THE RISE AND FALL OF REGIONAL PARTIES:
THE REFORM PARTY OF CANADA, THE NORTHERN LEAGUE OF ITALY,
AND THE WESTERN CANADA CONCEPT PARTY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
2000

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DEDICATION

To My Parents

For everything
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing a dissertation is truly not an individual feat but rather a journey that can only be completed with the help of others along the way. First, I would like to thank my committee—Dr. Mughan, Dr. Richardson, and Dr. Liddle—for their helpful suggestions and guidance at crucial points in the dissertation process. Dr. Mughan’s assistance was particularly crucial. He challenged me to strive for excellence and supported my efforts when I experienced frustration. A very special thanks goes to my ghost committee member, Dr. Wilson, my undergraduate advisor, who has acted as my mentor throughout my graduate school experience.

The support of my family and friends has been central to the completion of my dissertation. Without my husband’s cheerleading, patience, and personal sacrifice this research would have never been completed. Beyond general support, Kermit copied microfilm at the Library of Congress and read dozens of drafts of the document. Kermit and Trenton are my inspiration. My parents (Dan and Pam Grabarkiewicz), siblings (Laura and Jeff), grandparents, and in-laws were also very supportive of my efforts. My parents in particular spent many hours listening to my frustrations and amusing my son so I could work just one more weekend on the document.
Finally, I would like to thank the Reform Party Members of Parliament and the
members of the WCC that agreed to be interviewed and the library staff of the
Government of Alberta's library. All of the above provided me with important
information and without their cooperation the final product would have been deficient.
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INTRODUCTION

Political parties are fundamental to a healthy democracy since they provide the crucial link between the citizens and the government, a link without which representative democracy as we know it would cease to exist (Lawson 1988, 37). Even so, we know little about the basic questions surrounding political parties, such as why do regional parties form? Most theories of regional party formation argue that such parties emerge primarily because of the existence of latent social divisions based on shared ethnic attributes such as ancestry, language, race, religion, cultural similarity or other cultural characteristics. Therefore, the formation of the Reform Party (RP) of Canada, the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) and the Lega Nord (LN) of Italy is notable for having occurred in regions that lack a distinct ethnic heritage. Does this suggest that

1 “The terms ‘emergence’ and ‘party formation’ include institutionalization, organizational consolidation, and political relevance” (Kalyvas 1996, 114). Political relevance in this study is defined as parties that can theoretically hold blackmail or coalition potential in the legislature (Sartori [1976] 1990, 321). Similar to Kalyvas’ The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe, I am not trying to explain the rise of stillborn or politically irrelevant parties (Kalyvas 1996, 114).

regional parties can form anywhere? Most, if not all, countries exhibit regional differences, yet regional parties do not exist in every country and have not always existed where they do now. It seems then that the regionalization of social divisions alone will not result in regional party formation.

The rise of the Reform Party and the Lega Nord deserves our attention because they are partly responsible for profound changes in their country’s party system and government. In Canada and Italy, electoral earthquakes recently occurred, resulting in huge losses for the governing party. Between the 1992 and 1994 Italian national elections, the Christian Democrats (now the Italian Popular Party) went from 206 to 29 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Before the 1993 Canadian national election, the Progressive Conservative Party had 170 seats in the House of Commons; afterwards they had just 2. In both cases, the new regional parties gained a significant number of seats. The Reform Party increased its representation from 1 to 52 out of 295 seats in Canada’s House of Commons in the 1993 national election, while the Lega Nord increased its presence from 55 to 118 out of 630 seats in Italy’s Chamber of Deputies in the 1994 election. These results are significant because of the consequences for the political system as a whole as both parties advocate introducing legislation that will fundamentally change the distribution of power in the state.

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3 I realize that the Lega Nord is not solely responsible for the DC’s losses in 1994. This should be also credited to other parties such as the Forza Italia and the corruption scandal. Still, many scholars have argued that the LN was important as the first new force in post-war Italian politics which helped precipitate the end of the Christian Democratic Party’s dominance (Gallagher 1994, 457).
This study makes two contributions to the comparative study of political parties. First, it challenges traditional conceptualizations of what constitutes a regional party. Most analyses of regional parties have dwelt upon the cultural, ethnic, or national aspects of this phenomenon. Regional parties with and without ethnic bases of support are assumed to be fundamentally different and analytically distinct. Scholars such as Connor (1994); Gourevitch (1979); and Esman (1975), exemplify this position, arguing that nationalism invokes loyalty and emotions that regionalism cannot. Hence, it is reasoned that regionalism representing economic grievances alone cannot form the basis of a viable regional party. For example, “while economic conditions in northern England have been as bleak as those in neighboring Scotland, they have not resulted in the organization or expression of politically significant grievances” (Esman 1975, 377).

This dissertation contends that this dichotomy, separating regional groups based on economic as opposed to ethnic interests, is actually not so clear. Instead, I posit that the difference between these two types of regional parties is one of degree rather than kind. In fact, both types of parties mobilize voters based on economic, political, and cultural grievances; the difference between parties is primarily the degree to which they emphasize each type of grievance and perhaps how they frame the cultural grievances. In

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both cases, these grievances form the basis of regional identities. The subsequent result is that the region, like the nation, becomes a potential "imagined community".\footnote{Imagined community is a reference to Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities* where he argues that a "nation is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991, 6).}

Secondly, this study moves beyond single factor, macro-sociological explanations of regional party formation by shifting attention to the political processes involved. The focus of this dissertation is on how social cleavages are translated into regional parties.\footnote{Cleavage refers to the "conflicts and controversies that arise out of a great variety of relationships in the social structure..." (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 32). Bartolini and Mair 1990 suggest a more precise and complex definition of cleavage. They argue that "...the concept of cleavage can be seen to incorporate three levels: an empirical element, which identifies the empirical referent of the concept, and which we can define in social-structural terms; a normative element, that is the set of values and beliefs which provides a sense of identity and role to the empirical element, and which reflect the self-consciousness of the social group(s) involved; and an organisational behavioural element, that is the set of individual interactions, institutions, and organisations, such as political parties, which develop as part of the cleavage" (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 215). See Bartolini and Mair (1990, 213-220) for more details.} I propose that regional parties form in states: a) when regional grievances exist, b) when established parties fail to address the region's concerns, c) when political alignments lack stability, and d) when an entrepreneur skillfully mobilizes popular support. This model can explain failure as well as success. Conversely, it seems that the WCC failed to become a significant player in Canadian politics because these factors either did not exist or unfolded differently in comparison to the other cases. By including both socio-economic and political factors, this research advances the broader debate about the role of structure and choice in explaining the fate of political parties.
What is a Regional Party?

One of the striking features of the literature on regional parties is the disagreement within the academic community about what to call and how to define a regional party. A variety of different terms are used for these parties, including ethnonational party (Connor 1994), subnational party (Feld 1975), regional autonomy parties (Newell 1994), ethnoregional parties (Newman 1994), and ethnoterritorial parties (Rudolph and Thompson 1985). A predominate theme in the label given to regional parties is reference to nationalism or ethnicity. In effect, the term regional party is used as a synonym for nationalist party where nationalist parties exist within territorially defined units of multinational states. This practice has not been problematic until recently when regional parties emerged without an ethnic base of support.

One of the reasons why there is so much disagreement about defining regional parties is that the basis of much of this research, Lipset and Rokkan’s seminal work on cleavage theory (1967), is not entirely clear on the subject. They argued that regional parties result because of conflict during the nation building process between the national center and the territories (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 9). Initially, this classic work indicates that the center-periphery conflict is unrelated to ethnic identity, commenting that an example might be “Robert E Lee’s ‘am I a Virginian or an American?’” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 9). This statement implies that regional identity is important and not just ethnic identity. However, the rest of this work and the use of it by others revolve around the notion that regional parties emerge as a result of “conflict between the central national
building culture and the ethnically, linguistically or religiously distinct subject populations" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 14). Hence, almost all scholarship on regional parties has focused on ethnic or cultural identity politics.

Some scholars (Connor 1994; Esman 1975; Gourevitch 1979; Rogowski 1985) have attempted to address this issue, acknowledging that regional mobilization can have either an ethnic or economic base. However, an underlying assumption of this work is that these are mutually exclusive categories. The groups organize on the basis of either nationalist (ethnic) or regionalist (economic) politics. Thus, we should not use the same theoretical constructs to compare the phenomena because they have different causes and consequences. Two assumptions appear to underlie this position. First, regional movements with an economic base of support are not likely to be as popular or as successful as those with an ethnic foundation. “Where there is no sense of ethnic distinctiveness, purely economic grievances are unlikely to give rise to separatist movements: note the contrast between Scotland and the English North … Regional appeals without the ethnic dimension are correspondingly always weaker” (Gourevitch 1979, 320-21). The second assumption is that regionalism does not result in the same intensity of conflict as nationalism. Connor (1994, 108-110) argues that nationalism invokes loyalty and emotions that regionalism cannot. “Economic considerations may be

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7 On a related note, Mughan (1978) argues that nationalist movements can be described as primarily cultural or economic in their emphasis. However, similar to the other authors above, Mughan’s research focuses only on movements with an ethnic base.
an irritant that reinforces ethnic consciousness... but economic factors are likely to come in a poor second when competing with the emotionalism of ethnic nationalism” (Connor 1994, 108-110). The problem with this approach is that the authors never give empirical evidence to substantiate their position. Certainly, the case of the U.S. Civil War, in which the South—a region that lacked a distinct language, religion, or ethnic heritage—seceded from the “Union”, makes this argument questionable. Part of the problem with the above position is that the scholars never stop to contemplate the fundamental nature of nationalism and regionalism. To avoid this common shortcoming, this study reflects on this important issue.

Nationalism

In a nutshell, the problem is: what is nationalism? The answer to this question is highly contested. At the same time, the competing views of nationalism can be boiled down to whether or not national identity involves a voluntary or involuntary commitment to a group. Scholars of nationalism frame this debate in many different ways—the debate between the primordialist and instrumentalist (Smith 1994, 376), or ethnic and civic nationalism (Greenfeld 1992, 11; Keating 1991, 3). Hereafter, I will refer to it as the debate between the primordialist and instrumentalist.

The primordial approach argues that ethnic identity is involuntary, something acquired at birth automatically. It posits that an ethnic group shares attributes such as

8 For more references to this debate see Keating, Michael. 1996. Nations Against the State. New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc. 3-8.
can occur in a variety of combinations, there appears to be an objective basis to the attributes (Niellson 1985, 27). A politically mobilized ethnic group is then a nation (Niellson 1985, 27). Primordialists, or those supporting ethnic nationalism, believe that “one can neither acquire [nationality] if one does not have it, nor change it if one does; it has nothing to do with individual will, but constitutes a genetic characteristic” (Greenfeld 1992, 11). This approach suggests that belonging to a nation is an inherent attribute of humanity (Gellner 1983, 6).

The instrumentalist camp, on the other hand, considers ethnic identity manipulable and malleable to some degree and is activated primarily for political mobilization (Smith 1991, 25). Adherents of this approach believe that ethnicity is related to cultural characteristics, not biological ones. For these scholars, a nation is an “imagined political community” (Anderson 1991, 6). “The essence of a nation is intangible. This essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way” (Connor 1994, 92). Therefore, “nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones” (Gellner 1983, 1). Though the primordial and

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9 There are many definitions of nation, too numerous to list them all here. However, I will provide a few to familiarize the reader with some common themes. “Nation connotes a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related. Nationalism connotes identification with and loyalty to one’s nation as just defined” (Connor 1994, xi). Connor also uses the term ethnonationalism, which is a synonym for nationalism. Connor, Walker. 1994. Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Also see Kellas, James. 1991. The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity. New York: St. Martin’s Press. Kellas defines a nation as “a group who feel themselves to be a community bound together by ties of history, culture and common ancestry. Nations have ‘objective’ characteristics…and ‘subjective’ characteristics, essentially a people’s awareness of its nationality and affection for it” (Kellas 1991, 3).
instrumental approaches maintain fundamental differences about how individuals acquire their national identity, both assume that the "imagined community" upon which the nation is built involves a group that shares various cultural characteristics such as customs, language, ethnicity, history, and religion (Hobsbawm 1992, 63-67; Smith 1994, 377).

**Regionalism**

There is the tendency among scholars studying regional parties to neglect to take the time to identify what constitutes a region.\(^{10}\) Usually, it is assumed that a region coincides with political boundaries drawn by the state, but this is not always the case. In some cases, the region's borders do not coincide with the political boundaries of provinces or communes and may even overlap state borders.\(^{11}\) "Regions are social, cultural, and economic entities rather than simply political ones" (Matthews 1983, 14). All states have regions "characterized by particularistic historical, cultural, ethnic, religious, economic or political traits and identities that distinguish them from the surrounding environment" (Feld 1975, 1176). In order for a region to have political relevance, there must be a subjective perception that differences are present (Hueglin 1986, 439). The subjective feelings are based on "a sense of 'identification or consciousness of kind' that the inhabitants of a particular regional area feel for that region and/or for their fellow

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\(^{10}\) For example, see Connor (1994) and Keating (1991).

\(^{11}\) For example, the Alpine region spans five countries and the Basque and Tyrol region crosses two states.
inhabitants of the region” (Matthews 1983, 17). This differs from nationalism in that it is possible for people with different ethnic backgrounds to hold a common regional identity.

Regional parties are often discussed in conjunction with another concept, regionalism. Regionalism entails politicization of regional differences. It involves recognition of the region's special interests and concerns and involves conscious decisions to further those interests within the political sphere (Schwartz 1967, 309-310). Regionalism can manifest itself as an ideology, social movement, political party, or as a basis for regional planning (Matthews 1983, 17). This definition of regionalism does not assume anything about the ethnic makeup of the state.

Underlying all regionalist sentiment is a dispute about the geographic distribution of political power within a state's borders. Regionalism takes the form of a challenge to this distribution. The challenge is often presented as a grievance against a past injustice, which may be grounded in the political, economic, or sociocultural differences of the region, or is most likely a combination of these (Hueglin 1986, 439). This leads the group to perceive “themselves as oppressed, discriminated against, or dominated by the central government…” (Ronen 1979, 50). The oppression by the government or others can be real or imagined (Ronen 1979, 95). Regionalism can even result in pressure for secession (e.g. the Lega Nord). “Strong secondary factors such as discrimination, exploitation or neglect can by themselves (often along with weak and transparently fictional primordial claims) encourage the demand for autonomy” by regional groups (Ray and Premdas 1990, 196).
Are nationalism and regionalism comparable? The answer is yes. Parties based on these phenomena are very similar for the following reasons. First, the basis for political action in both cases is the group’s shared sense of grievance based on objective and/or subjective characteristics that differentiate them from other groups in the state. These grievances are the basis of a subjective identity, which may be to either a region or an ethnic group, both of which are potential “imagined communities”. The primary difference then between regional and national identities is that people with different ethnic backgrounds can hold the same regional identity. Both types of identities are partly or wholly created and shaped by the politicization of a group’s shared sense of difference. Regional party leaders, then, attempt to link in voters’ minds a connection between the group and specific common experiences that have resulted in grievances. Finally, the solution for both groups is either more resources or a redistribution of decision-making power within the state by undertaking devolution, federalism, confederalism, or more general reforms. Ultimately, these groups may even ask for outright independence.

Redefining Regional Parties

Based on the above discussion, it seems to me that scholars who imply that regional mobilization with ethnic versus economic bases of support are not comparable are over simplifying reality. Regional parties do not mobilize people based on exclusively

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12 This is strongly implied by Gourevitch (1979) and Rogowski (1985), both of whom initially consider western Canada in their research and then dismiss it for lacking ethnic nationalism.
ethnic or economic interests. Support for this position can be found in Bartolini and Mair's work which argues that, "the imputed opposition between 'value' cleavages, on the one hand, and 'economic' cleavages, on the other, obscures more than it reveals; it seems self-evident that value difference and conflict is dramatically present in all cleavages, since none is either wholly 'economic' or 'demographic'" (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 214). The difference is one of emphasis rather than kind. Indeed, regional parties with primarily an ethnic base of support also appeal to political and economic grievances. Likewise, regional parties with a predominantly economic focus can appeal to the group based on political and cultural grievances. In this case, cultural grievances are not ethnically specific, but are based on a group's shared experiences and customs, which themselves are linked to a specific territory that may or may not overlap with other more common cultural markers such as language or religion. This makes it possible for people with different ethnic backgrounds to identify with a specific regional culture.

There certainly can be a difference in the substance of the cultural grievances used by regional parties with and without an ethnic base of support. For example, Plaid Cymru initially "laid most emphasis on the preservation of the Welsh language" (Berrington 1985, 187). In the Reform Party's case, language issues have played a minor role in its message in comparison to western alienation. However, even this difference may not always be as clear-cut as one would expect. For example, in its rhetoric, the Bloc Québécois appealed to its constituents based on an individual being a Québécois (living in the province of Quebec), not necessarily a French Québécois. At any rate, to differing degrees, all
regional parties appeal to an individual's sense of economic, political, and/or cultural grievance.

At this point, it is appropriate to clarify the term regional party. The definition proposed argues that a regional party must satisfy the following criteria: 1) it must advocate policies of particular benefit to the region that it claims to represent; for example, the appropriation of additional resources, devolution of power, or substantial structural changes for the state; 2) it must link grievances to a population that resides in a contiguous area; and 3) it must concentrate its support in a territorially delineated region that does not encompass the entire state. It may still be useful to point out that regional parties emphasize economic or ethnic grievances to different degrees in their appeals, but these should not be considered entirely different types of parties. Both have regional bases of support; they just have a different emphasis in their appeals.

**Existing Explanations of Party Formation**

Party formation is not a popular topic in today's party literature. Instead, scholars seem to be preoccupied with considering whether or not the importance of political parties is declining as parties are seen more and more to be inadequate instruments of representation (Mair 1984, 171). At the center of this debate is the attachment between voters and parties and whether or not there has been a fundamental change in that relationship. Scholars have pointed to several indicators of party decline such as falling membership levels (Mair 1984, Katz 1990), increasing volatility levels (Mair 1993, Bartolini and Mair 1990), the weakening of cleavage politics (Franklin et al. 1992, Crewe
and Denver 1985), and decreasing levels of party identification (Huber 1989). This debate continues as some scholars (such as Merkl 1988 and Dalton 1984) argue that a qualitative change in the function and importance of parties has taken place, while others (such as Mair 1993 and Rose and Urwin 1970) insist that stability and continuity explains the situation better.

