officially or unofficially, from their federal counterparts. As a result, even when the same parties are elected in federal and provincial legislatures, these parties of the same name are best seen as separate entities. Secondly, and more salient to this paper, the regional unresponsiveness of the traditional parties often leads to the formation of a new, regionally sensitive political party to run provincially, federally, or both. There is a tendency in Canada for regional elites whose interests are unrepresented in the existing federal parties to retreat behind the bastion of a provincial government operating under the banner of a new protest party. Winning control of a provincial government provides the elite with a powerful base and one which is more easily won given their regionalized support. Similarly, regional elites in Canada have often

¹ See discussion in Chandler (1987, 153 and footnote 17). Such electoral landslides, as the federal elections of 1958, 1984 and, arguably, 1988, are exceptions to the rule.

opted for the establishment of regionally dominant, but nationally minor, new federal parties. Given the fact that the first-past-the-post electoral system tends to reward such regionally concentrated parties, these new parties can have an impact in voicing regional concerns. Since these parties are destined to remain third parties given their limited base, the greatest impact can come from their ability to hold the balance of power in Parliament.

As was mentioned earlier, new regional protest parties often focus on their provincial governments. When attempting to explain why this is the case, it is not enough to simply point out that it is easier for these parties to get elected provincially. This alone does not account for third party successes there; once again federalism is partly responsible. Any large, geographically diverse country will have interregional conflict (Rayside 1989, 354): federalism is the form of government believed to be necessary in such a country since it best recognizes and alleviates these tensions. Yet in this system where jurisdiction is divided between two levels of government, conflict results. Both levels attempt to assert authority and maintain jurisdiction at the other's expense. As David Truman (in Rayside 1989, 354) observes:

The basic political fact of federalism is that it creates separate self-sustaining centres of power, privilege, and profit which may be sought and defended as desirable in themselves, as means of leverage upon elements in the political structure above and below, and as bases from which individuals may move to places of greater influence and prestige in and out of government.

Conflict is therefore an inherent part of the federal system. To a certain extent, the very system of government which is adopted to recognize regional differences and thus alleviate tensions, is actually partially responsible for the continuation and often the intensification of these tensions (see Gibbins 1982, 187; Gibbins 1980, 190; Stevenson 1981, 119).

What results in Canada from this conflictual federal system is what is often referred to as a federal-provincial schizophrenia, meaning that Canadians want their provincial governments to be a different partisan stripe from their federal government. The reason for wanting this is clear: provincial politicians gain advantage from an adversarial relationship with Ottawa:

There can be little doubt from Canadian history that there are political advantages for provincial leaders in fighting Ottawa. Popular support can usually be maximized by casting Ottawa as the enemy and portraying the provincial governing party as the sole defender of regional interests. This has the additional advantage of making provincial oppositions appear irrelevant (Chandler 1987, 158).

This most often leads to the separation of the provincial and federal wings of political parties discussed above. But it can also lead to the formation of a completely separate, new provincial parties, which can do battle with Ottawa.

There are many features, then, of Canadian federalism which aid new parties in their development. These include: (1) powerful provincial arenas with easier access for some new parties; (2) the potent mix of high expectations of provincial representation at the centre, which exist in Canada's territorial diverse federation, combined with the failure of the federal governmental structure to provide this representation; (3) the regional and ideological unresponsiveness of the existing political parties; and (4) the federal-provincial schizophrenia which stems from the adversarial nature of the Canadian federal system and encourages the election of different, sometimes new, parties at the provincial level. This is not to say that federalism causes third parties, but rather, that it can provide an environment which aids and abets their birth and popularity. Having established this framework, the next step is to illustrate its utility by applying it to the Albertan experience.

Alberta: A Tradition of Third Parties

Since Alberta became a part of the federation in 1905 it has felt aggrieved about aspects of the federal system. Initially these could be classified as traditional agrarian complaints about tariffs and high transportation costs in a province remote from its markets. The United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) provincially and the Progressives federally became the vehicles through which the farmers' grievances were expressed. But more than this, these parties' protests represented a fundamental criticism; a recognition that while the farmers were a majority in the province they were a minority in Ottawa. There the interests that prevailed were those of central Canadian manufacturers, industrialists and financiers. The farmers were not complaining about their primary producer status. On the contrary, they were proud of it for they believed that the true wealth of the country rested on primary production. The problem was the parasitic middle men from the central Canadian cities whose interests dominated in the federal government. Coupled with this attitude of powerlessness was a set of beliefs that was democratic and populist: the importance of the individual and a distrust of power concentrated in traditional political parties and central institutions. The UFA called for greater popular control and the elimination of intermediaries between the voters and decision makers. Reform of the Senate and the electoral system was sought as both were deemed iniquitous. The principles which underlay the UFA's social and political theories were a belief in the worth and dignity of the 'common man' and in his/her capacity to choose and direct

government wisely. The traditional political parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, were rejected on the grounds that they were seen as undemocratic, with power unduly centralized in the cabinet and leader. In terms of economic and social reforms, the call was for the elimination of monopoly control and the restoration of free enterprise where possible, and government regulation where necessary. The Progressives were founded on similar beliefs and they also advocated a series of political reforms designed to deepen democracy. Both were populist parties where the movement came before the leader and the policy 'bubbled up' from the grassroots (Dafoe 1991, D2).

In 1935 a second wave of third party protest emerged: the people of Alberta turned wholeheartedly to the Social Credit Party both provincially and federally. The movement became an important social and political force in Alberta provincially, until the 1958 Diefenbaker sweep in Ottawa and Lougheed's Conservatives were elected at the provincial level in 1971. The reason why the movement emerged is best explained by a complexity of mutually reinforcing economic, social and political factors. The economic factor is the most obvious: in the midst of the Depression, Major Douglas' theory of funny money was alluring. More important were social factors: Social Credit, for instance, acted as a social movement uniting the province's heterogeneous ethnic population. It is also significant to note that the party drew support from diverse occupational groups beyond the farming community. Furthermore, there are several political factors which are vital in explaining the Socreds' success. Provincially, William Aberhart, and Ernest Manning after Aberhart's death, provided strong and able leadership. Both were somewhat authoritarian leaders who made good use of radio and effectively infused religious values into the Social Credit program. Of vital importance politically was the fact that both the federal and provincial Socreds were regional protest parties, rejecting not so much the monetary system but the central institutions which were perceived as being responsible for this failure in the financial system. Social Credit symbolized a rejection of Alberta's subordinate position within the confederation. Ottawa was also denounced for its insensitivity towards Alberta and later, after the discovery of oil at Leduc, for its constant intrusions into provincial jurisdiction over this resource.

Alberta has clearly supported many third parties since joining the federation. What is of interest here is not the question of why these new parties developed, but whether or not the federalism related factors outlined above helped effect them. Are the four elements of the framework discussed above evident in the Albertan support for these new parties and did the parties, in turn, capitalize on the features of Canadian federalism which make the political environment conducive to third parties?

The UFA effectively used the powerful, and more easily dominated, provincial arena to grab the reins of power and to try to implement their program. The second component, high expectations of representation and strong regional forces combined with weak means of representation at the centre, was also clearly present in Alberta at the time of the UFA's and Progressives' popularity. Alberta was a province of farmers, whose high expectations of representation at the centre were not merely based on their newly gained provincial status but equally on their belief in their worth as primary producers. This latter expectation was one they shared with farmers elsewhere in Canada who similarly supported the Progressives. The Albertan farmers complained that these expectations were thwarted by a federal government dominated by central Canadian manufacturers, industrialists and financiers, a House of Commons contaminated by party discipline, and an ineffective Senate. The Progressives and UFA clearly enunciated this sense of political powerlessness. They campaigned to change the Senate and the electoral system; and both parties vowed to abolish party discipline, and to allow the public, through the principle of constituency autonomy, to direct and scrutinize their politicians. The UFA and Progressives also rejected, and sought to reform, the political party system which was deemed to be undemocratic and generally unrepresentative of the farmers, a clear example of the third element, regional unresponsiveness. There was also an element of ideological unresponsiveness present in Albertans' support for the Progressives and UFA in the sense that the traditional parties did not incorporate the farmers political and social beliefs. Of the four components of the framework, the federal-provincial schizophrenia is the least evident in Albertan support for the UFA/Progressives. The practice of federal bashing and the gaining of political advantage through such confrontations first emerged under the later Manning administrations and became an art form under the guidance of Peter Lougheed.

According to Mallory (1954, 57), Albertan Socreds realized from the beginning that, due to their limited numbers, they were unlikely to make a real impact in Ottawa. Although this did not prevent them from fielding candidates at the federal level, the movement focused its attention on capturing the provincial government. Smith (1972, 209) states that the achievement of power in provincial elections was easier for the Socreds, and the UFA for that matter, than gaining power in Ottawa because 'they could turn the profound prairie sentiments of insecurity, xenophobia, pioneering righteousness, and resentment of exploitation against the Liberals and Conservatives, who appeared with some justification to be the local agents of a colonial power — eastern Canada'. What is interesting in the case of the Social Credit is that, although it was easier for them to dominate in the provincial forum, it was not an arena from which they could launch their program of

financial reform since this proved to be beyond the constitutional power of the province.

In terms of the next two federalism related components, the lack of representation at the centre and the issue unresponsiveness of the traditional parties, Albertans' reasons for turning to Social Credit were much the same as the reasons why they had supported the Progressives/UFA earlier: it expressed their feelings of political powerlessness and distrust of the traditional parties. Social Credit capitalized on these grievances. They were critical of central institutions for being dominated by the eastern monopolistic bankers, the 'fifty Big Shots' of central Canada, and for, at best, intensifying the difficulties caused by the Depression in the west if not causing the Depression. This criticism of federal government insensitivity towards Alberta was later replaced with condemnation of Ottawa's constant intrusions into the provincial jurisdiction of natural resources. Like the UFA and Progressives, Social Credit objected to Alberta's subordinate position within Confederation and its lack of representation at the centre. The Socreds also believed the party system had atrophied and that the major political parties needed to be reminded of whom they were there to serve. As Aberhart (in Pearson 1990, 40) stated, 'loose democracy and let her go, she's been bound too long by party politics'. They shared this complaint of unresponsiveness of the major parties with the UFA and Progressives, and again, as was the case with the agrarian protest parties, at issue was ideological as well as regional unresponsiveness:

The professed national aim of each party was to create a national two-party system divided on lines of principle, through which the reforms desired by each group might be adopted. The three parties of prairie origin argued either that the Liberal and Conservative parties were alike, offering the voter no choice, or that one of the two older parties was not fulfilling its proper function. Frequently they argued both. (Smith 1972, 204)

Initially, the reform rhetoric of the Social Credit Party was very similar to the early programs of the UFA and Progressives: populism and instruments of direct democracy would be the means employed to correct the faults of the central government and the party system. Yet once in office, as the UFA before them, this initial radicalism was replaced with conservatism. Under Manning the Social Credit Party ignored its radical roots to become an economically conservative, business-like government offering political stability and intent on attracting outside capital to develop the province's oil and gas. Manning developed a defensive approach to governing, determined to keep the federal government out of the province's jurisdictions and his focus was on establishing his government as a bulwark to protect provincial

rights. According to C.B. Macpherson (1953, 220), both the UFA and Social Credit governments were compelled to take this conservative position once they realized their position in relation to the established economy:

It was not that the exigencies of government, as such, caused the leaders on attaining office to become orthodox both in their economic policies and in their practice of democracy. Rather, the exigencies of governing a society of independent producers, in revolt against outside domination but not against property, brought out the conservatism inherent in petit-bourgeois agrarian radicalism.

Or, as Smith (1972, 212) states, 'the farmers and their political representatives fluctuate between radical discontent with the external forces that control their economic security, and conservatism when they find that they cannot fundamentally alter their economic insecurity without destroying the economic system.'

Manning frequently clashed with MacKenzie King and his Liberals, who had by this time become identified with the central government. The disputes were largely over the speed at which Alberta's natural resources should be exploited, and the provincial government became very wary of federal government encroachment. Manning's economic conservatism inevitably brought him into conflict with King's more liberal economic policy.

For all three new parties then the Canadian federal system was partially responsible for providing a political environment in Alberta conducive to their genesis and growth. At first glance the purpose and basis of these parties might appear to be primarily ideological in nature — implementing a radical reform program based on fundamental principles such as the inherent worth of the 'common man', free enterprise and limited government. Yet, in practice, the Progressives, UFA and Social Credit were at base regional protest parties expressing the traditional themes of western alienation, and the reforms they sought were designed to improve Alberta's representation at the centre. All three secured support in the province because they were able to establish themselves as Albertan protest parties, thereby capitalizing on the disenchantment with the centre which exists, perhaps inevitably, in the periphery in a diverse federal system.

The Reform Party of Canada

In November 1987 the Reform Party of Canada was formed at a convention in Winnipeg. From its inception the party vowed to be right wing, conservative and populist. The major recurring themes as stated in the party's manifesto, the 'Statement of Principles and Policies' (1991), include fiscal responsibility (such as cut backs in government-run social

programs), opposition to special status for Quebec, native peoples and minorities, and increased power for the peripheries. The constitutional reforms they advocated were familiar, such as a reformed Senate and more western representation on the Supreme Court of Canada. Their political reforms included populist measures which would give more power to the 'common people' and significantly alter the operation of the House of Commons. The party championed direct democracy in the form of binding referenda, voters' initiatives and the recall of Members of Parliament who had not upheld their oath of office — fundamental allegiance to their constituents and to the Queen. The party manifesto (1991, 10) also supported a 'direct democratic process' on moral issues such as abortion and capital punishment and on matters that 'alter the basic social fabric such as immigration, language, and measurement'. Another aim of the party was the reduction of party discipline in the House of Commons. Reformers proposed to achieve this through a change in parliamentary rules so that the defeat of a government measure would not automatically lead to the defeat of the government. In order for the government to fall, there would have to be a formal vote of non-confidence. Within the Reform Party caucus, before party discipline would be applied to any issue, there would be a free vote to determine whether or not the party would vote as a block and, if so, what the party's common position would be. These caucus votes would be made public.

The current mood of the Albertan electorate was one ripe for a new party, increasingly disillusioned and discontented. Their dissatisfaction was partly due to economic factors; the boom of the 1970s and early 1980s was followed by a severe recession in the province. Also significant was their disappointment with the federal Conservatives due to what has been dubbed 'the great Tory betrayal'. Albertans had expected more from the party to which they had remained loyal through the long years in opposition. Mulroney was the focus of much of this resentment. He was seen as a Quebec MP who pandered to French Canadians and ignored the west. The western perception is that, like Trudeau, Mulroney neither understood nor respected the west (Pearson 1990, 42). Albertans also believed that since the Tories, as did the Liberals, owed their acquisition of power largely to the Quebec vote, the government was willing to sacrifice western interests in order to appease Quebec. They cited the awarding of the CF-18 fighter maintenance contract to Quebec, the passage of language Bill C-72 which extended the use of bilingualism in Canada and even Mulroney's support for the Meech Lake Accord as examples of the Conservatives placating Quebec at the west's expense. Albertans were also critical of the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax, the Conservative's ineffectiveness at decreasing the deficit, and in dismantling the remnants of Trudeau's NEP policies. The numerous

influential Albertan cabinet ministers did little to lessen the Albertan sense of powerlessness; it is commonly believed that they had been co-opted and were not representing western interests. Joe Clark's, Don Mazankowski's and Harvey Andre's staunch support of Meech Lake was offered as evidence of this. During the years when Albertans sent Conservative MPs to a perennially Liberal dominated House of Commons, the legend of a Tory government salvation was pervasive in the west: 'when the Conservatives are elected then we will have power in Ottawa'. Yet many Albertans felt equally discontented under a Conservative government highlighting a problem that is more fundamental than simply being in opposition. Since the party is dependent on the large provinces of central Canada and since party discipline takes precedence over regional interests, Albertan Tory MPs are incapable of representing the province effectively in Ottawa. What Albertans need, and what the Conservatives fail to offer them, is the radical reform of the central institutions so as to empower the sparsely populated peripheries. According to Manning (*Western Report* 1987, 17), 'the PC [Conservative] party at the federal level has a congenital inability to govern ... it cannot be considered an appropriate vehicle for the implementation of a reform program.'

The party which has dominated in Alberta since 1958 is in decline. The Liberals and the New Democratic Party (NDP) are seen as viable alternatives only in a few ridings in Calgary and Edmonton, thus creating a political void and making the province ripe for a new party. This disenchantment with the federal Tories is based mainly on the traditional grievances of western alienation, the major one being that Albertans lack power at the centre.

But their disillusionment extends past the Conservatives to encompass politicians generally, both federal and provincial. The constitutional crisis brought on by the inept handling of the Meech Lake Accord is largely responsible for this loss of prestige. Mulroney staked his credibility on the deal: many believe he was responsible for 'kick-starting' a national crisis (*Western Report* 1990a, 12). The Liberals and NDP meekly accepted the Accord, acceding to the prime minister's claim that it was a seamless document and above revision or reproach. The fact that virtually all federal MPs, and most provincial legislators for that matter, seemed to acquiesce to this principle, despite the numerous unanswered questions relating to the content of the Accord, further disillusioned many Albertans.

The distrust of politicians which resulted from their hasty passage of the Accord was not based solely on the public's misgivings concerning its content. The public backlash issued more from the process by which Meech Lake was negotiated — 11 white men bargaining behind closed doors. According to Alan Cairns (1988, S122), the Charter established a

new more direct constitutional relationship with Canadians: it by-passed governments, recognizing instead individuals as the possessors of rights. Some of these rights were distributed to all Canadians. These included the traditional fundamental rights, democratic rights and legal rights contained in sections 1–16 of the Charter. But significantly the Charter also conferred specific rights on women, aboriginals, official language minorities and ethnic groups — sometimes referred to as 'Charter Canadians' — through the vehicle of multiculturalism, and to those listed categories, including race, religion, and physical disability, in the equality rights contained in the Charter. The Charter, in a sense, introduced new constitutional actors into the process: individual Canadians and, in particular, the Charter Canadians. There was the expectation which did not exist prior to the Charter that they would actively participate as political actors in the constitutional process. Hence as Cairns (1988, S142) states:

The hostility to the Meech Lake process is the expression of new constitutional realities that are the product of the 1982 Constitution Act. The political purposes of the Charter included the attracting of Canadians to the constitutional order by protecting their rights. In a surprisingly short time this has happened in English Canada; the Charter has taken root and generated a broad base of support... [T]he written constitution is no longer an exclusive affair of governments.

Albertans have for a long time felt left out of federal decision making. What was significant about the Meech Lake process was that now Albertans also objected to being excluded from the constitutional process. This created a sense of grievance and a mood in the province conducive to a new party, particularly one which offered them access to constitution making.

For some Albertans the disenchantment is also partially based on a growing unease with what they see as the promotion of French-speakers and minorities in the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights at the expense of other Canadians. These Albertans object to the two nations concept entrenched in the Constitution on the grounds that what this is protecting is French rights rather than the English–French duality. This contention is based on the premise that English is the dominant language and culture in Canada. Yet this supposedly dominant culture now feels vulnerable as a result of the recognition afforded minority groups defined by language, ethnicity, culture, race and religion. Some non-Charter English speaking Albertans fear they are relatively worse off because of the Charter's protection of minority rights. They realize that the Charter does protect their fundamental democratic and legal rights, but the Charter also contains a second tier of protection from which they are excluded — the 'special' rights for minorities.

This group of non-Charter, English speaking Albertans felt a growing sense of disfranchisement and a rejection of the Constitution Act, including the Charter. Raymond Breton (1986, 28) has argued that 'the enjoyment of a satisfactory symbolic/cultural condition requires not only appropriate actions and the absence of barriers, but also an institutional system that offers possibilities for the discovery of identity, for meaningful participation, and for the attainment of social recognition.' This underlying conception of society is manifested in the operation of public institutions and, most clearly, in the Constitution and Charter. Breton adds that people must feel their cultural reality is included in this enshrined conception of society:

Individuals expect to recognize themselves in public institutions. They expect a certain degree of consistency between their private identities and the symbolic contents upheld by public authorities, which are embedded in the societal institutions and celebrated in public events. Otherwise, individuals feel they are strangers in society, that the society is not their society... Individuals also expect to recognize themselves in the values and meanings incorporated in the culture of public institutions. They expect a concordance between their own and the public way of life or cultural style. (Breton 1986, 31)

Cairns (1988, S128) acknowledges that the Constitution and Charter, by recognizing certain rights and certain groups but not others, have become major instruments for 'the awarding and adjusting of the relative status of Canadians encompassed by them... As the constitution reaches down selectively into Canadian society it has become a social document of great symbolic value, the supreme instrument of social recognition and its denial.' For many Albertans, the Constitution and Charter symbolize and recognize a Canada which does not include them. They do not see themselves reflected in these documents.

The mood in Alberta is now one of disillusionment — disillusionment with the federal Tories, politicians generally and, for some, with the Constitution Act, including the Charter of Rights, because of its special recognition of minorities at the expense of English-speaking, non-Charter Albertans (and Canadians). Some of the grievances expressed are the traditional western complaints concerning lack of power at the centre. But many of the grievances are more novel and represent new layers of discontent.

The Reform Party embodies and responds to this many tiered sense of grievance in Alberta. In terms of the traditional complaints, when the party was formed in 1987 the emphasis was on these themes of western protest. Its founding slogan was 'The West Wants In'. The party's reason for being, as stated in its founding manifesto, was to secure 'economic and constitutional equality for the west' and to fight for 'more effective representation of western interests in Parliament'. Western alienation

politicizing, institutionalizing, and constitutionalizing English-French relations on a national basis as the sole reason for the nation itself. Reformers believe it is the role of individuals, families, organizations and even provincial governments to preserve the French culture, not the federal government and not the Constitution. This is a view which appeals to many non-Charter Albertans, and Canadians. The party's opposition to the 'selective' entrenchment of certain groups and their values was expressed by Manning in November 1989 when he spoke of his party's vision of the three fundamental principles for Canada:

- That the demands and aspirations of all regions of the country are entitled to equal status in constitutional and political negotiations;
- That freedom of expression is fully accepted as the basis of any language policy;
- That every citizen is entitled to equality of treatment by governments, without regard to race, language, or culture. (Manning 1989, 6)

Although couched in the most inoffensive of terms, what these principles mean is that the party is opposed to the federal government's and the Constitution's recognition of bilingualism. For the Reform Party 'equal treatment' means the removal of special status based on language, race or culture, and the withdrawal of federal funds for multiculturalism, native peoples and government-funded minority interest groups. Although the party has recently moderated its immigration policy, it could be that Reform Party immigration laws would prevent Canada from becoming more ethnically and racially diverse than it already is. In essence, the Reform Party has attempted to establish itself as the champion of what they perceive to be 'the average white anglo-Canadian'. In post-Meech Lake, post-Charter Canada, where this 'average' Albertan feels relatively excluded, the Reform Party, with its stance of direct democracy and the removal of special status for linguistic, ethnic, and cultural minorities, is alluring.

Conclusion

Not only does Alberta appear primed for a new party, but the Reform Party, armed with a platform which reflects the many layers of modern Albertan grievances, seems to be the party poised to capitalize on this favourable political environment. But to what extent is federalism responsible for this favourable political environment? As of yet, the Reform Party has not made use of the first federalist element of the previously established framework, namely running in the more easily won provincial arena. Manning is nationally fixated and is vehemently opposed to running at the provincial level. Moreover, as Jeffrey Simpson

(1991, A14) points out, 'the Reform Party is the first protest group from western Canada that has not called for a substantial transfer of power from Ottawa to the provinces.' Manning does regularly express his support for 'decentralization', but what he is advocating is something quite different from the traditional use of the word. What he seeks is increased power to constituents, and more influence for the provinces but through a greater input in the federal government rather than through increased authority to provincial governments. It is wrong, however, to infer from this that the Reform Party favours a strong federal government and weak provincial governments. What Manning and the Reformers advocate is a regionally sensitive but limited federal government since it is their belief that all governments have grown too large and must be hemmed in.

As was the case with the Progressives, the UFA and Social Credit, the Canadian federal system has spawned yet another western protest party bent on reforming centrally dominated federal institutions. Reformers are distressed by the concentration of power in the federal executive, hence the party's proposals aimed at reducing party discipline. Their reformed Senate is designed not only to increase provincial input but also as an elaborate political reform to reduce the cabinet's power. The Reformers envisage an 'effective' Senate, devoid of cabinet ministers and free from partisan voting, which would act as a counterweight to the executive dominated, highly partisan lower house. The Reform Party also claims to be democratic and populist, supporting the use of mechanisms fashioned to enhance direct democracy, once again as a means to repair such defects in the central institutions as party discipline and executive domination. This call for greater popular control is expressed in words reminiscent of the UFA and Progressives:

We believe in the common sense of the common people, their right to be consulted on policy matters before major decisions are made, their right to choose their own leaders and to govern themselves through truly representative and responsive institutions, and their right to directly initiate legislation for which substantial public support is demonstrated. (Reform Party of Canada, 1991, 5)

In terms of party structure, the Reform Party is organized, on paper, to give the grassroots more power than the party leader and executive. Technically, the party assembly is the party's highest authority. It is made up of delegates who meet annually, voting on party policy (with the decisions binding on the party leadership) and on the question of whether or not to hold a leadership assembly. The constituency assemblies are also meant to have considerable powers over the candidate nomination process and the Reform Party supports the principle of constituents recalling MPs.

Despite its claims of being populist, in reality Manning dominates the Reform Party, so much so that some have described Manning's approach as 'top-down populism' (Dafoe 1991, D2). The party, for the most part, was created by Manning and is still a reflection of him. Party members admit that the 'party's vision' is actually 'Manning's vision' (*Western Report* 1990d, 18). This was very evident at the party's 1991 convention: delegates were keenly aware of their leader's wishes and anxious to oblige him. Manning made it clear that while he was opposed to running provincially, he was eager to expand the party in the east of Canada. From all accounts, delegates confirmed both of these more from a sense of loyalty to their leader than from a spontaneous change of heart (Cernetig 1991, D2). But Manning's brand of leadership has also been called autocratic by some members and there have been complaints that the party's grassroots base has been replaced by a Calgary clique of advisers (*Western Report* 1990c, 9). The party's candidate recruitment package has been labelled by some as elitist and yet another example of the party jettisoning its populist spirit (*Alberta Report* 1991, 15). The 40-page package outlines the responsibilities of a Reform Party MP and 'screens' prospective candidates by questioning them on their support for Reform Party policy, asking potential candidates and their spouses to submit to credit rating checks, and by grilling them on personal matters such as their health, past alcohol or substance abuse, employment records and any criminal or bylaw offences.

The Reform Party also features criticisms which can be characterized under component three of the framework — the issue unresponsiveness of the traditional political parties. Reformers' condemnation of the major parties' regional unresponsiveness has already been examined. The Reform Party also objects to the ideological unresponsiveness of both the Liberals and the Conservatives', asserting that there is little to distinguish one party from the other. Reformers claim to be distinctive as a party which actually stands for something — populist, right-wing principles of small government, free enterprise, fiscal responsibility, traditional values and individual liberty. At the party's founding convention in November 1987 Manning (1987) stated:

... When we refer to the possibility of creating a new political party to represent the west, we are not talking about another splinter party, or single-issue party, or yet another party of the strange and extreme. The west has produced too many of these in the past years, and there is no need for another. Rather, we should be thinking about the creation of a new vehicle to represent the great political reform tradition which runs like a broad and undulating stream throughout the length and breadth of Canadian politics, but which currently finds no suitable means of expression in any of the traditional federal parties...

Manning hopes that the Reform Party's more ideological stance will force the other parties to define themselves clearly on ideological grounds either joining forces with the right-wing movement or operating in opposition to it. In such a situation Manning predicts the disappearance of old partisan lines to be replaced by federal parties based on ideology, offering meaningful alternatives for the voter whose disillusionment and cynicism would naturally disappear. According to Manning (as quoted in *Western Report* 1990b, 13):

There is a feeling out there that there's a great vacuum at the federal level, a feeling that no one is offering any substantive systematic change on the big issues. All the parties are high-spending parties, all the parties are locked into this old English-French model of confederation, all the parties are mistrustful of letting the public have more to do with constitutional processes, with having public input. And so people are groping for meaningful alternatives.

In terms of the last element of the framework — the federal-provincial schizophrenia — there is no disputing its acceptance in Alberta. Peter Lougheed, perhaps more than any other premier in English Canada, made effective use of this strategy, but it is most useful to a party running at the provincial level. Although Manning does not seem to have any aversion to federal-bashing, unless the Reform Party eventually competes in provincial elections, then this last element of federalism which can create a friendly environment for new parties will be relatively unimportant.

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Chapter 6

AUSTRALIAN FEDERALISM AND THE PARTIES OF THE RIGHT

Clem Lloyd

All local prides and effort are admirable. That is why, in a great country like Australia, we have a federal system. But I repeat that the prime object of bringing about federation in Australia was to create a nation.

Sir Robert Menzies (1960)

In late 1994, the Liberal Party of Australia is fifty years old. By any criterion it has been a successful political instrument. Although somewhat tarnished by the debacle of the federal election of 1993, its record at the national level has eclipsed both its 'Liberal' predecessors and the rival Australian Labor Party. John Lonie has summarised the cycle of non-Labor political parties in Australia as 'From Liberal to Liberal' (Lonie 1976, 47ff). If the first decade of Australian federal government is discounted, this summation is accurate enough. Four parties have dominated the federal history of right-wing parties in Australia: the Liberal Party (1909–17); the National Party (1917–31); the United Australia Party (1931–44); and the Liberal Party (1944 to date). The nomenclature of the parties of the right has reflected changes in composition and organisation caused by war, economic depression, political collapse and political renewal. Through these transformations, an enduring core has been transmitted from party to party, a core which has included a commitment to federalism, varying in intensity and often disregarded but never faltering completely.

According to Loveday, Australian federal politics were party politics from the very beginning with no non-party phase (1977, 383). This was largely due to the increasingly national organisation of the Australian Labor Party from the first meeting of the Commonwealth Parliament. The national organisation and character of the principal non-Labor party took time to jell. The first Liberal Party emerged in 1909 following the fusion of two broadly non-Labor groupings divided on free trade/protectionist lines. This Liberal Party governed Australia for brief

periods in 1909–10 and 1913–14. Early in 1917, the Liberal Party merged with the National Labor Party which had broken away from the Australian Labor Party in November 1916. Under William Morris Hughes, this National Party governed Australia from 1917 until October 1929 when it was routed by the ALP led by James Scullin. Scullin's ALP government disintegrated under the economic pressures of the Great Depression, with a small breakaway group led by Joseph Lyons joining a revived National Party to form the United Australia Party (UAP). With Lyons and Robert Menzies as Prime Ministers, the UAP was the principal party of government for a decade between December 1931 and August 1941. In the years immediately following, the UAP became increasingly dishevelled, eventually disintegrating into elements which lacked any semblance of federal organisation. This motley collection of fragments was remoulded by Menzies into the present Liberal Party after federal conferences of non-Labor political elements in October and December 1944.

Attempts to account for this ebb and flow in political fortunes have largely ignored federalism. In an influential survey of the Australian party system between 1910 and 1950, Henry Mayer explored traditional notions of parties of initiative and parties of resistance in the Australian experience:

The predominant conception, supposed to give us the key to Australian politics in general, and to the interaction of the parties in particular, has been the 'Initiative-Resistance' or 'Positive-Negative' theme. The [ALP] is presented as the party which, whether in or out of power, has been the 'magnetic pole by which all political ships must set their courses.'¹ [Alfred] Deakin's 'necklace of negatives' ... has been mass-produced and hung around the neck of the Nationalists and the United Australia Party by almost everyone. The Country and Liberal Parties have been adorned, but with rather more hesitation. (Mayer 1956, 254)

The Australian parties of the right have been branded with negativism throughout their history. Menzies acknowledged this in 1944 when he was assembling his Liberal Party:

On far too many questions we have found our role to be simply that of a man who says no. Once this atmosphere is created it is quite simple for us to be branded as reactionaries ... There is no room in Australia for a

¹ The internal quote here is from an article by J.A. McCallum on the economic basis of Australian politics, published in 1945. According to Mayer, Deakin's comment about a 'necklace of negatives' was first levelled at Sir George Reid, one of Australia's early non-Labor Prime Ministers.

party of reaction ... There is no useful place for a party of negation.
(*Canberra Times*, 14 October 1944, 12-13)

The post-mortems following the defeat of the Fraser government in 1983 also alluded to perceptions of the Liberal Party as reactionary and negative. The arguments about parties of 'initiative' and parties of 'resistance' have resonances for federalism, particularly in the attitudes of right wing parties to expansion of federal government powers by constitutional referenda. (This point is taken up further in later consideration of the Liberal Party's federalism policies.)

Mayer identified a broader importance for federalism in Australian political analysis but, uncharacteristically, dodged the issue:

It can be argued that political parties at different times are almost different things, and, indeed, that the whole usual comparison of party systems in different countries is infected by a vicious formalism: the 'two-party system' in Britain, it is contended, 'shares little but the name with the 'two-party system' in the USA. Anyone who takes this view would maintain that *the variations in the party pattern from state to state are the important things in Australia, and that any survey which ignores the existence of Federalism is futile.* [emphasis added] It is not necessary to discuss this contention here. When we have a set of monographs on the major parties in each state, there will be time enough, but until then, the nature of the materials forces us to indulge in speculations about speculations. Since it comes from writers in various states, the dangers of generalising from personal knowledge of the politics of one State to those of the Commonwealth may possibly be minimised. (Mayer 253. Mayer even suggested that a classic text on Australian Liberalism, F.W. Eggleston's *Reflections of an Australian Liberal*, could well have been also titled *Reflections of a Victorian Liberal*.)

Forty years after Mayer wrote his influential article, we have basic monographs on the government of each Australian state which devote at least one chapter to political parties.² Unfortunately, this has not stimulated the analysis of parties of either the left or right in the broad context of Australian federalism, as Mayer suggested that it might. This chapter does not attempt to compare the patterns of difference between the states as the basis for defining a distinctive federal coloration for Australia's parties of the Right. It is undeniable that a comprehensive examination from the perspective of the states would be a valuable exercise, perhaps

² I have particularly in mind the series on the Governments of the Australian States and territories, published in the late 1970s by the University of Queensland Press under the general editorship of Colin A. Hughes. See, for example, the lengthy chapter on political parties in R.S. Parker's *The Government of New South Wales* (1978, 37-138).

leading to a thorough reappraisal of conventional attitudes to Australian federalism. What is attempted here, however, is to look at Australian federalism from the perspective of the national party envisaged by Menzies. The particular question addressed is whether the creation of Menzies' national party has been restricted in any way by the realities of Australian federalism. The focus is the Liberal Party of Australia as a federal organisation body and not on the contribution of the constituent state components of the Liberal Party to Australian federalism. Accordingly, examination of the Liberal Party and federalism is directed to three broad areas: federal philosophy, federal structure, and federal policy.

Why ignore the National Party? One reason might be William Morris Hughes' famous rejoinder when asked why he had led every Australian political party except the Country (now National) Party: 'you had to draw the line somewhere'. This apart, the National Party has not been considered for a variety of logical and logistical reasons. There is the necessity of keeping the analysis to manageable proportions. In an argument which places a firm emphasis on federal organisation, it is difficult to accommodate a political party increasingly confined to the three largest states. It is extremely dubious, therefore, that the National Party in the context of the 1990s is a bona fide federal party. There have been periods of Australia's federal political history when the National Party was independently important as a generator of public policy, notably the 1920s, the 1950s and the 1960s. With regard to federal policy, the substantial contribution to Australian federalism of Sir Earle Page as Federal Treasurer in the Bruce–Page coalition government of the 1920s must be acknowledged.³ It is difficult, however, to separate Page's contribution from the integrated public policy record of the Bruce–Page government and attribute it solely to distinctive National Party organisational and public policy tendencies.

Furthermore, it is a point of fact that in recent years the National Party has been very much subordinate to the Liberal Party in policy formulation: the most pertinent example is the *Fightback!* program developed over 1990–93. Although *Fightback!* was overwhelmingly the

³ Page contributed significantly to the development of the federal grants system through provisions such as the Federal Aid Roads program inaugurated in 1926, and the first special grant to Western Australia in the 1926–27 Budget. Page also initiated the practice in the 192–27 Budget of showing financial relations with the states as part of the general accounts. Most importantly, Page negotiated the Financial Agreement of 1927, described by Sawyer as a triumph both for himself and for the long-term non-Labour policy of putting the matter on a stable basis rather than leaving the states exposed to the risk of changes in federal policy from year to year (Sawyer 1972, 282).

creation of the Liberal Party, or at least its federal leader, John Hewson, the policy documents were jointly issued by both parties. Much of the National Party's commitment to federalism for many years was channelled into the ultimate futility of 'New States'. When the New State movement finally expired in the late 1950s, the party lacked either the ingenuity or the credibility to fashion a new approach. It also retained a lingering commitment in its policy documents to principles of local self-government through the 'maintenance and expansion of the Federal system'. The National Party has also been a single, although federally structured, entity since its origins immediately after World War I. This makes it extremely difficult to correlate its organisational and public policy history with that of the contemporary Liberal Party formed in 1944.

Federal Philosophies

How important are federalist doctrines to the Liberal Party of Australia? A primary reason why Menzies assembled the Liberal Party was administrative: he wanted a national organisation superior to the ALP's national machine which appeared invincible after Labor's defeat of the UAP in the 1943 federal elections. Was Menzies also motivated by any fundamental philosophical commitment to federalism? Although Menzies created a federal political party, and an extremely enduring and effective one, he put little emphasis on theories of federalism in his letters and speeches relating to the Canberra and Albury conferences which established the Liberal Party in late 1944. His famous letter summoning the warring clans to Canberra contained four basic philosophical precepts: unity of action among political groups standing for liberal progressive policy; opposition to socialism; opposition to bureaucratic administration; and, opposition to restriction of personal freedom. There was no specific reference to federalism although, perhaps, the emphasis on opposition to bureaucratic administration might have federalist overtones. Nor is there any specific reference to federalism in the venerable statement of objectives set out as Part II of the Liberal Party's inaugural constitution, a declaration reiterated in subsequent constitutions and party platforms until it was finally removed as no longer appropriate in the late 1980s.

Unquestionably, Menzies was a federalist. His conception of federalism is set out in his Allan Hope Southey Memorial Lecture of 1960, which includes a succinct restatement of conventional federal principles. As the quotation from this speech in the headnote makes clear, however, he viewed federalist doctrine as subordinate to Australian nationalism, and to the creation of a national Australian identity. An Australian federation was not the embodiment of the states although it preserved essential freedoms:

[T]here is a deep instinct in the Australian mind for a system of government which, by a division of legislative and administrative powers, limits centralisation (or 'control' from Canberra) and protects a measure of individual freedom by not giving us one set of rulers — even elected rulers — who have absolute power. In a great island continent with widely scattered communities, this is a healthy sentiment. It has its dangers and I shall refer to them later on — but it is nevertheless, properly understood and sensibly applied, a good instinct and I respect and approve of it. (Menzies 1960, 3)

Menzies gave veiled warnings that fixation on preserving state powers would endanger the basic necessity of raising a national spirit. In his view, there was nothing in Australia's legislative history to support the notion that state parliaments would have more sense and responsibility than a federal parliament. He also expressed reservations about Australia's dismal record of constitutional amendment, although not suggesting that his own party had been negative:

In our chronic refusal to amend the Constitution in terms, have we lost sight of the fact that great constitutional changes can be brought about, and have been brought about, by the inexorable pressure of financial and economic events, and that other great changes may, in due course, be rendered inevitable if we adopt the wrong attitude towards the distribution of responsibilities?

In conclusion, Menzies defined two tasks of great practical importance:

One is to see that the growing financial power of the Commonwealth is exercised in such a way as to permit the States to discharge their own constitutional duties. The other is to abandon, not the principles of federalism, but the excessive emphasis upon purely local rights which is proving such an impediment to the creation of a truly national sentiment and pride. (Menzies 1960, 14)

This speech was delivered almost twenty years after the formation of the Liberal Party and it would be unwise to draw from it firm conclusions about Menzies' conceptions of federalism in 1944. It seems unlikely, however, that they would have changed all that much. Political pragmatism is the most logical explanation of why Menzies did not stress his own attitudes to federalism in these crucial foundation months. Nineteen forty-four had also seen the defeat of the 'fourteen powers referendum' in which the national Labor government sought a substantial increase in federal powers to implement its post-war construction policies. The loss of the 'fourteen powers' referendum was an important factor in the convergence of the fragmented anti-Labor groups and the emergence of a resurgent Liberal ethos. It would have been unwarranted, and perhaps injudicious, for Menzies to assert an idiosyncratic approach to federalism at a time when a new Liberalism was

crystallising before his eyes. Compared with the virtues of individualism, free enterprise, and removal of bureaucratic controls, federalism was not a predominant influence.

In later years, it became fashionable within the Liberal Party to signify federalism as a principal ingredient of Australian liberalism. A revival of interest in the liberalism of Alfred Deakin — the greatest liberal of colonial Australia, a founder of the federal Constitution and thrice Australian Prime Minister — was a principal stimulus. Thus, liberalism was often defined in a manner which owed much to classic conceptions of federalism. This extract from a speech by Andrew Peacock, twice leader of the Liberal Party, is evidence of a prevailing tone:

Liberalism distrusts great concentrations of power and is associated with the idea of checks and balances, of division of powers, of government constrained by the rule of law. It believes that a healthy society is one in which power and decision-making are widely dispersed throughout the community and enterprises, not monopolised in any one place. The State is seen not as an end in itself, not something to be elevated and sanctified, not to be turned to for the satisfaction of all needs, but, more modestly, as an instrument to adjust and reconcile the freely competing interests within a society, and to look after those things which cannot otherwise be done. (Peacock 1981)

In 1983, when the Liberal Party of Australia was at an historically low ebb after loss of federal government and major defeats in the states, federalism was invoked as a principal ingredient in a reinterpreted Australian liberalism. Party literature argued that Australian liberalism was synonymous with federation and that the creation of one Australian nation through federation was one of the great achievements of liberalism in Australia. In the general statement of relevant liberal principles, however, the expression of federalism was not reemphasised:

The party was founded in 1944 on the principles of individual choice, economic freedom, the family, the expansion of wealth through private enterprise, the use of this wealth to assist the disadvantaged, and *the decentralisation of political power*. [emphasis added] It was a party of moderation but clear direction, and people could see the direct and successful application of its principles and policies to their everyday tasks and social needs. Also its Organisational leaders at Federal, State and local levels were visible in the community. The Party reached out, interacted with the Community. It had a tangible presence, a clear identity. (Liberal Party 1983)

The linkage of contemporary Liberal Party political practice with traditional Australian liberalism owed much to this Deakinite revival. The creation of an annual Deakin lecture gave senior Australian Liberals, such as Phillip Lynch, the opportunity to explore Deakinite liberalism and relate it to the present. This sort of approach, particularly prevalent

in the 1970s, had its incidental ironies. Even a decade ago, it was not uncommon for Liberal Party leaders to extol Deakin's contribution to establishing the industrial arbitration system and centralized wage fixation, even though this was done five years before the first federal Liberal Party was formally established in 1910. In the early 1990s, the party moved decisively to dismantle the industrial system it had been instrumental in creating.

This attempt to define an Australian liberalism synonymous with Australian federation does less than justice to the rich plurality of personalities and interests contributing to the drafting of the Commonwealth Constitution and the establishment of Australian federalism. It also ignores the importance of conservative thought, even traditional Toryism, in the ethos of the Liberal Party of Australia. Historically, the Liberal Party owes much to early factions organised around principles of free trade and protectionism which drew from colonial conservative traditions as well as liberalism. Indeed, they overlapped with Deakin who was both a liberal and a protectionist. At a later stage, the political traditions of liberalism and conservatism coalesced around political leaders: for example, in the mid-1930s Menzies was identified with the liberal tradition within the federal United Australia Party and Archdale Parkhill with the conservatives, or 'Old Nats' as they were commonly called. It also shows up in the rudimentary factions or, more accurately, tendencies which have emerged in the Liberal Party. These range from what is essentially traditional liberalism, embodied in the Liberal Forum which was particularly active in the early 1980s, through moderate and essentially pragmatic manifestations such as 'The Group' in New South Wales, to the extremist fringe exemplified in 'The Uglies' of New South Wales. At the national level, 'tendencies' have been manifested in the broad groupings of 'wets' and 'dries', labels largely borrowed from the British Conservative Party.

Federal Organisation

Although federalist philosophies were neither central nor crucial to the establishment and evolution of the Liberal Party of Australia, federal organisation was an overriding imperative. Given the sturdy unity of the Liberal Party over almost 50 years, it is difficult to comprehend today the organisational chaos of the UAP during its final desperate years. The cumbersome but generally effective federal arrangements inherited from the National Party organisation in the early 1930s had largely dissipated. By 1943-44, the UAP was not even organised at the state level, let alone integrated for effective political participation in federal politics. Menzies had established his own National Service Group which operated virtually as a separate faction within the Federal Parliamentary Party. The Young

Nationalist Organisation of Victoria had constituted itself as what was essentially a separate political party from the UAP. The Queensland Peoples' Party had emerged as a state-based party, strongly opposed to the ALP but with a firm populist tinge. The political disintegration of what had always been a relatively loose confederation was well advanced when Menzies called together eighteen anti-ALP fragments to form the new Liberal Party.

The urgency of pulling together a new federal organisation to counter, and eventually conquer, a powerful Labor Party structure pervades Menzies' famous foundation letter of invitation issued in 1944. This is the central declaration:

The Australian Labor Party has an effective Commonwealth-wide organisation. To resist effectively those aspects of Labour policy to which we are opposed, and to gain the public support enabling governments sympathetic to our views to be formed, we must match Labor's organisation with an Australian organisation of our own. This organisation should have an Australian policy and have the closest contact with its parliamentary leaders and representatives. (Liberal Party nd)

At the Canberra conference in October 1944, Menzies set out in greater detail the organisational defects of the decaying UAP:

The picture they [UAP supporters] present is one of many thousands of people, all desperately anxious to travel in the same political direction but divided into various sects and bodies with no federal structure, with no central executive, with no clearly accepted policy doctrine to serve as a banner under which all may march. (quoted in Lloyd 1984, 465)

The model adopted was overwhelmingly federal with a branch (later amended to 'division') in each state, a Federal Council and a Federal Executive. The resemblance to the well established federal ALP organisation was striking, although important divergences were to emerge. In his opening speech, Menzies proposed a 'Federal non-Labour organisation with a governing executive, a Federal Secretariat and a broad Liberal policy framed in a spirit of political revival which... would find its expression in a real political movement'. Menzies also proposed that in a federal body, young people should be encouraged to take an active interest, and the new movement should be financed by 'rank and file contribution' (*Canberra Times* 14 October 1944). Thus, Menzies intended to end the dominance of subterranean fund raising organisations such as the Liberal Union and the National Union which had unfavourably influenced public perceptions of the three previous 'Liberal' Parties.

The federal reorganisation and integration sponsored by Menzies in 1944 have largely stuck through the ensuing half century. Menzies borrowed much from the ALP but he made innovations in two important areas which have proved to be the enduring glories of Federal Liberal

Party organisation. The first was his emphasis on rank and file branch organisation. By 1946, the Liberal Party claimed 150,000 members. This had dwindled to just over 100,000 by 1983 when the Liberal Party was ejected from national office. As a proportion of national population, Liberal Party membership has fallen considerably since the euphoria of the immediate post-war years. Despite this weakening, the party retains important elements of Menzies' insistence on branch organisation and rank and file fundraising.

Menzies' second enduring initiative has been the creation of a Federal Secretariat. Apart from basic party coordination, the secretariat incorporated research and public relations functions from its inception, effectively trumping the ALP's hitherto superior national organisation. Indeed, it was not until the early 1970s that the ALP was able to match and, by the early 1980s, surpass the efficiency and range of services contributed by the Liberal Party Federal Secretariat. In the earlier years, the Secretariat was constrained by the rigid distinction between policy and platform in the party organisation. Thus, the party 'Organisation', (invariably capitalised in party literature) was responsible for the constitution and platform; the Federal Parliamentary Party for policy. This important distinction began to blur from the mid-1970s when the Pascoe reforms of the Secretariat's operations brought it closer to the policy processes of the Federal Parliamentary Liberal Party. More recently, the policy support functions of the Secretariat have become increasingly overt, a role reinforced by administrative reforms which have given an increasingly centralist tinge to what was for many years an impeccably federalist organisation. This tendency towards structural review, reform and modernisation have been associated particularly with John Elliott's Federal Presidency of the Liberal Party in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Elliott showed little patience with traditional approaches to federal organisation:

The time has come for the Party to reassess its operations and structures in today's fast-moving and uncompromising political environment. We face tough and pragmatic opponents and we cannot afford to be hampered by traditions and procedures of 40 years ago. The electorate expects us to behave and perform as a disciplined Party with a relevant and effective Australia-wide structure. [A] Structural Review Committee is also examining the relations between the Organisation and Parliamentary wings, and the way in which the Organisation can make a substantial contribution to the development of policy. (Liberal Party 1990, 7)

Such notions owe little to traditional federalism and would have been considered heretical when Menzies assembled the Liberal Party of Australia in 1944.

This drift away from even the token elements of federal organisation peaked under the federal leadership of John Hewson from 1990. Hewson dominated the policy making mechanisms with an authority even exceeding that of Menzies. Menzies imposed policy by adhering to the conventions that he largely established: by consultation with the party organisation and particularly the Parliamentary Party, the constitutionally designated instrument for setting policy. Hewson's commitment to consultation and cooperation with traditional party mechanisms was mostly desultory, nor did he concede any significant role to the parliamentary party in drafting the elaborate *Fightback!* manifesto. *Fightback!* was largely the creation of the party leader, his private office and external consultants. Hewson's policy making supremacy was largely accepted by a party craving renewed federal success after a string of electoral defeats. In no sense can a dominant party leadership be construed as 'administrative federalism', whatever other merits it might possess. Hewson's electoral failure in 1993 inevitably brought a dominant party leadership under challenge, creating at least the opportunity for a more interventionist federal organisation.

Federal Policies

As a party of federal government, the Liberal Party has done little to alter the dimensions of Australian federalism or to refresh the implementation of policies relevant to that federalism. Under Menzies, the fundamental rationale of public policy was national development, not a reinvigorated federalism. Menzies was content to accept the federal structures and systems initiated by the Bruce-Page coalition of the 1920s and elaborated by the ALP government of World War II. Thus, national development was fostered in a climate of government that rested on central power but, through the political skills of Menzies and his senior colleagues, the Liberal Party inherited the mantle of genuine federalism, as distinct from the ALP's unitary inclinations. Not until the prime ministership of John Gorton (1968-71) was there any challenge to this ambivalence, with Gorton plainly espousing the virtues of strong central government. Not surprisingly, this created some consternation in the party machine but, according to the Federal President, J. E. Pagan, the Liberal Party organisation acted with perseverance and patience to reaffirm, without ambiguity, the party commitment to a federal system:

Once upon a time there were 'federalists' and 'unificationists', the Labour [sic] Party being the bad unificationists and we the poor federalists. Now we have a category called 'centralists' and from time to time the label is fastened onto [Gorton]. The implication is that he is plotting to diminish the powers of the States and erect in this pleasant

city [Canberra] a monolithic structure of terrible and all-consuming power. The state Presidents and the rest of us who make up the Federal Executive sit and hear Mr Gorton at our meetings. I think I can speak for all my colleagues when I say that if he is a sinister and conspiratorial 'centralist' he controls the role superbly. (Pagan 1970)

In the renewed federalism debate sparked by Gorton, the Liberal Party's Federal Council took an unaccustomed lead by setting up a steering committee which defined what a federal system was and suggested the introduction of a new growth tax for the states to make the system work. This prompted some anguish in the party organisation about the distinction between principle and policy, the Federal President, R.J. Southey, questioning whether a growth tax as a means of ensuring a workable federal system was policy or principle (Southey 1971).

In the early 1970s the Liberal government of William McMahon was influenced by the reinvigorated ALP's restatement of public policies in crucial areas such as education and the cities. The attempt to renew the party's commitment to conventional canons of federalism, however, was blunted as McMahon moved tactically to blunt the thrust of Labor's policy momentum. Thus, the party organisation had to provide both philosophical and policy support for initiatives such as McMahon's creation of the Cities Commission, described by Southey as directed to the 'protection and development of the amenities of life in our great cities' (Southey 1971). The merits of this policy accommodation did not include a resolute commitment to traditional federal principles.

In government during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Liberal Party presided over a notable debate on the philosophy, structure and policies of federalism, usually categorised as 'New Federalism' but more eloquently conveyed in Malcolm Fraser's label, 'Turnaround'. A sharp drift away from centralism was not the key to 'Turnaround' which was directed essentially to reversing the growth of government. The objective was to streamline and pare down the central government by withdrawing from it functions more appropriately handled by the states or private enterprise, and by rationalising what were deemed appropriate government functions. Thus, the principal symbol of the revised approach was Sir Phillip Lynch's Committee of Review of Commonwealth government, described by Fraser as the most significant review of the Commonwealth's functions and administration since federation. 'Turnaround', of course, was perfectly consistent with the sea change in philosophical approaches to the role, size and ethos of government which dominated the 1980's. Fraser saw 'Turnaround' as giving added strength to the Australian federal system, although he also acknowledged the contribution that strong central government had made in enabling the Liberal government to fulfil its aspirations and discharge its policies:

One of our concerns is to avoid the waste and duplication resulting from over-centralisation by giving the states responsibility for functions which are properly theirs ... Ideally, federalism should operate to limit government. But in terms of power, the Commonwealth government was the beneficiary of the centralisation and growth of government in Australia. Even Sir Robert Menzies, looking back from his retirement, made the observation that while it was easy in theory to favour limited power for the Commonwealth, a larger amount of power made it much easier to implement one's own policies. Of course in a situation in which selfish and divisive groups are extremely powerful, a weak Commonwealth Government would be a poor protector of individual rights and of the public interest. So what the Commonwealth needs is that measure of power which will enable it to exchange its own proper responsibilities — neither more nor less — and this Government will seek to return no power in excess of that. (Fraser 1981)

After the defeat of the Fraser government in 1983, the inevitable committee of review was somewhat muted in its approach to federalism, whether new or old. It suggested that the growth of the information society in Australia had made centralized decision making less effective because it had produced insuperable bottle-necks. In short, those at the centre could not absorb and process the vast amount of information now inherent in Australian society. Australia could only take full advantage of this great advance in information resources if individuals and diverse organisations could make effective use of these information resources. This required decentralized decision making in government, the economy and other areas of social life. Further movement towards centralized, authoritative coordination of Australian economic and social life would only frustrate the growing number of interests as they jostled for elbow room in the narrow corridors of power. Australia was already suffering from excessive concentrations of power in big institutions — particularly big business, big government and big unions. Thus, decentralized decision making was essential for effective management of Australia's information resources with the federal responsibility having a responsibility to lower levels of government and also to private and market institutions wherever possible (Liberal Party 1983, 30–1).

This idiosyncratic restatement of New Federalism had a certain bizarre charm but it was virtually useless as either a philosophical statement or a blueprint for policy implementation. The doctrine of New Federalism was easily manifested in lists of programs slashed and functions returned to the states. A federalism couched in terms of the spread of knowledge and the complexities of the information society had no practical public policy relevance, at least not in the 1980s. It was redolent with the incoherence that characterised Liberal philosophy and policy during seven turbulent years in which four successive electoral defeats and three

successive changes in federal leadership devastated the party. Debate on federalism within the party largely ignored the New Federalism in favour of conventional notions of cooperative federalism and fiscal federalism. These two motions from the 1990 federal council meeting, moved respectively by the West Australian and Tasmanian branches, illustrate the party's atavistic federal tendencies at the start of the 1990s:

That this Council resolves to request the incoming Federal Executive to set up a small but representative 'Liberal Commission on Co-operative Federalism' to examine and report on practical and achievable measures which might be taken to strengthen the federal system of federal government, the avoidance of duplication of functions, the harmonious and responsible division of government powers and duties by reducing the continuous push for Commonwealth control and dominance in many areas of responsibility and the abuse of the foreign affairs power for domestic purposes

... That the Liberal Party adopts the following principle as part of its Federation Policy, that each level of Government be responsible for raising more of the money that it spends. (Liberal Party, 1990)

Pragmatically, the party left it very much to the new federal leader, John Hewson, to sort out Liberal philosophies and public policies as part of the *Fightback* program.