The debate about the decline of political parties often neglects to consider this simple solution: new parties may be the driving force behind changes in established parties’ electoral fortunes (Dalton 1984, 219). Over the past twenty five years, several new parties have formed such as: the National Front in France, the Green Party in Germany, the Northern League in Italy, and the Reform Party in Canada. Perhaps a more accurate depiction of the parties’ fortunes is that the political party as an institution is not in decline; it is just that new ones have taken the place of older ones. This conclusion suggests the need to take another look at the literature about party formation.

“A political party is a coalition of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by legal means” (Downs 1957, 24). Scholars posit that parties form under a variety of circumstances. The most popular explanations are the extension of suffrage (Duverger 1954), crisis driven theories (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966), socio-structural explanations focusing on cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), a quasi-colonial economy coupled with a homogenous population (Macpherson 1953), structural strain and one-party dominance (Pinard 1971), major party failure (Rosenstone et al. 1984), the
emergence of cross cutting issues (Sundquist, 1973), and the strategic actions of rational actors (Aldrich 1995 and Kalyvas 1996).

Modern political parties did not arise until the mid nineteenth century in Europe. Earlier parties existed, but they lacked an external organization that conducted campaigns, mobilized voters, and worked in the constituencies. Maurice Duverger’s (1954) contribution to the understanding of modern political parties focuses on the distinction between externally and internally created political parties. Internally created parties, often called cadre parties, evolved and expanded into the public sphere as sitting parliamentarians reacted to the expanding electorate and sought to mobilize and acquire the support of new voters.\textsuperscript{13} Examples of cadre parties include the Conservative and Liberal Parties of Great Britain and the Democratic and Republican Parties of the United States.

“The externally created parties are those that emerge outside the legislature and invariably involve some challenge to the ruling group and a demand for representation” (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966, 10). They emerge with the extension of suffrage. As new groups become enfranchised and realize that the traditional parties do not represent their concerns adequately, self-interest drives them to create new parties. Externally created parties can apparently emanate from various groups demanding representation, including workers, Catholics, intellectuals, businesses, clandestines, and extreme and rural

\textsuperscript{13} Duverger never directly addresses why caucus parties first formed. I assume it has to do with the natural duality of tendencies that he identifies.
groups (Duverger 1954, xxx-xxxiv). According to Duverger, the majority of parties today are created externally; internal creation is the exception, not the rule (Duverger 1954, xxxvi).

Duverger’s explanation that the extension of the suffrage caused modern parties to form appears logical, but closer inspection reveals clear shortcomings. First, the extension of the suffrage is not a sufficient condition for new party formation. Existing parties could and sometimes did incorporate the demands of the new electorate into their manifestos. For example, in Britain, the Labour Party was slow to develop because of the alliance between the Liberals and workers (Luebbert 1991, 16). Another weakness of Duverger’s approach is that the extension of suffrage in western democratic societies is now rare, yet new parties continue to form. Parties, then, can form under circumstances other than the initial formation of legislative institutions, elections, and the extension of voting rights. A more comprehensive theory of party formation is needed.

One attempt is contained within Political Parties and Political Development (1966). In this work, Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner argue that parties form as a reaction to historical crises

“which may be precipitated by a wide variety of parametric changes, sometimes occurring simultaneously: wars, inflation, depression, mass population movements, a demographic explosion; or less dramatic changes in the educational system, occupational patterns, agricultural or industrial development, or the development of a mass media” (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966, 14).

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14 A general exception is the lowering of the voting age. A more unusual exception to this is the Swiss women obtaining the right to vote at the federal level in the 1970s.
15 Several new parties exist, here is a list of a very few: the Greens across Europe, the Front National in France, and the Parti Québécois.
Such changes lead governments to experience one of the following: a crisis of legitimacy, of participation, or of integration (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966, 14). Citizens believing the government lacks one or a combination of these characteristics form a new party to challenge the existing regime, or more modestly, the distribution of power within an accepted constitutional framework. For a party to emerge, this historical crisis must occur in a country that has already achieved a measure of modernization, since politicians are then forced to seek public support (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966, 19).

Although political crisis may contribute to regional party formation, in some circumstances, this explanation suffers for two reasons. First, a political crisis cannot directly predict the emergence of a new party. All that a political crisis may contribute is a favorable environment for the formation of a new party. Countries certainly experience varying degrees of crisis without the appearance of new parties. For example, the kidnapping and assassination of the leader of Italy’s Christian Democratic Party, Aldo Moro, in 1978 was a crisis of sorts, but it did not result in the formation of a new party. Secondly, the argument that a political crisis explains the emergence of new parties suffers for being unfalsifiable. Who decides whether or not a country is experiencing a crisis? Although crisis may be a precipitating factor in party formation, it certainly is not the only one.

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16 Other scholars such as Raymond Grew have argued that crisis may involve problems governments face in the following areas: identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, and distribution (Grew 1978, 11).
Another popular explanation for party formation is that of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Their theory holds that political parties are the outgrowth of social cleavages generated by the National and Industrial Revolutions (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 34). Four lines of cleavage are identified: the conflict between the central nation-building culture and the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct peripheries, the conflict between the nation-state and church, the conflict between landed interests and industrial entrepreneurs, and the conflict between owners and workers (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 34). Differences in party systems across countries are said to be due to “differences in national histories of conflict and compromise...” that occurred before the final extension of suffrage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 35). The recent appearance of regional parties indicates the reemergence of the center-periphery cleavage—a remnant of the intractable heritage of territorial-cultural conflict between the nation-building culture and the provinces and peripheries (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 33). This approach attributes the emergence of regional parties to a less than perfect incorporation of regional interests in national party systems and dominant cleavage patterns (Urwin 1985, 156).\(^{17}\)

While Lipset and Rokkan’s theory is useful for identifying potential cleavages within countries, it fails to go that important step further and clarify the conditions under which cleavage divisions are expressed in the party system. All it can say is that if the conflict exists the *potential* is present for party formation. As Sartori ([1968] 1990) notes,

\(^{17}\) Bartolini and Mair (1990) have a different perspective. They reason that the “specific cleavages of an ethno-linguistic nature only develop in response to the modern nation-builders’ attempts to effect cultural and linguistic standardisation, and when the opportunities to express dissent and to organise opposition become available” (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 217).
“the problem is that some cleavages are not translated at all. Whether cleavages are
deviated and domesticated, or instead intensified and exasperated, precisely by translation
handling” involves politics (Sartori [1968] 1990, 174-176). Bartolini and Mair address
this issue by noting that a cleavage is concerned not only with elements of the social
structure but also with the politicization, electoral mobilization, and democratization
process (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 216). It remains the case, though, that even this
improvement is too vague. It does not elucidate how politicization, mobilization, and
democratization result in party formation.

Rosenstone et al. (1984), and Sundquist (1973), scholars of American politics,
center their explanation of party formation on the actions of the established parties.
Rosenstone et al. (1984) argue that third parties (new parties) arise when the major parties
fail to represent citizens’ political demands, mismanage the economy, or nominate
unqualified candidates (Rosenstone et al. 1984, 181). In the United States, a third party’s
electoral performance in presidential elections is enhanced if an attractive, already
nationally known politician heads the party’s ticket (Rosenstone et al. 1984, 12, 126).
The life of a third party can be expected to be quite short, however, since the established
parties will co-opt third party voters thorough a variety of methods, including campaign
rhetoric, policy proposals and actions, political appointments and patronage (Rosenstone
et al. 1984, 43).

In a similar vein, James Sundquist’s work on realignment in the United States,
suggests that parties can emerge if a new issue is introduced which cuts across the old
lines of party cleavage (Sundquist 1973, 23). Such an issue causes inner turmoil amongst existing parties as their leaders recoil, temporize, and evade (Sundquist 1973, 23). This appears natural. When issues with unknown electoral payoffs arise, which may also jeopardize the party’s cohesion, the party hopes the issue’s salience will dissipate. Alternatively, an existing party may incorporate the new issue into its manifesto. Failure to do so will increase the potential for a new party to form.

Rosenstone and Sundquist’s scholarship falls short of explaining the rise of successful new parties, most likely because this is not the intention of their work. Both assume that established parties co-opt new party’s demands, and hence they do not attempt to explain why or how new parties become significant actors in the political system. The result is that they fail to address adequately how the actions of new parties influence their fate. This shortcoming probably derives from the idiosyncratic nature of the case they chose, the stable two party system of the United States.

Adopting yet another approach, two Canadian political scientists, C.B. Macpherson (1953) and Maurice Pinard (1971), developed models that explain the rise of third parties in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec. In Democracy in Alberta, C. B. Macpherson (1953) outlines the combination of class and center-periphery cleavages that create a potent environment for third party formation. He reasons that third party formation occurred in Alberta, because of the combination of the province’s quasi-colonial

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18 The materialist/postmaterialist value cleavage identified by Ronald Inglehart appears to be an issue that would conform to Sundquist’s explanation of party formation. Inglehart seems to argue that the Green parties are the result of a change in societies’ values that are not adequately represented by traditional parties rooted in the left/right ideological continuum (Inglehart [1987], 1990, 278).
economic status and homogeneous petite bourgeoisie class composition. This has produced a non-party ideology and thus the rise of the third parties, which have dominated Alberta’s party system, creating a quasi-party system (one party dominate system) (Macpherson 1953, 21). Macpherson reasons that this model explains the rise of both the United Farmers of Alberta and the Social Credit Party of Alberta.

In *The Rise of A Third Party*, Maurice Pinard (1971) begins with Macpherson’s model of third party formation and sets out to improve it (Pinard 1971, 66). Pinard proposes two models, one at the structural level and the other at the individual level. At the structural level, Pinard’s model for new party formation posits that the presence of structural grievances\(^{19}\) results in alienation from one of the major parties, and when this occurs in a one-party dominant system,\(^{20}\) the search for an alternative party leads voters to support the rise of a third party (Pinard 1971, 67). At the individual level, he suggests that short-term grievances, usually economic in nature, coupled with one-party dominance result in voters switching to a new party.

The critical flaw in both Macpherson’s and Pinard’s models is that they do not provide a mechanism to explain how a quasi-colonial economy populated primarily by a petite bourgeoisie or economic strain and one-party dominance results in the formation of new parties. According to these scholars, parties just seem to grow out of the

\(^{19}\) The concept structural grievance can take several forms in Pinard’s model, including economic and ethnic grievances or those caused by flagrant corruption aided by single-member plurality electoral systems (Pinard 1971, 67).

\(^{20}\) A one-party dominant system is one where the largest opposition party receives less than one third of the votes (Pinard 1971, 37).
environment. Once again, these approaches do not spell out how the actions and choices of political actors affect the formation of parties.

A general puzzle with all of the above approaches is that they fail to explain the political party formation process. All of the scholars were primarily concerned with delineating the conditions for party formation, certainly an important objective but one that leaves several issues unresolved. In *Why Parties? The Origins and Transformation of Party Politics in America*, John Aldrich (1995) attempt to address this shortcoming by adopting a rational choice perspective to explain the formation of political parties.²¹

According to Aldrich, politicians create parties because they are necessary instruments for achieving their goals (Aldrich 1995,4). There are three problems that give politicians incentives to turn to political parties. “All are so significant that there are theories about each: the theory of public goods and collective action, the theory of social choice and voting, and the theory of political ambition” (Aldrich 1995, 29). Aldrich presents several circumstances where politicians’ objectives, for instance, particular policy objectives and winning office, require that they create or join a party in order to overcome the social choice or collective action problem.²² This study’s contribution to the literature on party

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²¹ Another author who has adopted a rational choice approach to party formation is Stathis Kalyvas (1996) in *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*. The essence of his argument is that confessional parties in Europe formed primarily as a byproduct of the Catholic Church’s strategic choices, not as a result of its intentions or actions (Kalyvas 1996, 17-18). See Kalyvas (1996, 82-93) for further details. However, this account, like the others, does not illustrate what actions the founding leaders take that hurt or help party formation. Again, it just seems to assume initiative results in success.

²² For example, Aldrich claims that Jackson’s Democratic Party developed a mass party structure in order to organize and mobilize the electorate (Aldrich 1995, 97-125).
formation lies in pointing out that parties are institutions created to serve politicians rather than the view that parties merely reflect social cleavages (Aldrich 1995, 4).

Yet, for all its merits, this approach has two major shortcomings. First, Aldrich's theory that politicians form parties in order to achieve a variety of goals that they cannot achieve alone is so general and broad it cannot be falsified. There is no way to tell if the observed outcome would have been obtained anyway for reasons unrelated to the theory in question (Green and Shapiro 1994, 43). Notice, that he does not attempt to use his theory to explain why a party has failed to form. The second criticism is related to the first. Aldrich seems to assume that all politicians are successful in that he does not delineate the conditions under which politicians are successful in their bid to create or use parties to achieve their ends. While this dissertation accepts that politicians are crucial actors in the creation of parties, it also makes some generalizations about what steps politicians may take in forming regional parties.

The above explanations of party formation contribute to our understanding of the conditions that facilitate regional party formation. Indeed, this dissertation draws upon these approaches as it argues that regional cleavages are necessary but not sufficient for regional party formation. On the other hand, one of the striking features of all of these scholarly works is that they do not clearly articulate how conditions translate into party formation. Does any actor who decides to launch a party under these conditions become successful—meaning that the party is not irrelevant or stillborn? The literature above cannot speak to this very important question.
This account helps unravel the puzzle above—how do the actions of challenging and established parties affect the formation of regional parties? It advances our grasp of party formation by clarifying the role played by grievances, established parties, alignment stability, and political entrepreneurs. The last factor, political entrepreneurs, is crucial because it takes more than filing forms with the electoral commission of a particular state to produce a political party. Hence, the role of the political entrepreneur is scrutinized in this study, particularly the entrepreneur’s vision, electoral strategy, and management of the party.

Why the Reform Party, Western Canada Concept Party, and Northern League?

At this point, I would like to take the opportunity to provide a cursory overview of the parties to familiarize the reader with each of the cases; a more detailed account of each party’s history will be given in chapter two. The Lega Nord’s (LN)\(^{23}\) origins can be traced directly back to the creation of the Lega Lombarda by Umberto Bossi in 1983.\(^{24}\) The Lega Lombarda advocated making Italy a federal country, giving the regions more control over tax money, giving preference to citizens from Lombardy in receiving social services, aiding in the creation of a federal Europe and it promoted the culture of Lombardy (Lega Nord 1996, 5). The culture of Lombardy did not revolve around ethnic identity issues but

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\(^{23}\) In English, Lega Nord translates into Northern League.

\(^{24}\) The Lombard League (Lega Lombarda) was created in 1984 after Bossi’s short-lived Lombard Autonomist League. Hence, references to Bossi’s first party refer to the Lega Lombarda, not the earlier organization.
instead something new. “Differently from traditional autonomist movements, the League to achieve federalism, pivots on the socio-economic situation and not on ethnic divisions, always more confused in an advanced industrialized society, run through by great migratory flows” (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 7).

In the beginning, electoral success was slow to materialize. However, between 1987 and 1992, the party experienced tremendous growth beginning with Umberto Bossi’s capture of a Senate seat in the 1987 national elections. In 1991, several regional Leagues that had been cooperating informally decided to combine into one federated political party, the Lega Nord (LN,) under Bossi’s leadership. Support for the LN is concentrated in the regions of Italy, north of Rome.25 The Lega Nord’s policy proposals are largely the same as those mentioned above except for the fact that the party has wavered in its support of federalism, at times advocating secession for northern Italy.26

Unlike Italy, where the salience of the center-periphery conflict is a relatively recent phenomenon, Canada has been plagued with tension between the federal government and both Quebec and western Canada for many years. Historically speaking, western Canada has been home to several protest parties including the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), Social Credit, and the Progressive Party. Out of this populist tradition emerged the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) in 1981 and the Reform Party (RP) of Canada in 1987. The focus of this research, the Alberta branch of

25 The northern Italian regions where the Northern League is strong include Valle D’Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, Trentino, Veneto, Friuli V.G., and Emilia Romagna.
26 The party has already given the new northern state a name, Padania.
the WCC, was formed in 1980 by Douglas Christie to represent western Canada’s interests in Alberta’s provincial legislature. Shortly after, the Alberta WCC experienced internal rivalries and difference in opinion, which led to Douglas Christie leaving the Alberta organization. Following this row, the WCC had a series of leaders including Al Maygard, Wes Westmore, Gordon Kesler, and Jack Ramsay. The WCC campaigned on a platform that endorsed the following policies: the elimination of National Energy Program, the elimination of the metric system and official bilingualism, and, sometimes, the secession of western Canada.

After bursting onto the political scene in 1981, winning a by-election in February 1982, the party faltered in the Alberta general election of 1982. Although the WCC won 11.8 percent of the vote, it failed to win a seat. Subsequently, many of the party’s members left the WCC in disappointment. By the 1986 Alberta provincial election, the party had shrunk to a shadow of its former self, winning only 0.65 percent of the vote in the election. Shortly afterwards, the party leader, Jack Ramsay, joined the Reform Party. Hence, the WCC never fulfilled Sartori’s criteria of relevance, a party that holds coalition or blackmail potential. In fact, the party might be better described as ephemeral or politically irrelevant. The question I address is why?

The Reform Party and the WCC sprouted from the same roots and both represented western Canadian alienation. However, while the WCC wanted the West to

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27 Western alienation refers to an attitude held by many western Canadians that they are essentially powerless in national political life and that national policies do not represent their interests (Elton 1984, 47).
leave Canada, the Reform Party wanted it to become an integral part of the federation. At its founding convention, the Reform Party adopted the motto, “The West Wants In” and made Preston Manning its leader.\(^{28}\) Reform initially organized to improve western Canada’s situation within Canada’s federation. The primary instrument for achieving this goal was reform of the Canadian Senate and submission of all federal legislation to a regional fairness test.\(^{29}\) Other issues the party emphasized included the need to balance the federal budget, to make politicians more accountable, and to oppose the federal government’s multicultural and bilingual policies.