Fightback! was not a strategy imbued with federalism in either a philosophical or strategic sense. Much of the *Fightback!* document is frugal indeed in reference to federalism and the few concepts indicated are relatively crude. The thrust of the document is centrifugal in references to decentralizing responsibilities to 'local communities' rather than concentrating them in Canberra, and the need for a federal government and bureaucracy more in touch with the people 'they are supposed to serve' (Hewson & Fisher 1991, 2). While the dissipation of central powers to 'local communities' appears to bypass the powers of the states, this is more likely the result of sloppy drafting than any assertion of philosophy or policy. The invocation of 'Canberra' with pejorative overtones emphasised by double quotes implies elaborate reform in the federal system, although the dimensions are vague:

Australians know that 'Canberra' is too divorced from reality and too divorced from the problems which economic mismanagement has created. This has to change. And our program makes specific proposals to bring about that change. (Hewson & Fisher 1991, 25)

The only consolidation of federal material in the *Fightback!* document is left virtually to the end in the form of a statement headed 'Building a Better Federation'. This statement pledges the coalition parties to respect the federal constitution, to reform Commonwealth-state relations, and to

remedy a raft of problems including duplication, irresponsibility, and 'apparent lack of co-ordination'. It supports a federal system which distributes powers in a way which encourages participation and acts as a barrier against centralist, remote and authoritarian control. A desultory paragraph on revenue raising and spending responsibilities is capped by what is unquestionably the most interesting section, an attempt to define a concept of 'competitive federalism':

In order to maximise competitive pressure, each government has to be, as nearly as possible, responsible for its own revenue raising and expenditure decisions. This allows each State to provide a 'tax/service' bundle which has to compete with bundles from other States. This allows greater choice and a more efficient public sector. In a nutshell, there is much to be said for 'Competitive Federalism' — for competition in policy and in service delivery between the States. (Hewson & Fisher, 64)

Regrettably, no attempt is made to elucidate this tantalising notion of 'competitive federalism' in an Australian context. While perfectly consistent with the *Fightback!* ethos of free marketeering and smaller government, it would also seem to have the potential for distributive inequities, even the seeds of a 'chaotic federalism'. The remainder of 'Building a Better Federation' draws heavily on well-worn proposals put to the prime minister by the premiers and chief ministers in November 1991. Broadly, these would make the states accountable for an identifiable component of national personal income tax with the Commonwealth remaining the sole collection agency, protect the rights of the less prosperous states protected, and guarantee revenue neutrality and avoidance of double taxation. The statement ends with a strong endorsement of federal change:

Reform of Commonwealth-state relations — in particular, allowing the States to make more of their own decisions on taxing and spending, and to be responsible for the consequence of those decisions — will be one of the more effective and lasting ways of boosting Australia's economic performance. *It would represent, arguably, the most significant single reform of the 1990's.* [emphasis added] (Hewson & Fisher 1991, 64)

The inconspicuous placement of 'Building a Better Federation' near the end of the 66-page *Fightback!* document hardly equates with any significant renewal of federalism policy on the part of the Liberal Party. It should be noted, however, that federalism is followed by even skimpier statements on trade policy, foreign policy and national security!

Conclusion

The Liberal Party's main contribution to Australian federalism has been through the professional development of its federal organisation. The federal institutions created by Menzies gave the Liberal Party a political ascendancy, particularly in national politics but also at the state level, enduring until the early 1980s. In general, the party has worked comfortably within Australia's federal framework over the past fifty years. It has largely been content, however, to work within inherited doctrines and structures without straying into areas of novelty or innovation. The principal exception was the 'New Federalism' of Malcolm Fraser and Phillip Lynch but the notions of federalism contained in this ambitious program were closely inter-twined with concepts of small government, privatisation and deregulation. New Federalism was not a program embedded formally in revised, or renewed, theses of customary federalism. Inevitably, the federalism component was diluted by emphasis on the more fashionable catch cries of small government, privatisation and deregulation. In terms of implementation, New Federalism was reduced to what was essentially a mechanical exercise in fiscal transfers. Admittedly, it was truncated also by the defeat of the Fraser government in 1983, although its thrust had probably dissipated before the election. Hewson's *Fightback!* program was imbued with the ethos of accelerated market reform and dismantling of government activity, and its reforms were not projected in other than a perfunctory federal context. The rejection of *Fightback!* by the electorate at the 1993 federal election has extinguished even the feeble flicker of a re-vitalised federalism that it offered.

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Chapter 7

THE FEDERAL FACE OF CANADIAN PARTY MEMBERSHIP

R.K. Carty

Canada's national political parties all seek to be participatory organizations offering Canadians an opportunity to play an active part in the country's politics. But the opportunities the parties offer, and the impact individual party members can have, ultimately depends upon the character and structure of the party organizations. Though the parties' organizations inevitably reflect something of the logic of the institutional framework in which they operate, they also testify to the distinctive conceptions of politics that underlie the parties as communities of political activists. This paper explores the patterns of membership in Canada's national parties to reveal the similarities and differences amongst them, and maps the federal dimension of Canadian parties' membership and activity.

In his classic comparative study of political parties, Duverger (1954, 63-4) argued that it was the very concept of party membership itself that provided the basis for distinguishing between cadre and mass parties. Cadre parties are primarily organizations for electoral mobilization, pulling political notables and their local networks or followers together to contest elections. In such parties the concept of membership is necessarily rather informal and flexible: individuals join to support particular candidates and participate in campaigns, but then have only limited involvement, often letting their membership lapse between elections. Mass parties, by contrast, are built on the principle that an active participating membership is the very essence of a democratic party: members are not simply mobilized for electoral work but are actively and continually involved in all aspects of party life.

Given these important distinctions in the very nature of cadre and mass parties, the patterns of party membership in them ought to differ in quite predictable ways. Cadre parties should have an irregular and somewhat volatile membership that reflects the electoral cycles of the political system in which they exist. The size of their membership will vary and should largely be driven by electoral necessity. Mass parties

should have a much more stable and regular membership, with little variation between electoral cycles. Successful mass parties will typically have large numbers of members since its membership is both a principal reason for its existence and one of its major political resources.

Canada's three major national parties have often been described in these Duvergerian terms. The Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals which predate universal suffrage and a fully democratic politics, appear to be classic cadre parties. The New Democrats (NDP), a social democratic party tied to the trade union movement, has most of the organizational trappings of a mass party. While it is no doubt true that all three have, in some ways, moved to emulate one another and so adopt the style of a catch-all (Kirchheimer 1966) or an electoral-professional (Panebianco 1988) party, their distinctive organizational origins can not be ignored in any serious analysis of their membership patterns.

Federalism necessarily complicates all Canadian political organization. This is particularly the case for political parties which must decide if they wish to operate in both provincial and federal arenas, or at just one of the levels, and then construct and sustain organizations capable of meeting their needs. Rand Dyck (1991) argues that federalism forces parties to choose between two organizational types. On the one hand, there is the confederal party: its federal and provincial wings are quite distinct with little or no formal organizational linkages between them. The electoral lives of what are really separate federal and provincial parties are very much their own. On the other hand, there is the integrated party: federal and provincial organization and activity are two sides of the same coin and its organizations are tightly bound together in a mutually supportive fashion. In practice, these party forms constitute the ends of an organizational continuum rather than distinctly contrasting ideal types and, at different times and in different places, parties may vary along it.

Though there is no necessary connection between these two sets of organizational distinctions, one might expect that mass parties, with their commitment to a full and participatory politics, would be inclined to adopt an integrated structure. Cadre parties might well prefer the increased flexibility provided by a confederal model, though it could also be that an integrated organization would allow it to make more efficient use of limited organizational resources. Historically Canadian parties had integrated structures (Carty 1988a). However, with the addition of provinces, the emergence of government by executive federalism, and the evolution of the party system, both the Liberals and Conservatives (the only parties to have ever formed a national government) have moved towards more confederal structures in recent years.

But, even in terms of their own constitutional theory or form, organizational purity seems impossible for Canada's national political parties. The New Democrats come closest to it. They have most of the

organizational structures of an integrated mass party. Members join the national party by joining a provincial wing (or indirectly through an affiliated union local) and are assumed to be fully committed to both levels of politics. As an indication of its determination to overcome the pressures federalism exerts to create 'two political worlds' (Blake 1985), the party refuses to accept individuals who are members of any other party. But even the NDP has had to compromise this structure to deal with the realities of Quebec. There, the party has had to capitulate to the distinctive character of the province by establishing a confederal structure which leaves individuals free to join either or both of the federal or provincial parties, but to do so separately.

At the other end of the spectrum, the national Progressive Conservative Party comes close to having a pure cadre style confederal structure. Individuals prepared to support the national party are free to join it irrespective of their membership in other parties. This provision is particularly important for the Tories, and for their activists and supporters in provinces where there is no provincial Conservative Party (for example, Quebec or British Columbia). For the most part the party is separate and distinct from its provincial namesakes (there are some modest formal linkages, for example, Conservative provincial legislators are automatically made voting delegates at national party leadership conventions), though there are often active informal ties between Conservative organizers and activists at the grassroots. The confederal structure gives the party considerable electoral flexibility and allowed it, for example, to work with both nationalists and provincial Liberals in Quebec during the 1980s.

The Liberal Party, like the Conservatives, has a cadre style membership but has developed a rather schizophrenic response to the organizational challenges of federalism. In four of the provinces (and the largest four at that: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta) the Liberals have a confederal structure. In those provinces the federal and provincial parties are organizationally separate. However, in the other six provinces the party has an integrated constitutional form and individuals simultaneously join both federal and provincial parties by one action. To cope with potentially conflicting patterns of membership and loyalty, the party has adopted the rule that its members can not also be members of any other *national* party. If that is less demanding than the New Democrats' standard, it is at least somewhat more restrictive than the Conservative Party which lacks any exclusionary membership rule.

Whatever the forms the parties prescribe, the fundamental organizational unit for the vast majority of ordinary party members is their local constituency (often called 'riding' in Canada) party association. It is through this association that they have an opportunity to participate in party and electoral activity. It is also true that the regionally diverse

character of the Canadian federation has ensured that there will be a great deal of decentralization and local autonomy in organizations that are primarily composed of volunteers and enthusiasts. Thus it is to the constituency associations that we must look in an effort to map out the realities of party membership and activity. How closely do the patterns of membership and organizational activity that are implied by organizational constructs such as the cadre/mass and confederal/integrated dichotomies really match the distinctions between the parties? How organizationally homogeneous, or diverse, are the parties themselves? Does their organizational form make a difference to their activity? It is now possible to begin to answer some of these questions.

As part of its research program, the recent Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (the Lortie Commission) conducted a wide-ranging survey of the organization and activity of constituency party associations in Canada. An extensive and detailed survey was sent to all of the constituency associations of the three major national parties (and two of the minor parties not discussed in this paper) in the spring of 1991. The return rate was 54 percent and it produced a data set which was representative of all regions and parties, as well as electorally successful and unsuccessful associations (for full details of the study see Carty 1991, chap. 2.). This data set provides the basis for the description and analysis that follows.

The Patterns of National Party Membership

To the extent that the Liberals and Conservatives are essentially cadre style organizations, and the NDP a mass party, it should be possible to observe clear differences in their membership patterns. The memberships of the former ought to be driven by the electoral cycle, growing quickly in an election year then steadily falling off until a subsequent electoral impulse gives it another jolt. By contrast, the NDP's membership ought to be relatively flat, little effected by the vagaries of electoral politics.

The constituency association survey allows us to test these propositions. The individual associations reported the number of local members they had for each of the four years from 1987 to 1990. Given that a national general election was held in 1988, this allows us to observe party membership changes from a pre-election year through an election and then on to the mid-point of the subsequent inter-election period. To deal with the problem of extreme cases which can distort the mean as a fair measure of the typical constituency party association, membership sizes of the median associations are used to indicate the changing patterns of party membership. It should also be noted that our data, based on the local parties' annual membership figures, say nothing about the stability of membership in them. Comparative data (for

example, Selle & Svasand 1991) suggests that, if anything, membership patterns are likely to be even more volatile than those of the party association that a member joins.

Figure 7.1 charts the typical local constituency association's membership over 1987–90 and confirms our basic expectations of the differences between the cadre style Conservatives and Liberals and the mass structure of the NDP. Membership in the two cadre parties' local associations typically doubles in an election year (it grew by 100 percent among Conservatives; 125 percent among Liberals over 1987–88) but then rapidly falls back in a post-election demobilization. Over the 1988 election cycle, party membership actually grew more in the opposition Liberal Party than in the governing Conservative Party's associations. That is not surprising. It reflects the increased mobilization efforts in Liberal associations in 1988 stemming from local riding party nomination contests, inevitably more numerous in the opposition party with its larger number of open seats (Carty & Erickson 1991). The pattern in the NDP is quite different. Though there was some membership growth in the election year, by comparison with the two traditional parties, NDP local association membership was far less volatile: there is little evidence here that it is driven by an electoral imperative.

Figure 7.1
Constituency Association Membership: 1987–90
(median size)

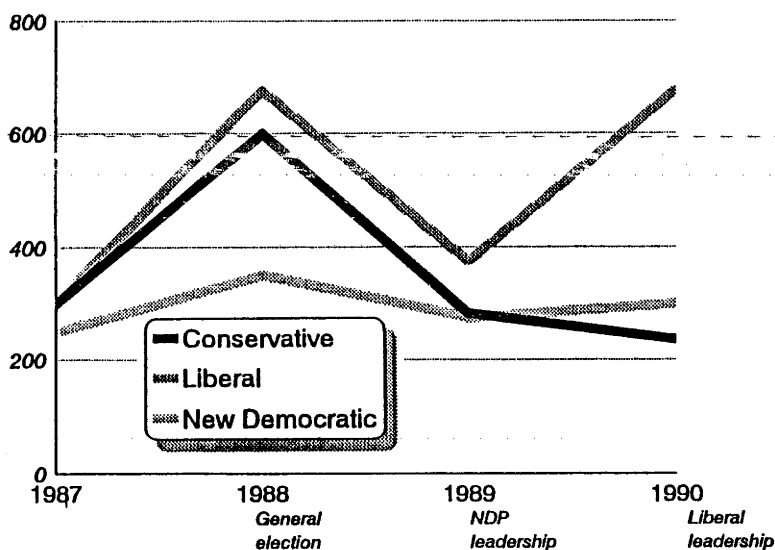


Table 7.1
Constituency association membership size by region
 (median association)

	1987	1988	1989	1990
Atlantic				
Conservative	350	400	80	100
Liberal	1350	1850	2410	2600
New Democrat	140	170	140	200
Quebec				
Conservative	400	1000	450	350
Liberal	400	750	575	650
New Democrat	40	182	145	25
Ontario				
Conservative	200	425	200	200
Liberal	200	725	293	700
New Democrat	250	288	250	254
Prairies				
Conservative	350	925	369	250
Liberal	325	600	550	1200
New Democrat	638	1200	700	897
British Columbia				
Conservative	500	573	450	264
Liberal	180	200	250	300
New Democrat	976	1080	1200	1200
Conservative				
Atlantic	350	400	80	100
Quebec	400	1000	450	350
Ontario	200	425	200	200
Prairies	350	925	369	250
British Columbia	500	573	450	264
Liberal				
Atlantic	1350	1850	2410	2600
Quebec	400	750	575	650
Ontario	200	725	293	700
Prairies	325	600	550	1200
British Columbia	180	200	250	300
New Democrat				
Atlantic	140	170	140	200
Quebec	40	182	145	25
Ontario	250	288	250	254
Prairies	638	1200	700	897
British Columbia	976	1080	1200	1200

The data indicate that the Liberal Party also had a surprisingly large membership growth in 1990. It is surprising in that there is no reason to think that this sort of dramatic change will normally occur in a cadre party during an interelection year and, as figure 7.1 indicates, it did not in the Conservative Party that year. The ready explanation is that 1990 was a year in which the Liberals chose a new national party leader. That is a

process, in Canada's Liberal and Conservative parties, which involves local party members choosing constituency delegates to a national leadership convention. Candidates whose personal machines can mobilize local supporters to join and then participate in constituency party association elections can increase the number of delegates supporting them. Thus, such contests often lead to greatly increased party memberships as individuals enter the party to take part in the election of a new leader (Carty 1988b; 1991, chap. 5). But this is quite consistent with our expectation that cadre parties memberships are driven by an electoral dynamic. Elections of this sort are intraparty contests and so the dynamic is simply self-induced. One would expect a similar pattern of growth, followed by decline, in Conservative riding association memberships in a year in which they choose a new leader.

Something of the real difference between the cadre parties and the NDP is also revealed in the NDP membership figures for 1989. In that year the NDP chose a new leader, yet its national leadership convention delegate selection process produced nothing of the membership explosion that characterized the Liberals in 1990. For the NDP as a mass party based on a steady, ongoing membership, even intraparty electoral contests do not stimulate changes in its membership.

Canada has a federal political system because of the profound regional differences that have always characterized its political life. And the very existence of federal institutions helps to perpetuate such differences. As one would expect, there is a considerable regional variation in party membership patterns. These variations also suggest that our simple characterizations of the three national parties may need to be modified somewhat in light of the electoral roles they play in the various parts of the country and their structural response to the imperatives of the two political worlds of federal and provincial life.

Table 7.1 reports the parties constituency association membership figures for the country's five regions. The three largest provinces (Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia) stand alone, but the data for the four small Atlantic provinces and the three Prairie provinces, have been grouped together. In Atlantic Canada, the traditional stronghold of cadre style politics, the Liberal Party had extraordinarily large local memberships over the period in question which appear to have been independent of the national electoral cycle. That reflects not only the contemporary popularity of the federal Liberal Party but also the vigor of the region's provincial Liberal parties which were in power in three of the four provinces. Because this is an area in which the Liberals have an integrated organizational structure, the growth and success of the region's provincial parties (driven in considerable part by local electoral cycles) rebound to the advantage of the national party. Quebec and Ontario, which together encompass 60 percent of the nation's ridings, have

patterns that pretty much mirror the national patterns revealed in figure 7.1. The NDP is stronger in Ontario, where it is rooted in a strong provincial party, than it is in Quebec, the one province where it has not been able to maintain an integrated party structure. The Prairies are particularly distinctive as the one region where the NDP's membership appears to be influenced by the electoral cycle. It is there that the party first grew (as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation), and the region has consistently provided the party with its greatest electoral success. Perhaps its very electoral success on the Prairies may have led to it developing some regional membership patterns that are rather more characteristic of the electorally driven cadre parties. Finally there is British Columbia. There the NDP's greater strength depends upon a strong provincial party but neither of its two opponents seem to have membership patterns especially marked by the electoral cycle. That is perhaps not too surprising given the far higher ideological temperature of the Pacific province's political life which operates to keep the region's political life on a steadier boil.

Of the three national parties, it is the Conservatives which appear to have a membership pattern most attuned to the electoral cycle in every region of the country. That is what one might expect from the governing party which has both a cadre style organization and a confederal model underlying the structure of its federal and provincial linkages. The NDP's membership is least cyclical, though even that observation must be qualified by our earlier suggestion that an electoral cycle may shape the party on the Prairies, and by the recognition that NDP membership levels are simply very low in the two eastern regions of the country and comparatively high in the two western ones. (For an argument that most of the NDP's local organization in the five eastern provinces is largely made up of 'paper' associations see Carty 1991, chaps 4. & 9.) The Liberal pattern, perhaps a consequence of the party's ambivalence over whether to adopt a confederal or integrated structure, is more varied. On the two coasts Liberal membership seems unaffected by the electoral cycle but this reflects two distinct patterns: in the east it has large, confederally organized memberships, in the west the party is at its weakest and has played no significant part in the area's provincial politics for most of a generation. In the other regions Liberal memberships give evidence of the impact of the party's electoral vocation.

Federalism and Party Membership

While the party constitutions allow for a fairly straightforward distinction between confederal and integrated party structures, the difference is not always so clear when one considers individual constituency party associations. In principal, the confederally structured Conservative Party

will have constituency associations whose memberships are 'exclusively federal' while, with the notable exception of Quebec, the integrated NDP's federal riding parties will have memberships which are held jointly with the corresponding provincial party organization. The pattern in the Liberal Party should be much more mixed, reflecting the national party's adoption of the practice of 'provincial option' on whether confederal or integrated structures will be used. It is possible that some local party associations in the two old cadre parties will have no formal memberships, preferring to rely on traditional understandings of just who is part of the local party, although the formalization of party memberships over the last couple of decades engendered by nomination and leadership contests ought to have eliminated most such local organizations. To test these expectations, table 7.2 summarizes the local parties' accounts of their membership types.

Table 7.2
Constituency Association Membership Type by Party
(vertical percentage)

	Conservative	Liberal	New Democrat
<i>Local association membership:</i>			
Exclusively federal	74	48	25
Joint with provincial party	23	50	73
No formal membership	3	2	2

The pattern of local membership is largely what our analysis predicts. Three-quarters of the Conservative's riding parties have 'exclusively federal' local memberships while only one-quarter of the New Democrats do. The Liberals sit firmly in between: half their associations have an exclusive (confederal model) membership, the other half joint (integrated model) memberships. But this means that our prediction of membership types was only partially correct: the reality is that fully a quarter of the Conservative and New Democratic party riding parties appear to operate in a fashion that runs counter to the spirit, and generally the letter, of their constitutional and organizational norms.

Of the two, the New Democrats appear to be the most consistent: only in three provinces (but the three biggest — Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia) do some associations report exclusively federal memberships, and two-thirds of them are in Quebec where the party has recently been forced to abandon an integrated structure and move to a confederal arrangement. By contrast, and despite a national constitution which eschews joint federal-provincial party memberships, the Conservatives have associations in eight provinces which claim to share

their local members with a provincial party. This confirms the conventional wisdom that the NDP has a more homogeneous cast to its membership than does the Conservative Party. The NDP's successes in developing an integrated organization in the face of the decentralizing pressures of Canadian federalism reflect the greater seriousness the party pays to membership. It is also consistent with our portrait of the NDP as a mass party rooted in a dependable and involved membership. As a cadre party, whose organization is tied to the realities of an often very parochial electoral politics, the Conservatives may have less ability to enforce their confederal principles in all ridings, but then they probably worry less about doing so than might the NDP.

Predictably, given the regional variations in Canadian party development and strength, local association membership varies across the country (table 7.3). The vast majority of the constituency associations in the three maritime provinces have local memberships that are jointly held with provincial parties. This is true, regardless of party, in a region that continues to be dominated by the Liberals and Conservatives and where NDP organizational norms have made little impression. And it is only in that region that older, traditional patterns of political mobilization — with party membership an informal, social phenomenon rather than a formal organizational category — continue to persist to any marked degree. Exclusive memberships are most common in the four largest provinces, no doubt because those are the provinces in which the Liberal Party has moved to adopt confederal structures. If we take the proportion of associations with exclusive memberships as an indicator of the degree to which federal and provincial party life is separate, then these data suggest that Alberta is the province whose federal and provincial party politics are most alienated from one another.

Does the form of membership make a difference to the riding association as it goes about its tasks of managing local party activity? As a first approach to that question we can ask whether membership type makes a difference to the size of the local party membership. It seems reasonable to expect that federal riding associations with joint memberships should be larger than those with exclusively federal memberships, as they would be more likely to involve individuals interested in provincial politics as well as those whose primary interests were in federal politics. Table 7.4 reports the pattern of constituency association membership size for the three parties in terms of the local association's membership type.

The evidence suggest that constituency associations with joint federal-provincial party memberships are typically larger than those which (at least formally) define their membership in exclusively federal terms. The difference is really quite marked in the NDP where the median joint membership association is two to three times larger than those with federal orientations. But that is only to be expected for most of the

NDP's exclusively federal membership associations are in eastern Canada (especially Quebec) where the party is, and has always been, particularly weak. At first glance a similar pattern of greater membership strength in joint membership riding parties appears to hold for the two cadre parties, but a closer examination suggests an important difference. In both parties the size difference between the two types of constituency parties virtually disappears during election years (1988 for the Conservatives; 1988 and 1990 for the Liberals). Given that those are precisely the periods when membership has a much greater importance in cadre parties, it would appear that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives pay any significant membership price for their confederal approach to party organization and the more fragmented pattern of party membership that goes with it.

Table 7.3
Constituency Association Membership Type by Province
(horizontal percentage)

	Exclusively Federal	Joint with provincial party	No formal membership
Newfoundland	40	50	10
Nova Scotia	20	70	10
Prince Edward Island	--	83	17
New Brunswick	33	67	--
Quebec	57	43	--
Ontario	67	31	2
Manitoba	42	54	3
Saskatchewan	45	52	3
Alberta	81	19	--
British Columbia	61	37	1

Table 7.4
Constituency Association Size by Membership Type
(median association)

	1987	1988	1989	1990
Conservatives				
exclusively federal membership	391	1042	513	320
joint federal-provincial membership	640	997	986	528
Liberals				
exclusively federal membership	379	942	498	1037
joint federal-provincial membership	655	963	867	1125
New Democrats				
exclusively federal membership	247	291	224	181
joint federal-provincial membership	734	775	786	837

The Focus of Constituency Party Activity

A riding party association's membership size and structure is one thing, its focus of activity is quite another. Large numbers of its activists and supporters do not rigidly divide their political interests in the same way that the country's federal constitution requires of governments; and so local party associations, even when defined in terms of the federal electoral map, may find themselves drawn into the realms of provincial politics. In an attempt to assess the extent to which this was so, the constituency association survey asked the local party presidents to describe the focus and concern of their riding association executive, and provided four possible responses: (a) 'federal politics exclusively', (b) 'mainly federal politics but sometimes provincial affairs', (c) 'federal and provincial politics equally', and (d) 'mainly provincial politics but sometimes federal affairs'. Table 7.5 reports the party responses. The differences are not as sharp as one might have inferred from those on membership just considered.

Table 7.5
The Activity Focus of Federal Constituency Associations
(vertical percentage)

<i>Activity focus:</i>	Conservative	Liberal	New Democrat
exclusively federal	52	36	32
mainly federal, sometimes provincial	35	45	38
federal and provincial affairs equally	13	18	22
mainly provincial, sometimes federal	--	--	8

As the confederal-integrated party structure analysis developed to this point would suggest, Conservative constituency associations are more concerned with federal politics, but only half of them (52 percent) report that is their exclusive concern. Those in the NDP, on the other hand, are far more likely to report they are engaged in provincial as well as federal politics, and a not inconsiderable number of their federal riding associations suggest provincial affairs are at least as important (22 percent), if not more so (8 percent), than are federal activities. Regionally, the data (not reported in tabular form here) indicate that the sharpest separation of federal and provincial affairs exists in the province of Quebec. There, fully 70 percent of the riding parties report that they are completely concerned with federal politics. Given the very sharp differences in that province's federal and provincial party systems, this is hardly unexpected. In Atlantic Canada, by contrast, less than a quarter (22 percent) of the region's federal constituency associations report an

exclusive concern for federal politics. This despite the fact that the area remains the heartland of traditional cadre style political organization, though the concern for both levels of politics obviously matches the pattern of far more integrated federal-provincial party memberships we noted persist in that part of the country. Thus, while the Quebec data indicate that federalism can lead to sharply distinct party worlds in the same territory, the evidence from the four small eastern provinces remind us that, where it suits their needs and organizational interests, parties can also operate to ignore those constitutionally defined boundaries.

There is an observable relationship between the type of membership a riding party has and the focus of its activity, though it is perhaps less compelling than one might have anticipated. While a majority of the associations with an exclusively federal membership are solely concerned with federal politics, some 40 percent of them report giving at least some attention to provincial politics (table 7.6). Among those with joint memberships, a third actually claim to be exclusively concerned with federal politics, while just 27 percent report giving equal attention to both federal and provincial affairs. This is a general pattern that holds fairly consistently across all three national parties.

Table 7.6
Constituency Association Activity Focus
by Membership Type
(vertical percentage)

<i>Activity Focus</i>	<i>Membership Type</i>	
	<i>Exclusively federal</i>	<i>Joint federal-provincial</i>
exclusively federal	59	24
mainly federal, sometimes provincial	35	43
federal and provincial affairs equally	5	27
mainly provincial, sometimes federal	—	6

The portrait that emerges from this exploration of the membership and orientation of the national electoral constituency associations is that Canadian riding parties are not merely instruments for national politics pure and simple. As table 7.7 indicates, only 31 percent of them have an exclusively federal membership and are solely concerned with federal politics. More (37 percent) had both joint memberships and mixed orientations, while the other third fell in between these two types. Obviously, the majority of Canadian national party associations are relatively complex and multifaceted organizations. Their members are shared, and their activities are correspondingly oriented to more than just national politics.

There are, however, fairly sharp differences among the parties in the proportions of their constituency associations which fall into these two distinct groups of local associations distinguished by their membership and focus of activity. Almost half (48 percent) of the Conservative riding parties may be described as essentially national party organizations, but the same is true for only half as many (25 percent) of the Liberals and just one-third as many (16 percent) of NDP constituency associations (table 7.7). By contrast, the figures for the proportions of associations that integrate federal and provincial party life are a near reverse image of the national group: the NDP has 59 percent of its associations with joint memberships and activities, the Conservatives only 17 percent.

Table 7.7
Party Membership and Activity
(horizontal percentage)

	Riding party Membership and Activity	
	Both national (exclusively federal)	Both mixed (federal & provincial)
All three parties	31	37
Conservatives	48	17
Liberals	25	38
New Democrats	16	59

While these patterns are consistent with what one would expect from a confederal cadre party on the one hand, and an integrated mass party on the other, it is also clear that, for each of the parties, its local organizational base is far from being particularly homogeneous. The fact is that only 48 percent of the Conservative constituency associations can be described as corresponding to its theoretically ideal type; and, while the figure for model associations in the NDP is somewhat higher (59 percent), that party is also still a long way from having the seamless organizational web described in its constitution and assumed to exist by much of the literature written about it.

Constituency Level Organization in Canada's National Parties

It is clear from the data that the conceptual distinctions between cadre and mass membership parties, and between confederal and integrated structures as responses to the intraparty tensions created by federalism, provide considerable theoretical purchase for an analysis of Canada's national political parties. But, at the same time, it is equally clear that,

despite the parties opting in relatively clear fashion, especially in the cases of the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats, for particular organizational forms, in many cases national constitutional principles do not easily translate into local political reality. There is, in all three of the national parties, considerable internal heterogeneity. This means that, in practice, local party members are likely to find quite different structures of partisan opportunity as they move from one constituency association to another.

Other analyses demonstrate that Canada's three national parties have distinctive approaches to their political practice. There is little doubt that the basic cadre/mass distinction between the Liberals and Conservatives on the one hand, and the NDP on the other, helps account for many of the differences between these parties' characteristic modes of electoral campaign organization and activities (Carty 1991, chap. 7). Similarly, the uniquely confederal structure of the Conservatives appears to underlie the distinctive pattern of local autonomy which structures electoral financing in that party (Carty 1991, chap. 8). But all these differences appear to be a dimension of the national parties' basic modal patterns. The local organizational heterogeneity we have discovered in the membership and activity does not result in riding parties of one type organizing or behaving differently from others in the same national party. It is as if local associations are prepared to work within a common partisan framework, but decide how they will organize locally to do so.

To understand Canadian parties, then, requires that we accept that simple descriptions are a mask for considerable local autonomy and variation. Party constitutions, sometimes even those adopted by the riding parties themselves, provide a starting point for local organization; but they may be more of an amiable fiction than an accurate account of actual practice. The real world of Canadian party organization continues, as it always has, to reflect the parochial concerns of an extraordinarily varied, and federally organized, country.

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Chapter 8

'MEDIA INTRUSION' CENTRALISATION AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE ESTABLISHED PARTIES IN CANADA AND AUSTRALIA¹

Ian Ward

Media Intrusion Theory

'The study of political parties', Gagnon and Tanguay (1989, 2) write, 'has been marked by alternating moods of pessimism and optimism'. In their more pessimistic moments students of political parties in western democracies have detected widespread party decline. Thus Armyot (1986, 952) believes that there are 'clear signs' that parties in western democracies are in decline. 'It may be', Lawson and Merkl (1988, 3) suggest, 'that the institution of the party is gradually disappearing' and giving way to new structures geared to the 'economic and technological realities of twenty-first century politics'. A variety of reasons have been advanced for this. One of the most familiar — and plausible — is that modern communications technologies have made party organisation increasingly redundant as a means of reaching and persuading voters.

Very simply '[mass] communication has replaced organisation as the primary motor of politics' (Axworthy 1991, 81), and in particular 'television has accelerated the long-term trend toward party decline' (Abramson, Arterton & Orren 1988, 89). This has been dubbed 'media intrusion theory' (Davis 1990, 161). It posits that the media may be 'inadvertently hastening or even precipitating the demise of parties', which has been evident for more than twenty years. Thus Ware argues that

...the revolution in communication industries has posed a threat to parties in two ways. On the one hand devices such as television have forced a re-evaluation of the ways in which parties communicate with

¹ A modified version of this chapter has appeared as "'Media Intrusion" and the Changing Nature of the Established Parties in Australia and Canada', *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 26(3), 477-506.

electorates; on the other hand, they have also increased the potential for the effective use of forms of political communication which bypass parties (Ware 1987, 3).

In a similar vein Paolo Mancini (1991, 137, 152n) suggests that the birth of commercial television prompted some fundamental changes including the introduction of advertising techniques and 'the personalization and dramatization of news'. Such changes in political communication, he argues, have progressively stripped (Italian) political parties of their functions and eroded circuits of communication once 'assured by the organisation of the political parties and their interpersonal networks'.

Media intrusion theory is by no means novel. Its central claim was sketched out as early as 1958 by V.O. Key, who observed that the advent of new media had meant that 'specialists in radio and television, and others who deal in mass communications', had displaced the local party workers who hitherto had the task of mobilising the vote (Key 1958, 375). Subsequently in 1967 Epstein made much the same point. Television, he argued, would trigger a decline in party numbers, not only because it would supplant the role of the mass membership but because 'the need for professional staffs to manage mass-media campaigns ... was at odds with the talents available from party members' (Epstein 1967, 238). Such arguments have a certain logic. Simply put, enduring mass party organisations evolved to enable party elites to utilise vertical interpersonal links to disseminate propaganda 'downward' and to mobilise and persuade voters, as well as to collect political intelligence and channel it 'upwards'.

The advent of television and other communication technologies has enabled political elites — guided now by professional pollsters, advertisers, direct-mail marketeers and other communication experts — to communicate directly with voters. In short, the arrival of 'television gave candidates the means of communicating directly to the public, without using party organisations' (Alger 1989, 188). The passing of old style party organisations need not be unduly mourned. As Qualter (1985, 182) has observed 'traditional' campaigning often utilised 'image making, exaggeration and fakery' and even outright corruption. What is significant, he argues, is that reliance on sophisticated campaign methods, predicated upon television, has allowed communications professionals to wrest control of campaigning from politicians. That is, 'new professionals' (see Penniman 1981, 109) whose skills lie in 'tracking' and 'targeting' voters — those Mills (1986) dubs 'the new machine men' — have emerged to rival those who traditionally ran party machines.

Furthermore television, O'Shaughnessy (1990, 82, 84) argues, has dissolved the 'automatic loyalties' of the constituencies on which parties

had traditionally drawn. Once television was able to convey 'all the emotions of the campaign' the ranks of canvassers and other volunteer party workers declined. As Abramson, Arterton and Orren (1988, 89) suggest, television now provides the main connections between candidates and voters and has 'assumed many of the functions once performed by political parties'. Modern campaigning no longer requires the 'ongoing networks of personal contacts' which parties once provided, and the new communications media have made the permanent organisations of party structures largely superfluous (see Arterton 1984). As Zukin (1981, 359) argues, while parties still 'to some degree serve as opinion-to-policy linkage mechanisms', the media now afford citizens a much more direct means of monitoring the political process and 'have reduced political dependency on interpersonal communications' which urban party organisations once facilitated. Kolar (1986, 89) presses the argument even more strongly. Television, with its capacity to 'reach a broad and diverse audience... with emotional, personal messages' has had a 'dramatic' impact on parties since it has meant that party organisations are no longer 'the primary source of information or point of contact between candidate and voter'.

However, Anthony Smith (1981, 173) has cautioned that 'television's impact has not been uniform in the societies where it has assumed a major role'. Equally the introduction of polling, computerised direct-mail, phone banking and related communication technologies are unlikely to have had the same impact on the various democracies where parties have adopted these electioneering methods. For example, O'Shaughnessy (1990, 210) points to circumscribing 'structural factors' which have constrained the use of marketing methods by parties in the UK. Legislation proscribing televised political advertising (which is widely used elsewhere) is a case in point. Penniman (1981, 111) extends this same argument. Western democracies, he notes, possess significantly different electoral laws and party systems, and the effect of new technologies has been 'to accentuate existing institutional relations rather than sharply change them'.

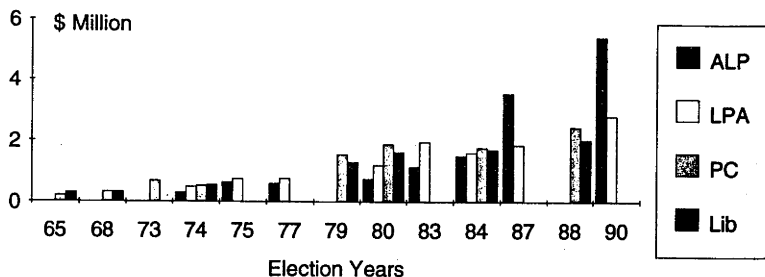
This paper compares and contrasts the impact which the adoption of new campaign technologies has had on political parties in Canada and Australia. Interest in Canadian-Australian comparative analysis is, as Goot (1992, 113) has observed, 'quickenning', and this is now a regularly ploughed field. Thus, although in a sense the choice of Canada and Australia to test the suggestion that circumscribing structural factors will govern the impact of television and new campaign technologies on parties is an arbitrary one, it needs no particular defence here. Suffice to say that there are sufficient similarities — and differences — between the two political systems to allow a fruitful comparison (see Alexander & Galligan, 1992). Both Canada and Australia have political systems which

combine federalism and cabinet government. Yet there are important differences in their electoral systems (and laws), and in the very nature and practices of the political parties which dominate national politics in each country.

Embracing Television-Centred and Cognate Campaign Technologies

To begin with, it is noteworthy that the major Canadian and Australian political parties have been particularly eager to embrace and adapt communication and marketing strategies developed in the commercial world. For example, whereas, say the British Labour Party first hired an advertising agency in the mid-1960s (Qualter 1985, 182), in Australia — well before the advent of television in 1956 — the Labor Party (ALP) had involved an advertising agency in campaigning in NSW in 1934 (Mills 1986, 89) just as the Tories in Canada had in 1935 (Nolan 1985, 182). During the 1970s and 1980s — with television well established — the major parties in both Canada and Australia made televised political advertising a central feature of campaigning. Figure 8.1 shows that in this period, like Australia's Labor and Liberal parties, the Canadian Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties also invested increasingly heavily in televised campaign spots (even though restricted by law to advertising in the 28 days before polling day). Indeed this same figure underlines the enthusiasm shown in both countries for television centred campaign methods.

Figure 8.1
Expenditure on Television Election Advertisements,
Australia and Canada, Selected Years, 1965-1990



Source: see Ward 1993, 482

Since Pierre Trudeau's 1968 campaign in Canada, and the ALP's 1972 'It's Time' campaign which was built around E.G. Whitlam, parties in both countries have fought leader centred and television-focussed campaigns. To this end parties have developed a variety of strategies for winning free time on television and for controlling the context in which party leaders are filmed by news crews. For example, in Canada in particular the major parties perfected the leader's campaign tour as a media event during the 1970s (see Nolan 1991, 35–9). Furthermore, in both countries the growing political importance of television gave an impetus toward permanent campaigning and the use of opinion polling. The major parties turned to (private) polling to monitor the impact of their television coverage and to target their advertising and gauge its effectiveness. In Canada the Liberal Party led the way, drafting US pollster Lou Harris in 1962 and setting a path on which they have since been outpaced by the Tories.² In Australia, the ALP pioneered campaign polling in 1967–68 in South Australia and in the run-up to the 1972 federal election (Mills 1986, 2), and forged a working relationship with ANOP which lasted until 1990 and gave it an advantage over the Liberals during the 1970s and 1980s.

Spot advertising, polling and the leader's tour are all forms of political communication associated with the increased political use of television. However, Abramson, Arterton and Orren (1988, 5) have pointed to a second, subsequent generation of communication technologies which harness together computers and telecommunications. On the one hand, these have allowed party strategists to refine first generation methods — for instance, to substantially reduce time taken to conduct and analyse opinion polls, or to produce, edit and air TV ads. On the other, they have enabled the major parties in Canada and Australia to employ quite new campaign methods. These include geodemographic electorate analysis, computerised direct-mail and phonebanks to raise funds and deliver persuasive messages, which, Lee (1989, 28) suggests, have enhanced and extended the impact of first generation technologies. Typically, the impetus to adopt new techniques of campaigning — initially, television and opinion polling, and, more recently, of computerised tele-marketing — has been their use by candidates and parties in the USA.

² Hoy (1989, 24–5) suggests that the Tories were in fact the first Canadian party to use polling, experimenting with rudimentary research in Ontario in the 1940s and conducting benchmark polls from the national office in the 1960s. Wearing (1988a, 91) indicates that the 'two older parties attempted some political polling in the 1950s' but nonetheless points to its use by the Liberals in 1962 as marking its acceptance as an important campaign tool.

Americanisation?

The Canadian Liberals' interest in polling was triggered by Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. Since then, according to Soderlund (1984, 125) and his colleagues, there has been an Americanisation of Canadian politics which has been fuelled by the parties 'studying and emulating American-style campaigns'. Indeed, Axworthy (1991, 64) has argued that Canadian parties have systematically borrowed from their 'southern neighbour's bank of election tricks', and observed that recent US innovations have taken about five years to find their way into Canadian politics. North American practice has had a similar influence on Australian elections. Since the 1960s both Canadian and Australian political parties have carefully studied US elections, sending their professional staff to observe the campaigns of their sister American parties and, in some cases, to take part in campaign training sessions organised by the Republican or Democratic parties for their own workers (Mills 1986, 6-7). There even has been a modicum of cross fertilisation between Canadian and Australian parties. For example, the LPA in NSW turned to the Progressive Conservatives in 1985 for lessons in direct mail fund raising, and the ALP similarly brought a New Democratic Party direct mail expert to Australia. And in 1986 the Queensland National Party imported Pat Kinsella, a Canadian public affairs consultant and sometime Progressive Conservative apparatchik, to oversee their state campaign.

Table 8.1
The Diffusion of Political Innovation

	U.S.	Canada	Australia
Development of party system	1820s	1820s	1890s
Near universal manhood suffrage	1832	1900	1850s
National leadership election tour	1896	1860	1917
Radio political broadcasts	1924	1930	1931
Dramatized radio ads	1944	1935	1949
Advertising agency influence	1952	1943	1934
Network television political broadcasts	1952	1957	1963
Network television spot advertising	1952	1962	1972
Strategic use of polling	1959	1962	1972
Televised leaders' debates	1960	1968	1980
'Negative' spot advertising	1964	1972	1980
Direct mail fund raising	1964	1975	1982
Direct mail vote targeting	1966	1984	1987
Advocacy group advertising impact	1980	1988	-
VCR video campaigning	1980	-	-
Cable political advertising	1982	-	-
Satellite tele-conferencing campaigning	1984	-	1989
Computer assisted production of quick response ads	1984	1988	-

Source: Derived from Axworthy (1991)

In fact, the hiring of an North American political consultant to guide an Australian election campaign was most unusual. Similarly, Canadian parties have made only sporadic use of US consultants. Neither country has been a market for the some 3,000 political consultancies which control election campaigning in the USA, although parties in both are avid users of US-pioneered electioneering methods (and Canadian parties did turn initially to US pollsters such as Lou Harris and Robert Teeter for initial assistance with polling). As Mills (1986, 197) has argued, in introducing direct mail, parties in Australia 'have been at pains to ensure that they, not the agents they hire, retain ultimate control'. Much the same point might be made about Canadian parties, although the picture is a little clouded by a small number of Canadian consultants (like Kinsella) whose loyalties are well known, and whom parties readily accommodate in their campaign teams. Polling is the exception to the rule that parties have retained control of, and staffed for their own campaigns. Provincial and federal elections in Canada and Australia occur too infrequently for parties to sustain their own in-house polling — although since breaking its long association with ANOP in 1990 the ALP appears intent on this course. In Canada, just as the ALP did with the polling firm ANOP from the early 1970s (Mills 1986, 19–21), both the Liberals (with Martin Goldfarb Associates) and Progressive Conservatives (Decima) have forged close links with particular polling firms whose main business is market research. And just as ANOP's Rod Cameron became directly involved in deciding ALP campaign strategy, Martin Goldfarb and Decima's Alan Gregg became key strategists for the Canadian Liberals and Tories respectively (Hoy 1989, Walker 1989).³ It is worth noting that the Australian Liberal Party is something of an exception because it has used a variety of polling firms at state and federal level over time and, as a consequence, has not developed links comparable with those, say between Rod Cameron and the ALP, or Alan Gregg and the Canadian Tories. The federal LPA is a loose federation of largely autonomous state branches, which has been less successful in establishing a centralized control over campaigning.

³ Both Gregg and Goldfarb have longstanding connections with the parties for whom they work. Goldfarb first became involved with the Liberal Party in the early 1970s via his friendship with the party's key strategist, Keith Davey. Gregg gained prominence as a pollster whilst working in-house for the Tories. Using these connections he eventually established Decima as an independent research firm in 1979 (Hoy 1989, 123, 103–4). About 15 percent of Decima's work is political, and the balance conventional market research. Like Goldfarb, Gregg benefits from the parties' habit of automatically passing work to companies with 'the closest working relationship with the leader's office' (Walker 1989, 388–9).

Outwardly then, it would seem that there are marked similarities in the ways in which the major parties in Canada and Australia have taken up television centred and cognate campaign technologies, although Canadian parties may have been more zealous in exploring new campaign forms. They were certainly quicker to exploit radio. In 1948–49 (at the behest of the Hansen–Rubensohn advertising agency) the LPA bought air-time and ran weekly satirical radio serials featuring 'John Henry Austral', which mercilessly attacked the Chifley ALP government of the day as socialist and uncaring. Mills (1986, 94) describes this as 'a brilliantly successful prototype of a style of electioneering that is still very much in use today'. In fact, it was simply a clone of a similar campaign conducted some fifteen years before by the Canadian Tories, who had, in the fall of 1935, 'introduced political soap opera to Canadian radio'. Their series, produced by the J.J. Gibbons Advertising Agency, featured 'Mr Sage' who expressed 'sharp distaste for the Liberals' at every opportunity (Nolan 1985, 182). In Australia in 1931 party leaders first used radio to address a national audience. However Nolan (1985, 178–9) argues that in Canada during the 1920s parties gradually came to view radio as 'an important campaign tool', and that the 1930 federal campaign was the first 'to feature radio as a principal technique in the parties' attempts to win office'. By 1930, campaign use of radio had passed beyond local and experimental phases and had 'become widespread on a national basis' (Nolan 1991, 9–10).⁴

The comparative tardiness of Australian politicians to adopt radio as a principal means of campaigning⁵ also signals their somewhat slower

⁴ The fact that radio only 'began to compete in earnest with newspapers for retail and local advertising trade after World War II' (Leiss, Kline & Jhally 1990, 104) underlines the alacrity with which Canadian parties adopted radio as a campaign tool.

⁵ Perhaps this argument warrants some qualification. It is true that in 1925 the NSW Labor Council established its own radio station, 2KY, in Sydney for propaganda purposes. (Labor stations, such as 3UZ in Melbourne, were also established in other capitals but without such a conspicuously political objective.) During the 1925 NSW election 2KY broadcast election speeches of selected ALP candidates. In the latter 1920s it continued to broadcast political speeches, and in 1931, during the era of the Lang Labor government, the proceedings of the NSW parliament as well. Nonetheless by the 1930s 2KY had abandoned propaganda in favour of popular entertainment. Despite Labor owned stations such as 3UZ and 2KY, the federal ALP was slow to craft its campaigning around wireless (which it continued to use as an adjunct to town hall meetings and similar traditional campaign forms). Symptomatic of this, Tiffen (1989, 151) recounts how, in 1949, Chifley eschewed gimmicks and used only 36 of the available 60 minutes of free air time for his leader's policy speech.

adoption of advertising methods. Whitaker (1977, 221) suggests that there is 'scattered evidence' of the involvement of advertising agencies in the election campaigns fought by Canadian parties in the 1920s and 1930s, while Nolan (1985, 183) considers that the Canadian Tories' 1935 Mr Sage serial shows that advertising professionals had already obtained an influence over the political process and that, even then, their methods were beginning to replace traditional party politics. In contrast, the advertising agencies which the Australian Labor Party used from the 1930s onward appear to have been used mostly to orchestrate the heavy print media advertising which continued to be a major feature of campaigns until the latter 1940s. Perhaps the reason for this is Canada's closer proximity to the USA and hence vulnerability to Americanisation. For example, Axworthy (1991, 51-2) notes that by 1928 the US Republican Party was spending more on radio than on print advertising, and argues that Canadian parties followed closely behind 'in using the new medium'. But there is an alternative, and ultimately more convincing, explanation which points to the different nature of Australian and Canadian parties. In short, Canadian parties were more open to the influence of advertising because of their ingrained history of patronage (see Carty 1988b, 15-20, Williams 1956, 143-7).

Caucus-Cadre vs Mass Parties

As Whitaker (1977, 217) argues, the Canadian habit of federal government patronage meant that the interests of both advertisers and the major parties neatly dovetailed. He traces the advertisers' practice of undertaking unpaid or cheap election work for parties in anticipation of picking up lucrative post-election contracts as far back as the late 1930s when the Liberals faced the problem of distributing government contracts amongst their 'various friends...in the advertising world' (Whitaker 1977, 221). The close link between the Cockfield Brown agency and the National Liberal Federation during the 1940s and 1950s is illustrated by the agency's payment of H.E. Kidd's salary for the duration of the decade he spent as a full-time NLF official (Whitaker 1977, 235-6).⁶ Not surprisingly, given links such as these which had no equivalent in Australia, Canadian parties were quicker than their Australian counterparts to adopt advertising methods and to utilise new forms of communication, beginning with radio.

⁶ During the 1950s, relations between Cockfield Brown and the NLF were such that the agency was directly represented at meetings of a cabinet publicity subcommittee and privy to advance knowledge of election dates and other details 'normally reserved to the inner circle of the cabinet' (Whitaker 1977, 239).

The distinctive use of patronage by Canadian parties and the nexus it still⁷ provides between parties and advertising agencies underline the difference between the major parties in both countries. In Australia each of the major parties originally emerged as a mass party. At the national level, both the ALP and LPA are loose federations of state based party organisations, with the biennial National Conference and National Executive of the ALP exercising a far greater constitutional authority over state Labor organisations than their Liberal equivalents do over the formally autonomous state Divisions of the LPA (Jaensch 1989, 101–4). The ALP was forged in the early 1900s from labour leagues established in various states by the trade union movement in the 1890s in the wake of a period of bitter class struggle. The LPA was established in 1944 after the failure of a series of anti-Labor caucus–cadre parties (the first of which formed in 1910). Its founder, R.G. Menzies, envied the army of electoral workers which his opponents could muster from their local branches, and sought to establish it as a middle-class party in Labor's image. Hence the history of the Australian party system is broadly consistent with the commonplace process of organisational contagion that Duverger (1964, 24–5) identifies, in which the development of working-class membership-based party structures is then emulated by centre and even right-wing middle-class parties. However, in Canada the evolution of the party system took a quite different form.

Both the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties have their roots in caucus–cadre style organisations of the nineteenth century. Class cleavages in Canadian society were not politicised in a partisan fashion as happened in Europe (Brodie & Jensen 1989, 28) — and, to a degree, in Australia. No equivalent of the ALP or left-wing working-class party emerged to threaten the dominance of the two established parties, even with the formation of the forerunner of the NDP in the 1930s. Consequently, each evolved without contagion from the left (see Lightbody 1972, 195). There was, however, some democratic contagion from the south, not seen in Australia. The Liberals in 1919, and Conservatives in 1927, adopted and adapted US-style party conventions to select leaders and formulate policy. Despite undergoing some democratisation, neither the Liberals nor the Progressive Conservatives

⁷ Historically both older Canadian parties have long been chiefly financed by business interests in Toronto and Montreal. From the 1920s and 1930s Canadian parties evolved the 'contract levies' system of party financing which survived into the 1950s (Whitaker 1977, 199). The use of government contracts to 'repay' advertising agencies for their campaign assistance was simply an extension of this system. It survives still as 'one of the biggest patronage scams in the federal government' (Malvern 1985, 299; see also Stanbury et al. 1983, 151; Noel 1987, 103).

have entirely shed their caucus-cadre forms and developed into fully fledged membership-based mass parties. Williams (1981, 118, 107) describes them as 'essentially cadre-style organisations' despite more recent efforts to 'regularise their membership base'. The lingering habit of patronage (see Noel 1987; Smith 1989) in Canadian politics is one result. Another is that neither major Canadian party attracts and retains a corps of fee paying members as their Australian counterparts do.

The extra-parliamentary organisations of both major Australian parties are formally built on a network of neighbourhood based permanent local branches. Party membership appears not to fluctuate appreciably between election and non-election years. In contrast, each of the two major Canadian parties maintains a constituency-wide association rather than a neighbourhood presence in each riding. Neither sustains an ongoing or relatively constant fee paying membership, despite some more recent attempts to formalise party membership (Williams 1981, 106). Between elections, the extra-parliamentary organisation at the riding level virtually dissolves, and in many cases requires 'mouth to mouth resuscitation' to contest campaigns (Lyon 1983, 114). Perlin (1980, 20-1) finds: 'there are very few constituencies in which active continuing [Tory] membership exceeds the dozen or so' who are local party office holders, and argues that all Canadian parties have had difficulty in sustaining active local organisations. This does not mean, as Epstein (1981, 66) notes, that they are unable to mobilise activists and supporters, or, indeed, that party activists play no part in, say, the selection of candidates. Each party does provide for grassroots participation, most notably via the mechanism of conventions. But rank-and-file involvement fluctuates significantly as federal elections — and leadership conventions which also excite great interest — come and go.

The Impacts Of New Campaign Technologies

Despite their shared enthusiasm for new campaign technologies, it is clear that the major parties in Australia and Canada have rather different organisational structures, and that they involve grassroots activists in very different ways. Such differences are germane here because the chief claim of media intrusion theory is that modern communications technologies have supplanted earlier forms of party organisation. Indeed, in Australia the branches of the LPA and ALP are emptying of dues-paying members as the theory might predict.

Each of the two established Australian parties has suffered a marked decline in grassroots numbers. The precise dimensions of this erosion are difficult to chart since neither party routinely publishes accurate membership totals. At this point in time Labor's Australia-wide membership appears to have slumped to around 42,000 (Scott 1991, 29). The party's

own estimate is somewhat larger, although ALP leaders do concede that numbers are shrinking beyond the point where Labor might legitimately regard itself as a mass party (Hogg 1990, 5). Estimates of Labor's membership peak in the post-war period vary. The ALP National Secretary R.D. Hogg estimates that Labor had more than 75,000 members in the mid-1970s, although (the not always reliable) published estimates for this period do not bear him out (see Ward 1991, 156-7). But, if he is in fact right, then the slump in Labor's membership has been even more dramatic than more conservative estimates (see Scott 1991, 30) might suggest. The LPA, too, appears to have suffered a long term membership decline. One analysis by a party insider suggests that LPA numbers had slumped from 130,000 in 1975 to just 69,000 in 1990, although, again, party officials proffer a rosier estimate of current numbers (Ward 1991, 156). While the figures are rubbery, there can be little doubt that the past two decades have seen a significant deterioration in the dues-paying memberships of both parties. There is also evidence of dissolving traditional party loyalties, which is consistent with media intrusion theory.