The Reform Party’s electoral stronghold has always been Alberta and British Columbia.\(^{30}\) Unlike the WCC, the Reform Party only contested federal elections. In the 1988 federal elections, the party won 15 percent of the vote in Alberta and 5 percent in British Columbia. In 1989, they won a by-election seat in Alberta, and in the 1993 federal election, they won 52 seats in the House of Commons. The 1997 federal elections resulted in Official Opposition status for the Reform Party as they elected 60 people to the House of Commons. In a relatively short period of time, the party has increased its electoral support exponentially. After 1991, the Reform Party did not fit so neatly into the regional

\(^{28}\) Western Canada in this study includes the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

\(^{29}\) Some of the members of the WCC had also endorsed Senate reform along the same lines as Reform. Meanwhile, the regional fairness test was the Reform Party’s mechanism for making sure nothing like the National Energy Program was ever implemented again.

\(^{30}\) This should not be surprising because Preston Manning, the party’s leader, is the son of Alberta’s long-time premier Ernest Manning. In addition to being the premier of Alberta, Ernest Manning was the leader of the Social Credit Party, a party that was also very popular in British Columbia in the post World War II era.
party category. This is because the party decided to organize in all of English Canada and after 1993, they even tried to organize Quebecers. Even so, the party’s stronghold today is still western Canada, especially the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

Evidence of the party’s regional character is the Reform Party’s failure to increase its share of the seats in parliament after the 1993 federal election and to win any seats outside the West in 1997 (Ellis and Archer 1998, 111).

Finally, before proceeding further, it seems pertinent to acknowledge that my treatment of the Lega Nord and Reform Party as regional parties is unconventional. Both parties are more often treated as populist (McCormick 1990; Harrison 1995, Woods 1995) or as right wing parties (Kitschelt 1995; Dobbin 1991; Sharpe and Braid 1992; Betz 1993). While these approaches enlighten us about some aspects of these parties, this research suggests that one cannot understand politics in Canada and Italy, the questioning of national identity (Manning 1992; Woods 1992; Rusconi 1998), and the proposals for substantial restructuring of the state (Agnew 1990; Bull 1998) without investigating these parties as regional parties. After all, the actions and platforms of these parties imply great changes to the state structure of Italy and Canada, respectively—Italy becomes a federal state or even breaks apart after existing for over a century under a highly centralized state developed by Cavour and Mussolini, while Canada’s highly decentralized

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31 The exception is James Newell’s article “The Scottish Nationalist Party and the Italian Lega Nord” in the European Journal of Political Research. In this essay, he argues that the Scottish Nationalist Party and Lega Nord are comparable cases.

32 This is just a sampling of the literature on the subject. Many more authors could have been cited, especially concerning Canada’s national identity.
federal system adopts a Senate that may actually work to centralize the state’s power and, hence, increase alienation in Quebec.

**Why choose the Reform Party, the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC), and the Lega Nord?**

The Reform Party, the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) and the Northern League are included in this study for a variety of reasons. First, I chose these parties in order to include pair-wise cases that are most similar (the Reform Party and WCC) and most different (Reform Party and Lega Nord). Both the Reform Party and Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) formed organizations in western Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan), shared a common geographic base of support—Alberta, and represented themes common to western alienation. The parties also had some overlapping membership.\(^{35}\) Choosing parties with so many similarities should minimize confounding explanatory factors such as differences in political culture, electoral systems, and institutional structures. At the same time, similar environmental conditions did not result in a comparable outcome for the cases. The Reform Party became a significant player in Canada’s party system, while the WCC vanished almost entirely from the political scene two years after forming.

On the other hand, a comparison of the Reform Party and Lega Nord maximizes the variation in potential causal indicators to explain a similar outcome, the formation of a regional

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\(^{35}\) See chapter two for details about the intermingling of some of the top leadership of the WCC and Reform Party.
party. Although Italy and Canada share some similarities such as late unification and weak national identities, they harbor more differences than similarities. Some of the key differences between Italy and Canada include: the party system (multiparty, Italy maintained a polarized system in comparison to Canada’s two and half party system based on brokerage politics), the electoral system (proportional representation rather than a plurality electoral system), the governmental structure (centralized, unitary structure versus decentralized almost confederal structure), experience with democracy (Mussolini’s authoritarianism in comparison to unbroken democracy since the late 19th century), and political culture (Marxist and Catholic rather than Liberal, Tory, and Catholic). Choosing cases that are most similar and different is considered to be advantageous because it promotes a representative sampling of the cases, which improves the possibility of making causal inferences (Freidreis 1983, 268).

Secondly, all three of the regional parties are unique in their attempts to mobilize supporters in the absence of claims of common ethnic identity. This is unusual amongst regional parties, thus far most of which have had an ethnic component. Thinking about the depth and the scope of the conflict of some well noted cases—Quebec, the Basque Region, Catalonia, Scotland, etc.—it should become apparent that a proliferation of the areas susceptible to this type of mobilization is destabilizing to the state system since these parties challenge the legitimacy of the state and/or the state’s structure. Because these parties raise questions about the territorial borders of existing states and the concentration of power at the state’s political center, it is conceivable that the structure of the state system will forever be
changed if, as it appears in Canada and Italy, regional interests can be organized like other types of interests without any regard to ethnic identity. In the United States alone, one could imagine a dozen or more regional parties tearing at the fabric of the country. If this phenomenon continues to grow in strength, it can lead to dangerous consequences as the shunning of the central state and the parochialization of politics continues.

**Outline of the Thesis**

The first chapter of the dissertation provides theoretical justification for my hypothesis: regional parties form where regional grievances exist, when established parties fail to address the region’s concerns, where political alignments lack stability, and when political entrepreneurs skillfully mobilize people. Chapter two focuses on the historical context from which the Western Canada Concept Party, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord arose. This encompasses a brief overview of the histories of Canada and Italy, focusing particularly on regional socio-economic and political differences. Included in this chapter is a history of each of the parties.

Chapters three through six consist of thematic case studies of each of the causal factors mentioned above. Consequently, chapter three discusses regional grievances, chapter four, receptiveness of established parties, chapter five, alignment stability, and chapter six, the role of Douglas Christie, Preston Manning, and Umberto Bossi in explaining regional party formation. Each chapter concludes with a comparison of the cases. Finally, chapter seven presents the overall conclusion of the dissertation.
The next step is to shift the focus to the theoretical framework designed to explain the formation of regional parties in western Canada and northern Italy.
CHAPTER 1

FACILITATORS OF SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL PARTY FORMATION

This dissertation research proposes to test the following hypothesis: regional parties form where regional grievances exist, when established parties fail to address the region’s concerns, where political alignments lack stability, and when political entrepreneurs skillfully mobilize people. It posits that a sequential, additive relationship exists between these factors—grievances are left unaddressed by established parties, which results in alignment instability that creates a window of opportunity, which is seized by a political entrepreneur. The hypothesis will be tested on two cases of successful regional party formation: the Northern League of Italy and the Reform Party of Canada and one case of ephemeral party formation, the Western Canada Concept Party.

As mentioned earlier, this research focuses on regional party formation, which I consider to be a stage versus a discrete moment in time. To form a modern political party, a single meeting or signed piece of paper does not signify the presence of a well-developed party organization that undertakes activities year round. Creating an organization, platform, and a base of support in essence, creating organizational consolidation takes some time. This study
focuses on parties that have achieved organizational consolidation and political relevance (Kalyvas 1996, 114). A politically relevant party is one that holds coalition potential, by either winning enough seats to lead a coalition government or winning enough to be considered a possible coalition member, or one that holds blackmail potential (the party is so powerful that it can indirectly put its demands on the agenda) (Sartori 1976, 1991, 321). At that point, a related but different group of factors determines the party’s fate. The criteria above were chosen to distinguish between parties that have some permanence and impact on their country’s party system versus those that either flash across the party system or have minimal impact.  

Given the above criteria, this study will focus on the Reform Party between 1987-1993, the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) between 1980-1986, and the Lega Nord from the founding of the Lombarda Autonomist League in 1983 to the Lega Nord’s first decisive electoral success in the 1992 national elections. In other words, the Reform Party and Lega Nord had become significant parties within their party systems by 1993 and 1992, respectively. On the other hand, the WCC, officially founded in 1980, was a skeletal organization after 1982 and ceased to exist in 1987 when Jack Ramsay, its leader, joined the Reform Party.

**Economic, Political and Cultural Grievances**

Under what conditions do successful regional parties form? As mentioned earlier, the existence of an uneven distribution of socio-economic characteristics across the state is often

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34 When I refer to regional party throughout the study, I am referring to one that fulfills the consolidation criteria mentioned earlier.
used as an explanation of regional party formation. The socio-economic conditions generally considered are the uneven distribution of wealth, ethnic enclaves, and other socio-economic factors. The result of this uneven distribution is that the region’s inhabitants believe that government policy affects them adversely for one reason or another. This can result in feelings of deprivation, frustration, and/or discrimination. In sum, the citizens in the region perceive they are suffering from some type of injustice, which may or may not be grounded in objective differences. These grievances are key to party formation, for it is their politicization that leads to political action. Yet most, if not all, industrialized states harbor regions with the potential to mobilize around grievances based on their own idiosyncratic interests. Still, it is the case that regional parties do not exist in every country and have not always existed where they presently do, so it seems that differences and/or grievances alone will not result in regional party formation. Regional grievances appear to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful regional party formation.

The types of grievances expressed by regional parties vary greatly but can generally be characterized as falling into three categories: economic, socio-cultural, and political. These grievances are inter-related and overlapping, and oftentimes it can be difficult to disentangle them. Many of the grievances will be long-standing, while others may be more proximate to the formation of the party. Once the party forms, it may even contrive some of the grievances. However, the existence of grievances either latent and long-term or proximate does not guarantee the formation of a regional party. It is the translation of the grievances into political action that is of central importance to this work.
How are these grievances translated into regional parties? The answer to this question is partially determined by the responsiveness of the political opportunity structure. Thus, I turn my attention to this important element of the translation process.

**Political Opportunity Structures (POS)**

The responsiveness of a political system to latent political cleavages is determined by the political context that mediates conflicts (Kriesi et al. 1992, 219). Analysis of political context occurs by evaluating the properties of a political system including: “its formal institutional structure, its informal procedures and prevailing strategies with regard to challengers, and the configuration of power relevant for the confrontation with the challengers” (Kriesi et al. 1992, 220). These properties constitute the political opportunity structure (POS). The POS is important for challengers because it influences whether or not the political system is open or closed to their demands. If the political system is open, it promotes assimilative strategies; challengers are accommodated or compromises are constructed by working through existing institutions (Kitschelt 1986, 66). Conversely, closed political systems react to challengers by either ignoring or repressing them. The POS does not have to be entirely open or closed. It is possible for various channels of the POS to be open to a particular group of challengers, while other avenues of access may be unreceptive to their demands. Traditional channels of access include finding bureaucrats, the government, political parties, and/or members of the judiciary receptive to the challengers. When traditional channels of influence

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35 Political opportunity structure is a concept that has been developed by several scholars, including Eisinger (1973), Kitschelt (1986), Tarrow (1989).
are closed, the political system provides challengers with four options: mass demonstrations, challenging the government by entering the electoral arena, disbanding, or doing nothing.

When individuals from a particular region decide to pressure the government to change or implement policies, it may be assumed that they attempt first to work through the existing channels of the POS to have their grievances addressed rather than immediately forming a regional party. This assumption is based on the probability that rational actors attempt to build new vehicles of interest representation only if traditional organizations fail to respond and the institutional structure is conducive (Sundquist 1973; Kitschelt 1986, 19; and Luebbert 1991, 9). This is due to the initial costs of organizing. If established elites controlling traditional channels of access in the POS are not receptive to the challengers, the challengers must seek other avenues of access. Forming a new party may be the only way for the aggrieved to gain access to the political system.

Which characteristics of the political opportunity structure (POS) are most important for challengers? Across countries and policy areas, different institutions and institutionalized relationships will play a role in the interactive relationship between challengers and the state. In this paper, the facets of the POS important for regional parties include: the receptivity of existing parties to the challengers and the stability of political alignments. Next, I will briefly hypothesize how each of these factors affects the openness of the political system to regional interests.

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36 This pressure can take various forms including: letters written to members of parliament, businessmen, and professional associations lobbying their representative, riots and strikes, and/or support for opposition parties.
Established parties' reactions

Most parties begin as a group of concerned citizens discussing the various grievances they share. This group is usually informal, meeting in homes or at work. Oftentimes, they organize as clubs or discussion groups but may also become formally organized as an interest group. The response the group of aggrieved citizens receives from the established parties, consolidated parties with substantial histories, is crucial to whether or not a new party forms. If this informal group has its concerns addressed, then it is unnecessary for them to form a new political party because it appears that the political opportunity structure is receptive to their concerns. On the other hand, if the established parties are not receptive to the grievances, a new regional party may form.

There is a variety of reasons why the established parties may hesitate to be receptive to the group’s grievances, including: 1) the issue raised by the challengers divides the party membership, 2) the group’s demands conflict with the party’s ideology or electoral interests, and/or 3) it appears that the grievances have little support amongst the public. Hence the challenger’s demands can be easily dismissed as extremist from fringe elements in the electorate. At any rate, the established parties hope that the issue’s salience will decrease.

If the group continues to press their grievances amidst unreceptive established parties, it is highly probable that a new party will form. This is a common occurrence. But the new party is usually short-lived because at least one of the established parties changes its mind and decides to accommodate the new party’s demands during its
formation stage (Sundquist 1973; Rosenstone et al. 1984). The established parties’
response to the challengers can fall into one of two categories: 1) concretely receptive
where the established parties adopt some of the regional party’s platform planks and 2)
sympathetic actions—for example, the established party makes public statements to show
that they sympathize with the party’s grievances. Either type of accommodative behavior
may hinder the fledgling party’s long-term existence. However, the worse case scenario
for the regional party is that the established parties adopt concrete proposals that mirror
the regional party’s agenda, resulting in its brief existence because the established parties
have taken away its raison d’être.

**Stability of political alignments**

Another aspect of the political opportunity structure (POS) that should be conducive to
regional party formation is whether it is perceived that political alignments are unstable in the
region (Tarrow 1994, 87; Sundquist 1973). “The changing fortunes of government and
opposition parties, especially when they are based on new coalitions, create uncertainty among
supporters, and encourage challengers...” (Tarrow 1994, 87). Ordinarily, the instability of
political alignments is first manifested in the voting booth simply because democratic political
culture has defined voting as a mechanism to institute change (Piven and Cloward 1979, 15).
The instability of political alignments is considered to present the regional challengers with a
window of opportunity that would otherwise be closed to them. If they seize this potential
opening, it is generally posited that dissatisfied voters will be more receptive to their overtures
(Tarrow 1994; Sundquist 1973; Mair 1984). In order to operationalize whether or not political
alignments are unstable, and thus, if a potential opening in the POS exists, a variety of measures will be used to ensure the reliability of descriptive alignment statistics, including trends in: party volatility,\(^{37}\) the relative strength of party identification, and rate of turnout. To compute these measures of alignment stability, longitudinal data will be presented emphasizing the time period previous to the party’s formation.

One measure of the instability of political alignments is volatility rates. Volatility rates have both systemic and individual level properties. First, electoral instability as a property of the political system should be considered important in terms of the responses it elicits from party leadership (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 26). Individual party volatility is most important to party leaders. At stake is not whether aggregate volatility data actually captures individual voter’s preferences; rather it is the reaction of party leadership and potential challengers to this information (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 26).

Increasing volatility rates should act as a cue to two different actors discussed in this study. First, I would expect that increasing volatility rates would provoke a reaction from the established parties. Increasing volatility rates, especially a long-term trend of electoral decline for an established party, should result in the party being receptive to the region’s concerns. On the other hand, increasing volatility levels should be a cue to political entrepreneurs that the time is ripe to form a new party. Hence, I hypothesize that an increase in party volatility rates should precede the formation of a new regional party.

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\(^{37}\) Party volatility refers to the change in a party’s percent of the vote from one election to the next.
An increase in party volatility rates is important because it may reflect a weakening of the linkage between parties and voters. “Linkage refers to the interconnections between mass opinions and public decision” and encompasses both representation and participation (Lawson 1988, 14). The breakdown of the linkage between parties and voters might reflect a weakening of the ties that bond a particular socio-economic group to the established parties. The result is an increase in individual voting shifts, creating more volatile results and perhaps also a decline in party identification. A breakdown in the linkage between parties and voters produces an environment conducive to new party formation.

Alignment instability may also be signaled by a decline in party identification. “If parties are losing their 'hold' on voters, then this should be apparent in a declining popular sense of attachment to parties as measured by responses to survey questions which probe strength of party identification” (Mair 1984, 176). This condition is also referred to as partisan realignment. A weakening of party identification may result in voters being more receptive to new parties. Therefore, I would expect a decrease in party identification prior to the formation of a regional party.

The last measure of alignment stability considered here are turnout rates. Abnormally large fluctuations in voter turnout may be a signal of alignment instability. While it seems to

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38 Parties provide four types of linkage: participatory, electoral, clientelistic, and directive (Lawson 1988, 16-17).
39 This assumption seems reasonable unless the new party is only attracting previously inactive voters, which seems highly unlikely. “Putting aside the problem of the utility of the concept of party identification in a European context, and also ignoring the obvious differences in what is tapped by the notion of party identification in the different countries,” it seems that a decline in party identification may result in electoral market disequilibrium as voters become more open to new parties (Mair 1984, 176).
40 See footnote 6.
me that a significant increase or decrease in voter turnout may have a significant impact on stability, some scholarship suggests that a declining trend in the rate of voter turnout may indicate disillusion with the political process (Mair 1984, 175-176; Sani 1987, 26). While this may certainly be the case, abnormally large fluctuations in turnout will be the crux of my focus. Hence, I would expect to discover that there is an increasing trend in party volatility levels, a decreasing trend in party identification, and abnormally large fluctuations in turnout rates before the formation of a new regional party.