Table 8.2
Party Identification in Australia 1967-90

	1967	1979	1987	1990
Party identification	%	%	%	%
Lib-Nat	50	44	44	41
Labor	39	45	47	44
Other	3	3	4	12
None	8	8	5	4
	(2023)	(1982)	(1710)	(2020)
Lib-Nat identifiers				
Very strong	27	29	19	19
Fairly strong	45	43	47	48
Not very strong	28	28	34	33
	(1011)	(867)	(749)	(806)
Labor identifiers				
Very strong	37	33	21	17
Fairly strong	38	44	51	49
Not very strong	26	23	29	35
	(783)	(893)	(794)	(882)

Source: McAllister & Bean (1990, 177)

Sociologists have long argued that there is a sense in which a party's membership extends to those who identify with it (see Tanguay 1990, 130); and indeed party membership has never been satisfactorily gauged by those who pay fees, since the entitlements and obligations associated with formal membership will vary widely (as they do between Canadian and Australian parties, or even between the ALP and LPA). Survey data collected during various Australian elections since 1967 are recorded in table 8.2. These show that since the 1960s there has been a decline in the

numbers of voters who strongly identify with each major party. This is especially pronounced in the case of the ALP which, despite attracting more adherents, has seen its core of strong identifiers fall from 37 to 17 percent over the 23 year period for which data are available. Since the members of a political party will be mostly drawn from those who strongly identify with it, this trend would seem closely related to the membership contraction which the ALP and LPA have each experienced since the 1970s.

In Canada a different picture emerges. Membership of parties (except in the case of the NDP) is not directly comparable with either Australian party. Moreover, in Canada party membership details have been mostly kept at the riding level and there are no records with which to chart changing party numbers (Carty 1988a, 84). Nonetheless, if there are grounds for supposing that the use of television and other new communication technologies has inadvertently hastened — precipitated would be too strong⁸ — party decline in Australia, in Canada it can be argued that the use of new technologies has not diminished and may have even increased rank-and-file involvement in both major parties. For example R.M. Lee (1989, 90) asserts that, even though new communication technologies have undermined local party organisation, 'parties have not disappeared' and 'party participation has never been healthier in Canada' when measured by membership and revenue.⁹ Lee

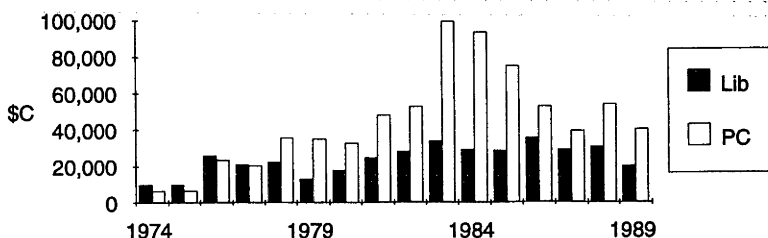
⁸ Elsewhere I have argued that the shrinkage Australian parties have experienced is in all likelihood caused, not by the television, but by underlying social changes including suburbanisation and the blurring of class cleavages (Ward 1991, 167). However, this need not rule out media intrusion theory which, in its weaker form, sees the advent of television as accelerating, rather than causing, party decline.

⁹ Lee's claim is somewhat controversial. Although there are some dissenting voices (for example, Whitaker 1980, Paltiel 1989), the idea that Canadian parties are in decline has been vigorously argued for a number of years by Meisel (1979, 1991) who, to quote Gagnon and Tanguay (1989, 9), sees 'the growing importance of campaign technologies (polling, electronic media) that devalue party organisation' as one of two principal 'long-term causes of party decay'. By and large those intimately involved in parties and election campaigns support this view. They report that parties are finding it more difficult to recruit. For instance, Dalton Camp (1981, xiii) believes that parties are 'withering'. Greg Lyle represents a younger generation of campaign expert, but he too says there are 'definitely fewer' volunteers willing to work for the Conservatives than ten years ago. Jerry Lampert, another experienced Tory campaigner, says that 'over the past 10 years there has been a noticeable drop off — this goes for all the parties — in the number of volunteer campaign workers'. He sees the new campaign technologies as part of the problem. Getting people to canvass door to door is very difficult, and phone banks and direct mail have encouraged campaign managers to think that they no longer need to make the effort to recruit canvassers.

Lee produces no hard evidence, but his point is in fact well illustrated by the impact of those second generation technologies which parties have used to adapt modern marketing methods and raise funds via direct mail.

Passage of the 1974 Electoral Expenses Act made generous tax credits available to individuals making modest donations to parties. The Tories in particular were quick to see the opportunity this afforded to introduce computerised direct-mail fundraising (which they did by studying and adapting Republican Party methods under the tutelage of a US expert, Robert Odell). Indeed, during the early 1980s the Conservatives actually achieved a three-fold increase in the number of individual donors (Paltiel 1989, 343-4). The longer term trend is shown in figure 8.2 which plots the number of individual contributors to both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties in each year for the period 1974-1989 using data compiled by Stanbury (1989, 363; 1991). It is true that the mailing lists which the parties have used to solicit donations from individuals have not been drawn directly from membership lists. If we consider those who give to parties as members in the wider, sociological sense, then figure 8.2 clearly suggests that, in conjunction with the 1974 Act, the introduction of computerised direct-mail methods has indeed strengthened rather than diminished each of the two older parties. This conclusion lends weight to Paltiel's (1989, 339) view that the adoption of the new technologies has encouraged the resurgence of Canadian parties.

Figure 8.2
Individual Contributions to the Canadian Liberal and
Progressive Conservative Parties, 1974-1989



Source: Stanbury 1989; 1991

A second corroborating argument is rather more complex because it involves an analysis of the impact of new communications technologies (including television) on national party conventions in Canada. Courtney (1988, 202) argues that 'modern Canadian leadership conventions have

emerged as one of the principal televised media events capable of shaping a party's character and support base'. Prior to the 1970s, Conservative and Liberal party conventions had been irregularly convened by party executives. Since then, both parties have 'strengthened and institutionalised their extraparlimentary wings' to ensure that conventions regularly assemble¹⁰ to debate 'questions of organisation, policy, and leadership' (Carty 1988b, 25). Conventions have also been substantially expanded in size — from around 1,300 to 4,670 in the case of the 1990 Liberal convention (Perlin 1991, 4). Moreover, the selection of convention delegates now provides the party rank-and-file with an important means of participation. Perlin (1991, 4) estimates that between 75,000 and 100,000 people would have taken part in selecting delegates for the Liberals' 1990 convention. Evidently these changes have expanded grassroots participation in both major parties.¹¹

Winn and McMenemy (1976, 178) suggest 'the mass media may be a factor in the development of party conventions', and single out television, which first gave near continuous coverage to a convention in 1967. This is now the norm. Television now not only gives 'live and free' coverage to conventions but also reports on the build-up to them in order to provide 'an especially intimate link between thousands of viewers and a party's internal life'. Hence, according to Fletcher and Drummond (1988, 97), the development of leadership conventions 'has been tied in closely with the advent of television'. Perlin (1991, 2) also traces the changing nature of conventions to 'changes in the technology of political communications' and especially to the advent of television which has drawn once relatively private conventions firmly into the public arena. So too does Wearing (1989, 72) in arguing that we are now witness to 'a new era in convention politics ... which reflects the increasingly

¹⁰ In 1971 the Progressive Conservatives amended their constitution to ensure biennial general meetings or conventions, as the Liberals had done in 1966. Hitherto, conventions had typically gathered in times of crisis (Winn & McMenemy 1976, 178).

¹¹ The relative health of Canadian parties is apparently borne out by data recently collected by R.K. Carty in his survey of 'Constituency Party Association Organisation and Activity'. These suggest that in 1990 the federal Progressive Conservative party had 112,000 members across Canada and the Liberals 317,000. Of course the membership of Canadian parties is volatile and not accurately measured by lists of those paying dues in any one year. Carty's data show there is considerable fluctuation in party membership in response to political events such as leadership contests and elections. For instance, in the election year of 1988 the Conservatives appear to have had some 313,000 members as against 181,000 in the previous year, and the Liberals 280,000 as against 150,000.

important role of the mass media and microcomputer technology'. In leadership conventions especially, direct mail and polling are common-place as microcomputers and other second generation technologies are now used to track and target conference delegates throughout the pre-convention period. If we accept the argument that the expansion and institutionalisation of party conventions has been driven, at least in part,¹² by changes in the technology of political communication, then it follows that in Canada, contra to media intrusion theory, television and other new communication technologies have extended rather than supplanted earlier forms of party organisation and boosted rather than diminished the level of participation in the two major parties.

Television and second generation communication technologies have had a very different impact on the two older Canadian parties than on their Australian counterparts. The available Australian evidence (see table 8.2) suggests that the emergence of television as the dominant medium for political communication coincided with a noticeable weakening in the intensity with which voters very strongly identified with the major parties. Comparable Canadian election surveys spanning the period 1965 to 1988 which have been variously reported by Clarke and his colleagues — and which are shown in a recalculated form in table 8.3 — suggest that there has been no similar erosion (Kornberg & Clarke 1982, 201; Clarke 1984, 61; Clarke 1991, 53). Indeed, in the case of the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals alike there has been an overall increase in the number of strongly partisan voters (of 6 and 3 percent respectively) even if the variation from one election to the next, shown in the table, suggests that this is not indicative of a long-term trend. In short, by this measure too and in marked contrast to the Australian experience (see table 8.2), the period which coincides with the rise of television and then second generation technologies in Canadian political life offers no evidence of declining party membership in its wider sense.

Brokerage Politics

According to Le Duc (1985, 382), Canadian election studies have not recorded the same shrinkage of very strong party identification or pattern of dealignment, found in the USA and UK — and, as we have seen, in

¹² Carty and Erickson (1991, 1–11) suggest that the evolution since the 1970s of a system of electoral law and regulation institutionalising the role of parties in the electoral process may have also contributed to the expansion and development of party conventions.

Australia. In Canada, he argues, there has been no 'dramatic pattern of change' because in the 1960s and through to 1974 noticeably fewer Canadians strongly identified with two major parties than did voters in either the USA or UK (Le Duc 1985, 383). A similar contrast can be made with Australia. Whereas just 18 percent of Canadians very strongly identified with either the Tories or Liberals in 1965 (and 20 percent in 1968), the comparable Australian statistic in 1967 was 28 percent. Le Duc's argument is that identification with the national parties in Canada has long been relatively weak and unstable, and he offers several reasons for this. One is that short-term factors loom large in Canadian political life because party allegiances owe little to long-term underlying social and demographic factors. Another is the co-existence of quite distinct provincial-level party systems, which has encouraged split party loyalties far more so than in federal systems such as Australia's (Le Duc 1985, 391; Le Duc 1989, 164).

Table 8.3
Party Identification in Canada 1965-1988

	1965	1968	1974	1979	1980	1984	1988
Party Identification	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Liberal	43	51	50	43	45	33	31
Progressive Conservative	28	26	24	31	28	40	39
Other	18	16	14	16	16	15	18
None	11	8	12	12	10	12	12
	(2615)	(2706)	(2343)	(2569)	(1742)	(3188)	(1043)
Liberal Identifiers							
Very strong	26	26	32	35	33	21	29
Fairly strong	47	49	45	49	47	49	48
Not very strong	28	26	22	16	20	30	23
	(1124)	(1380)	(1172)	(1105)	(784)	(1052)	(323)
Conservative Identifiers							
Very strong	25	27	29	32	29	25	33
Fairly strong	50	46	46	52	54	50	51
Not very strong	25	27	25	16	18	25	15
	(732)	(704)	(562)	(796)	(488)	(1275)	(407)

Sources: Recalculated from tables in Kornberg & Clarke (1982, 201); Clarke (1984, 61); Clarke (1991, 53).

The intriguing possibility suggested by Le Duc's analysis is that Canadian political parties did not experience the same membership decline which accompanied the introduction of new methods of political communication in Australia (and elsewhere) because they already resembled the form of political organisation into which Australian parties have evolved since the advent of television. In effect Le Duc's argument relies on the familiar claim that Canada has long exhibited a distinctive

pattern of brokerage politics.¹³ That is, Canada has a party system in which federal parties are organisationally frail; they are not born of class or similar social cleavages nor underpinned by the long-term loyalties of identifiable social groups; they are without a well defined electoral base; and hence they are forced to build new coalitions of support from one election to the next (Clarke 1991, 9). The result is, Courtney (1988, 198) argues, that the major Canadian parties are characterised 'by compromissary leadership, an aversion to ideology and an absence of [policy] consistency'. They are necessarily more concerned with consensus than political vision. In order to broker diverse regional, linguistic, socio-economic and other political interests, parties avoid detailed policy commitments and programs (and, in effect, often surrender the determination of policy to the Prime Minister's Office, the bureaucracy or to federal-state councils). Broker parties are driven by what Galipeau (1989, 406) describes as the 'law of the inclusive middle' which holds that winning electoral coalitions integrating diverse interests are built by avoiding extreme positions. Blancmange-like in most respects, it is often only their leaders who have differentiated the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties. In turn, leaders have been able to stamp their own personality and preferences onto their party (Courtney 1988, 201).

Clearly, this brokerage party system is not an outgrowth of the relatively recent arrival of television and cognate second generation technologies.¹⁴ It is true that a number of features of brokerage politics may have been amplified by developments in political communications. For instance, Gagnon and Tanguay (1989, 7) argue that use of 'the new technology of politics' has reinforced 'the traditional leadership fixation of Canadian politics'. The advent of television sharpened the traditional focus on leaders and enhanced their power to set the political agenda (Seigle 1983, 246; Black 1982, 256; Lee 1989, 33; Courtney 1988, 201). Moreover Tanguay (1990, 148-9) argues that the introduction of new political communication technologies has further attenuated ideological debate between the parties. Equally, as Galipeau (1989, 406) suggests, television and the tyranny of the brief evening news clip have

¹³ As Galipeau (1989, 405) writes, 'The Canadian party system is commonly termed a brokerage system'. There are several versions of it is not universally endorsed, but the brokerage model is clearly the 'most widely accepted' interpretation of Canadian party politics (Brodie & Jenson 1989, 29).

¹⁴ As is often noted, André Siegfried detected a number of the elements of the brokerage party system, such as the ideological blandness of the major parties, as early as 1907 (Galipeau 1989, 406-7).

further discouraged policy debate. So too has the development of computerised polling and phonebanking which allowed parties to more perfectly pursue the law of the inclusive middle. These may be important but they are not fundamental changes. The undisturbed roots of Canada's system of brokerage politics are generally understood to lie in the 'deep, divisive, and persistent linguistic, religious and regional cleavages' which have long separated Canadians and constrained federal political parties seeking to unite them (Brodie & Jensen 1989, 31). What is interesting here is that changes in political communication in Australia appear to be reproducing many of the elements of brokerage politics in that country. The noticeable weakening of party identification which has accompanied the emergence of television as the chief means of political communication is just one case in point.

Electoral-Professional Parties

The high costs of campaigning in recent years (see figure 8.1) appear to have forced both the ALP and LPA to rely increasingly upon business as a source of funds in much the same way as the two major Canadian parties have always obtained the lion's share of their funding.¹⁵ The rapport which the pragmatic federal Labor government evidently struck with business in the 1980s was an outcome of a convergence toward the centre. Australian parties too have increasingly been driven by the law of the inclusive middle. According to Jaensch (1991, 145-6) by the 1970s the 'major parties had mellowed, had become closer to the centre and hence closer to each other'. In part, this convergence reflects the increasing use of opinion research which Head (1989, 487) believes has made parties 'less willing to take unpopular decisions and [more] anxious to cultivate the middle ground'. He also suggests, — without entirely discounting ideology — that Australian parties now use style of leadership to differentiate themselves, even selecting their leaders with their opinion poll ratings in mind (Head 1989, 487). Moreover, it seems clear that in recent years Australian politics has grown more presidential and that leaders like Hawke and Hewson have been able to stamp their

¹⁵ Direct mail fund raising and public funding notwithstanding, the two major Canadian parties still raise half of their funds from corporations (Gerin 1990, 5). In the Australian context Jaensch (1991, 147) rightly points out that we have no 'detailed information from political parties about their cash flows'. However, a series of recent inquiries (including the Western Australian Royal Commission into what became known as 'WA Inc') have provided glimpses of the normally covert fund raising activities of both major parties, which confirm that both major parties do solicit campaign funds from business.

own particular policy priorities onto the parties they lead with far more ease than their predecessors.¹⁶ Here too there is a further resonance with Canadian party politics.

There are ideological differences between, and within, the two major Australian parties. But it would seem that ideology now counts for much less than in the past. In recent years the LPA has flip-flopped between 'wet' and 'dry' liberalisms as it underwent various leadership changes (Jaensch 1991, 144). But it is Labor in government which provides the clearest example. Woodward (1990, 151) argues that Labor under Hawke 'has shown greater adherence to laissez-faire free enterprise than even the previous conservative governments'. And Jaensch (1989, 158) claims that a new pragmatic ALP leadership has subordinated ideology to a passionless 'electoralism', which dictates caution and the rejection of causes and policy programs where these may lose votes. In short, if the major Australian parties are not yet as resistant to taking up ideological cudgels as their Canadian counterparts are, the ideological cleavage between them now seems less rigid and less pronounced. Perhaps a reason for this is that the class cleavages, which once honed the ideological gap between the parties, have blurred. Kemp (1978) has argued that the relative contraction of the blue collar workforce, increasing material affluence, and the growth of relatively homogeneous suburbs all subtracted from the political importance class cleavages once had in Australia. This is a thesis supported by the various electoral studies conducted since 1967 which show 'that there has been a gradual decline in the electoral importance of class over the past twenty years' (McAllister 1990, 207; also see McAllister & Bean 1990, 169). The decline has also increased the resemblance between Australian and Canadian electoral politics, since the latter have never been class-based (Brodie & Jenson 1989, 38).

¹⁶ For example on the eve of the 1983 election the federal ALP caucus replaced W. Hayden with R.J. Hawke as leader. Hawke's leadership credentials had largely been built outside of parliament as an Australian Council of Trade Unions leader with the happy knack of resolving industrial disputes. Hawke's reputation for achieving consensus was central to Labor's 1983 campaign which was built around 'Bringing Australia Together'. In keeping with this theme Hawke promised during the campaign to convene a summit meeting of business and labour groups when elected. The National Economic Summit which assembled in April 1983 cemented the Accord between the government and ACTU which became a cornerstone of Labor's industrial and economic policy for the rest of the decade. Had Hayden led the ALP into government in 1983 it is doubtful that there would have been a Summit or an Accord, and it is likely that a quite different policy course would have been set.

The ALP and LPA have each responded to the slow erosion of their historical bases of support and to their shrinking branch numbers by turning to new political communication technologies to track and target voters in order to build fresh winning coalitions of voters (Mills 1986). Each appears less and less driven by ideology and more by an ambition to win elections by matching their policies pragmatically to the mood of the public. Policy making has passed, or is passing, from party forums into the hands of economists, academic advisers, specialist consultants and similar policy professionals whom the party elites have gathered about them, including, in the case of the governing party, public service officials in key departments such as Treasury or Prime Minister and Cabinet. In turn, these changes have further drawn the parties away from the narrow interests of their original supporters. In short, each is evolving into an electoral-professional organisation (see Ward 1991). In such parties, leadership is personalised and parliamentary leaders are key figures; professionals with specialised tasks play a central role in campaigning and deciding policy; only weak vertical organisational ties with traditional supporters survive; election appeals are pitched at the broad middle ground; and funds are mostly obtained from public election funding schemes or from corporations and sectional interest groups (Panebianco 1988, 264).

Panebianco's (1988) thesis is that mass parties, celebrated by Duverger, have evolved into catch-all parties, as described by Kirchheimer, and ultimately into electoral-professional organisations. This process, he argues, has been impelled by two factors. One has been the social structural transformation of capitalist societies, which has produced a more heterogeneous electorate and progressively detached political parties from the particular social classes from which, as mass organisations, they once had chiefly drawn support. The other factor has been the impact of television and new techniques of political communication which caused 'an earthquake in party organisations' (Panebianco 1988, 266). The Canadian broker parties clearly have many of the traits which Panebianco attributes to electoral-professional organisations. Yet, since neither evolved from a cadre into a mass party in the first instance, his analysis sheds little light on the development of the Canadian party system. Panebianco (1988, xv) himself limits the scope of his thesis to Europe although it clearly provides an explanation of the evolution of the major Australian parties (see Ward 1991). Indeed, in an Australian context, Panebianco's thesis allows us to see that the collapse of party numbers and the parties' increasing use of television and cognate technologies of political communication to reach voters is evidence not of the demise of parties

(as media intrusion theory suggests) but of their evolution into new, albeit rather more fragile, organisational forms.¹⁷

Centralization?

In the face of evidence that the ranks of party faithful are diminishing, Mills (1986, 14) has argued that Australian parties have grown stronger having adopted new forms of political communication to replace the armies of campaign workers on whom they once relied. But there is no contradiction if we accept that both parties are evolving into electoral-professional organisations in which a sizeable rank and file membership is no longer a key element. Mills believes that the new methods of political communication are vastly more efficient than old campaign methods which largely depended on the not always reliable efforts of the parties' rank and file. Since Australian party elites have not, in contrast with the USA, lost control of campaigning to pollsters and other 'new machine men', they have in fact achieved a much greater command over their electoral fortunes with the introduction of much more scientific and dependable means of tracking and targeting voters. Although he does not fully develop it, in effect Mills' argument is that there has been a centralization of power within the major parties as a consequence of their turning to television and other new means of political communication which both require and facilitate centrally controlled election campaigning. One sign of this is the increased emphasis on, and hence growing power of, federal party leaders. Sometimes seen as the presidentialisation of Australian politics, this can unambiguously be traced to the influence of television.¹⁸

¹⁷ It should be noted that Panebianco (1988, 274) does not rule out the possibility that electoral-professional parties may prove inherently unstable and that their emergence may be a step toward 'the dissolution of parties as organisations'. But he regards this as only one possible future line of development.

¹⁸ For example, a lasting — and at the time, damaging — image of Arthur Calwell's 1960–1967 period as federal leader of the ALP is of Calwell waiting hat-in-hand outside the closed meeting of the party's Federal Executive for a policy determination. Compare this with Paul Keating's announcement on the Nine Network's 'Sunday' program, that his government would merge and sell Qantas and Australian airlines. His decision contravened official Labor policy but represented a *fait accompli* which left ALP federal secretary Hogg with no option but to cast around for the least painless way of formally adjusting Labor's platform to suit. Clearly, television has given leaders a capacity to speak directly to voters, circumvent party councils, and lock the party in behind their own decisions.

Since both Australian political parties are in fact loose federations of state branches or divisions, perhaps the most interesting form which the centralization of power has taken in each is to be found in the growing authority of the federal party organisation over the state party units from which it is constructed. It is by no means the case that there is yet a federal LPA which exists as an organic entity independently of the Divisions from which it is constructed. But it is possible to discern embryonic developments in this direction. As Jaensch (1990, 135) suggests, since the 1970s the federal organisational wing of the LPA has become 'more involved in policy areas, electoral planning and "ideology"'. Mills (1986, 109) too sees a similar centralization. He argues that the adoption of new technologies has centralized control of now virtually continuous campaigning in the hands of the federal party organisation. The federal party has extended its influence over the LPA's human and financial resources, and even over the process of policy formulation, which is now at least partly influenced by research. Certainly the federal secretariat of the LPA grew appreciably in size and importance during the 1980s. And, a further sign of a trend toward centralization, in 1990 the federal executive of the LPA supported by the federal leader attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to persuade the national conference of the LPA to formally extend disciplinary powers to it which might allow the federal body to intervene in the internal affairs of state Divisions in order to safeguard the party's national interests.

In Labor's case the federal ALP has established an even greater central control. As with the LPA, the federal structure of the ALP 'has been a real bulwark against the formation of a national oligarchy' (Jaensch 1989, 104). However Labor's constitution hands the federal ALP the power to overrule and even restructure state branches. Since the early 1970s it has utilised this previously little used power to intervene in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and, most recently in 1992, to override the decision of the Tasmanian ALP to downgrade the position of a federal minister on the party's Tasmanian Senate ticket. If it is true that intervention during the 1970s was the product of complex, state based factional rivalries rather than the 'expression of a single national party' (Holmes & Sharman 1977, 109-10), dealing with an unruly subsidiary, more recent federal intercession appears to have been motivated by a desire to improve or safeguard the electoral prospects of the federal ALP.

With the formation in the 1980s of three national factions stretching across all states and down from the federal Cabinet (Lloyd & Swan 1987), the federal ALP began to establish an identity separate from its constituent elements. The purchase of John Curtin House to accommodate an expanded federal secretariat contributed to this trend as did federal Labor's continued occupancy of the Treasury benches from 1983 onward. As in the case of the LPA, the increasing sophistication

with which the ALP planned and executed election campaigns has extended the authority of the federal party. Woodward suggests that with the responsibility for coordinating campaigns 'the position of national secretary of the party has become increasingly important' (Woodward 1990, 148). Much the same point might be made about the National Secretariat, National Executive and national leadership, all of which are centrally involved in the campaign process, which of course now extends well beyond the formal election period. At least as far as campaigning is involved, the authority of the federal party extends to the very grassroots of the party where it can — and does in seats judged to be marginal — exert considerable influence over the campaign process.

Whether the adoption of new forms of political communication can be argued to have centralized authority within the two older Canadian federal parties is less clear.¹⁹ To begin with, Francophone and Anglophone Canadian communities live in separate media worlds and their isolation from one another has tempered the impact of television and blocked the emergence of a national political agenda (Jackson, Jackson & Baxter-Moore 1986, 158). These separate worlds have, for example, obliged the Liberals to mount quite separate campaigns in Quebec. Using different teams of media professionals, these have often struck different themes and have varied noticeably from the parallel campaign fought elsewhere in English-speaking Canada. Moreover, the gap between federal and provincial party organisations is far more pronounced in Canada than in Australia where it is much less common for state and federal parties to act independently.

Cairns (1988, 111) argues that in Canada 'the structuring effect of federalism' has seen a recent, pronounced trend toward the establishment of separate provincial and national party wings each with separate finances, distinctive career paths and often different policy agendas and ideological outlooks. Hodge (1991, 187) also believes that 'the evolution of Canadian political parties has favoured a dissociation of the national and provincial organisations of each partisan camp'. In the case of the Progressive Conservatives, the federal or national party is now constitutionally separate from the various provincial level parties of the same name. In Quebec, there has been no provincial Tory party since 1936, and in British Columbia a provincial party barely survives. Otherwise organisationally separate provincial and federal party organisations exist in parallel, although there is much 'crossover in terms of personnel, some mutual assistance in elections and an ongoing relationship amongst senior staff, executives, and caucus members,

¹⁹ Note that Penniman (1981, 118) has suggested that Canadian elections are 'rather decentralised' in contrast to Australian polls, despite the similarities of their parliamentary and federal systems.

especially in the Maritimes where federal and provincial Tory organisations share offices (Dyck 1991, 59). The Liberal Party — which scarcely exists in the western provinces — has formally separate provincial and national organisations in British Columbia (since 1991), Alberta (1977), Ontario (1976) and Quebec (1964). Elsewhere, it has an integrated structure in which, as in the case of Australian parties, the provincial party serves as a branch of the federal party as well as an independent actor in provincial level politics.

Far from seeing new forms of political communication as a centralizing force, Dyck (1991, 58) argues that the federal and provincial wings of Canadian parties are less integrated and 'not as dependent upon each other as they once were' because of these technologies. The parties use of new campaign technologies, he argues, has transformed party organisations and removed any need for 'the assistance of a party organisation at the other level of government'. However others hold seemingly contradictory views. For example Smith (1989, 143) argues that 'television's influence was to centralise' since its associated costs forced parties to abandon regional production at the 'sacrifice of regional perspective'. The parties have developed a pan-Canadian political approach.²⁰ Similarly, Paltiel (1989, 341) argues that the parties have turned the new technologies of political communication to advantage to counter the trend toward the 'confederalisation' of Canadian politics and that, as a consequence, they have become more centralized and leadership orientated. And in the case of the Liberal Party, Wearing (1988, 90; also see 1989, 274) suggests that, beginning in the 1960s, 'the new era of campaigning' turned it from 'a provincially based organisation into a more centralised, national one'.