Scholars such as Tarrow (1994), Sundquist (1973), Barolini and Mair (1990), and Rochon (1985) argue that electoral instability reveals that the public may be loosening their ties to established parties and thus be open to new appeals. However, it may also be the case that alignment stability remains relatively unchanged until a new party arises, when it increases by leaps and bounds. This may be because the ties between voters and established parties have loosened, but it could also be due to the attractive nature of the new party’s program. So, the good fortune of the new parties may not be entirely determined by the misfortunes of the established parties as much as by the refreshing appeal of the new party.

If this is the situation, which I later argue is the case, aggregate measures of alignment instability will be less helpful in assisting us in understanding why the instability occurred. The aggregate measures of alignment instability in western Canada and northern Italy cannot explain individual attitudes and changes in voting. To get an accurate picture of electoral behavior, attitudinal survey analysis will be included whenever possible. Since the attitudinal data is sporadic, a complementary method,
ecological analysis that uncovers the characteristics of the regions where the regional parties are popular will also be utilized. 41 This additional analysis is indispensable because to a large extent the research surveys did not focus on the regions until well after the WCC, RP, and LN formed, and earlier national samples of the electorate include too few a cases to draw credible conclusions. The two methods combined will create a more reliable portrait of the WCC, RP, and LN supporters and their motivation for supporting the parties.

**Political Entrepreneurs** 42

The presence of long standing regional socio-economic and political grievances, unstable alignments, and established parties unreceptive to the region's concerns produces conditions favorable to successful regional party formation. Yet these factors provide only a portion of the necessary ingredients for successful party formation. To complete the puzzle, I postulate that the activities of the political entrepreneur must also be taken into account.

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41 I realize there are limitations to ecological analysis, mainly that aggregate data cannot explain or measure individual attitudes and changes in electoral choices (Mulé 1993, 414).

42 Political entrepreneurship can be defined in a variety of ways, depending on the goals of the entrepreneur and the existing structure of opportunities. An entrepreneur representing a group of challengers may decide that it is in the group's best interest to work through existing channels of the political system. This may result in the entrepreneur deciding to pursue the group's agenda as an interest group, infiltrating existing parties, and so on. Alternatively the entrepreneur may decide to form a new political party. I assume that potential political entrepreneurs have already attempted to apply pressure through these traditional channels and upon failing have turned to party formation. Furthermore, I realize by using entrepreneur in the singular I am over simplifying the analysis somewhat.
Although political leader could have been substituted for political entrepreneur, I decided against using this word because leader carries too many different meanings.\textsuperscript{43} This dissertation focuses on the actions of a particular type of leader, one that excels at innovative, insightful, and strategic leadership. These qualities have been given other names such as transformative leadership (Burns 1978) or heresthetician (Riker 1986).\textsuperscript{44} In a similar vein, Schneider and Teske (1992, 737) reason that political entrepreneurs are “individuals who change the direction and flow of politics” and have been successful at persuading others to support their position. This is the definition of political entrepreneur adopted by this study.

It is generally accepted that entrepreneurs have an impact on politics, but it is something entirely different to discuss systematically how they do so. After all, what is it that entrepreneurs do? Answering this question has proved to be a daunting task that can be approached using two different literatures. The first, of course, takes a rational choice perspective. The focus is overwhelmingly on how to overcome the collective action problem inherent in forming a new political party (Aldrich 1995; Olson 1971).\textsuperscript{45} As mentioned in the introduction, this approach has serious shortcomings, including that it

\textsuperscript{43} For example, leader might be equated with position or title a meaning far from the notion of entrepreneur.

\textsuperscript{44} Burns captures the essence of political entrepreneurship with his transformative leader (Burns 1978). Transformative leadership “recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower” (Burns 1973, 4). Riker’s work uses the word heresthetician to describe in essence qualities attributed here to political entrepreneurs. A heresthetician is an individual who is able to structure decision-making situations to his advantage (Riker 1986, 8).

\textsuperscript{45} See Aldrich’s book Why Parties Form and its discussion of collective action on pages 31-37. Other rational choice tools have been used to look at the role of entrepreneurs such as the tipping game (Kalyvas 1996). These rational choice approaches suffer from similar limitations.
cannot be falsified and it does not outline the conditions under which entrepreneurs
successfully organize a new party (Aldrich 1995).

The second approach applicable to the study of political entrepreneurship derives
from a related concept, political leadership. This literature has its own failings, particularly
that there is no coherent body of literature considering the role of leaders in politics
(Mughan and Patterson 1992, 11). In fact, its study is quite compartmentalized. Scholars
usually focus on one narrow aspect of the phenomenon such as biographical or social-
psychological studies, the linkage between leaders and followers, or the impact of leaders
argues that though these approaches might produce fruitful insights, in order to fully grasp
the complexity of leadership we should start by focusing on the functions performed by
leaders. "...As political scientists we must specify what sorts of 'goods and services'
leaders provide in the exercise of political power" (Tucker 1992, 36).46

This research utilizes Tucker's framework to focus on what it is that political
entrepreneurs do to facilitate the successful formation of regional parties. For Tucker,
leadership is first and foremost a directive activity that can be divided into three
categories: diagnosis, policy formulation, and policy implementation (Tucker 1992, 38-
39). All three of these functions are inter-related, and the entrepreneur at times may be
accomplishing all simultaneously. But, for the purpose of this discussion, I will attempt to
separate these functions while at the same time acknowledging their interdependence.

46 I adopt Tucker's leadership framework to evaluate political entrepreneurship, hence the interchange
of the terms in this section.
In diagnosing the problem, the political entrepreneur describes a set of circumstances, which he has endowed with meaning in a way that relates to his purposes and concerns and those of potential followers (Tucker 1992, 38). In the process, he defines the regional party’s raison d’être. In performing this task, the successful entrepreneur becomes a master at controlling the agenda and thereby structures political dialogue to his advantage (Riker 1986, 8-11). Identifying the issue(s) a party will emphasize is one of the most important decisions a political entrepreneur can make.

Hand in hand with the process of defining the situation, the party leader offers a solution to the circumstances. Tucker calls this the policy formulating function. This is a formalistic way of saying that the entrepreneur prescribes a course of action on behalf of the group that will address the situation (Tucker 1995, 19). Included in this endeavor is the formulation of the entrepreneur’s means and goals. In this particular study, parties are the means by which entrepreneurs believe they can achieve their goals (Aldrich 1995). The goals can vary widely. In general, they will be deduced by analyzing a formal document such as a party platform, an autobiographical statement concerning the party’s objectives, or public pronouncements.

Choosing a course of action is probably the most difficult task of the entrepreneur because disagreement over this issue is more likely than agreement about the problem. While supporters may all agree on the problem, they may not all agree on the method employed or the solution. Consider a hypothetical example. While everyone in a group may agree that unemployment is too high and that parties should address this issue, some
might argue cutting taxes is the solution while others propose that the government should commit more money to worker retraining. In this case, the policy goal sought is different. The disagreement that results over the course of action can have wide-ranging ramifications. In the above example, these differences may become so great as to warrant that the individuals join opposing political parties.

According to Tucker, the final function a leader engages in is policy implementation. More generally, this refers to the entrepreneur’s ability to mobilize support for his definition of the situation and the plan of action proposed (Tucker 1995, 19). For the most part, has the entrepreneur been able to impose his vision upon the party and along the way to keep the party’s supporters? “Leaders must gain the group’s support, or predominant support, for the definition of the group situation that they have advanced and for the plan of action that they have prescribed” (Tucker 1992, 39). Not only is this a difficult task in the initial stages of party formation but also particularly difficult to maintain over time. There are two different groups the entrepreneur has to mobilize, party members and supporters.

The first group considered is party members. An entrepreneur must convince party members to support the party’s objectives and also contribute to it over time. Membership support is crucial because it is highly unlikely that the entrepreneur leading a regional party will be able to bring about the policy objectives he seeks alone. Usually, maintaining steady membership support in a new party is difficult because, for the most part, initially new parties are not very successful and therefore cannot distribute the rewards and
perquisites of elected office to their supporters. There are various factors that can help entrepreneurs keep and attract party members; some of the most important include the attractiveness of the party’s platform and the entrepreneur’s personal qualities.

The second group is potential supporters in the mass electorate. Successful electoral mobilization is predicated upon the party finding its niche. There are two simultaneous strategies the party employs to achieve electoral success. First, they identify and attempt to target a specific group. Classic scholarship on party formation argues that parties emerge to represent social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Parties vary in their overt commitment to organizing a particular group. Some are explicitly group oriented, for instance the communist party earlier this century. Other parties argue that issues are at the center of their program, not groups (e.g. the Green parties). However, for many parties, either publicly or privately, there is recognition that their chosen means and goals appeal more to some groups than others. Realistically, all parties make appeals by focusing on both groups and issues. In order to be competitive and avoid wasting party resources, the entrepreneur gives this issue.

As indicated above, the entrepreneur may experience opposition concerning any of the above directives from individuals challenging his leadership. As the party becomes more successful, the probability and frequency of internal conflict may increase as various individuals make claims for power or perks. I would anticipate that an entrepreneur with a clear mission, with a well thought out and novel program that appeals to a rather large
group, and with few leadership challenges will have a better chance of forming a regional party that manages to consolidate by fulfilling the criteria mentioned earlier.

Before testing the theoretical framework outlined above, I take a step back and provide the historical context from which the WCC, RP, and LN arose. The following chapter gives a regional perspective of the political history of Canada and Italy, centering on the time periods central to the parties’ stories.
CHAPTER 2
POLITICAL HISTORY IN CANADA AND ITALY: A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

While differences between Canada and Italy’s historical and political development are striking, their similarities also make for an interesting comparison. Both states are recent creations by a rather small group of elites, both encompass wide-ranging socio-economic diversity, and both have weak national identities. The regional conflicts in Canada and Italy have their roots in the past, dividing western Canada from central Canada and northern Italy from southern Italy. Consequently, the goal of this chapter is to provide a brief synopsis of the setting from which the Reform Party, Western Canada Concept Party, and Northern League emerged.

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47 As mentioned in the introduction, the differences between Canada and Italy’s political systems are wide ranging. Some of the differences include the structure of the party system, the electoral system (until recently), the geographic distribution of power, experience with democracy, and political culture.

48 Western Canada refers to the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.
Before I proceed, however, an important caveat is in order. Though this study will often refer to the various regions of Canada and Italy as western Canada or northern Italy, it should not be assumed that these are homogenous regions. There are striking differences within each of the regions, but for the sake of parsimony, these intra-regional differences will not be discussed extensively unless they have made an independent contribution to the tales of the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC), Reform Party (RP), or Lega Nord (LN).

**Constructing Canada and Italy**

The history of the Canadian state is multi-dimensional and can be examined through a number of different lenses. Some of the most common include the impact of Great Britain and the United States (Lipset 1970; Hartz 1964; Wittke 1928), the impact of socio-economic developments (McInnis 1964), and the impact of great persons such as Sir John A. MacDonald on Canada’s development (Pope 1894; Creighton 1940). It remains the case, though, that from each of these approaches a theme can be extracted—there has been tension between those who supported provincial rights and federal centralization and it has dominated Canadian politics since the state’s inception.

For the casual observer of Canadian politics, it may not be obvious that this tension is ubiquitous, existing beyond the well-noted clashes between Quebec and Ottawa and the West and Ottawa. In 1868, one year after the Dominion of Canada was founded, Sir John MacDonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada, admitted, “a conflict may, ere
long, arise between the Dominion and the States Rights people” (Bumsted 1998, 109).

MacDonald’s premonition soon came to fruition, as illustrated by the following examples:

- “As early as 1869 Ontario became distressed at ‘the assumption by the Parliament of Canada of the power to disturb the financial relations established by the British North America Act (1867), as between Canada and the several provinces’” (Cook 1969, 11).

- Shortly after Ontario started making such claims (1869) the French in Quebec added “French-Canadian national rights to Ontario’s provincial ones” (Bumsted 1998, 199).

- “In 1886 a series of resolutions was introduced into the Legislature of Nova Scotia advocating secession on the grounds that the commercial and financial interests of the Province had been vitally injured by Dominion policies” (MacKirdy et al. 1967, 230).

- Violent revolts against the federal government occurred in Manitoba in 1869 and 1885 under the leadership of Louis Riel, the leader of the Métis.

While federal-provincial tensions may be pervasive, their all-encompassing history is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, a narrow filter will be used to view Canadian history, focusing on Western Canada and its relationship with the federal government.

**The Politics of Unification**

Canadian confederation had a dubious beginning. Unification was not the result of a revolution based on popular sovereignty but instead derived from a combination of narrow self-interest and outside pressures. There were primarily three catalysts for Canadian unification: 1) between 1840-1860s Canadian politics lacked stability and
effectiveness, leaving political elites open to reform (McNaught 1988, 121),
businessmen were interested in creating a unified market in British North America with a
common currency, banking, and weights and measures to enhance commerce (Wittke
1928, 180), and 3) the United States’ Civil War brought external pressure for
unification.51

Under these circumstances, in 1864, George Brown, leader of the Grit faction of
the Liberal Party proposed, “and both MacDonald and Cartier accepted, a coalition whose
purpose would be to inaugurate discussions leading to a general confederation of the
British American provinces” (McNaught 1988, 122).52 The settlers of Upper (Ontario)
and Lower (Quebec) Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia united under the auspices

49 The Act of Union (1840) joined Upper (Ontario) and Lower (Quebec) Canada into a single political
entity. The newly formed Canada adopted an assembly with equal representation from each province
and the Westminster model of responsible government. This institutional configuration led to conflict
and ineffective government as it soon became evident that double majorities were necessary to pass
any legislation. That meant that to pass legislation, an overall majority was needed in parliament plus
majority support from the section (French or English) affected (McNaught 1988, 120). “The average
life of ministries was six months, and even these Governments clung to their lease of power by
slender majorities of from one to three votes” (Wittke 1928, 179).
50 Within Canada, capitalist interested in creating a single unified market and those interested in
strengthening Canadian autonomy against imperial authority encouraged unification (McInnis 1959,
305).
51 Canada feared invasion by Union soldiers during the U.S. Civil War because of British policies.
While Canadians initially had pro-northern sympathies because of their disapproval of slavery,
Britain’s decision to remain neutral made it appear that Britain, and hence Canada, favored the
South’s claim to independence (Wittke 1928, 171). “The sympathies of the British aristocracy,
manufacturers, and governing classes were clearly with the South, although the vulnerability of
British North America to attack from the United States undoubtedly served to curb these pro-Southern
sentiments somewhat” (Wittke 1928, 171).
52 Georges-Étienne Cartier was leader of the Blues of French Canada. He later participated in
MacDonald’s Conservative governments. For further reading on the crucial early years of
confederation see W.L. Morton. 1964. _The Critical Years: The Union of British North America 1857-
1873_. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, and D.G. Creighton. 1964. _The Road to Confederation: The
Emergence of Canada, 1863-1867_. Toronto: Macmillan.

53
of the British North America Act (BNA) in 1867.\textsuperscript{53} The BNA created the Dominion of Canada as a colony within the British Empire. The Act functioned as the country’s constitution and established Canada as a parliamentary democracy characterized by a weak Senate and a federal structure. The Dominion was an elite creation backed by Great Britain.

“The Dominion was not the outgrowth of a popular movement, but the work of a small group of political leaders supported by important economic interests, and the final scheme was never submitted to popular ratification. Neither was it submitted to or accepted by the provincial legislatures.... The real authority behind the British North America Act...was that of the British Parliament” (McInnis 1959, 305).

The British North America Act (BNA) sought to correct many of the failures the British and Canadians saw in the United States’ federal constitution. Foremost, it made sure that the central government had ultimate authority over the provinces through several provisions. For example, the federal government held all residual powers not explicitly assigned to the provinces: control over the economy, superior powers of taxation over the provinces, and control of the regulation of trade and commerce (Gibbins 1982, 27). “It is reasonably clear... that the Fathers of Confederation intended to create a strong central government with exclusive and effective powers over economic policy for the purpose of building up a strong transcontinental economy which could resist the powerful economic pulls of the United States” (Mallory 1971, 332-333). This constitutional structure was

\textsuperscript{53} Initially Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland refused to join Canada. The rest of the provinces were created and joined Canada over the next forty years. Manitoba joined in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873, and Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, and finally Newfoundland joined in 1949.
further reinforced by the practice whereby the national government appointed the provincial lieutenant governors, who functioned as the provincial heads of state (Gibbins 1982, 28). Hence, the BNA appeared to create a government more centralized than that of the USA.

Despite the BNA and Prime Minister MacDonald’s early efforts to build a centralized Canadian state, the country evolved in the opposite direction. One reason for this was the actions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. After unification, several jurisdictional disputes emerged. Beginning with *Hodge v. The Queen*, 1883, in which the Council decided that the provinces were not subordinate to the federal government, over the next fifty years the Council made a series of decisions that indicated that the provinces had supreme power (McInnis 1964, 355). “By a process of attrition the plain intent of the framers of the constitution was nullified, and the federal government found itself confined by a constitutional strait jacket and unable to deal with the broad national problems that were to confront it as the twentieth century advanced” (McInnis 1964, 355). The actions of the Privy Council made it difficult for the federal government to forge common policies and, indirectly, a common identity for all of Canada.

Following unification, Canada’s attention focused on creating a continental state from the land holdings of British North America. Between 1867-1905, Canada more than

54 Furthermore, “the lieutenant governor had the right to withhold assent for provincial legislation, or to reserve such legislation for acceptance or rejection by the federal government” (Gibbins 1982, 28).