The argument that television centred and cognate campaign technologies have been a centripetal rather than centrifugal force has several strands. We have already noted that it is widely argued that new forms of political communication have accentuated the importance of party leaders. Arguably these have also given an impetus to the development of central party organisations. As Lee (1989, 38–9) notes, since the late 1960s and early 1970s both parties have striven to control campaigning in the provinces and at the riding level, by providing candidates and campaign managers with extensive training, advice and

²⁰ Smith (1989, 144) clearly believes that the major parties' newly found pan-Canadian approach to politics has had a significant 'structuring influence on the self-perception of Canadians'. In this context it is noteworthy that 'studies of recent elections show that news coverage of election campaigns tends to be more nationally orientated and homogeneous now than in the past' (Jackson, Jackson & Baxter-Moore 1986, 165).

'assistance' to ensure that 'the message determined by the strategy committee would be congruously and dependably reflected in all ridings'.²¹ The scope of their recent attempts to centralize control of campaigning at the riding level is all the more remarkable, given that both established Canadian parties were relatively slow to develop an extra-parliamentary organisation and party office dedicated to success at the national level (Smiley 1976, 93). Indeed, in the case of the Liberals this occurred only in the 1960s and it remained something of a Cinderella organisation well into the 1970s (Wearing 1981, 14). Even if individual studies of local level campaigns during the 1988 election suggest that the parties' national campaign managers have yet to achieve extensive control on the ground (for example, Bell & Bolan 1991, 13) it is clear that the use of new forms of political communication have given an impetus to the development of a national party structure and a 'national thrust to the campaign' (Graham 1986, 308).

Given that there are two very different, competing perceptions of the impact of new forms of political communication on Canadian parties, Carty's (1988b, 24-5) assessment of the impact of 'electronic politics' from the 1960s onward on the organisations of the two major parties is particularly interesting. He not only discerns a trend toward centralized control of electioneering and the formation of national campaign machines which extend the power of national leaders, but also the countervailing development of separate, more open party institutions, including expanded party conventions which have enhanced local autonomy and, as we have seen, opportunities for participation. It is, he argues, the tension between these twin effects of the new politics which has 'severely strained' the capacity of the national parties to integrate provincial politics and has produced their separation and 'often formal divorce' (Carty 1988b, 25).

These same twin pressures toward centralization and disassociation within the two older Canadian parties are apparent in the effects of the legislative changes which the electronic politics have prompted. Dating to the 1970s, there have been a 'series of reforms to the electoral regime' which have seen the 'legalisation and institutionalisation of Canadian

²¹ Thus the July 1987 issue of the Tory newsletter *Partyline* praised in glowing terms the 'national network of integrated office information systems' which would 'provide quality information to the right people in the right place at the right time'. The party's Ottawa headquarters, already equipped with the new system, would advise ridings on the acquisition of compatible equipment and provide suitable training to assist the automation of riding offices. The PC's National Executive strongly supported the introduction of this information technology because it 'will be critical to an effective campaign organisation'.

political parties' (Erickson & Carty 1991, 336). These changes have represented the attempts of legislators to 'regulate the collection and spending of money' and to control the impact of increasingly costly new campaign methods (Paltiel 1987, 228). Amongst these Erickson and Carty (1991, 336) single out the requirement to add party labels to ballot papers. This effectively gave the leaders the responsibility of vouching for the bona fides of their party's candidates, and with it, a power to veto those nominees of riding associations of whom they disapproved. Whilst carrying real political costs and therefore little used, this measure nonetheless placed additional powers in the hands of national leaders. But not all legislative changes have consolidated power at the centre. For example, the 1974 *Electoral Expenses Act* introduced tax credits for political donations as well as reimbursements to candidates for approved election expenses. One unexpected effect of this was to leave many candidates with large campaign fund surpluses which 'helped create rich local party associations' whilst central party organisations remained starved of funds (Seidle & Paltiel 1981, 255). In short, provincial and constituency party organisations found themselves better placed than ever before to solicit small donations and as a consequence became 'far more independent of central [party] authorities' (Jackson et al. 1986, 461). This financial independence persists, although the federal Tories and Liberals have since devised ways of taxing riding associations and have won access to their membership lists for their own direct mail fund raising efforts (Stanbury 1991).

Conclusion

When the evidence is weighed, it is not clear that the introduction of new forms of political communication has been a force for centralization within the two established Canadian parties. Clearly, the adoption of television, cognate communication technologies and American style new campaign methods has had a rather different impact than in the case of the established Australian parties. In both major Canadian parties new forms of political communication appear to have set in train centripetal as well as countervailing centrifugal forces. Equally, it appears that these new technologies have not seen an identical Americanisation of Canadian and Australian politics. Nor have they triggered party decline in Canada, which is commensurate with the loss of membership and the support of strong identifiers which the two established Australian have experienced and which media intrusion theory predicts.

There is, of course, a certain superficiality to media intrusion theory and the proposition that traditional forms of party organisation which once harnessed the leg power and word of mouth efforts of party volunteers have been displaced by television, and subsequent second

generation technologies may do no more than reflect the fact that party elites now clearly prefer such methods as a means of communicating with, and persuading, voters. However, as Becker has cautioned (with another equally beguiling theory about the media in mind), always be 'suspicious of the simple explanation of social phenomena, no matter how promising it sounds; things are probably always more complex than they seem on first notice' (Becker 1982, 533). When it comes to media intrusion theory, things are bound to be more complex. Clearly the intrusion of mass media into political life need not only, nor simply, produce party decline. Arguably, in the case of the Canadian Tory and Liberal parties, the intrusion of mass media has expanded opportunities for participation at the local level, even if it has also consolidated power in the hands of party elites at the national level.

Things are also bound to be more complex because from one political system to another different structural factors will constrain political parties and their use of the new technologies. Clearly the legislative, federal and media environments in which Australian and Canadian parties operate — and indeed the structure and nature of the parties themselves — are very different. Given these differences, it would be surprising if the new media intruded upon Canadian and Australian political parties in the same way. There seems little doubt that the arrival of television and other new forms of political communication has hastened the evolution of the ALP and LPA into electoral-professional parties. Ironically, this has increased the similarities between the major Australian parties and the two Canadian broker parties which are also, as the ALP and LPA are each becoming, organisationally frail, uninterested in ideology, driven by the law of the inclusive middle, and disconnected from underlying class cleavages. However, it is clear that the Canadian broker parties have each reached this state by quite another historical route. The influence of electronic mass media upon parties in Canada and Australia can not be dismissed but nor can it be distilled into a simplistic media intrusion theory. Clearly there are structural variations between these two political systems which are significant, and which show that the impact of new media on the established parties in Canada and Australia has not been uniform.

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Chapter 9

COMPARING PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE CANADIAN PROVINCES AND THE AUSTRALIAN STATES

David K. Stewart

Comparisons between Australia and Canada are attractive to those interested in federal states and their politics. The two countries are enticingly similar in a number of important categories. And, as Dogan and Pelassy (1984, 118) noted, 'A comparison between relatively similar countries ... is at the heart of the comparative method'. Comparisons between Canada and Australia neutralize a number of potentially important differences since both countries are similarly sized, both are parliamentary democracies, both are former British colonies and, of course, both are federal in structure. Those seeking comparisons in the areas of federalism or parliamentary government will find the Canada-Australia contrast hard to resist.

The basic objective of this study is to examine the subnational party systems in Canada and Australia. This study builds on two previous examinations of party systems in the Canadian provinces and the Australian states. It seeks to update Canadian material provided in 1979 by Chandler and Chandler and place the new results in a comparative perspective.¹ Chandler and Chandler looked briefly at the structure and nature of party competition in each of the provinces, noting the diversity but really not spending much time developing the analysis since the prime focus of their study was on public policy. The second work, and one to which this paper is a direct response, was an examination of the party systems in the Australian states. Sharman, in an attempt to

¹ The analysis of provincial party systems carried out by Chandler and Chandler (1979) includes election figures only through 1972 (58). Two additional decades of elections may have changed the patterns they found. On a comparative note, see Sharman (1990, 89) for a brief indication of how the Chandler and Chandler work helped inform his study of party systems in the Australian states.

demonstrate 'the variety of state party systems in terms of their patterns of partisan competition' (Sharman 1990, 104) examined voting and parliamentary results for each state election held between 1945 and 1986. Using a variety of measurements of party competition, he concluded that the party systems of the Australian states were rather more diverse than usually assumed.

In this paper, Sharman's study of state party systems will be used as a framework for examining provincial party systems in Canada. As well, Sharman's Australian data will be used to place the Canadian results in comparative perspective. To again use the words of Dogan and Pelassy (1984, 117) 'Binary comparison sufficiently highlights each national case for the specificity of each to be noted, no matter what separates them. The full originality of each country stands out'. Hopefully, this comparative approach will enhance understanding of subnational party politics in federal systems and, more specifically, will highlight the peculiar features of subnational party systems in Canada and Australia.

Before proceeding with the presentation of the Canadian data and the comparison, it is necessary to provide some background on the Canadian data. The paper draws on results from elections held in the Canadian provinces between 1945 and 1990. These election results were obtained from two sources: Rand Dyck's *Provincial Politics in Canada* (1991) which provides provincial tables presenting popular vote and seat totals, and Loren Smerl's (1982) presentation of provincial election results between 1905 and 1981. The calculation of party seat and vote totals proved difficult in a number of cases in British Columbia and Manitoba. As a result, data from the coalition era elections in British Columbia (1945 and 1949) are not included, while in Manitoba the party known as the Liberal Progressives between 1945 and 1966 is treated as if it were simply the Liberal party. Of course, this has the effect of underestimating the peculiarity of party politics in those provinces. With those exceptions noted, the data set includes figures from 125 elections held in the ten provinces from 1945 through 1990.²

The format of the paper mirrors that used by Sharman in his analysis of state party systems. The initial focus is on bipartyism: the degree to which two parties dominate the party system in terms of vote share and seat share. The examination then shifts to one party dominance by

² The reasons for the 1945 starting point are quite simple: to capture the period of post war expansion and to simplify the Australian comparison by starting at the same point. Data from elections held after 1990 are not included in this study. In BC in 1945 and 1949, when the Liberals and Conservatives contested the elections as a coalition, both Dyck (1991, 604) and Smerl (1982, 690) record the election results under the heading 'coalition' rather than by party.

looking at the vote and seat share of the largest party, and continues by noting where different parties dominate. Next, data on party system instability is presented to map the volatility of the electorate and the manner in which their 'volatile' voting decisions are translated into seats. Penultimately, the paper turns to an examination of fractionalization, using Rae's index and the modification of that index used by Sharman³ to rank and categorize the various provinces. Finally, the paper looks at the question of regime change and notes the partisan stripe and length of provincial regimes as well as the frequency of change. Throughout the various sections comparative references to Australia will be interspersed with the Canadian data.⁴ A number of references to the national party systems will also be made.

Bipartyism

The obvious starting point in a comparative study of partisan competition is the important break point between two-party and multi-party competition. Sartori (1976) and Duverger (1954) both noted the important separation between a simple two-party system and a multi-party system. Both Canada and Australia have been said to possess two-party systems, but the persistent success of a third party at the national level has left both countries somewhat difficult to categorize, leading Sartori (1976, 185), in his discussion of two-party systems, to suggest that 'Australia actually has three relevant parties; and Canada might be even more anomalous than Australia'. They are perhaps easiest to classify as two and a half party systems. Such systems are marked by two larger parties and 'an enduring but weak third party that would gain between 10 and 20 percent of the vote' (Dyck 1991, 16; see also Blondel 1968, 184, 185; and Lijphart, 1984, 118). Between 1945 and 1980 the three 'relevant' parties in Australia averaged almost 93 percent of the first preference votes with the Australia Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberals between them taking 83.1 percent of all first preference votes (see Jaensch 1983, 151). In the fifteen elections held in Canada's two and a half federal party system between 1945 and 1988,⁵ the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives (PC) on average attracted 76.6 percent

³ See Sharman 1990 (98, 99) for a description of both Rae's index and the modification of it he used. Both indices will be explained in more detail later in the paper.

⁴ The Australian data are derived from Sharman's (1990) article in *Publius*.

⁵ The federal figures cited in this paper are calculated from vote and seat percentages from each election since 1944. These election results were derived from Frizell, Pammett & Westell (1989, 133).

of the popular vote, with the New Democratic Party⁶ (NDP) taking another 15.5 percent.

Voting results from Canadian provincial elections do not replicate the pattern of national politics. In three of the provinces, the two leading parties combine for more than 90 percent of the total vote leaving just a tiny percentage of the vote for other parties (see table 9.1). All three provinces are in the Atlantic region.⁷ In another three provinces the two largest parties receive over 85 percent of the popular vote. Two of these provinces, Nova Scotia and Quebec, are again eastern leaving Saskatchewan as the lone western province with a weak third party in terms of vote share.⁸ If McCormick's (1989, 154) designation of marginal parties as those attracting less than 15 percent of the popular vote over a series of elections is used, this category captures all five of the eastern provinces.⁹ In contrast, the party systems of Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia all demonstrate persistent third party strength, with the two largest parties averaging less than 80 percent of the total vote. The most striking factor in terms of vote shares is the East West divide. Bipartyism is strong east of the Ottawa River but relatively weak west of it.

Bipartyism at the level of voters does not appear to be quite as strong in Australia'.¹⁰ In only one of the Australian states were the two largest parties able to garner over 90 percent of the total vote (see Sharman 1990, 91) and the 91.4 percent share those parties took in Tasmania would rank it only fourth in a combined ranking of bipartyism for the

⁶ The party known as the New Democratic Party was not formed until 1961. Basically, it replaced the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF).

⁷ In this paper, for the purposes of simplicity, 'NDP' refers to both the NDP and the CCF.

⁷ The Atlantic region includes the provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island (PEI), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The western provinces are Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia (BC).

⁸ The term third party as used here refers to a party which is not one of the two largest in a given province.

⁹ McCormick defines marginal parties as those 'gaining less than 15 percent of the vote over a series of elections' and minor parties as those which '[gain] less than 30 percent but more than 15 percent of the vote'. Major parties are those which regularly gain more than 30 percent of the vote (McCormack 1989, 154). Here the 15 percent level is applied whenever the two largest parties fail to reach the 85 percent mark. This is not exactly the way McCormick uses it.

¹⁰ The voting figures for Australia are based on expressions of first preference.

two countries'.¹¹ Queensland would anchor the other end of the rankings with a lower level of bipartyism than any of the Canadian provinces (70.6 percent). Still, there are more similarities than differences: half of the Australian states have party systems in which the third party at the vote level could be considered marginal, while a similar examination in Canada reveals six marginal provinces out of ten. Moreover, the mean two party score for Canada was 85.6 percent while the Australian figure was an almost identical 83 percent'.¹² The two countries as a whole had virtually identical vote patterns, although Australia was slightly less bipartisan at the vote level. Still, as one might expect, evidence of regional divisions appears more striking in Canada with the Atlantic provinces and Quebec recording the highest levels of bipartyism. However, one should note that the range from top to bottom in Australia for votes actually exceeds the range in Canada'.¹³

The evidence with respect to seats (table 9.1) indicates the powerful role played by electoral systems and demonstrates how electoral systems can distort perceptions of party strength. While Canadian provinces and Australian states are virtually identical at the vote level, an examination of the seat share of the two largest parties reveals the greater success major parties in Canada have had in establishing their parliamentary dominance: in eight of the Canadian provinces the two largest parties held over 90 percent of the Assembly seats. Indeed in seven of these provinces, BC being the exception, third parties on average accounted for less than 5 percent of the legislative total. Only in Ontario and Manitoba were third parties in possession of more than 10 percent of the legislative seats, and even in those provinces, such parties could not reach the 15 percent level. The Canadian pattern is stark and consistent: third parties do not elect many people to the provincial legislatures. On average, these parties held only 5.2 percent of the seats after a provincial election. The Canadian provinces are highly bipartisan at the parliamentary level. Moreover, they are much more bipartisan than the federal parliament where, over the same period, representatives of parties other than the two largest accounted for an average of 13 percent of the seats.

¹¹ To reiterate, the Australian figures are taken from tables provided by Sharman in his 1990 *Publius* article. These tables can be located in the *Publius* article as follows: table 9.1 (Bipartyism), page 91; table 9.2 (One Party Dominance), page 94; table 9.3 (Party System Instability), page 96; table 9.4 (Fractionalization), page 99; and table 9.5 (Changes in State Regimes), page 101.

¹² Averages are derived from provincial and state totals. Overall means for all state or provincial elections in the two countries were not calculated.

¹³ The difference in Australia is 20.8 percent between Tasmania and Queensland while in Canada the difference between PEI at the top and Ontario and Manitoba at the bottom is 18.2 percent.

Table 9.1
Bipartyism in the Canadian Provinces: 1945–1990

Province	Number of elections	Electoral Bipartyism		Parliamentary Bipartyism	
		Mean %	Range	Mean %	Range
Newfoundland	13	93.1	82–100	97.8	91–100
Nova Scotia	13	88.8	78–97	96.0	93–100
New Brunswick	11	94.2	88–100	98.9	98–100
Prince Edward Island	13	97.8	94–100	100.0	100
Ontario	14	75.6	70–83	86.6	72–98
Manitoba	14	75.6	62–91	86.4	73–100
Saskatchewan	11	84.5	72–98	97.5	89–100
Alberta	12	78.0	71–87	95.3	86–100
British Columbia	12	78.6	58–95	92.6	78–100
Quebec	12	89.7	68–100	96.8	83–100

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982).

Note: Mean figures for Electoral and Parliamentary Bipartyism in the Australian states are as follows (Parliamentary figures in brackets): New South Wales 81.6% (81.9%); Queensland 70.6% (76.5%); South Australia 89.1% (94.2%); Tasmania 91.4% (96.9%); Victoria 79.2% (82.6%); Western Australia 85.9% (84.0%). Figures taken from Sharman (1990, 91).

The Australian picture reveals less parliamentary two-party dominance. In four of the six states, third parties on average occupied more than 15 percent of the legislative seats (see Sharman 1990, 91). To again use the cut off points applied by McCormick (1989), in two-thirds of the Australian states the equivalent of a 'minor' party secured representation. Only Tasmania and South Australia approached the Canadian level of two-party seat dominance with shares of 96.9 percent and 94.2 percent respectively. In the Australian states the two major parties averaged only 86 percent of the legislative seats, a full 8 percent points lower than the Canadian figure. Hints of another relatively important difference between Canada and Australia emerge from these figures: with third parties holding few seats, minority, let alone coalition governments, have been extremely rare in Canada. Single party majority governments were formed after 118 of the 125 provincial elections examined in this study. There have actually been almost as many minority governments at the federal level in Canada as there have been provincially. Five of the fifteen federal elections held since 1945 resulted in minority governments. In the same period, only three provinces experienced minority governments (Ontario, Manitoba and BC) and in none of these provinces were there more than three minority situations.

The first past the post system used in provincial elections¹⁴ is remarkably effective in producing majority governments. In his study of parties and party systems, Sartori (1976, 122) suggested, 'A minor party can be discounted as irrelevant whenever it remains over time superfluous, in the sense that it is never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority'. By that standard, the only relevant minor or third parties extant in Canadian provincial politics are in Ontario and Manitoba.¹⁵

The difference between Australian federal and state politics is not as striking. Virtually every non-Labor government at the federal level has been a coalition between the Liberals and the National (formerly Country) Party and such coalitions are also quite common in state politics. In Western Australia and New South Wales, all the non-Labor governments have been coalitions, while in Queensland a National Party/Liberal Party coalition has governed over half the time. Even Victoria and Tasmania have seen some coalition activity.¹⁶ South Australia stands out for its single party governments and, for that matter, for the rather even balance in governing between the Liberals and the ALP (see Sharman 1990, 101).

One Party Dominance

A diversion into minorities and coalitions provides a useful background for the subject of one party dominance. One party dominance has been a much discussed feature of Canadian provincial politics, and indeed Maurice Pinard (1971) attempted to attribute the rise of third parties in Canada to this very phenomenon. There are a number of ways of examining one party dominance, the most obvious is endurance in office over a long period of time. This regime persistence will be discussed later in the paper. For the moment the emphasis will be on the largest party's vote and seat share.

Dyck (1991, 15) suggests that the degree of dominance can be measured 'by percentage of seats or popular vote held by the dominant party, e.g. one party might gain more than 70 percent of the seats or

¹⁴ The first past the post system is the norm for provincial elections in Canada. However, alternative voting has been used at the provincial level in BC and in parts of Alberta. Proportional representation was also used for some city seats in provincial elections in western Canada. Nonetheless, the first past the post system is the norm and was used in almost all of the elections in this study.

¹⁵ The last BC election to produce a minority government was in 1952.

¹⁶ Indeed in Western Australia and Victoria, the National or Country Party as it was then known, actually participated in coalitions with Labor (Richard 1983, 83).

persistently attract more than 50 percent of the vote'. Using the vote measurement suggests that one party dominance in the Canadian provinces is less common than one might expect. The mean vote share of the party attracting the most votes was just over 49 percent, indicating that most of the electorate preferred another party as government. The Atlantic region stands out, since in three of those provinces the largest party garnered over 50 percent of the vote (see table 9.2). Of course this was virtually a logical necessity given the huge two party vote share noted earlier. Once more Quebec joins with most of the Atlantic region in that its largest party also averaged more than 50 percent of the popular vote.

Table 9.2
One Party Dominance in the Canadian Provinces, 1945-90

Province	No. of Elections	Average share of votes of largest party	Party with largest vote share	Average share of seats of largest party	Party with largest seat share
Newfoundland	13	57.4%	Lib 6 PC 7	74.0%	Lib 7 PC 6
Nova Scotia	13	49.3%	Lib 4 PC 9	70.6%	Lib 5 PC 8
New Brunswick	11	51.1%	Lib 7 PC 4	67.4%	Lib 5 PC 6
Prince Edward Island	13	53.0%	Lib 9 PC 4	73.5%	Lib 9 PC 4
Ontario	14	43.3%	Lib 2 PC 11 NDP 1	63.9%	Lib 1 PC 12 NDP 1
Manitoba	14	41.8%	Lib 2 PC 7 NDP 5	54.6%	Lib 3 PC 7 NDP 4
Saskatchewan	11	46.9%	Lib 1 PC 1 NDP 8	68.1%	Lib 2 PC 2 NDP 7
Alberta	12	53.1%	PC 6 SC 6	83.8%	PC 6 SC 6
British Columbia	12	43.7%	SC 10 NDP 2	62.4%	SC 11 NDP 1
Quebec	12	50.6%	Lib 7 UN 3 PQ 2	71.8%	Lib 6 UN 4 PQ 2

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982).

Note: Average percentage share of votes and seats for largest party in the Australian states are as follows (seat share in brackets): New South Wales 48.5% (53.8%); Queensland 43.3% (46.2%); South Australia 49.9% (53.2%); Tasmania 50.8% (52.5%); Victoria 42.8% (54.9%); Western Australia 47.0% (49.1%). Figures taken from Sharman (1990, 94).

Patterns of partisan support in Alberta appear rather different than those in the other western provinces and Ontario. Alberta ranks second in terms of the mean vote share obtained by the largest party. In half of the Canadian provinces then, the governing party routinely secures over half the votes cast. In contrast, in Ontario and the Western provinces other than Alberta, the largest party on average was supported by less than half the voters. Nationally, the largest party has been supported on average by 43.7 percent of the voters. Among the provinces only Manitoba's largest party recorded a lower average level of support.

An examination of the largest party's mean seat share provides evidence for those looking for one party dominance in provincial politics and again suggests the important role of electoral systems in shaping perceptions. One party dominance is much stronger in the legislature than it is in the electorate. Alberta provides a particularly strong example of one party dominating the legislature. The average share of the largest party in Alberta was almost ten points higher than that of the next most one-sided legislature (see table 9.2). On average, Albertan governments preside over a legislature in which opposition parties occupy less than a fifth of the seats. If, as Dyck (1991, 15) suggested, one party dominance might occur when one party wins over 70 percent of the seats, then one party dominance is the norm in Alberta, with the largest party holding an average 84 percent of the seats. Indeed, provincial governments in general dominate their legislatures. The 70 percent seat share was exceeded in five provinces, while in two others the largest party occupied more than 65 percent of the legislative seats. In none of the provinces did the mean seat share of the largest party drop below 50 percent and only in Manitoba did it fall beneath 60 percent. The mean seat share for provincial governments in Canada was slightly over 69 percent. Canadian federal governments generally do not enjoy such dominance. The mean seat share for the largest federal party was a paltry 56 percent.

Slight differences can be detected between Canada and Australia with regard to voters' support of the largest party. In Australia, the largest party in terms of votes averaged about 47 percent — a bit lower than the Canadian figure. However, only in Tasmania was the largest party able to average more than 50 percent of the vote.¹⁷ Moreover, the vote totals in Australia varied only within a very small range of 8 percentage points from top to bottom. In Canada, the variation was almost twice that at 15.6 percentage points. Still, it was at the seat level that Australia deviated most substantially from Canada. On average, the largest party in the Australian states held just 52 percent of the lower house seats. In two states, Queensland and Western Australia, the mean

¹⁷ The average in South Australia came very close to the 50 percent mark working out to 49.9 percent.

seat share of the largest party did not even reach the 50 percent mark¹⁸ (see Sharman 1990, 94). Undoubtedly, the more evenly divided legislatures in Australia provide for more interesting legislative politics than one finds in Canada. Certainly, Australian state governments do not enjoy the same two to one ratio over the opposition that Canadian provincial governments possess. Nor do Canadian federal governments enjoy such dominance.

A major difference between Canada and Australia comes into focus when one looks not just at the voting and seat totals of the largest party, but at the name of the largest party. In Australia, Labor dominates state elections: after 88 percent of the elections held between 1945 and 1986 it received more votes than any other party (Sharman 1990, 93). There is no such pattern of one party dominance in Canada. The Progressive Conservative party, only the second party in terms of federal support over the period,¹⁹ was the most successful of the Canadian provincial parties and it was able to attract the largest vote share only 39 percent of the time. Eliminating Quebec from the analysis (since the PC party does not compete in provincial elections in that province) does little to change the picture, raising the PC percentage to just 44 percent. The Liberal party, in spite of its much discussed western weakness,²⁰ actually won more votes than any other party in 31 of the 113 elections (28 percent) held outside Quebec. The New Democrats and Social Credit each topped the polls 16 times. Significantly, none of the 32 non-Liberal or PC 'victories' occurred in an Atlantic province and only one was in Ontario. Clearly then, the success of such parties is a western rather than a national phenomenon. Quebec resembles the west in terms of success for such parties but stands alone with its idiosyncratic pattern of party competition. As noted, the most successful provincial party in the country did not contest a provincial election in Quebec during the time frame encompassed by this study and is not likely to do so in the foreseeable future. Both the Union Nationale (UN) and the Parti Québécois (PQ) formed governments in Quebec and both parties contested elections solely in that province. Indeed, while the Liberal party won half of Quebec's post-war elections, it has not been associated with the federal Liberal party for almost two decades, and even before that was

¹⁸ Interestingly, Victoria, the state with the lowest average vote for the largest party, was also the state in which the percentage of seats held in the assembly by the largest party was highest.

¹⁹ In the 15 federal elections held between 1945 and 1990, the Liberals averaged 40.2 percent of the vote, the Conservatives 36.4 percent and the NDP 15.5 percent.

²⁰ See for example David Smith (1981), *The Regional Decline of a National Party*.

frequently at odds with its federal cousin (Smiley 1987, 111). Provincial politics in Quebec seems to march to a different drummer, while provincial elections in Canada produce more varied results than those in Australia, at least in terms of the battle to attract the most votes.

The ALP's dominance of Australian state politics diminishes somewhat when seat totals are examined. While that party received the highest vote totals almost nine times out of ten, it was able to win the most seats 'only' 61 percent of the time (Sharman 1990, 93, 94) suggesting that the electoral system is not working to that party's advantage. The deviation was particularly striking in Victoria, where the ALP had the largest vote share in nine elections but the largest seat share after only four. Still, by Canadian standards, a single party winning the most seats 61 percent of the time is astounding. As one can infer from the vote totals, no Canadian party won the largest number of seats in a majority of elections. The Conservative party was most successful, finishing with the most legislative seats after 50 of the 125 elections, while the Liberals led after 39, Social Credit after 17, the NDP after 13 and others after the remaining six. On several occasions the party with the most seats was not the party with the most votes; but this phenomenon is not present to the same degree as it is in Australia.

Party System Instability

Thus far the provincial party systems have been examined in a rather static fashion. An examination of mean scores for a 45 year period implies a stability which may not in fact exist. Nor do mean scores for each province indicate whether there is much variation in terms of the rates of change in the various party systems. It is, therefore, important to discuss the volatility of the provincial party systems. To that end, the rate of change in the various party systems will be mapped (see table 9.3) and comparisons made with Australia.

Provincial electorates in Canada appear rather more volatile than their Australian counterparts. In Australia, the average vote change for each state ranged from 2.7 percent to 3.9 percent (Sharman 1990, 96) while the Canadian figures for vote change ranged from 3.6 percent to a rather striking 8.9 percent.²¹ Indeed, of the Canadian provinces, only PEI was less volatile than any of the Australian states. To put it another way,

²¹ The average for each province is calculated according to the formula used by Sharman (1990, 96). As he puts it, the average is 'calculated by adding the changes in the percentage share of each party with more than 2 percent of the total votes in any pair of consecutive elections (all changes are positive), dividing this sum by the relevant number of parties, and averaging the result over the period' (1990, 95, 96).

nine Canadian provinces were more volatile in terms of voting than the most volatile Australian state (Tasmania).

Table 9.3
Party System Instability, Canadian Provinces, 1945-90

	No. of Paired Elections	Measure	Mean Party Support Change	Range	Ranking
Newfoundland	12	votes	6.0%	1.5-11.3	5
	12	seats	15.4%	2.5-43.5	5
Nova Scotia	12	votes	4.0%	2.0-6.3	9
	12	seats	15.3%	3.5-29.3	6
New Brunswick	11	votes	4.9%	1.5-12.7	6
	11	seats	20.3%	2.0-68.0	1
Prince Edward Island	12	votes	3.6%	0.0-7.0	10
	12	seats	20.0%	0.0-63.0	2
Ontario	13	votes	4.2%	1.3-9.3	8
	13	seats	10.5%	0.7-30.3	8
Manitoba	13	votes	6.1%	3.3-10.5	4
	13	seats	11.0%	2.3-22.3	7
Saskatchewan	10	votes	8.9%	4.3-17.3	1
	10	seats	19.9%	2.0-58.0	3
Alberta	11	votes	7.6%	3.0-11.5	2
	11	seats	8.0%	0.7-23.0	10
British Columbia	11	votes	4.5%	2.3-9.5	7
	11	seats	9.7%	1.3-25.8	9
Quebec	11	votes	7.1%	0.7-14.3	3
	11	seats	16.6%	2.3-47.0	4

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982).

Note: Mean party percentage support change (votes and seats) in the Australian states are as follows (seat changes in brackets): New South Wales 2.7% (3.9%); Queensland 3.6% (5.0%); South Australia 3.3% (3.8%); Tasmania 3.9% (4.7%); Victoria 3.3% (6.5%); Western Australia 3.7% (3.9%). Figures taken from Sharman (1990, 96).

The mean vote change for the six Australian states was 3.4 percent while in Canada the change in votes averaged 5.6 percent. Institutional factors may partially explain the greater volatility of Canadian provincial electorates. Canadian voters get to make only one decision in terms of voting, while Australian voters may be able to indulge their desires for change in the process of ranking their choices or, except in Queensland, in voting for the upper house. Another possible explanation for the greater volatility of provincial voters in Canada lies with the non-polarized politics one finds in many provinces. Virtually nowhere in Canada can one find the same Labor/non-Labor antithesis which marks

most Australian state elections. In the absence of such 'polarization', voters may be more willing to switch their votes.²²

As one might expect, volatility at the parliamentary level in Canada exceeds that at the level of votes (see table 9.3) and vastly exceeds that identified in Australia²³ (see Sharman 1990, 96). While in Australia average seat changes fell in a tight range of 3.8 to 6.5 percent, in Canada the minimum change was 8.0 percent and ranged upwards from that to 20.3 percent. Somewhat surprisingly, two provinces that were on the low side in relation to vote changes topped the charts with seat changes: in both PEI and New Brunswick, the average seat change was 20 percent, a rather massive level of volatility. At the other end of the scale was Alberta with an average change of just 8.0 percent. Even that figure was inflated by the events surrounding the one post-war government change in 1971. The differences between Australia and Canada are sharp: in Australia the mean seat change for the six states was 4.6 percent, while in Canada the ten provinces had an average seat change of 14.7 percent. Again, the first past the post system translates relatively tiny vote changes into mammoth seat changes. This can be seen when one compares the overall means: the difference in means between the two countries in votes was 2.2 percent, while in seats it mushroomed to 10.1 percent.

Fractionalization

While preceding sections have given some indication of the number of parties involved in each party system and the strength of the largest parties, Rae's fractionalization index provides a simpler and more easily comparable measure of party system competitiveness.²⁴

- 22 See, for example, the discussion in chap. 3 of Clarke, Jenson, Leduc & Pammett *Absent Mandate* (1991). Of course no evidence of individual vote switches can be conclusively derived from aggregate vote totals. Nonetheless, the assumption seems relatively safe.
- 23 The parliamentary change index is also the same as that used by Sharman (1990, 97). It is calculated similarly to the vote index. This time however, only parties that secured parliamentary representation after two consecutive elections were included.
- 24 Rae's fractionalization index is calculated 'by adding the squares of the decimal shares of the votes [or] seats won by parties in a given election and subtracting this sum from unity. The index is thus sensitive to both the number of competing parties and the variations in the shares of votes or seats gained by any given number of parties. Two parties with 50 percent of the vote each, for example, produce an index of .500, but two parties with 80 percent and 20 percent shares of the vote produce an index of .320' (Sharman 1990, 98). Sharman also notes some of the shortcomings of this measure, in particular the difficulty in determining where between .500 and .600 a two party system becomes a multi party system.

The fractionalization index for votes reveals similar averages in both Canada and Australia (see table 9.4 for the Canadian results). In Australia, the Rae index yielded a mean figure of .622 while in Canada it worked out to .594. Thus, in both countries multiparty competition appears to be the norm at the voting level. The usual regional variations were found in Canada. All five eastern provinces had scores which fell under .600 while the other provinces recorded scores in excess of that level. The modification of Rae's index used by Sharman²⁵ provides more easily grasped representations of the state of competition and again emphasizes the importance of the Ottawa River divide: east of the Ottawa River the competition is basically between two parties (mean score 2.24); west of that river three parties compete for votes (mean score 2.8). The comparative figures suggest some difference between the two countries. In Australia, the lowest result on the modified index was 2.3; three Canadian provinces — all of them in the Atlantic region — fell below that mark.

At the parliamentary level, the difference between the countries widens with a mean fractionalization index in Australia of .576 and in Canada of .414. Indeed, the difference between Canada and Australia was greater than the variance across all six Australian states. Only two of the Canadian provinces had scores reaching .500, while every Australian state surpassed that figure (see Sharman 1990, 99).

In both countries, the level of fractionalization at the parliamentary level was substantially lower than at the level of votes. The most 'fractionalized' of the Canadian provinces were Manitoba, British Columbia and Ontario which, not surprisingly, were the only provinces to have had minority governments. The overwhelming majorities enjoyed by Albertan governments are once more apparent, with that province's legislature receiving a fractionalization score of only .26. When one puts the results in a comparative perspective using the modified index, the degree to which provincial legislatures are divided between two parties and dominated by one appears even more striking. The most fractionalized legislature in Canada was Manitoba's at 2.35; the scores in half of the Australian states were in excess of that amount. All of the states had parliamentary scores of over 2.0 on the modified index while in seven of the Canadian provinces the scores did not reach that level. At the parliamentary level, then, Australia was considerably more fractionalized than Canada.

²⁵ Briefly, the modified index subtracts Rae's index from one and divides the result into unity (see Sharman 1990, 98–9). Thus instead of a scale ranging from .000 to 1.000 the results are displayed in a fashion that makes the distinction between a two party system and a multi party system easier to grasp. For instance, this modification ensures that pure two party competition gives an index of 2 (see Lijphart 1984, 120).

Table 9.4
Fractionalization In The Canadian Provinces, 1945-90

Province	Rae's Index	Electoral Modified Index	Rank Order	Rae's Index	Parliamentary Modified Index	Rank Order
Newfoundland	.53	2.16	9	.34	1.58	9
Nova Scotia	.58	2.42	6	.40	1.74	5
New Brunswick	.54	2.19	8	.39	1.72	7
Prince Edward Island	.51	2.05	10	.35	1.60	8
Ontario	.65	2.87	2	.49	2.07	3
Manitoba	.66	3.03	1	.57	2.35	1
Saskatchewan	.61	2.61	5	.43	1.78	4
Alberta	.62	2.66	4	.26	1.42	10
British Columbia	.64	2.90	3	.50	2.05	2
Quebec	1.57	2.40	7	.39	1.69	6

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982).

Note: Electoral and Parliamentary Fractionalization the Australian states: Rae's Index and Modified Index (Parliamentary scores are in brackets): New South Wales .633 and 2.7 (.566 and 2.5); Queensland .682 and 3.1 (.635 and 2.7); South Australia .588 and 2.4 (.540 and 2.2); Tasmania .568 and 2.3 (.522 and 2.1); Victoria .656 and 2.9 (.585 and 2.4); Western Australia .604 and 2.5 (.610 and 2.6). Figures taken from Sharman (1990, 99).

Regimes and Party Systems

The final measure to be used in this examination of party systems is that of outcomes, a measure which takes into account who wins elections and how long winners stay in office. Indeed, electoral victories and longevity in office are likely to be better indicators of one party dominance than are the vote and seat shares of the largest party.²⁶

Overall, there were relatively few regime changes in Canada: 74 percent of the time governments were reelected. In four of the provinces, fewer than three changes of government occurred in the period covered. Indeed, one province, Alberta, experienced just one regime change²⁷ (see table 9.5). During the same time frame, five changes of government took place at the national level, producing a reelection rate of only 66 percent.

Regime changes initially appear more frequent in Australia (Sharman 1990, 101). On average, there were 3.7 regime changes in the Australian

²⁶ For a discussion of these different ways of conceptualizing one party dominance see McCormick (1988, 161) and Dyck (1991, 15).

²⁷ A 36 year Social Credit regime was replaced in 1971 by a Conservative regime. Regime change or changes of government refer to one party being replaced in government by another.

states while the corresponding figure for Canada was 3.1. Indeed, while half of the Australian states experienced five changes of government, that heady level of change was reached in Canada only by Manitoba and Quebec. However, the greater frequency of change in Australia is something of an illusion. If one looks at the number of elections per regime change, one finds that in Canada the average number of elections before a change in government was 3.8 while in Australia the corresponding figure was 4.3. Thus, when one controls for the number of elections, government changes are actually somewhat more common in Canada.

Table 9.5
Changes in Canadian Provincial Regimes, 1945-90

Province	No. of Elections	No. of Regime Changes	% of Elections after which Party Formed Government	Longest Continuous Regime (Years)	Average No. of Elections Per Regime Change
Newfoundland	13	2	54% Lib 46% PC	22	6.0
Nova Scotia	13	3	39% Lib 62% PC	14	3.0
New Brunswick	11	4	45% Lib 54% PC	17	2.5
PEI	13	4	69% Lib 31% PC	14	2.8
Ontario	14	2	14% Lib 79% PC 7% NDP	40	6.5
Manitoba	14	5	21% Lib 50% PC 29% NDP	13	2.4
Saskatchewan	11	3	18% Lib 13% PC 64% NDP	19	3.0
Alberta	12	1	50% PC 50% SC	26	6.0
British Columbia	12	2	8% NDP 92% SC	20	4.0
Quebec	12	5	50% Lib 33% UN 17% PQ	15	2.0

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982). The amount of time in office that the longest regime might have served prior to 1945 is excluded.

Note: Number of regime changes and largest party's share of government in the Australian states are as follows (government share in brackets): New South Wales 2 (70.0% ALP); Queensland 2 (66.3% National and Liberal Coalition); South Australia 5 (59.9% Liberal); Tasmania 3 (82.3% ALP); Victoria 5 (68.3% Liberal); Western Australia 5 (68.7% Liberal and National Coalition). Figures taken from Sharman (1990, 101).

In terms of one party control of the government, British Columbia and Ontario stand out with one party forming the government over three-quarters of the time. In Australia, only Tasmania rivalled this pattern of dominance.²⁸ Still, in both countries the states and provinces experienced relatively lengthy periods of rule by one regime: on average, the longest regimes in Australia lasted almost 21 years, while in Canada they held on to power for about 20 years.²⁹

In four of the Canadian provinces, three different parties formed governments.³⁰ In Quebec, the Liberals were victorious in half of the 12 elections, while the UN won four elections and the PQ the remaining two. The other cases in which three parties had a turn at government were Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In the latter two cases, the Liberals formed governments relatively early in the period but were subsequently displaced by the Conservatives as the leading non NDP party. In both those provinces the Liberals at present hold substantial shares of the popular vote. Ontario provides observers of the battle between the NDP and the Liberals with the interesting case of the dynastic collapse of the Tories, after 42 years, and the indignity of their relegation to third place. Ontario, for years the bastion of the Conservative party, has seen that party finish third in the last two elections while the Liberals and NDP alternated in power. The clearest example of one party dominance in the country, in terms of persistent success, has fallen by the wayside.

Another clear incidence of extended one party dominance was found in BC. The Social Credit party, after forming a minority government in 1952, went on to win 10 of the next 11 elections. It appears, however, that this dynasty came to a crashing end in 1991. Alberta also provides an example of one party dominance in spite of the even division of post war election victories between the Conservatives and Social Credit. Prior to 1971, Social Credit won every election while the Conservatives won in 1971 and have not lost since. In Alberta, then, the post war pattern of regimes has simply been one dominant party being replaced by another.

²⁸ Even in New South Wales where the ALP was invariably the largest party in the legislature, it formed the government only 70 percent of the time.

²⁹ No regime in Australia lasted for 27 years so the longevity of Ontario's Tories is even more striking. They remained in power for 42 years. The 40 year figure is used in the text because regime length was counted as beginning in 1945. It actually began in 1943 and Ontario Conservatives held office until 1985. At the time they fell from power they held more seats in the legislature than the Liberal party which replaced them. Regime lengths for all provinces are calculated only from 1945. This also reduces the length of the longest regimes in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec.

³⁰ The number of provinces would grow to five if the coalition era governments of BC were included.

The four western provinces reveal interesting and varied patterns of governments and regimes. Of the 49 elections held in the region, Social Credit won 17, the Conservatives 15, the NDP 12, and the Liberals just five. In contrast, at the national level the Liberal party won nine of 15 elections with the NDP and Social Credit parties winning none.

The western regional totals disguise a number of provincial peculiarities. The NDP dominated in only one province, Saskatchewan, the province in which their initial victory occurred in 1944. There the party held office almost twice as long as the Liberals and Conservatives combined. In no other province could the NDP win even one third of the elections. The Social Credit party was limited to the two most western provinces, and even there its existence is now tenuous. The party never recovered from its 1971 loss in Alberta, and has ceased to exist as a viable political entity in that province. In 1991 the BC party lost its virtual stranglehold on power, falling to third place in seats and popular vote and leaving the electoral future of the party as an open question. Only Manitoba appears genuinely competitive. With such varied results, it is difficult to speak of an overarching western pattern. Party politics in western Canada is, however, marked by the success of parties other than the Liberals or Conservatives. Still, one should note that the demise of the Liberal party in the west is vastly more pronounced at the level of seats than it is at the level of votes. Throughout the 1945–1990 period, the average vote of the Liberals (see table 9.6) dipped below 15 percent in only one province (Alberta) and even there it has shown signs of recovery, garnering 29 percent of the vote in the most recent election (1989). The party appeared on the road to oblivion in BC averaging only 4.3 percent of the popular vote in the four elections between 1972 and 1991. However, in the 1991 election it jumped to second place in votes and seats indicating that its decline was far from terminal.

The Atlantic provinces seem relatively free of one party dominance, despite the large vote share achieved by the largest parties (see table 9.2) and those provinces remain a battleground between Liberals and Tories. Of the 50 elections held in the region, the Liberals won 26 and the Conservatives 24 for a relatively even balance. They also remain relatively competitive with frequent government turnovers.³¹

³¹ One should note, however, the dominance of the Nova Scotia Tories since 1956. They have had two 14 year regimes and have only been out-pollled by the Liberals once in the last 34 years. With the collapse of the Ontario Tories, they have become the most successful party in the country in this period. The success of the Joey Smallwood led Liberals in Newfoundland from the time that province entered Canada in 1949 until 1971 should also be noted.

Table 9.6
Vote Shares of Major Parties by Province (per cent)

Province	1945-1972				1973-1990			
	Lib	PC	NDP	Othr	Lib	PC	NDP	Othr
Newfoundland	58.1	36.9	1.9	2.0	39.4	50.6	6.8	2.8
Nova Scotia	46.5	46.1	7.4	0.0	37.6	45.2	15.6	1.4
New Brunswick	51.3	45.9	1.7	0.7	48.0	41.5	7.5	2.8
Prince Edward Island	52.0	47.3	0.0	0.0	51.0	45.8	1.2	0.0
Ontario	32.1	45.4	21.4	0.9	36.2	34.3	27.7	1.0
Manitoba	34.0	32.6	24.4	3.0	19.2	41.7	37.0	2.3
Saskatchewan	37.4	8.1	46.7	6.4	15.3	41.3	42.8	1.0
Alberta*	16.7	17.4	11.7	50.7	10.8	55.6	20.6	7.8
British Columbia*	20.6	7.1	32.4	39.4	4.3	2.8	43.3	49.0
Overall	38.7	32.0	16.5	11.3	29.9	40.7	21.9	6.5
Quebec	1945-1972				1973-1990			
	Lib	UN	PQ	Othr	Lib	UN	PQ	Othr
Quebec	46.9	43.6	8.7	4.7	48.2	5.4	39.8	4.8

Province	1945-1990			
	Lib	PC	NDP	Other
Newfoundland	50.9	42.2	3.8	2.3
Nova Scotia	43.1	45.8	10.5	0.5
New Brunswick	50.1	44.3	3.8	1.5
Prince Edward Island	51.5	46.6	0.5	0.0
Ontario	33.9	40.6	24.1	0.9
Manitoba	27.6	36.5	29.8	2.7
Saskatchewan	29.4	20.2	45.3	4.5
Alberta*	14.3	33.3	15.4	32.8
British Columbia*	15.2	5.7	36.0	42.6
Overall	35.2	35.5	18.6	9.4
Quebec	1945-1990			
	Lib	UN	PQ	Other
Quebec	47.4	27.7	18.5	4.7

Source: Calculated from Dyck (1991), and Smerl (1982).

Note: * In Alberta and British Columbia Other refers solely to the Social Credit party.

The NDP weakness in the Atlantic region is obvious. The party was most successful in Nova Scotia but even there averaged just 11 percent of the vote. In the remainder of the region its mean popular support did not reach 5 percent. The only cause for optimism in those figures comes when attention is limited to the post-1972 era (see table 9.6). Since then, the party has crossed the 15 percent plateau in Nova Scotia and garnered about 7 percent of the vote in Newfoundland and New Brunswick. Still, the party has, at best, a marginal presence in the region's party systems and is irrelevant in a discussion of governments and regimes. Governments in Atlantic Canada are formed either by Liberals or Conservatives.

No single party dominates Quebec elections. While the Liberal party won six elections, other parties also won six elections, providing a balanced division of office holding. Prior to 1972, Quebec politics was marked by the competition between the Liberals and the UN, while subsequently it has been between the Liberals and the PQ. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, even the Liberal label in Quebec has little relevance to the rest of the country. Quebec clearly constitutes a distinct polity. Noteworthy in support of this claim is the irrelevance of the Conservatives and NDP in Quebec's provincial elections.

There is a good deal of diversity in government formation in Australia as well. Only in Victoria were single party governments formed by three different parties (see Sharman 1990, 101). Coalitions generally governed in Western Australia and Queensland. Of course, in Western Australia the dominant coalition partner was the Liberal party, while in Queensland the National party dominated and indeed, occasionally governed in its own right. The ALP was dominant in Tasmania and in New South Wales, forming governments 70 percent of the time in New South Wales and 82 percent of the time in Tasmania.³² South Australia appears unique in the relatively even division of government between the Liberals and the ALP: the Liberals held office 60 percent of the time while Labor occupied the government benches for the remainder of the period. In the 1945–1986 time period, South Australia was the only state which did not experience coalition government. It appears to have a genuine two-party system with frequent alternation of power.

There is no clear and consistent pattern of government formation in the Australian states. The Liberals were the dominant party in Victoria and in South Australia, while the ALP dominated Tasmania and New South Wales. A coalition headed by the National Party generally ruled Queensland and the Liberal party usually headed a coalition in Western Australia. However, Australian state election outcomes do not provide the same easy regional contrasts that provincial results in Canada offer. For instance, there is not even a large state/small state contrast. The ALP dominates the largest and the smallest states and the Liberal party usually governs in both Victoria and South Australia. Nor is there a division between the states dominated by a single city (South Australian and Western Australian) and those which are not (Queensland

³² The most enduring pattern of parliamentary dominance might be found in New South Wales where the ALP was never outnumbered in the legislature by any single party even though it did not always form the government. The ALP's weakest points were in Queensland and Victoria where, more often than not, another party won more seats. Of course, even in those states, the ALP attracted more support from voters than any other party.

and Tasmania).³³ The National Party is strong in Queensland, but has virtually no support in Tasmania. Regional diversity exists in Australia but it is not a diversity amenable to short summary statements.

Conclusions

If further proof of the regional diversity of Canadian politics is required, an examination of the provincial party systems provides it. Analysis of a selection of indicators dealing with partisan support in elections and legislatures reveals a clear pattern of regional diversity. Also emphasized is the difference between federal and provincial party systems with the two and a half party system said to characterize Canada nationally replicated almost nowhere. Only in Manitoba and Ontario is the existence of a multi-party system beyond debate, and in neither of those provinces was the Liberal party the dominant actor it was federally.³⁴ Provincial party systems in Canada are not microcosms of the national party system.

Appreciation of the regional diversity of Canada's provincial party systems is enhanced by the contrast with Australian states. While Sharman has clearly and correctly challenged the assumption of regional uniformity in Australia, Canada's lack of uniformity appears striking when juxtaposed with Australia. Particularly striking is the contrast between the electoral dominance of the ALP in all states and the inability of any Canadian party to win plurality support in a majority of elections. This is not to say that Australia displays national uniformity. For instance, the range of experience with bipartyism was actually greater than that noted in Canada and the pattern of government formation in the Australian states also exhibited a good deal of variety. Nonetheless, the comparison with Australia demonstrates that the diverse patterns of provincial party politics in Canada are not replicated even in a large former British colony with a federal and parliamentary system like Australia.

³³ In Queensland, Brisbane, the largest city accounts for only 45.6 percent of the state population while Hobart is home to only 40 percent of Tasmanians. In the other states, the largest cities contain over 60 percent of the total population. In only one of the Canadian provinces, Manitoba, can over half the population be found in one city (Hodgins et al. 1989, Appendix 2).

³⁴ One of the interesting things about this examination of party systems in the Canadian provinces is the peculiarity of Manitoba. Despite the fact that coding in the early years made Manitoba appear more similar to the other provinces than it in fact was, Manitoba managed to stand out with its ongoing three party competition. Manitoba warrants more attention in Canadian academic circles than it receives.

The comparison with Australia also highlights the degree to which Canadian provincial legislatures are, as noted earlier, divided between two parties and dominated by one. Canadian provincial governments dominate their legislative chambers to a far greater degree than their state counterparts in Australia and their federal counterparts in Canada. While Cairns (1968, 56) demonstrated conclusively that the electoral system federally had only a mediocre performance in creating 'artificial legislative majorities to produce cabinet stability', there can be no doubt that the first past the post system has done a superlative job in fashioning huge one party majority governments and stable cabinets in the provinces.

One should be somewhat cautious in interpreting comparisons of Australia and Canada. While there are many similarities between the two countries, there are also a number of important differences. The first is obviously the Quebec question. As Holmes and Sharman (1977, 12) admit, 'There are not social cleavages in Australia to compare with Canada's self evident racial and religious diversities'. In none of the Australian states do concerns over language and cultural distinctiveness trouble the political agenda. For that matter, such issues are relatively unimportant outside Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada.³⁵ It is abundantly clear however, that Quebec constitutes a distinct polity in Canada, one in which the party labels used nationally and in other provinces are virtually without resonance. 'Regionalism' cannot fully capture the Quebec dimension and the presence of Quebec in Canada complicates Canadian-Australian comparisons. Still, even if Quebec were excluded from the analysis, the patterns of provincial party politics in Canada would appear more varied than those found in the Australian states.

The choice of electoral systems also complicates matters. The two countries rely on different types of electoral systems. The first past the post system typically used in the Canadian provinces is not used at all in Australia, rendering comparisons relating to parliamentary composition problematic. Differences between the two countries were consistently wider at the parliamentary level than they were at the electoral level. In all likelihood the distortion goes beyond this. The manner in which votes are translated into seats plays a major role in shaping the party system. Party systems can be changed by playing with the electoral system.

35 Linguistic questions have become quite significant in New Brunswick politics. The 1991 New Brunswick election saw the Conservatives displaced as the second largest party in the province by an anti bilingual party called COR (Confederation of Regions). Drawing support in English speaking areas in New Brunswick, COR elected eight members and formed the official opposition. This result marks the only time in which either the Liberals or Conservatives attracted fewer votes than a third party.

Perhaps the quintessential example of this occurred in BC in 1952 (see Elkins, 1989) when experiments with alternative voting (that is, in the Australian idiom, preferential voting) helped bring the lowly and previously unheralded Social Credit party to power with only 27 percent of the first preference vote. That party, recognizing the long term advantages to be derived from the first past the post system, quickly switched back and was able to dominate BC politics for the next 40 years. The Queensland Country Party's flirtation with the first past the post system also emphasizes the causal role electoral arrangements can play. Many of the differences between the Canadian provinces and the Australian states may be attributed to the electoral system. Seats and votes cannot be simply separated. The distribution of seats in one election undoubtedly affects the distribution of votes at the next. Parliamentary systems place a premium on seats, not on votes. Such a premium surely affects voting decisions in a first past the post system in a way that differs qualitatively from the impact in an alternative voting system.³⁶

Similarly, the practice of coalition governments and the existence of elected upper houses in most Australian states suggests that voting in Australian state elections for the lower house is not exactly the same as voting for provincial assemblies in Canada. Coalition concerns need not trouble Canadian voters since they can count on the electoral system to deliver a majority. But they cannot indicate a second choice on their ballots or hedge their bets by electing a somewhat different upper House to keep an eye on the government. The relative stability of voting in Australia may be attributable to the ability to split votes or tinker with secondary rankings.

Nonetheless, one can safely conclude that regionally diverse party systems can be found in both countries. In Canada the regional differences are obvious: the Atlantic provinces appeared unique on a number of indicators relating to bipartyism and third party weakness; the West stood out for its patterns of NDP and Social Credit success and for relatively weak Liberal results; Quebec was unique in terms of its partisan competition; only Ontario and adjacent Manitoba possessed obvious multi-party systems and they differed from the two and a half party system found nationally. Regional differences in Australia may not be as easily summarized, but they exist. Australians should not let the more obviously varied Canadian patterns blind them to their own diversity.

³⁶ It is perhaps significant that the one Australian state which does not use preferential voting in single member constituencies for electing members to its lower house, Tasmania, formed the outlier in a number of cases. Tasmania had the highest level of bipartyism, the highest vote and seat shares for the largest party, was the least fractionalized and displayed the greatest volatility in voting.

There are many reasons why one would not expect to find as much regional diversity in Australia. One is the timing of admission to the federation, the six states all entered the federation at the same time and with the same powers. Canada's federation has grown from the original four to ten. And, a number of the units which have become provinces were treated as internal colonies for some time. For instance, the Prairie provinces were not given control over their natural resources until 1930, creating a climate of suspicion and a perceived sense of discrimination that resonates still. It is also interesting to note that in Australia the dominant party in state politics, the ALP, actually predated the achievement of a federal union. As Alford (1967, 77) put it, the 'Australian Labor Party arose partly as an instrument for the unification of Australia as an independent nation'. Thus, in each of the states the major party is indigenous in a way the Liberals and Conservatives could never be in the Canadian west. For the most part, these eastern Canadian parties were transplanted in the west and thus lacked deep roots. Similarly, the NDP and Social Credit originated in the West and experienced difficulty making headway in eastern Canada. In contrast, the ALP has very deep roots in the soil of all Australian states. Also, as noted earlier, Australia does not have the kind of racial and religious social cleavages found in Canada (Holmes & Sharman 1977, 12). Finally, federal and state parties in Australia are integrated in a way that Canadians can scarcely comprehend. Again as Holmes and Sharman (1977, 108) explain, 'Australian parties have only state level preselection procedures for both state and national offices'. They also note that state parties 'dominate the organizational life of the Australian party system' (Holmes & Sharman 1977, 25). Given these important factors, one might expect to find uniformity in the politics of the states. Such uniformity does not exist; while the Australian party systems are not as diverse as those in Canada, there are regional differences which must be given respectful attention.