55 However, there has been a “sharp discrepancy between developments in Canada and the United States in one a weakening of the power of the national government, in the other a strengthening of it.” (Lipset 1989, 196).
doubled the number of provinces that were members of the confederation (from four to nine). Each new province undertook extensive bargaining with the federal government to get a good deal from membership in the Canadian federation. Critics argued that the negotiations to acquire the North-West, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island resulted in bargains that were "'insane,' coercive and always materialistic" (Smith 1986, 84). "But MacDonald realized what his critics seemed ever ready to ignore: 'the prospect of getting something new' was the one sure basis for expansion, and thus the bargains were essential if Canada was to fasten together the territories that would make it a transcontinental state" (Smith 1986, 84). For instance, when British Columbia applied for admission to Canada it asked the Dominion to assume a debt of $1,500,000, for an annual subsidy, and for the completion of a wagon road from Lake Superior to Vancouver and the terms it accepted in 1870 were very close to those demanded (McInnis 1964, 207). The bargains and Council rulings, in tandem, combined to make tensions between Ottawa and the provinces substantial very early in Canada's history.

The Canadian West

In 1868, Canada asked Great Britain to purchase the Hudson Bay Company's land west of Ontario in order to sell it to Canada. The British acquired the territory and Canada paid Britain 300,000 pounds for it while also making several land grants to the Hudson Bay Company (Bumsted 1998, 188). This purchase gave Canada 2,500,000 square miles of territory with a population of 175,000, largely composed of non-white peoples (Wittke 1928, 202). Immediately, surveyors and land speculators rushed into the
area. These events occurred without discussion with the people who already lived in the territory.

The Canadian government’s actions bred distrust amongst the inhabitants of the area. Louis Riel, leader of the Métis, a group of people of French Canadian and Indian descent, fought for recognition from the government of Canada. They wanted to confirm various rights, such as bilingualism, for the area. A rebellion ensued. Riel and his supporters took over the local fort and took several prisoners. Canada decided that it had better negotiate with the Métis leaders. “At what the Canadians always regarded as the point of a gun, the Métis extorted the Manitoba Act of 1870. This legislation granted provincial status to a Manitoba roughly equivalent to the old Red River settlement, at about 10,000 square miles with 1,400,000 acres set aside for the Métis and bilingual services guaranteed” (Bumsted 1998, 191). However, one of the most crucial demands of the rebels, control of lands and resources just as other provinces enjoyed under the BNA Act, was refused. “Control of lands and resources was ‘vested in the Crown, and administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of the Dominion,’ in the words of the Manitoba Act” (Conway 1983, 19).

Whereas Manitoba was annexed by Ottawa, British Columbia negotiated with it as an independent British Colony. It entered the union with full provincial status, the promise of an annual grant of $30,000, and the promise that the federal government would

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56 One of the prisoners, Thomas Scott, an Orangeman from Ontario, caused Riel problems. He was eventually tried, found guilty and hanged by Riel’s provisional government without being allowed to speak in his own defense. This made public opinion in Ontario turn against the rebels (Conway 1983, 19).
begin a railroad to the Pacific Ocean within two years and finish it in ten. In 1871, the province became a part of Canada after the public ratified the agreement (Wittke 1928, 207). Despite these seemingly generous concessions, B.C. was not altogether happy with confederation membership. In fact, in 1876 and 1878 the provincial legislature passed secession resolutions. "In 1881, B.C. was described as the 'spoilt child of Confederation' by the British colonial secretary, who had been called upon once again to support the province's demands for speedy fulfillment of the terms of union" (Blake 1986, 171). On the other hand, B.C. citizens recognized that the province needed the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and hence their fate was intertwined with the Canadian state (Blake 1986, 171).

Alberta and Saskatchewan did not immediately become provinces of Canada. Only after a huge influx of immigrants, over 1 million between 1896 and 1913, was it decided that the Northwest Territory needed a provincial government (Conway 1983, 27). "The two provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were established by the Autonomy Bills in 1905, and their resources, like those of Manitoba, were reserved for central administration" (McNaught 1988, 195). As was the case with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta entered "confederation as a colonial possession of the Dominion government. ...The prairies were simply purchased from absentee owners without consultations with the local people" (Conway 1983, 11).

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58 Alberta and Saskatchewan did not gain control of their natural resources until 1930.
Western Alienation and the Rise of Third Parties

According to many Canadian scholars (Macpherson 1953; Morton 1950; Blake 1984; Conway 1983; Pratt and Stevenson 1981) the terms under which the western provinces entered confederation had a long-term impact on their psyche. In other words, these terms have since been a partial catalyst for western alienation. "Western alienation is a concept that refers to an attitude held by many western Canadians regarding the Canadian political system. This attitude has two principle elements: (1) a sense that western Canadians are essentially powerless in national political life, and (2) national policies are at best indifferent to western concerns and at worst exploit the human and natural resources of western Canada" (Elton 1984, 47). In general, the quasi-colonial status under which the prairie provinces joined the confederation has resulted in more public support for the themes of western alienation in those provinces then in British Columbia (Blake 1984, 56).

It remains the case, though, that regardless of the terms of accession, in the early years of confederation, the western provinces shared some common grievances against the federal government. The grievances derived from a variety of sources, including the nature of the West’s economy (based primarily on agriculture and resource extraction) and

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59 For example, a 1980 survey done by the Canada West Foundation revealed that attitudes expressed by respondents from B.C. were much closer to the national average than other western provinces, especially Alberta (Elton 1984, 49).
the geographic distance between western and central Canada (Blake 1986, 171). For example, “BC complained that it bore an unfair share of the burdens of Confederation because most manufactured goods had to be imported from abroad or from central Canada, thus incurring extra costs from tariffs and freight charges” (Blake 1986, 171). At the same time, the West’s sparse population base meant it had little potency in parliament (See Table 2.1). “National parties were controlled in caucus by majorities drawn from central Canada to the advantage of the sectional interests of the East” (Morton 1950, 9).

These conditions, combined with resentment over the terms of accession, periodically erupted into serious bouts of western alienation. During these periods of intense western alienation, this theme often combined with other concerns to form the basis of a third or populist party in western Canada.

Western alienation and populism are integrally intertwined in the history of western Canada. Populism “stresses the worth of the common people and advocates their political supremacy, rejects intermediate associations between the mass and leaders, and directs its protests against some group which lies outside the local society” (Harrison 1995, 5). In

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For example, between 1921-1941, independent farmers and businessmen made up 48 percent of Alberta’s population, and in Canada as a whole they constituted 30 percent. Meanwhile, industrial wage and salary earners were 41 percent of Alberta’s population, in Ontario about 70 percent and in Canada as a whole about 60 percent (Macpherson 1953, 16).

The National Policy, primarily a policy of high protective tariffs started by MacDonald, resulted in western Canada paying more for manufactured goods than it would have had free trade been adopted (Witte 1928, 116). “It was argued that Canada’s infant industries needed protection until they could meet the competition of their more lusty and longer-established rival in the United States” (Witte 1928, 117).
western Canada “the people” were western Canadians and the group it protested against was the economic and political interests dominant in central Canada.

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<td>Percent of total seats</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of seats</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>295</td>
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“The variety of protest movements and parties expressed a common belief that the political rules of the game were fixed in favour of a broadly defined central Canada, and more specifically in favour of the economic elites located in the East” (Gibbins 1995, 47). This belief was held regardless of whether one’s ideological orientation was Left or Right. Both the WCC and the Reform Party claim to be part of the populist tradition of western Canadian politics. According to Preston Manning, “because the Reform Party’s roots are in the populist reform movements of western Canada, it is impossible to understand the
party and my role in it without looking at the significance of those movements” (Manning 1992, 7).

Indeed, western Canadians showed their frustration by supporting alternative parties. The earliest western based parties were the federal Progressive Party, the provincial United Farmers Parties of Alberta and Manitoba, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), and the Social Credit Party. Of particular relevance is that many of the themes raised by these parties resurface at the end of the twentieth century in the programs of the Western Canada Concept Party and Reform Party, some of which I presented in Table 2.2.

These parties experienced varying degrees of success. The party most central to this study is the Social Credit Party of Alberta. In 1935, William Aberhart founded the Social Credit Party of Alberta. The party ruled Alberta from 1935-1968. Its long serving leader, Ernest Manning, was Premier of Alberta from 1943-1968. A bit of a digression about Social Credit and Ernest Manning is necessary. Since this party dominated the politics of Alberta longer than any other party prior to the rise of the

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62 There was also the predominant feeling that western provinces “didn’t want provincial parties as a subordinate section of a federal party” (Macpherson 1953, 21).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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| Progressives                 | 1) The Progressives argued that the West was exploited by the control of tariffs, railways and credit, which took its wealth and gave it to the industrial center of Canada (Morton 1950, 319).  
                                | 2) The party “made the abolition of party discipline in the federal Parliament—with its attendant muzzling of regional voices—an important plank in its platform for the 1921 national election” (Stark 1992, 141).                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| The United Farmers Party     | 1) The United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) supported proportional representation, and the publics right to initiative, referendum and recall. (Laycock 1990, 73)  
                                | 2) The UFA wanted to abolish the National Policy and its high tariffs and instead promote free trade with Great Britain and, in certain products, with the U.S.A. (Morton 1950, 62).                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) | 1) “The CCF’s most obvious features were rejection of the two major parties as instruments of eastern business, support for state ownership of major industries, and advocacy of a farmer labour alliance against organized business” (Laycock 1990, 20).                                                                                                             |
| Social Credit Party          | 1) The Social Credit governments of Alberta were in total opposition to government ownership of any industry including utilities, opposed to bilingualism and multiculturalism, instituted social welfare programs that were means tested in Alberta, and continually charged that the Federal government was socialist (Finkel 1989, 145-152; Macpherson 1953; Harrison 1995, 30).  
                                | 2) The Social Credit Party was known to be supported by the petite bourgeoisie (Macpherson 1953; Harrison 1995; Lipset 1950)⁶⁴.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Table 2.2. Excerpts from Third Parties’ platforms based in western Canada

⁶⁴ Macpherson defines the petite bourgeoisie as independent commodity producers (farmers, their families, and others working on their own account) (Macpherson 1953,15-16). This group oscillates between conservatism (often even reactionary) and radicalism (Macpherson 1953, 226). As it pertains to Canada, I adopt Macpherson’s definition of the petite bourgeoisie for the rest of this study.
WCC and because Premier Manning was the father of Preston Manning, leader of the Reform Party of Canada.

Ernest Manning governed Alberta during a time when it experienced a boom in prosperity as the production of oil in the province accelerated in the 1940 and 1950s. This oil lured many conservative American oilmen to the area, and especially to Calgary where they supported Manning’s politics. Alberta’s prosperity allowed Manning’s administrations to emphasize lassiez faire economics and conversely spend lavishly on infrastructure and education in Alberta (Harrison 1995, 30). His virulent anti-communist/socialist rhetoric fit well with the Cold War period. Spending on the general public by the Alberta government was not reformist in character. “Manning’s government was far to the right of Canadian consensus in the 1960s” (Finkel 1989, 154). The Social Credit Party primarily attracted the support of the small business owners and farmers (Harrison 1995, 28).  

Elements from the Social Credit Party and other parties’ platforms can be detected in the platforms of the Western Canada Concept and Reform parties. Both have argued that federal economic policy is structured by Central Canada without considering western

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65 In 1968, Ernest Manning retired from the party leadership amidst allegation that the party was dominated by elderly rural rich men while 20 percent of Albertans lived below the poverty line (Finkel 1989, 174-177). In 1971, Social Credit was unseated by the provincial Conservative Party and was never able to recapture control of the government. At the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, the Social Credit Party fell apart not knowing how to function as the loyal opposition. The party’s support continued to decline and reactionaries gained control. The Social Credit phenomenon was not unique to Alberta. British Columbia and later Quebec also had Social Credit parties for varying lengths of time (See Maurice Pinard, 1971 for more details). In 1952, British Columbia elected a Social Credit government and a long history of governing began in British Columbia. The Social Credit Party also contested elections at the federal level with minimal success.
Canada’s interest. The Reform Party has adopted popular political reforms of the past, such as the elimination of party discipline in the federal parliament and advocating the need for referendum, recall, and initiative to make the MPs in the House of Commons more accountable to their constituents in the provinces rather than to the national parties dominated by eastern interests. These themes are reminiscent of the Progressives and United Farmers Parties’ message. Additionally, the conservatism of the Social Credit regime has had an influence on the Reform Party, which has adopted the need for a residualist or minimalist welfare state in Canada.

**World War II to the present**

Federal-provincial relations were relatively congenial in the two decades following World War II as Canada found its industrial capacities at a new level of maturity at the end of hostilities. “There was spectacular expansion of the economy, not only in levels of production but also in the scope and diversity of natural resources” (McInnis 1959, 510).

While federal-provincial tensions were limited following World War II, circumstances began to change in the 1960s. It is only since the 1960s that provincial powers seem to be on the ascent and federal power appears to be dwindling, making Canada the most decentralized country in the industrialized world (Stevenson 1995, 420). Accompanying the decentralization trend is that, “provincial revenues have been greater than federal revenues in every year since 1977, although they were only half as large as federal revenues in 1960” (Stevenson 1995, 420). This implies a substantial increase in provincial power.
During Pierre Trudeau’s long tenure (1968-1983) as Prime Minister of Canada, tensions over national unity surfaced sporadically. In 1969, the Official Languages Act was passed affirming the equality of French and English in all government activities. Trudeau’s aim was respect for the French language and protection of the right of French minorities to use it in interactions with the federal government. “The Multicultural Act of 1971 officially [designated] Canada as a country ‘that [was] multicultural in a bilingual framework’” (Lipset 1989, 179).

In 1976, the Parti Québécois won the provincial election and subsequently held a referendum on sovereignty-association with Canada in May of 1980. The 1980 referendum was defeated 40 percent oui and 60 non, a defeat that motivated Trudeau to forge a new constitution for Canada. In 1982, the Canadian constitution was repatriated amidst controversy. Many Canadians questioned the ramifications of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, similar to the U.S. Bill of Rights, and the accompanying notwithstanding clause, which allowed the provinces to override the Charter with provincial legislation. The repatriation of the Constitution was viewed as a unilateral move by Trudeau to impose his vision upon Canada, which consisted of coast-to-coast bilingualism and a stronger central government (Cheffins and Johnson 1991, 57-58). These events seemed to give western alienation new vigor in the 1970s and 1980s. “In the wake of a number of federal moves culminating in the Trudeau government’s national energy

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66 Trudeau was not Prime Minister for nine months in 1979 when the Progressive Conservative Party formed a short-lived minority government under Joe Clark.
67 The repatriation of the constitution involved completing the transfer of complete authority over constitutional issues from the British House of Commons to the Canadian House of Commons.
program and constitutional package—which progressively alienated western public opinion—aggrieved westerns began to give up on the national center altogether” (Stark 1992, 142). On one hand, since a major catalyst for increasing alienation in the 1970s was Trudeau’s (the Liberal government’s) obsession with Quebec, language policy, and constitutional change, western discontent began to take on an anti-French complexion (Gibbins 1995, 46-47). On the other hand, Trudeau’s seeming insensitivity to western concerns as manifested in the implementation of the National Energy Program also served as a catalyst for western alienation (Tupper 1981, 86).

Trudeau’s imposition of the National Energy Program in 1980 sparked particularly great resentment.

“The NEP (National Energy Program) and its companion legislation (the Petroleum Incentives Program [PIP], the Natural Gas Export Tax [NGET], and the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax [PGRT] aimed at increasing the Canadianization of the petroleum industry through both public and private sector strategies. The programs also aimed at increasing the federal share of petroleum rents, necessarily at the expense of the producing provinces and the petroleum companies” (Harrison 1995, 59).

Specific provisions of this legislation included: “the unilateral imposition of a new four-year pricing regimes for oil and natural gas; the establishment of a new revenue sharing scheme which would increase Ottawa’s share of petroleum revenues by levying several new taxes, including a new tax on natural gas sold in Canada or exported; the launching of a massive energy substitution program to reduce oil imports; and the creation of a program to increase Canadian ownership in the petroleum industry” (Toner and Bregha 1981, 1).
In Alberta, the biggest producer of natural gas and oil in Canada, the reaction to the NEP was swift and uniformly negative. Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed stated that the energy policy was “an outright attempt to take over the resources of this province...(Pratt and Stevenson 1981, 165). Almost immediately, Lougheed announced a reduction in oil production and the provincial government’s intention to launch a court case to repeal the NEP.

As a result of the Liberal government’s actions, politics in western Canada, especially in Alberta, were pointedly anti-Ottawa. Western alienation manifested itself in a variety of groups at this time, many of which were very short-lived. The two most prominent were the West-Fed pressure group led by Elmer Knutson and the Western Canada Concept Party led by Douglas Christie—both of which advocated separatism. “Urban or rural, the separatists were united by a belief that all federal policies were designed to exploit the West and drain its wealth...” (Harrington 1981, 34). The separatists argued that if Quebec and Trudeau did not go, western Canada would secede (Harrington 1981, 25).

In 1980, with tensions running high between the federal and Albertan governments, Rene Levesque held a referendum on Quebec’s independence. Trudeau began to see western alienation and Quebec nationalism as one and the same.68 “At the constitutional conference in September 1980, Trudeau charged that more premiers were

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68 The Liberal government commented that “if there is a bottom line to the referendum debate [Quebec’s 1980 referendum]...it surely is provincial self-interest. Premier Levesque has, if nothing else, provided the catalyst the premiers needed to make their own pitch for more power, control, and independence from Ottawa” (Milne 1986, 27).
coming to share ‘the concept of Canada put forward by Mr. Levesque;’ regionalism had by then become in the eyes of the Trudeau government hardly more than a variant of Quebec separatism” (Milne 1986, 27). Following the imposition of the NEP and the 1980 Quebec sovereignty referendum, Canada experienced a rise in the tensions between the federal and provincial governments.

The West’s reaction to Trudeau’s various policies was to vote in increasingly greater numbers for the Progressive Conservative Party in federal elections, as is evident from Table 2.3 which shows a steady upward trend in the number of Progressive Conservative MPs sent to the federal parliament by Alberta and British Columbia. Preston Manning, leader of the Reform Party, argues in his autobiography that voting for the Progressive Conservative Party and New Democratic Party was the natural outlet for the frustrations of western Canadians (Manning 1992, 92).