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Chapter 10

POST-WAR PATTERNS OF INCUMBENCY IN AUSTRALIAN STATES AND CANADIAN PROVINCES

Jeremy Moon and Michael Lusztig

Introduction

Generally speaking, studies in comparative government have tended to focus on the national level of government, while studies in comparative federalism have concentrated on the intergovernmental aspects of federal systems. These emphases are, of course, understandable, but nonetheless it is curious that the field of comparative sub-national politics remains relatively unexplored. It is an aspect of this topic which we seek to explore in this study.

This chapter is concerned with government incumbency in Australian states and Canadian provinces — henceforth collectively called sub-national political systems (SNPSs).¹ More specifically, we observe and explain two patterns of incumbency. These are the Australian and Canadian patterns of incumbency, and the lifecycles of what we call ~~predominant parties, being those parties able to win parliamentary~~ majorities in three consecutive general elections (Sartori 1976, 1999). These are of special interest, being the apogee of incumbency.

In brief, our findings suggest some cross-national similarity in the mean success rates of incumbent governments, and the tendency for incumbency by predominant parties. Nonetheless, distinct national differences exist. There is a far greater range in the identity of parties holding office both within and across Canadian provinces than in Australian states. Other differences emerge, however, which do not

¹ Our interest is not in electoral politics per se. Indeed, we recognise that incumbency is often a function of winning only a plurality of the vote. Thus governments may only need to appeal to a minimum winning coalition (see Riker 1962; Waterbury 1992). For studies of partisan electoral competition in Australian and Canadian SNPSs see Sharman (1990) and Stewart in this volume.

conform to national classification. In particular Canadian predominant party lifecycles differ along regional lines, with one region broadly conforming to Australian patterns and another diverging.

In seeking to explain our findings on incumbency, we employ two related explanatory variables. The first is structural, and is a function of institutional and historical development. The second is strategic, and is dependent upon the ability of governments to manipulate their political environments.

Although there are important differences between the Australian and Canadian political systems, it is something of a commonplace that these countries are good examples of most similar political systems (see Alexander & Galligan 1992). Notwithstanding one or two well-known qualifications, both are characterised by the early dominance of British-derived political institutions, including party systems which conform to what Sartori (1976) calls two party mechanics.² Both have economies largely dependent on primary resources. Australian and Canadian subnational governments bear the bulk of responsibility for the bread and butter aspects of public policies such as health, education, local transport, and land use. Both national governments have sought to become involved in these and other policy areas outside their jurisdiction in a variety of ways, principally by virtue of their spending power, and by extension of their constitutional powers.

The time-frame involved in our study, 1945–1990, is relatively short. While we recognise this shortcoming, we believe that the post-war era is analytically distinctive, primarily due to the enhanced role of governments in the economy and society of both countries. Moreover, we compensate for the compact time-frame with a relatively high number of cases.

National Patterns of Incumbency

Our first research question concerns national patterns of incumbency. Table 10.1 reveals only a small range of the numbers of regime changes in Australian states (between 3 and 6). Moreover, an examination of the

² Systems featuring two party mechanics adhere to the following criteria: (i) two parties have the potential to win an absolute majority of seats; (ii) one party does; (iii) this party undertakes to govern alone; (iv) alternation of government is a reasonable expectation (Sartori 1976, 188). Given the regularity with which the Liberal and National parties have been regular government coalition partners in the Australian states, we consider it appropriate to categorise the occurrence of such stable coalitions as akin to single governing parties.

proportion of years in which parties or stable coalitions held government shows that New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (combining the National Party and Liberal/National Coalition scores), Tasmania, and Victoria have all been ruled for about 75 percent of the period by one party. In South Australia and Western Australia, office was more evenly shared.

Table 10.1
Australian SNPS Incumbent Parties/Stable Coalitions
1945-1990

	Party/ Stable Coalition	Years		Changes in Regime	Elections won by Incumbent Party/ Stable Coalition	
		n	%			
NSW	ALP	31	69	3	13/16	81%
	Lib/Nat	14	31			
Qld	ALP	13	29	3	13/16	81%
	Lib/Nat	26	58			
	Nat	6	13			
SA	ALP	20	59	5	11/16	69%
	Lib	25	51			
Tas	ALP	34	76	4	10/14	71%
	ALP/Inds	1	2			
	Lib.	10	22			
Vic	ALP	13	29	5	11/16	69%
	Lib	32	71			
WA	ALP	18	40	6	9/15	60%
	Lib/Nat	27	60			
States				4.3	68/93	73%
Average						
C'with	ALP	14	31	4	14/18	78%
	Lib/Nat	31	69			

Source: Derived from C. Hughes & B. Graham 1968 and supplements.

Turning to Canada, table 10.2 reveals considerable diversity, with a range between 1 (Alberta) and 7 (Manitoba) regime changes. In the 46 year period Alberta, Newfoundland, and Ontario had 2 or less, and British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Saskatchewan 4 or more changes of regime. There was considerable variation in the share of years in office by parties. In two provinces (Manitoba and Quebec) no party held office for more than 42 percent of the period, whereas in Ontario the Progressive Conservative party held power for 89 percent of the post-war era.

Table 10.2
Canadian SNPS Incumbent Parties/Stable Coalitions
1945-1990

	Party/ Stable Coalition	Years		Changes in Regime	Elections won by Incumbent Party/ Stable Coalition	
		n	%			
Alta	Con Socred	19	42	1	11/12	92 %
		26	58			
BC	Lib/Con NDP Socred	7	15	4	10/14	71 %
		3	7			
		35	78			
Man	Con Lib Con/Lib NDP	17	38	7	7/12	50 %
		10	22			
		3	7			
		15	33			
NB	Con Lib	25	56	4	7/11	64 %
		20	44			
Nfld	Con Lib	17	40	2	11/13	85 %
		26	60			
NS	Con Lib	26	58	3	10/13	77 %
		19	42			
Ont	Con Lib NDP	40	89	2	12/14	86 %
		4	9			
		1	2			
PEI	Con Lib	14	31	3	10/13	77 %
		31	69			
Qc	Lib PQ UN	17	38	5	7/12	58 %
		9	20			
		19	42			
Sask	Con Lib NDP	8	18	4	7/11	64 %
		7	16			
		30	67			
Provincial Average				3.5	92/125	74 %
Federal	Con Lib	13	29	5	8/14	57 %
		32	71			

Source: Derived from R. Dyck, 1991.

Comparing the two sets of data, we find that on average there were fewer changes in government in the Canadian provinces (3.5) than in the Australian states (4.3) over the period. However, this could be explained by the lower mean number of elections in the Canadian provinces (12.2) than in the Australian states (15.5). If we examine the proportion of

elections won by incumbent parties in the two sets of SNPSs, we find almost identical proportions of elections won by incumbent parties, suggesting some common underlying mechanism giving incumbents three chances in four of re-election.³

Notwithstanding this similarity, tables 10.1 and 10.2 reveal a marked difference between the two countries. In broad terms, the Australian picture shows relative uniformity in the identity of parties competing for office across the states throughout the post-war period. There has been a consistent pattern of government by the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and a non-ALP alternative, often a stable Liberal/National Party coalition. In Canada, by contrast, there is diversity. One group of provinces — the Atlantic — has a pattern of two parties, Liberal and Conservative, being the main contestants for office. In the remaining provinces, government has been held by different combinations of Conservatives, Liberals, Social Credit (Socreds), New Democratic Party (NDP), and the two entirely distinctive Quebec parties: the Union Nationale (UN) and Parti Québécois (PQ).

What accounts for these national patterns of incumbency? Turning to our first explanatory variable, structural development, we note that the history of the two sets of SNPSs has differed markedly in four ways. First, the Canadian provinces were developed over two centuries. While parts of what are now Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces have witnessed non-indigenous settlement for over three hundred years, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan have only experienced non-indigenous settlement for little more than a century. By contrast, all the Australian states were settled within a period of 50 years, and won self-government within thirty-five years of each other.⁴

Secondly, in Canada there was a staggered federation of existing and emerging political communities. Only four provinces were included at Confederation in 1867, and the rest joined at five different dates over the next eighty years.⁵ Conversely, all the Australian states were founding members of the federation in 1901.

³ This contrasts with Rose and Mackie's (1983) findings for national elections in Anglo-American democracies, in which incumbents are successful in just over 60 percent of cases.

⁴ New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania had all won self-government by 1860, and Western Australia in 1890.

⁵ The last province admitted to federation was Newfoundland in 1949. Manitoba and British Columbia entered in 1870 and 1871 respectively; Prince Edward Island in 1873; Alberta and Saskatchewan (previously part of the North-West Territories) in 1905.

Thirdly, immigration patterns have created a more varied regional ethnic mix in Canada than in Australia. This variation is especially marked with respect to the greater variation in the proportion of British/Irish descendants across Canada.⁶

Finally, there is greater variation in the main economic activities among Canadian provinces than in Australian states. There is, therefore, a greater sense in Australia of a national economy than there is in Canada, where the notion of regional economies is more materially and politically apparent.

The diverse histories of settlement and development in the individual provinces have contributed to the different patterns of politics in the Canadian provinces. Following Hall (1986), we would thus expect different sets of formal rules, compliance procedures and standard operating procedures that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy. These institutional factors serve to condition fundamental cleavages within the provinces. We would expect fewer such differences in the case of the Australian states given their more homogeneous patterns of settlement and development.⁷ This contrast is strengthened when we turn to our second explanatory variable, the ability of governments to manipulate electoral cleavages to maintain incumbency.

There appear to be fundamental differences in the electoral cleavages of Australian and Canadian politics. In Canada few defining social cleavages exist within the SNPSs. Moreover, there is no nationally integrating electoral cleavage at work in Canada. The most obvious example of such a cleavage in other industrialised democracies is social class. However, despite numerous studies at the national level,⁸ and a few at the provincial level,⁹ none has revealed convincing evidence of a national class based cleavage in Canadian voting behaviour. Furthermore, the only party system (provincial or national) where the

⁶ Whereas in one group of provinces over 70 percent of residents are British/Irish (Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland); in a second group just over 50 percent fit this category (BC, Ontario, New Brunswick); in a third between 37 percent and 44 percent are British/Irish; and in Quebec under 8 percent fit this category. Conversely, the range of Australian residents who are of British/Irish/Australian ancestry is only between 64 percent (Victoria) and 82 percent (Tasmania).

⁷ Furthermore, settlement and development of Australian SNPSs took place at the advent of communication technology that could span what shortly became the nation.

⁸ e.g. Alford 1963; Lambert and Hunter 1979; Ornstein et al 1980; Clarke et al 1980; Elkins and Simeon 1980; Hunter 1982; and Gidengil 1989.

⁹ e.g. Wilson 1974; Jenson 1976.

NDP has predominated in Saskatchewan, a province whose workforce is disproportionately agricultural. Finally, Canadian politics has been characterised by a comparatively strong regional orientation on the part of voters. In the Australian case, by contrast, while some regionalism exists (see Holmes and Sharman 1977), the factor of class in voting behaviour is comparatively strong, founded on high levels of urbanisation and unionisation.¹⁰ Each sub-national system in Australia features a working class party which regularly forms government. Moreover, these parties are opposed by a party or stable coalition organised around the principle of opposition to the ALP. This results in both a powerful intrastate, as well as a nationally integrating, electoral cleavage.¹¹ The strategic task for Australian incumbents is thus easier than for their Canadian counterparts, given the stronger role of class in voter choice. Even if they lose power, this provides a basis for a credible campaign to regain office.

In sum, we have sought to explain the national differences in incumbency patterns with reference to both structural and strategic explanations. These national differences notwithstanding, it may be the case that our national aggregations of incumbency mask variation within the two systems. We now turn to an instance of non-national patterns of incumbency: the life cycles of predominant parties.

Party Predominance and Disappearance

Table 10.3 illustrates the fate of predominant parties. Such parties are significant because they have unusual success in maintaining incumbency. As mentioned, predominant parties are those which achieve three or more consecutive electoral majorities. Each of the sixteen SNPPs under study has featured predominant party government since 1945. This reinforces the finding that these systems are more susceptible to manipulation by incumbent governments than are national Anglo-American systems. However, as table 10.3 suggests, discrete differences emerge when the lifecycles of predominant parties are analysed.

¹⁰ Matthews (1991) reports that in Australia 58 percent of the workforce is unionised, compared to 31 percent in Canada.

¹¹ Relative fragmentation in Canadian voting behaviour is reflected in the electoral positions adopted by party elites. The uneasy relations between Canadian provincial and national parties, with the exception of the NDP, are well known (see Carty in this volume). This contrasts with Australia, where although differences emerge between the state and national party organisations (see Parkin and Marshall in this volume), they are more integrated than the Canadian cases.

Table 10.3
Fate of Predominant Parties 1945-1990

	PREDOM	PERSIST	Fate of Predominant Parties		
			STILL	CHALL	DIS
Non-Atlantic					
Alta	2		1		1
BC	1				1 ^a
Man	2	1			1
Ont	1				1
Qc	1				1 ^b
Sask	1	1			
Australian					
NSW	2	2			
Qld	2	1		1 ^c	
SA	2	2			
Tas	1	1			
Vic	1	1			
WA	1	1			
Atlantics					
NB	2	1			1
Nfld	2	1		1	
NS	2	1	1		
PEI	1	1			

Notes: a: The Socreds appear poised to meet the criterion for disappearance.

b: The Union Nationale persisted, then disappeared.

c: We treat the Liberals as a splinter party after 1983.

PREDOM = Numbers of predominant parties

PERSIST = Persisted: Remained strong enough to have another major victory after losing predominant status.

STILL = Still predominant

CHALL = Challenge: Remained strong enough to retain official opposition status after losing predominant status.

DIS = Disappear: Unable to maintain even official opposition status for two successive elections after losing predominant status.

Predominant party lifecycles fall into two clusters. Australia and the four Atlantic provinces are characterised by a remarkable degree of stability. Of sixteen predominant parties, only one has disappeared. By contrast, in the six non-Atlantic Canadian provinces, of eight predominant parties five have disappeared (assuming that Social Credit in

British Columbia is fatally wounded). In these cases it is even possible to equate incumbency with survival of predominant parties. Thus, the question emerges as to what explains this dichotomy among our sixteen SNPPs.

The conditions under which parties predominate and/or disappear is a topic of increasing interest in comparative politics. Rose and Mackie (1988) offer a typology indicating the circumstances under which parties persist or fail. First, parties may persist without significant organisational change. Secondly, they may persist by maintaining the same name, but undergo some significant change in composition or direction. Thirdly, parties may disappear, but leave a legacy reflected in the formation of a successor party. Finally, parties may disappear without a trace. Trajectories one and four are the most relevant for present purposes. It will be useful, therefore, to review briefly the conditions under which parties are most likely to persist or disappear. Three factors, which conform to our two general explanatory variables, seem to condition continued electoral success. Two are structural: the conjunction of system emergence and party formation, and the existence of a stable social foundation. The third is strategic and relates to the ability of incumbents to manipulate the political environment.

System Emergence and Party Formation

Lipset and Rokkan argue that parties present at the introduction of universal suffrage tend to persist, because universal suffrage enfranchises the final 'reservoirs of potential supporters'. With no territory left to conquer, bases of party support stabilise, and with them party systems. This stability is reinforced by the fact that in succeeding generations ~~most voters are socialised into a familiarity with the partisan status quo.~~

To most of the citizens of the West the currently active parties have been part of the political landscape since their childhood or at least since they were first faced with the choice between alternative 'packages' on election day (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, 50).

Extending this line of argument, Irvine and Gold (1980) argue that the family represents an important vehicle for political socialisation. Indeed, they maintain that in the absence of prevalent social cleavages, family transmission of partisanship becomes paramount.

Social Foundations

Another theory which seeks to explain party persistence points to the significance of stable social foundations, which provide a critical mass of voter loyalty upon which the party can count. Such social foundations

typically entail class, religion, ethnicity, and language. It should be noted, however, that should change diminish social foundations, affected parties will have to adapt to the new conditions, or become catch-all brokerage parties in order to survive (Rose and Mackie 1988). Indeed, Kirchheimer (1966) argues that the latter occurred in western Europe in the 1960s as increased affluence rendered class-based party systems increasingly irrelevant (Wolinetz 1979; Dalton et al. 1984).

Incumbency: A Double-Edged Sword?

Finally, Rose and Mackie (1988) explore the advantages of incumbency and electoral success in party persistence. They find, for example, that parties regularly in government are less likely to disappear than those not. Moreover, since 1948, incumbent parties have been victorious in 61 percent of Anglo-American national elections (Rose & Mackie 1983, 134).¹²

Incumbent parties enjoy certain advantages: they can manipulate the economy; in most systems they can time elections to coincide with propitious political climates; and they can attempt to manipulate the media by seeking to ensure that the disproportionate share of coverage naturally accruing to the government is turned to political advantage.

However, incumbency also brings liabilities: governments are not infallible and events may occur in the economy and society, for which incumbent parties will be blamed. Because the voters representing the margin of victory tend to be weakly committed to the government, government error or changing circumstances can lose the support of marginal voters. In such circumstances, the media can also work to the disadvantage of the government: when things are going badly, increased media attention rapidly becomes a liability.

There appear to be two dominant explanations of why parties which have held office disappear. First, disappearance may be a function of being associated with unpopular policies. This might be labelled the 'policy baggage thesis'. Second, parties may disappear due to a lack of internal cohesion.

The policy baggage thesis holds that parties unable to adapt to changing political environments are threatened with electoral failure. Old parties are less adaptable to changing conditions than are newer ones. They tend to be bound, for example, to traditional interests. Moreover, policies adopted while in government tend to restrict a party's flexibility. Incumbent parties, especially brokerage ones, must be adept at

¹² These democracies are Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

calculating when changes in direction will alienate traditional supporters, and when maintaining the status quo will marginalise the party. Those not skilful in this electoral calculus risk disappearance.

Of course, even parties with acute electoral foresight are not guaranteed success. Often intraparty dynamics are responsible for the fate of parties. All parties face internal tension between traditionalists and revisionists. The former correspond to what Kitschelt (1989) calls ideologues — that is, those committed to the core values of the party — while the latter correspond to what he calls pragmatists — those whose commitment to values is tempered by the desire for office. These problems are less evident in brokerage parties. Here the traditionalists are not so much wedded to ideology as to policies or internal factions.

Party cohesion is tested by watershed issues, such as major policy decisions or changes in direction, and potentially disruptive events such as leadership changes. Rose and Mackie argue that when tested, parties must resolve the trade-off between internal and external pressures.

The big trade-off model emphasizes that competition takes place *within* parties as well as between them. Within a party, there is competition between those who put internal goals first, and those who give first priority to electoral and governmental pressures. The art of party leadership is to balance conflicting pressures in order to maintain a party intact and have it reasonably successful in electoral competition (Rose & Mackie 1988, 556–7; emphasis in original).

According to this perspective, the skill of the party leaders in resolving this trade-off determines the likelihood of party survival or disappearance.

Predominant Party Lifecycles in the SNPSs

As noted, the above discussion of the literature can be reduced to conform to our two general explanatory variables. We now utilise these to explain the predominant party persistence in one group of SNPSs, and disappearance in the other.

The Non-Atlantic Provinces

While some provinces feature parties whose ties to the electorate are based on social foundations (the PQ in Quebec, and, to some extent, the NDP in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario), for the most part, as noted, undifferentiated populations have provided no natural cleavages in party systems. Moreover, this has been reinforced by the lack of a nationally integrating cleavage. To a large extent, then, in these provinces parties do not have the luxury of counting on a permanent constituency for support, and must operate as brokerage parties.

The volatility of predominant party lifecycles in the non-Atlantic Canadian provinces may be largely a function of the absence of a class cleavage within the electorates. This has been accounted for in numerous ways. The neo-Marxist interpretation is that the traditional dominant electoral cleavages — language, and (especially) region — have been exploited by political elites to mask the underlying class cleavage (Brodie & Jenson 1980). Less conspiratorially, Ornstein et al. (1980; compare Elkins & Simeon 1980) find a regional fragmentation of class cleavage in which the fundamental components of Canadian political culture — ideology, feelings of political efficacy, levels of participation — are conditioned by social class. However, this meta-cleavage is obscured by a superficial regional cleavage which conditions perceptions about political parties and institutions.

Cairns' (1977) inquiry into Canadian federalism is more readily reconcilable with empirical evidence than class-based accounts are. Arguing from a statist perspective, Cairns suggests that regionalism is not so much a cause as an effect of federalism. Like neo-Marxist scholars, he argues that there is no sociological basis for regionalism in Canada. However, this does not mean that the emergence of an underlying class cleavage is inevitable. Instead, regionalism is reinforced by a federal system that serves the interests of actors within the provinces. To this end, provincial governments go to great lengths to couch issues in 'us-them' terms. Provincialism is reinforced, moreover, by the party system and the structure of interest groups.

A federalism created and maintained by elites has resulted in most policies being translated into regional terms. Thus, the reason for the existence of provincial governments has been seen to be to articulate regional grievances, which perpetuates both the importance of provincial governments, and the primacy of regionalism.¹³ As Cairns notes:

Clearly, the political language of federalism, and the federal political system with which it is intertwined, have encouraged a politics in which provincial particularisms have been accorded special prominence. Provincial governments as the claimants for, and recipients of federal bounty, have acted as surrogates for the communities they govern (1977, 718).

Given the importance of regionalism, the question here becomes: what is its impact on predominant party lifecycles? One of the principal

¹³ This is reinforced by the fact that the provincial governments do not have the revenue-generating capacities to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities. As such, 'cooperative federalism', featuring federal spending in areas of provincial responsibility, has served to cement the interactive process between the two levels of government.

implications of politics based on regionalism is the lack of any obvious socially-based attachment to parties. Parties compete to demonstrate competence in articulating provincial interests nationally. For incumbents, tenure becomes less a function of exploiting party identification, and more of defending provincial interests at the national level. Indeed, in these provinces only one of the three proposed conditions facilitating persistence is present — electoral success. It may, therefore, be hypothesised that in the absence of a dominant electoral cleavage, voters in the non-Atlantic provinces tend to support incumbents until some event — poor policy decisions, internal dissonance for example — renders the party unattractive. At this point, the party either regroups, or, more likely, ceases to be a force within the party system, disappears, and is replaced by another party.

Australian States and the Atlantic Provinces

In contrast to the propensity for predominant parties to disappear upon losing incumbency in the Canadian non-Atlantic provinces, the ten Australian and the Canadian Atlantic cases feature persistent predominant parties which lose incumbency, but tend not to disappear. We posit two structural factors to explain this, one unique to the Australian cases, and the other which applies to all ten SNPSs.

The first explanation concerns the salience of social class as a predictor of voting behaviour in Australian politics (Alford 1963; Albinski 1973). There has been some revision of views concerning the significance of class in recent Australian voting behaviour (Kemp 1978), and it appears that parental voting choice and party identification are now pre-eminent explanations of electoral behaviour (Kelley & McAllister 1984; Aitkin 1977). However, logically these do not constitute a break from the earlier patterns of class-based voter cleavages, but adaptations from them. Furthermore, Kelley and McAllister argue that two dimensions of class remain good predictors of voter choice: class self-image, and the objective criterion of being a blue (or white) collar worker. This class based cleavage provides a stable social foundation for parties in Australian SNPSs, and contributes to stability within the party system.

A second explanatory factor for stability in the Australian and Atlantic SNPSs relates to the relationship between democratic system emergence and party formation. As Lipset and Rokkan suggest, parties active when mass suffrage¹⁴ emerges benefit from what might be called

¹⁴ Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) study refers to universal suffrage but it emerges from their analysis that mass politics is actually the crucial variable. We therefore refer to mass suffrage.

a frozen electoral cleavage. This results in a high degree of party identification, and a high propensity to vote according to parental socialisation (Irvine and Gold 1980). Obviously, where this cleavage is reinforced by others (such as class in Australia) the impact on party stability will be even greater. In Australia, for example, party formation took place before federation. In addition, the emergence of a national political system and mass suffrage around that time meant that, even though neither the ALP nor the Liberal Party had national organisations, 'each had forged a national identity for itself and regarded itself as the opponent of the other party on national questions' (Loveday 1977, 453). Thus, national and state politics reinforce each other to the benefit of incumbent parties.

Conversely, in systems where party identification is weaker, other cues for voter choice emerge. This, we argue, occurred in the six non-Atlantic Canadian provinces. Indeed, as outlined above, the regional orientation of voters in these provinces has fostered the emergence of brokerage parties.

Of course, such a hypothesis begs the question of why regionalism has not undermined traditional party identification in the Atlantic provinces. We offer two suggestions. First, the region's lack of a potential for economic autonomy, which has heightened dependence upon the national government, has militated against party mobilisation on regional grounds (Young et al. 1984; Smith 1988). Secondly, the low levels of immigration to Atlantic Canada in this century have preserved traditional political orientations. By contrast, all the non-Atlantic provinces have been characterised by the converse — potential for regional economic autonomy and higher levels of immigration.

Conclusion

This chapter explores a relatively neglected aspect of comparative politics and comparative federalism, that of subnational incumbency. Notwithstanding the common success rates of incumbents in the two national sets of SNPSs, when turning to the identity of incumbents, we find uniformity across and stability within Australia's states compared with Canada's provinces. At a general level we argue that structurally, the greater nationalising effects of Australian institutional, demographic and economic development make for uniformity of incumbents across states. The character of incumbency in Australian states is brought into sharper relief when we look at the lifecycles of predominant parties. Class, and its legacies of parental socialisation, provide relatively stable party identification in Australian politics. This yields relative consistency and predictability in the strategic tasks facing state governments when compared with the Canadian provinces.

It should be noted, however, that the Atlantic provinces share with Australia the fact that the identity of parties competing for and winning office has remained stable. They also share one of the structural factors underpinning this: the conjunction of mass suffrage and party formation. The strategic task of incumbents is shaped principally by the social stability and traditionalism of the electorates, and the inability to attract support through aggressive regionalism. This factor explains the relative lack (compared with the other Canadian provinces) of opportunity for third parties to overshadow predominant parties.

In contrast, the non-Atlantic Canadian provinces are characterised by the disappearance of once predominant parties, and unstable patterns of incumbent identities. We explain this by reference to the absence of two structural factors whose presence in the other SNPSs contributes to the predominant parties' persistence: the conjunction of party and political system formation, and a stable social structure. As a result, incumbents in these SNPSs must rely primarily on strategic factors — the ability to use office to manipulate the political environment. This ability, however, tends to be eroded over time, as past policies and/or internal party conflicts render the party unattractive to critical segments of the electorate.

Although our purpose has been explanation, not prediction, our conclusions would lead us to expect the cross national, and the Canadian cross regional, patterns to persist. We would expect relative stability in the identity of incumbents in the non-Atlantic provinces only if an abiding social cleavage emerged on which majority support could be based, or there was a fundamental change in national politics to mitigate the provincial effects of regionalism. In Australia, we would only expect new incumbents and the disappearance of predominant parties in the event of a breakdown of the salience of class and its surrogates in electoral behaviour. There is more chance of change in the Atlantic provinces, but this would still require one of the following: an influx of new citizens; a sea-change of the political orientations of the existing citizenry; the ability of an emergent party to exploit regionalism. Failing these, we see no reason to expect change in the contrasting mosaics of sub-national incumbency in the Australian and Canadian federal systems.¹⁵

¹⁵ It remains to be seen whether the recent disappearance of the New Brunswick Conservatives can be explained by these factors; or whether the party will make an electoral recovery. Significantly, the main electoral platform of the Confederation of Regions (the party threatening to eclipse the Conservatives), was the abandonment of official bilingualism — a policy imposed by the national government.

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