In addition to voting for opposition parties, the West began developing its own proposals for institutional reforms. The West held a very distinctive position during the constitutional negotiations of the 1980s and 1990s. British Columbia and Alberta promoted stronger representation for the provinces at the federal level. In 1985, Alberta’s government advocated the creation of the Triple E Senate. The Triple E-Senate is elected with equal representation from each province and has effective powers. Presently, the Senate is a relatively weak chamber. Its members are appointed by the Prime Minister and serve until age seventy-five and there is not an equal number of them from each
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<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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province. While the weak Senate does not provide for the equal representation of the provinces, neither does the federal parliament where the number of MP’s from each province is determined by the province’s population. Thus, the Triple E Senate proposal appeals greatly to the West, which has a great deal of economic power but very little political power because both houses of the Canadian legislature bases representation to at least some extent on the population of each province. This hurts the West because it is not heavily populated in comparison to Ontario and Quebec. The effect of adopting the Triple E-Senate, the West envisions, would be to enhance the powers, legitimacy, and maybe even the centralization of the federal government, all of which are contrary to Quebec’s wishes.

In 1986, western alienation was further aggravated by the awarding of the CF-18 fighter jet contract. A Quebec firm was given the contract to do maintenance on the CF-18 fighter jet even though a lower bid was submitted by a Winnipeg firm. Youth Minister Jean Charest said, “the government knew the contract decision would cost it support in the West while winning support in Quebec. Similarly, other decisions will satisfy the West and anger other regions, but that is one of the realities of trying to run a national government.”

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69 “The Senate was originally intended as a conservative check on the House of Commons (there is a property qualification for service) as well as a way to represent Canada’s regions more equally” (Weaver 1992b, 42). Currently, “the Senate has 104 members: 24 each from Ontario and Quebec, 24 from the Western provinces (6 each from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), 30 from the Atlantic provinces (10 each from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 6 from Newfoundland, and 4 from Prince Edward Island), and 1 each from the Yukon and Northwest Territories” (Weaver 1992b, 42).

At that point, it became obvious that Brian Mulroney’s Progressive Conservative Party would not represent western Canada’s interests adequately so Preston Manning decided it was time to form a new federal party. At its founding convention in 1987, Manning became the party’s leader and it adopted the motto, “The West Wants In”. The Reform Party set off to make western Canada an integral and adequately represented member of the Canadian federation. To accomplish this, the party pushed a regional agenda (details later in this chapter). Some key issues of the party’s platform included: the creation of a Triple E-Senate, the need to balance the federal budget and make politicians more accountable, and opposition to the federal government’s bilingual and multicultural policies.

In the meantime, further constitutional discussions, the Meech Lake Accord (1987) and the Charlottetown Agreement (1991), illustrated the discord between western Canada and Quebec and Ontario. The Meech Lake Accord revised the Canadian constitution by recognizing Quebec as a “distinct society,” giving each province a veto over most amendments to the Constitution, compensating all provinces for federal government programs they refused to join, and holding regular discussions of Senate reform (Bumsted 1998, 385). The Charlottetown Agreement (1991) was an even more encompassing document. The revised constitutional package “offered Quebec a distinct society, the provinces a veto, the Aboriginal peoples self-government, and the country both Supreme Court and Senate reform” (Bumsted 1998, 386-387). On October 26, 1992, the country rejected the Charlottetown proposal, with 44.8 percent voting in favor
and 54.2 percent against. One of the reasons the Charlottetown Accord was defeated was because the Reform Party campaigned against it.

The Reform Party and its supporters in the West were reluctant to ratify a constitution that recognized Quebec as a distinct society primarily because its vision of Canada opposes the philosophy underlying the distinct society clause. Many western Canadians believe that Canada is a country of ten equal provinces, not two founding peoples. Hence, Reform argues that conferring distinct society status on Quebec gives it jurisdiction and power beyond that of the other provinces. Secondly, western Canadians are more likely to believe that Canada consists of a melting pot of peoples rather than a compact between two founding peoples, the French and English.

"Although the region (West) is often seen as the heartland of multiculturalism, the emergent nationalist spirit was closer in many ways to the myth of the American melting pot, and to the associated American frontier experience, than it was to more contemporary notions of multicultural mosaic. A polyglot and ethnically diverse frontier society generated strong pressures for cultural assimilation and the use of a single, unifying language, pressures that often compromised the constitutional rights of the small francophone minority in the West" (Gibbins 1995, 48).

In 1993, Mulroney was ousted as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) and Kim Campbell became the new Prime Minister of Canada. The election of that same year went badly for the very unpopular PCP. Under these conditions, the Liberal Party won the 1993 Federal Election with 177 of the 295 seats. The Progressive Conservatives won 2 seats, Reform 52, the Bloc Quebecois 54, and the NDP 9.
Western Canada Concept Party

The Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) emerged as the result of a multi-provincial speaking tour undertaken by Douglas Christie in the summer of 1978. During his 45-day tour of British Columbia and Alberta, he spoke to audiences about his conviction that western Canada should become an independent nation. He sought to create a

“movement for the development of a new nation out of a territory defined by culture, language and economic interests. It was necessary to establish a new party as a vehicle for western Canadian independence because it seemed to be the only way to free the West from the bankrupt federal system. The federal system is bankrupt in the eyes of western Canadians because central Canada, reflected by the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, have all political, economic, and cultural power and therefore all of Canada’s federal institutions reflect the wishes of those provinces only.”

Christie’s vision was explicitly separatist, equating the WCC with independence movements in other areas such as Scotland. “Canada was not either created by God or created permanently or fundamentally on a sound foundation so in the end it will fail and many people and I regret this, wait for Quebec to solve the problem.”

Christie attracted people to his meetings by making speeches that listed a litany of grievances that the West had against central Canada. The following is an example of the type of comments WCC members made to arouse support in the West.

“Whereas the nation of Canada, through long-standing usage and its constitution, has abused the West and catered to Quebec and Ontario with patronage and corrupt favoritism, robbing the West and effectively enslaving its people to laws and choices they have not made; whereas, the government of Canada has imposed bilingualism, multiculturalism, special status for Indians, an immigration policy which is destroying our identity, a debt which we can

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71 Christie undertook a similar speaking tour in 1980.
72 Phone interview with Douglas Christie 10/1/96.
73 Phone interview with Douglas Christie 10/1/96.
never pay, a bureaucracy which we can never control and taxes of all sorts which we can no longer endure...” (Christie, Western Separatist Papers, September 1996, 8).

By 1980, the WCC was officially established and registered as a political party in British Columbia. Soon after, branches organized in the other three western provinces. Each provincial party had substantial autonomy and was organized individually to contest provincial level elections. Early in the party’s history, however, a rift emerged between Douglas Christie, the party’s founder, and the Alberta leadership for a variety of reasons. After the rift in 1981, Christie had very little contact with the Alberta branch of the WCC and instead focused on his leadership of British Columbia’s branch of the party. From this point on, this research focuses exclusively on the Alberta branch of the WCC. Initially, the WCC’s support was very volatile. Except for a surge in support near the end of 1980, the WCC did not gain much publicity or popularity until 1982 (Harrington 1981, 29-31). The volatility of the WCC’s support may have reflected the public’s fickle attitude towards separatism. In March 1980, an Edmonton Journal-Calgary Herald telephone poll revealed that 32 percent of the 600 Albertans polled wanted to separate (Harrington 1981, 40). The following year, a poll released by the Canada West Foundation in May 1981 showed that only 15 percent of Albertans were in favor of a separate country (Harrison 1995, 74).

“Even more revealing, however, was that 49 percent agreed with the statement that

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74 The rift revolved around Christie’s desire to maintain tight control over the organization, personality, and policy issues. These issues will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

75 Hence, from this point forward when I refer to the WCC, I am referring directly to the Alberta branch of the WCC. Christie has no influence over the Alberta branch after 1981.

76 The cry of separatism was strongest in Alberta; although the WCC organized parties in all four western provinces (Harrington 1981, 24).
‘Western Canadians get so few benefits from being part of Canada that they might as well go it on their own” (Harrison 1995, 74).

The Western Canada Concept’s early platforms reflected themes typical of western alienation. It promoted separatism and proposed to eliminate the National Energy Program (NEP), metrification, Official Bilingualism, and multiculturalism. Initially, a few of the party’s candidates advocated adopting the Triple-E Senate. A crucial problem with the party’s platform was that its position on separatism was not very clear. Some in the party argued that if elected, it would immediately push for changes in federal government policy. Only if federal policy changes failed to materialize would they advocate the independence of western Canada. Other party leaders suggested that separatism was the party’s chief objective, period.

However, the party’s future looked bright when Gordon Kessler, aided by Howard Thompson, won the Olds-Didsbury by-election in February 1982 for a seat in the Alberta provincial legislature. After the election victory, the party decided it was necessary to hold a leadership convention to confirm a party leader and executive board before the next Alberta general election, but this convention only served to lay bare the ongoing problem of internal party cohesion. The WCC had constantly struggled with internal feuding, especially over the question of separatism. The problem was the WCC’s initial quick success led to a situation in which everyone wanted to be the leader and no one the follower.77 A powerful faction of the WCC Alberta leadership led by Gordon Kessler, Howard Thompson, and Jean Ferguson believed separatism should be used as a bargaining

77 Phone interview with Ray Speaker 8/5/96.
chip or as a last resort if the federal government did not acquiesce to its demands. Kessler wanted to downplay separatism and instead emphasize that the WCC would stress good government if it were elected. Others such as Al Maygard, Wes Westmore, and Jack Ramsay were die-hard separatists. This dispute led to the resignations of Al Maygard, WCC leader, and Wes Westmore, WCC president, in May of 1982. Initially, confusion resulted as the former leaders locked the party’s offices, disconnected the party’s phone lines and froze the party’s assets.

Still, the leadership struggle was not over. Howard Thompson and Gordon Kessler, both from the moderate faction of the party, contested the party leadership. In the end, Gordon Kessler, the party’s lone member of Alberta’s legislature (MLA), became the WCC’s party leader. The faction that presented the separatist option as a last resort won control of the leadership.

The WCC’s leadership struggle had a lasting effect on the party. According to the vice president of the executive board, Jean Ferguson, after a disappointing showing in the 1982 Alberta general election, where the WCC’s 78 candidates received 11.76 percent of the vote and none of the candidates were elected, the immature and inexperienced Kessler turned his back on Thompson and that side of the party. The party seemed to split down the middle, with many of its well-known members, including Jean Ferguson and Howard Thompson, leaving it. All that was left of the WCC was a rump of the previous party. With the party in disarray, some of the old separatist supporters, particularly Jack Ramsay,

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79 Phone interview with Jean Ferguson on October 10, 1996
attempted to reorganize the party. In 1984-1985, the WCC was reincarnated as a separatist party under his leadership. Compared with the party’s previous foray into electoral politics, the 1986 Alberta provincial election was a disaster. It received 0.65 percent of the votes with twenty candidates. Many former WCC members ran as independents in various ridings. In Alberta, the WCC disintegrated with the rise of the Reform Party. After some hesitation, the Reform Party allowed Jack Ramsay to become a member of the party, and he eventually became a Reform member of parliament in 1993.

The Reform Party

Preston Manning and many of the other leaders of the Reform Party were no strangers to politics. Some of the key players involved in the development of the Reform Party such as Ray Speaker, Preston Manning, and Warner Schmidt had been involved directly or indirectly in politics for years.\(^8^0\) During 1985-1986, Ray Speaker and Preston Manning held a series of seminars in the major cities of Alberta to try to popularize various ideas or policies that they had been discussing for some time.\(^8^1\) Eventually a meeting with notables from western Canada led to the idea to hold a larger political meeting. The Reform Association of Canada was created to help organize a convention,

\(^8^0\) Several former members of Alberta’s Social Credit Party were involved in the initial organization of the Reform Party, including: Ray Speaker, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons in 1993, Werner Schmidt, and Charles Strahl. Even so, it would be a grave oversimplification to argue that the Reform Party is just the Social Credit Party reincarnated (Reform Party, MP interview on 8/13/96 b). The Reform Party’s support and policy breadth is much greater than Social Credit’s. Furthermore, while the Social Credit party was immensely popular at the provincial level, the Reform Party wants to play a role on the national stage and has rejected forming a provincial wing to participate in local politics (Stark 1992, 143).

\(^8^1\) Phone interview by author with Ray Speaker on 8/5/96
called the Western Assembly on Canada’s Economic and Political Future, in Vancouver, May 1987.

Well in advance of the Vancouver Assembly, Manning asked Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister and leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party, John Turner, Leader of the Federal Liberal Party, and Ed Broadbent, Federal leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) “to send a representative to explain why western Canadians should still consider the traditional federal parties as adequate vehicles for expressing and promoting western demands for change in the federal arena” (Manning 1992, 140). The Liberal Party and NDP sent observers but no official representatives, and the Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) declined to send anyone. The letter from Mulroney welcomed any proposals on western economic diversification and reminded them that he was fighting for Senate reform and had several western MP’s in his cabinet (Manning 1992, 140). The PCP encouraged members not to attend the assembly because they felt that Mr. Manning was really bent on forming a new federal party and thereby fracturing the PCP’s support.

During the meeting in Winnipeg, delegates were asked to consider whether or not it might be possible for the Reform Association to accomplish some of its goals by working through existing parties. It soon became apparent, however, that

“a huge number of people in western Canada were dissatisfied and felt that Ottawa wasn’t serving the people properly. A group of people went and looked at all the existing parties and tried to find an avenue whereby they could institute some changes within an existing party and that just didn’t seem possible, so there was really no other option or alternative but to start a new party.” 82

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82 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/12/96.
79
One of the reasons it appeared impossible to influence existing parties was because the established parties' internal structure and functioning did not lend them to renewal from within.\textsuperscript{83} By the close of the convention, 300 delegates had voted in favor of forming a new political party.

The official founding convention of the Reform Party occurred in Winnipeg in the fall of 1987. The convention ran smoothly except for a leadership skirmish between supporters of Stan Roberts and those of Preston Manning. This resulted in Roberts abruptly withdrawing from the leadership race, alleging irregularities in the party's bookkeeping and in the balloting by party delegates.\textsuperscript{84} After Roberts had stormed out of the assembly, Preston Manning was elected party leader. The motto taken from that convention was that the “West Wants In!”

In 1988, the Reform Party contested the November federal elections and received 5 percent of the vote in British Columbia and 15 percent in Alberta. They ran candidates in some ridings in Manitoba and Saskatchewan but didn’t do as well there. In March 1989, Deborah Grey became the first Reform member of parliament by winning a by-election in the Alberta riding of Beaver River. Meanwhile, in October 1989, the Province of Alberta held an election to fill a vacant Senate seat.\textsuperscript{85} Reform candidate Stan Waters won the province-wide election and, after some delay, was appointed to the Senate in June of 1990. He became the first elected Senator in Canadian history.

\textsuperscript{83} Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/6/96.
\textsuperscript{84} Joan Bryden. “Squabble kicks off new party,” \emph{Calgary Herald}. 11/2/87.
\textsuperscript{85} Senators in Canada are not elected; they are appointed by the Prime Minister. Therefore, Alberta’s actions caused great controversy.
Initially, the Reform Party’s policy agenda was decidedly regional in nature as it again took up the cause of western alienation. Some of the grievances emphasized by the Reform Party included the unfairness of federal government legislation and decisions as reflected by the National Energy Program (NEP) and the CF-18 fighter jet contract, the West’s lack of adequate political representation, and the fact that Quebec’s concerns dominated the federal government’s agenda. As a result, Reform advocated the creation of the Triple-E Senate, the subjection of all federal legislation and spending to a regional fairness test, and the elimination of the federal government’s official policy on bilingualism and multiculturalism. There was also a populist sub theme to the Reform Party’s agenda. It advocated referendum, recall, initiative, and the elimination of party discipline (McCormick 1990; Laycock 1994, Harrison 1995).

In 1991 at the Party’s convention in Saskatoon, it was proposed that the membership decide whether or not Reform should be expanded west of Manitoba. In a party referendum in May of 1991, it was decided that Reform should try to organize citizens west of Manitoba. Another important accomplishment of the 1991 convention was that Preston Manning unveiled his vision for Canada. “New Canada should be a balanced, democratic federation of provinces, distinguished by the conservation of its magnificent environment, the viability of its economy, the acceptance of its social responsibilities and recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all its provinces and citizens” (Reform Party 1991, iv).

See chapter three for more details.
After 1991, the Reform Party does not fit so neatly into the regional party category. This is because the party decided to organize in all of English Canada and, after 1993, it even tried to organize Quebecers. Even so, the party’s stronghold today is still Western Canada, especially the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

In the October 1993 federal election, Reform ran candidates in 206 out of Canada’s 295 ridings. The results of the election gave the Reform Party 52 seats in the House of Commons with 19 percent of the popular vote.\(^87\) Meanwhile, the Liberal Party won 177 seats, the Bloc Quebecois 54, the Progressive Conservatives won 2 seats and the NDP 9. After 1993, the Reform Party began its consolidation phase. The result was 60 seats and Official Opposition status after the 1997 federal election. All 60 seats were from districts in western Canada.

**Italy**

It is impossible to understand the Lega Nord and the recent crisis in Italian politics without a firm grasp of Italy’s history. If there is a theme to the history of “Italy”, it must be political, social, and economic fragmentation as the state of Italy did not exist until 1861 (Duggan 1994, 4).\(^88\) For example, “the historian Arnold Toynbee observed that there were more independent states in central Italy in the fourteenth century than in the entire world in 1934” (Duggan 1994, 2).

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\(^87\) The Reform Party achieved these electoral results without running candidates in Quebec and very few candidates in Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island.

\(^88\) From the second century B.C. to the Middle Ages, the term “Italy” had a strictly geographic meaning, and from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century “Italian” referred to the language used by the upper-class elite who lived on the penisula (Zamagni 1993, 1).
While it might seem reasonable to focus this account on post unification Italy, it would leave out essential pieces of the puzzle that explain the rhetoric, symbolism, and rationalizations used by the Lega Nord. My intention has been to provide a focused overview of Italy’s history by dwelling on the 12-15th centuries, unification period (Risorgimento), and post World War II era because these are central to the Lega Nord’s story. This section claims no originality or comprehensiveness.

**Early History 476-1499**

Although the area known today as Italy was unified under the Roman Empire almost two thousand years ago, for numerous centuries after the Western Roman Empire’s fall in 476 A.D., Italy experienced great political, social, and economic fragmentation. This fragmentation derived primarily from three different sources: topographic challenges, outside powers, and internal rivalries (Duggan 1994, 9-59).89 These themes occur repeatedly in the histories of the three macro-Italian regions—North, Middle, and South—focused on in this chapter.

In the early years, 476-1000, geography played an important role in Italy’s development. Its location in the middle of the Mediterranean, which was for centuries one of the main centers of civilization, meant that Italy profited from being at the center of trade routes (Zamagni 1993, I). This was the time of the great ports such as Amalfi,

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89 Since the earliest days, Italy’s fragmentation has been reinforced by topographic challenges including the mountains in the South, the separation of Sicily and Sardinia from the mainland, and the relatively long distance between North and Southern Italy.
Naples, Genoa, Pisa, and Venice. The civilization that developed in the sea towns was intellectually and technically advanced. This was the place where communal self-government rapidly took shape (Proccaci 1968, 8).

However, Italy’s location was also very difficult to defend. Its long sea border, coupled with powerful neighbors to the northwest and northeast, meant that between 476-1000 Italy was invaded by the Arabs, Lombards, Normans, Byzantines, and Hungarians (Proccacci 1968, 1). Each of these groups held sway over different parts of the peninsula, yet none succeeded in conquering and controlling it entirely, partly due to the mountains that divided Italy.

By the twelfth century, northern Italy began its unique trajectory of development in which independent, wealthy communes and city-states flourished. The creation of prosperous, independent communes was the result of Italy being at the center of extensive trade, a breakdown of centralized political control after the ninth century, and the extraordinary growth in the economy that continued until the fourteenth century (Duggan 1994, 37). Some of the most powerful and wealthy cities included: Venice, Pisa, Genoa, Milan, and Florence.

The history of the northern communes (towns) is markedly different from that of the rest of Italy. There was a sharp division between commune and rural life in cultural as

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90 It was these material conditions that laid the foundation for the cultural and artistic achievements of the Italian Renaissance (Duggan 1994, 38).
91 “At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Florence was the most important European trading and financial market and its gold florin was the preferred and most widely used means of payment both within Europe and beyond” (Cipolla 1994, 199).
well as economic terms. "The merchants, the professionals, the craftsmen who lived in the
towns did not acknowledge the control of the rural world or its cultural values; on the
contrary, they evolved their own culture and their own values" that were in direct conflict
with the rural-feudal establishment (Cipolla 1994, 120; Duggan 1994, 38). The feudal
nobility was upset by the cities’ practices. For example, Otto of Frisingen, uncle of Holy
Roman Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa wrote:

“In the Italian communes they do not disdain to grant the girdle of
knighthood or honorable positions to young people of inferior station, and
even to workers of the vile mechanical arts, whom other peoples bar like
the plague from the more respectable and honorable circles” (Cipolla 1994,
121).

“So the Italy of the communes as a whole, in spite of its many-centered-ness and its
particularism, acquired a certain homogeneity: that of an intensely urbanized area. ...In the
long run this was bound to favour the formation of a sort of national Italian consciousness,
above and beyond the divisions of local patriotism” (Procacci 1968, 31).

Economic prosperity was driven by the trade and craft guilds and the professionals
in northern Italy (Putnam 1993; Cipolla 1994). Professional groups in the thirteenth and
fourteenth centuries in northern Italy stand out for their size, especially the notaries that
were the bureaucrats of the time (Cipolla 1994, 69-70). For every 10,000 inhabitants,
Verona had 124 notaries (1268), Bologna had 212 notaries (1283), Milan had 250
notaries (1288), and Pisa had 90 notaries (1428) (Cipolla 1994, 69). The importance of

92 “The revolutionary character of the city in Italy was more apparent than elsewhere...” (Cipolla 1994,
121).
the professions to the economic prosperity of the Italian cities can hardly be exaggerated because their high incomes increase demand for distinctive clothing, houses, entertainment, and educational services for their children (Cipolla 1994, 69-70). A bonafide middle/upper middle class was created during this early period.

However, these small city-states' prosperity and independence were often threatened by foreign incursions. Particularly noteworthy was the struggle between the Holy Roman Emperor, Federico Barbarossa, and the northern communes that began shortly after he assumed the throne in 1152. This conflict lasted more than twenty years. To fight off the emperor's attacks, the communes decided to cooperate by creating the Lombard League. The League was composed of knights representing northern cities who took an oath at Pontida to create an alliance, the original Lombard League, against Federico Barbarossa. "In 1176 he (Barbarossa) was defeated at the Battle of Legnano by the combined forces of the northern cities grouped together in the 'Lombard League' (Lega Lombarda). Six years later, with the Peace of Constance, Frederick formally acknowledged the autonomy of the communes" (Duggan 1994, 44). This battle was "one of the key episodes of nationalist historiography" (Duggan 1994, 6).

For the most part, however, peaceful cooperation between the communes was limited. Partly because the city-states were so successful, rivalries amongst elites developed, limiting cooperation and attempts at unification (Zariski 1972, 12). "Without any strong executive power, the elite landowning nobles and wealthy merchants...fought

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93 The defeat of Frederick is mythologized by Giuseppe Verdi in the opera La Battaglia di Legnano (The Battle of Legnano) (1849).
for supremacy” (Duggan 1994, 43). Ultimately, the North paid a high price for this competition. During the 16th century, northern Italy fell prey to foreign armies. Control of the city-states oscillated between the French or the Hapsburgs. In 1535, Milan became a Spanish Hapsburg’s possession. Only Genoa and Venice remained as free states during this time.

In its rhetoric and symbolism, the Lega Nord draws its inspiration from this early period of Italian history. In particular, it has glorified “the communes of the Middle Ages: its symbol was the medieval knight, Alberto da Giussano, one of the leaders of the Lombard League which had defeated the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa at the Battle of Legnano in 1176” (Duggan 1994, 292).

While the northern communes were experiencing unprecedented prosperity, a quite different regime was taking shape in central Italy. Beginning in 756, the Pope began to build a theocratic, feudal regime in central Italy. Initially, he only governed the area immediately around Rome but by the fourteenth century the Papacy had expanded its landholdings to include most of Lazio, Umbria, Marche, and Romagna. The politics of the Papal state were extremely complicated. The Papacy’s authority fluctuated tremendously, primarily because the Pope had no army to enforce his authority (Duggan 1994, 45). When threatened, the Pope recruited local or external lords to defend his claims. As one can imagine, this caused all sorts of problems. Oftentimes, the lord who agreed to help the Pope later challenged his power. The local aristocracy was a constant threat and often

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94 Of course there were pockets of communal prosperity in parts of central Italy.
challenged the Pope’s rule and more than once forced him to leave the city (Procacci 1968, 67). Throughout this period, the Popes “regarded any effort to unite Italy as a threat to their own sovereignty, and so foiled any attempts by the Holy Roman emperor to gain hegemony over Italy” (Zariski 1972, 11).

When the Pope was governing the region, his strategy for ruling the area was straightforward—“guaranteeing the landowners and nobility of the various towns and provinces the peaceful enjoyment of their incomes and privileges, while draining towards the Roman curia the maximum possible amount of tax” (Procacci 1968, 70). Feudalism, and thus agrarian lifestyles, flourished in the Papal States with the Church and barons owning large amounts of land farmed by peasants. According to Mattei Dogan, the Papacy ruled central Italy just like any other feudal landlord, breeding resentment among the peasantry (Dogan 1967, 183). By the second half of the 15th century, the Pope’s power was substantial, which allowed him to make Rome a magnificent city during the Renaissance while the Papal state’s provincial cities lost their vitality and stagnated (Procacci 1968, 70).

Finally, the Norman aristocracy, known for its particularly harsh authoritarian rule, ran a highly centralized regime in Sicily and southern Italy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. “The Norman monarchy in southern Italy, like that in England, was feudal. The

95 For example, during most of the 14th century, the Pope was forced to leave Italy and instead reside in France (Duggan 1994, 46).
96 This legacy is reflected most prominently in the popularity of the Communist Party in central Italy (Dogan 1967, 184).
conquered lands were split up and assigned as fiefs to the conquering warriors who, once they had become barons, were kept in fealty to their king” (Procacci 1968, 16). Roger I ruled Sicily at its height. Under his rule, intellectual life and architectural achievements in the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily abounded (Procacci 1968, 17). The cities of southern Italy, Naples, Palermo, and Amalfi grew into brilliant commercial and cultural centers (Duggan 1994, 13). However after the death of Roger I, the South began to decline significantly, never to fully recover. One reason for the South’s decline was that the kings following Roger I were weak. The barons took advantage of the weak kings by causing political turmoil (Smith 1968, 36-38). A series of civil wars followed. Outside actors took advantage of the situation and several foreign armies invaded demanding protection payments by the official heir of the moment (Smith 1968, 44-48).

The South experienced a brief reprieve from its decline with the reign of Fredrick II (1208). In order to restore the authority of the state he declared several new laws to bring the barons under his control. Frederick had no qualms about trying to dictate the public and private behavior of his subjects and hence created a totalitarian regime (Smith 1968, 53). Frederick II developed an advanced state for the Medieval Age. He created a state university to train bureaucrats and in 1231, Frederick II codified the monarchy’s authority over justice and public order as well as the privileges of the feudal barons (Putnam 1993, 122).

Several acts of Frederick II contributed to the decline of the South’s economy toward the end of this reign. First, he brutally repressed several uprisings by the Moslems.
in Sicily who tended to be the industrial artisans and entrepreneurs (Smith 1968, 59).

"Between 1160 and 1246, emigration and slaughter of these Moslems left wide areas waste and empty: it has been estimated that half the village settlements which existed in the early Middle Ages were to disappear subsequently" (Smith 1968, 59). Secondly, he claimed a regalian monopoly to several important industries (mining, dyeing industry, and salt). The results of these actions was the decimation of the entrepreneurial class and a lack of competition in the mining industries. Despite Frederick II’s desire to make Sicily prosperous, its economic decline continued under his kingship.

After Frederick’s death in 1250, Sicily began a long period of decline. “The Emperor’s death was followed by fifteen years of civil discord and family vendettas in which rival contestants fought for what was left of Norman Sicily” (Smith 1968, 65). By the fourteenth century, the Kingdoms were no longer politically unified. In spite of that the southern regions shared similar economic, social, and political development, which consisted of a largely agricultural economy with feudal institutions and relationships preserved more or less intact accompanied by feuding nobility (Procacci 1968, 64).

**Unification Period 1800-1900**

The creation of Italy in 1870 resulted in four ruling traditions— the Papal state, the Kingdom of Sardinia, the independent city states of the North, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, becoming folded into one.⁹⁷ Although conditions had changed in each of the

⁹⁷ The Kingdom of Sardinia that unified Italy has a misleading name. The Duke of Savoy, based throughout history primarily on the French side of the Alps, acquired the Kingdom of Sardinia in 18th century. The Kingdom’s headquarters was in Turin, the capital of Piedmont, a part of French Savoy.
regimes since the centuries I discussed earlier, Italy was still socially, politically, and economically fragmented in the nineteenth century. Yet during this century, a resistance movement developed within Italy to free the country from foreign rule.

The unification movement was known as the Risorgimento. The leaders of this movement, Giuseppe Mazzini, Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, and Giuseppe Garibaldi, to name a few, came overwhelmingly from northern Italy, particularly Piedmont. The King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel II, and Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, his prime minister, (based in Piedmont) were the prime instigators of Italian unification through military conquest. While armies led by the Kingdom of Sardinia united northern Italy and marched south to Rome, Giuseppe Garibaldi conquered and united southern Italy to the borders of Rome, where his troops joined with those of Count Cavour. The only areas not under the two armies' control were Venice and the area immediately around Rome ruled by the Pope. On March 17, 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed with Victor Emmanuel II as King and Cavour as Prime Minister. For ten years, a combined Papal and French force guarded Rome from the Italians. However, in 1871, the French troops left, a plebiscite was held, and Rome became the capital of a united Italy.

The political settlement imposed by the leaders of the Risorgimento was not a foregone conclusion since its leaders held a wide variety of opinions. Some wanted Italy to become a republic based on universal suffrage (Giuseppe Mazzini), others favored a federal union under the Pope (Vincenzo Gioberti), and still others wanted a federal
republic (Carlo Cattaneo and Giuseppe Ferrari). At first, it looked as though Italy might adopt a quasi-federal state. In fact, a bill advocating regional devolution, the Farini-Minghetti bill, was unanimously approved by the cabinet (1861), but it was withdrawn when it became clear it was not supported in the South (Bull 1998, 288). In the final analysis, harmonization of regional differences took precedence. This resulted in the adoption of a constitutional monarchy with a highly centralized prefectural system along Napoleonic lines and very limited suffrage (Bull 1998, 288).

The landowners in the South and the industrialists and professionals in the North supported unification. The industrialists supported unification because they wanted the benefits of a unified market, while the professionals desired the upward mobility that could only be achieved by moving towards democracy. The southern landowners supported unification because the Liberals leading the unification effort promised to stave off land reform in exchange for their support. To that extent, “the northern middle classes had a free hand in a policy of reforming and democratizing the state, on the condition that the established interests of the dominant southern classes were not touched” (Procacci 1968, 277).

The masses were not involved in creating Italy, and when the peasants did rise up in the South, they were brutally repressed (Zariski 1972, 17). “In late 1860 Luigi Farini, governor of Naples, and a future prime minister, wrote: In seven million inhabitants [of the South] there are not a hundred who want a united Italy. Nor are there any liberals to

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98 Umberto Bossi draws a great deal of his inspiration from Cattaneo.
99 After all, in 1861 only 2.5 percent of the population knew Italian (Bull 1998, 288).
speak of… What can you possibly build out of stuff like this!” (Duggan 1994, 137).

Hence, the Risorgimento failed to create a national, unifying myth. “The old cliché, ‘Having created Italy, we must now create the Italians,’ reflected this awareness” (Zariski 1972, 23-24).

Consequently, the new regime rested on tenuous foundations. The Liberal ruling elites feared both the Church and an agitated Left that wanted land reform. The new rulers cooperated with the old elites in order to consolidate their power. They ruled through entrenched local elites, especially the wealthy families (provincial petty bourgeoisie), governors in earlier regimes, and the Mafia, all of which struggled to control local politics (Tarrow 1977, 63). The situation did not contribute to the new regime’s legitimacy and was the beginning of the “clientelism that would inhibit the growth of both mass political mobilization and legitimacy well into the twentieth century” (Tarrow 1977, 63).

Conditions across the newly unified country varied substantially. In the century before unification, Piedmont, Liguria, and Lombardy had adopted agricultural innovations and increased their manufacturing activity and financial and commercial investment (Zamagni 1993, 12). “From a glance at the lists of Piedmontese taxpayers in the years 1734 to 1795, one notices a growth in wealth among bankers, silk merchants, wool and cotton producers and salesmen, and wholesale merchants” (Zamagni 1993, 16). Hence, on the eve of unification, Piedmont and Lombardy’s level of development was superior to that of the other regions. Table 2.5 shows that these regions maintained a majority of Italy’s rails and exports and the most literate population.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population in 1861 (millions)</th>
<th>Railways in operation in 1859 (km)</th>
<th>Illiteracy in 1861 (%)</th>
<th>Enrollment rate in primary schools in 1861 (%)</th>
<th>Exports in 1858 (million lire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont(^a)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardy(^b)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papal State(^c)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom of the Two Sicilies</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>1,829</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Figures for Piedmont also include Liguria.
\(^b\) Data concerning railways in operation for Lombardy also include Veneto.
\(^c\) The illiteracy and enrollment rates for the Papal State are an estimate.

Table 2.5. The Italian States' development at the unification of the country.

Developments in the Papal States were quite varied. Some of the northern regions such as Bologna seemed to be cousins of rich Lombardy and Piedmont, while others such as Umbria resembled more the Kingdom of the two Sicilies. The Papal States’ economies were agriculturally based whether it was profitable or not. There was no industrial base worthy of mention (Toniolo 1990, 55). Rome itself had a unique economy, “with one-half of the population begging for a living, while the other half (with the exception of the aristocracy and the clergy—who owned all the buildings in the city together with extensive farmland) included all those who lived from services provided for the rich, as well as for visiting pilgrims and foreigners” (Zamagni 1993, 21).
The situation in the South was very different.

“In the South, there were only sixty miles of railways all told by 1860; yields per hectare were on average a third of those in Lombardy; joint stock companies were non-existent, and the structure of banking, primitive. Even Tuscany, had little industry; and its agriculture was beginning to suffer from a doctrinaire adhesion by the great landowners to share-cropping, which they saw as promoting harmonious class relations, albeit at the expense of output” (Duggan 1994, 118).

Although the population of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was large and potentially a positive resource, 87 percent was illiterate, few children attended primary school, and railways and roads were underdeveloped (Zamagni 1993, 14-15). 100

In a similar vein, the majority of peasants were living in extreme poverty and working on estates of rich absentee landlords. “Latifundia dominated the agricultural panorama, most of them concentrating on cereal production using a work force consisting of day labourers who spent most of the year unemployed” (Zamagni 1993, 22).

“Various enlightened conservatives drew attention to the desperate poverty of southerners and suggested that urgent social and economic reforms were needed to resolve what was now referred to as the ‘southern question’; but when in 1874-5 the government proposed measures to help the poor, the landowners in the South threw up their hands in horror and defected to the opposition.” (Duggan 1994, 145).

The situation in the South was compounded by the fact that the gradual introduction of democracy did not accelerate change. For example, the 1882 electoral reform that extended the suffrage to seven percent of the population, resulted in a smaller

100 Ironically, in Italy, the first railroads and steamship were built in Naples by industries supported by the Bourbon King, Ferdinand II. However, industrialization failed to take root because the state’s intervention was too limited and domestic demand for industrial products too weak (Toniolo 1990, 45).
increase in the number of voters in the South than in the North because the South lacked a sizable middle class (Procacci 1968, 278). This just aggravated the differences between town and country and North and South (Procacci 1968, 279).

1947-Present

The history of Italy after World War II is quite different from the periods discussed earlier. By 1945, Italy had been united for almost seventy-five years (1871) and the result was that though social and economic fragmentation did exist, this concern did not dominate society. Instead, conflict in society revolved around three issues: republicanism versus monarchism, the conflict between church and state (clerical and anti-clericals), and the class cleavage. The first conflict, between republicanism and monarchism, was resolved rather quickly. A referendum was held in 1946 to determine if Italy would become a Republic or stay a constitutional monarchy and, by a narrow margin of 2 million votes, it became a Republic. “Particularly striking was the political cleavage between North and South; Rome and the South voted for the monarchy (79 percent in Naples), the North rejected it (77 percent in Emilia and 85 percent in Trentino) (Duggan 1994, 248). The pro-monarchy legacy manifested itself in the South in the form of a monarchist party that existed for a few decades.

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101 At the close of World War II, a short civil war occurred between the fascists (including the Nazis) and the resistance. The resistance was composed primarily of Communists and, to a lesser extent, liberals (Duggan 1994, 241).
The other two cleavages in Italian society were reflected in two very strong subcultures in Italy, the Marxist and the Catholic, coupled with a smaller secular (Liberal) culture. “Each is deeply rooted in events that date back to the earliest conflicts between church and state, to the left-wing ideologies and movements of the present century” (LaPalombara 1987, 35). Italy’s subcultures developed extensive associational networks from student groups to trade unions and religious societies (LaPalombara 1987, 35). These associations were particularly crucial for the Communists who “were treated like Lepers with the onset of the Cold War, which forced them to develop a network of organizations and activities to encourage solidarity” (Ginsborg 1990, 195-196).

Out of these subcultures arose the dominant political forces in postwar Italian politics, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) and the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Between 1948-1992, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) constituted the largest party in parliament and essentially controlled the Italian government. On the other hand, the country’s second largest party, the Italian Communist Party, was shut out of the national government. At times tensions between the adversaries ran very high, often aggravated by the Cold War.

There are several reasons why the DC was able to hold power for so long, not the least of which was the party’s pragmatic nature. The DC was an umbrella organization that housed disparate groups. Initially, the factions (correnti) represented different

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192 The DC’s dominance commenced in 1948, when it received forty-eight percent of the vote in the national elections.
193 Note that regional cleavages were not directly represented in the party system.

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ideological currents, but overtime this changed and they became interest based (Caciagli 1982, 266). This allowed the party to have different appeals in different locations. In the North, the DC appealed to the middle classes and devote Catholics, while in the South it attracted supporters using clientelism. This allowed the DC indirectly to manage regional cleavages.

Another reason the DC was able to maintain its dominance for so long was that as it grew weaker, it co-opted the parties of the left; first the Socialist Party (PSI) in 1963 and later the Communist Party (PCI) in the 1970s. It did this by formally sharing power in coalitions with the PSI and informally by allotting the leftist parties patronage positions and dividing up committee chairmanships proportionally among the parties (DiPalma 1980, 162). To outsiders in the late 1970s, it may have appeared Italy was a consociational democracy but it was not; it was government by antagonistic partners. This situation resulted in a stalemate government, which lacked motivation by government or opposition to institute meaningful reforms (DiPalma 1980, 164).

The culmination of the DC’s and other parties’ activities was the creation of a party state, ruled by the partitocrazia. The partitocrazia maintained its privileged position in society by implementing an extensive system of clientelism. “In a favorable

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104 “Simply defined, clientelism means the plunder of the state by one or several political parties and the simultaneous use of the state to plunder the private sector” (McCarthy 1995, 2). In the South, the DC built a mass clientelist party whose main function was to dispense resources large and small to patrons (Caciagli 1982, 273). Hence, the earlier clientelism of notables was replaced by the clientelism of the political party (Caciagli 1982, 274).

105 Informally, the PCI supported the DC government from 1976-1979 by not voting against it. This was the government of national solidarity.

106 Partitocrazia refers to “a political system where the principal parties ran the government in their own interests” (Gilbert 1995, 5).
environment the practice of clientelism can be an effective regulatory mechanism. By controlling latent tensions, it can reinforce the power of a ruling class and contribute to the equilibrium of the system" (Caciagli 1982, 287). However, clientelism also has many non-productive features; it multiples the divisions in society, fosters inflationary pressures, and serves to preserve the rule of the privileged and dominant classes both locally and nationally (Caciagli 1982, 287). The resulting political system is consequently not run on modern principles of efficiency and technocratic expertise and, in fact, is often the exact opposite.

Overtime, this inefficient and often corrupt system lost legitimacy. "The prime aim of clientelism is to win votes and so a politician has to barter with whoever can deliver them. In Sicily this meant the Mafia" (McCarthy 1995, 63). Surveys undertaken by the European Union’s Eurobarometer reported regularly that Italians were "less satisfied than are other European with their democracy—and much more distrustful of their national government" (LaPalombara 1987, 259).

On the economic front, Post World War II governments were very successful in Italy. From 1950 to 1970, Italy experienced an “economic miracle”, which was primarily driven by growth in exports from industrial northern Italy. At the same time, Italy eliminated projectionist policies and embraced the European Economic Community and free trade. Many southern Italians moved north and their cheap labor helped spur the economic miracle (Duggan 1994, 246). Internally, the miracle was driven by several factors: "the entrepreneurial skills of the owners of the new Italian firms, their ability to
finance themselves in the early 1950s, their willingness to adapt to new techniques and to renovate their plant continuously, their exploitation of the low cost of labor and its high productivity, and the absence until the late sixties of any significant trade union organization” (Ginsborg 1990, 215). The result of this activity was that Italy’s economy became the world’s 5th largest economy, surpassing Great Britain in 1987 (Ginsborg 1990, 408). At the same time, however, the “miracle” did not have much impact on the South’s poverty (see Table 2.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North-West</th>
<th>North-East and Centre</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>95</td>
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The Italian government attempted to address the South’s economic problems by creating the Cassa del Mezzogiorno (Fund for the South). Initially, the Fund invested

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107 This occurred alongside a huge public sector deficit. At one point in the early 1990s the deficit was 108 percent of Italy’s GDP (See: Alastair Bruton, “The Devil’s Own Kingdom,” The Guardian, November 12, 1993). By the later half of the 1990s, substantial progress had been made toward reducing the public debt.
money in agriculture and infrastructure development. "In 1962 Pasquale Saraceno, one of Italy's leading economists, commented: 'We feel that we are resolving the southern problem more than in any other moment of the history of the unified state'" (Ginsborg 1990, 229). Nonetheless, after making some initial progress, the fund was poorly directed and mismanaged by the political parties who used it primarily as a source of patronage. Economic planning was dominated by political considerations and sheer fraud (Bull 1998, 296). The result was incomplete roads, isolated factories dubbed cathedrals in the desert, poorly planned cities, etc. In 1984, the Cassa was finally closed down and a new southern development agency, the Agenzia per la Promozione dello Sviluppo del Mezzogiorno, existed until 1993 (Zamagni 1993, 372). The state's involvement in the South helped to increase the standard of living, but it still lagged far behind the North chiefly because it started from a low base point (Zamagni 1993, 370).

There was some attention to regional issues following World War II. In order to accommodate regional variations, the 1947 constitution established regional governments. However, only the special regions of Sardinia, Sicily, Valle d’Aosta, and Trentino Alto-Adige, Fruili-Venezia Giulia set up regional governments before 1970. The special regions were implemented rather quickly in order to limit separatism as a political issue in places like Sicily (Duggan 1994, 248-249). However, the DC delayed implementing regional governments in the "normal" regions for fear that the communist would win control of various areas such as Tuscany, Umbria, and Emilia (Smith 1997, 430-431).

\footnote{The special regions were treated differently by the central government because they harbored citizens whose ethnic and/or cultural background differed from the rest of the country.}
During the 1970s, there was a gradual creation of the fifteen "ordinary" regional governments. In 1971 the Italian parliament enacted legislation creating regional councils in the ordinary regions; however, it was not until 1975 and 1977 that a transfer of powers occurred. The regional councils are relatively weak in Italy; they have only concurrent powers, which means that they can only initiate legislation and exercise power that complements the central government (Zariski 1987, 110). Additionally, the regions have very little fiscal autonomy, raising only six percent of their operating revenues, and have discretionary control over less than twenty percent of the money they spend (Zariski 1987, 119). Still, it is conceivable that the creation of regional governments, even if they are weak, encouraged citizens to view political participation in Italy differently, allowing for the creation of regional identity (Woods 1992, 60). More importantly, the creation of regional governments helped reinforce and exaggerate the differences between each of Italy’s regions. “The reform freed the more advanced regions from the stultifying grasp of Rome, while allowing the problems of the more backward regions to fester” (Putnam 1993, 61).

The decade beginning in 1990 had an entirely different flavor from the 1980s. In 1990, “the long-delayed crisis of politics had arrived” (McCarthy 1995, 132). By 1990, the Lega Lombarda had already begun to rattle the political establishment, and great debates occurred about reforming Italy’s institutions.\(^{109}\) Several reforms were considered by the DC and coalition partners, including the implementation of a first past the post

\(^{109}\) The first League formed in 1979, the Veneto League. Shortly thereafter, the Lombard Autonomist League formed in 1983, subsequently becoming the Lombard League in 1984.
electoral system (FPTP) and the creation of an elected presidency, similar to the French system. However, initially neither of the proposals was adopted. Instead, a more minor reform was implemented due to the persistence of Mario Segni, at the time a Christian Democrat. In June of 1991, a referendum was held to eliminate electoral preference voting. This was noteworthy because it was viewed as eliminating a substantial amount of the vote rigging done by the Mafia. Notice, however, that none of the parties proposed federalism.

In the meantime, the Lega Lombarda officially transformed itself into the Lega Nord in 1991 with Umberto Bossi as leader. The Lega Nord carried on the Lega Lombarda’s torch by advocating federalism for Italy, closer ties to the European Union, more local control over taxation, and increased fiscal responsibility. The 1992 election was a watershed for the party. It won 17 percent of the vote in northern Italy, 55 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and 25 in the Senate. The 1992 parliamentary elections are considered the last of Italy’s first Republic.

Though the rise of the Lega Nord contributed to the collapse of the DC regime (The First Republic), the initiation of an investigation that uncovered extensive corruption by politicians sealed the fate of the partitocrazia. In February of 1992, assistant prosecutor Antonio Di Pietro had Mario Chiesa, a member of the PSI, arrested for

110 Major reforms such as the direct election of the mayor and changes in the electoral law did not occur until 1993, after the Lega had begun to consolidate itself.
111 Under the old system, voters wrote numbers to signify their choice, which made it possible for local Mafiosi to tamper with ballots by say adding a “1” before a vote that had a “4”, changing it into a preference for “14”. (See: “No to cheats, yes to change,” Economist, 15 June 1991, 45).
corruption. After a month's stay in prison, Chiesa realized that his powerful friends, including Bettino Craxi, were not going to help him, so he decided to become a government informant. The widening investigation became known as mani pulite (operation clean hands). By September 1993, 2,600 people were under investigation, including 325 members of parliament (McCarthy 1995, 140). From the investigation “it would emerge clearly that much of the money that greased the wheels of politics in Milan and other leading Italian cities finished in the private bank accounts of individuals at all levels of the political process (Gilbert 1995, 127). The investigations touched all of the parties and implicated the most prestigious politicians, including Bettino Craxi (PSI) and Guilio Andreotti (DC), both former Prime Ministers. As the revelations of corruption continued, the DC’s regime lost all of its legitimacy.

By the 1994 parliamentary elections, the core of the DC and Socialist Parties had disappeared, although each tried to reconstitute itself. As the mani pulite investigations continued, one era ended and another began. The 1994 parliamentary elections are considered the first of Italy's Second Republic.

Northern League

In 1979, Umberto Bossi, leader of the Northern League, met Bruno Salvadori, founder of the Union Valdotaine Party, who aimed to spread his federalist ideas beyond

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112 “The judges' campaign to remoralise Italian public life came to be known as mani pulite (clean hands), a codename given by the policemen involved in the earliest investigations” (Nelken 1996, 191). As mentioned in chapter two, the mani pulite (in English, the clean hands operation), also known as tangentopoli, focused primarily on Milan prosecutors bringing charges of corruption against many politicians.
Valle d’Aosta. Bossi was influenced by Salvadori’s political views and decided in 1983 to form the Lombard Autonomist League, a group concerned with preserving Lombardy’s culture, promoting its economic prosperity, and achieving its political autonomy. In 1984, this group transformed itself into a political party, called the Lega Lombarda.113

The party’s platform promoted federalism, Lombardy’s culture, lower taxes, and fighting the Mafia and corruption. The party’s promotion of federalism derived from the simple notion that the Roman government was taking money from northern Italy and spending it inefficiently in Southern Italy instead of reinvesting it in northern Italy. A popular poster depicting this theme shows a plump chicken laying golden eggs into a basket held by a fat farmer’s wife. The league believes that the chicken is productive Lombardy and the woman the parasitic South.114 Hence, federalism was advocated as a way for Lombardy to acquire more fiscal and political autonomy.

By the time Bossi organized the Lombard League, the Liga Veneta had existed for five years and had won a few seats in local elections.115 The limited success of the Liga Veneta encouraged the Lombard League (Diamanti 1993, 55). In 1985, the Lega Lombarda won its first seats in the communal elections of Varese and Gallarate. After this limited success, Bossi realized that he needed to emphasize more the socio-economic interests of Lombardy and less on a lost Lombard culture and tongue. Instead, Bossi emphasized that the different nationalities of the Alpine Arc were united by common

113 The Lega Lombarda translates in English into Lombard League.
114 This poster can be found in the Lega’s party paper and the book, *La Lega Nord attraverso i manifesti*.
115 Even though the Liga Veneta organized before the Lombard League, its importance is dwarfed by the rule of Bossi in the Lega Nord so this discussion will focus on the LN.
civility with roots in the distant past. They were people created from the same socio-economic fabric, very different from the Mediterranean peoples of the peninsula (southern Italians) (Gomez-Reino 1998, 13-14, 18). The Lega strategy emphasized the socio-economic interests of the region, promoted the creation of a regional identity, and combined this with a focus on the conflict between center and periphery (Diamanti 1993, 55). At the same time, Bossi promoted cooperation between the Liga Veneta (Venice League), a group known as the Rinascita Piemontese (Piedmont League), and the Lombard League in order to coordinate their activities, making it possible for them to launch a substantial challenge against the established parties (Lega Nord 1998).

In the 1987 elections, the Lega Lombarda won 2 percent of the vote in Lombardy, resulting in Umberto Bossi taking a seat in the Senate, and Giuseppe Leoni becoming a member of the Chamber of Deputies. In 1989, the Lombard League won 8 percent of the vote in the European Parliamentary elections. The Leagues, which were now involved in substantial cooperation, made considerable gains in the 1990 regional elections, winning 19.5 percent of the vote in northern Italy. Afterwards, Bossi proclaimed that the party would only collaborate in coalition governments if complete autonomy for the regions were contemplated.116 In 1991, the Lega Nord was formalized by combining all of the Leagues in the northern regions into one federated political party. The undisputed leader of the Lombard League, Umberto Bossi became leader of the Lega Nord. “However, what was originally devised as a confederation of movements evolved into [a] single

centralized party. Lega Nord acquired legal ownership of the original symbols of all the other parties…." (Gomez-Reino 1998, 17).

As early as 1991, the Lega Nord raised the notion of an independent Republic of the North with an alternative government. This Republic would be named Padania after the valley where the historical oath of allegiance occurred between the Lombard cities to fight the emperor Barbarossa in the Middle Ages. However, during the early 1990s, the party did not officially support secession but federalism. “The situation was reversed in 1996: the party [sought] the secession of Padania from the Italian state” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 24). Hence, beginning in the summer of 1995, the parliament of the North was held, named the Parliament of Mantova because the meetings were held in Bagnolo San Vito, a small village outside of Mantova.

Although the Lega experienced substantial shifts in policy in the mid 1990s, the Lega’s electoral support continued to be substantial. After the 1992 general election, it sent 55 Deputies and 25 Senators to Rome. The year 1992 was a decisive turning point for the party, marking the end of the formation stage and the beginning of consolidation. In 1994, the number of deputies increased to 180 and the Lega Nord’s Irene Pivetti was elected as President of the Chamber (Speaker of the Lower House). In 1996, the party increased its share of the vote (from 8.4 to 10.1 percent for the proportional seats in the Chamber of Deputies), but its share of the seats declined to 59. This occurred because the Lega did not make any electoral pacts, unlike in the 1994 election in which it won 180 seats.
Conclusion

The narrative above describes the stage upon which the Reform Party, Western Canada Concept Party, and Lega Nord arose. It reveals a country, Canada, periodically experiencing a crisis of identity and another country, Italy that seems unconcerned with this issue. As Canada moves from one crisis to the next, Italy’s postwar crises focus on the conflicts inherent in the Left-Right ideological divide. Two very different modern histories produce a similar outcome, the emergence of very successful regional parties that have had a significant impact on debates about political reform.
CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL GRIEVANCES

As argued in the introduction, the regionalization of social cleavages cannot alone account for regional party formation. The resulting grievances have to be translated into political parties. By the same token, however, these grievances are absolutely essential to party formation since, without them, the party has no raison d'être. Regional grievances, therefore, are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the formation of a regional party.

This chapter investigates the regional grievances articulated by the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC), the Reform Party of Canada (RP), and the Lega Nord of Italy (LN). Whether long-standing or new, they share the characteristic of deriving from the region’s dissatisfaction with the central government’s policies. Resulting feelings of

\[117\] Latent grievances differ from longstanding ones in that latent grievances are not formally expressed in politics by political parties or interest groups, while this is just the opposite for longstanding ones. I realize that regions cannot be dissatisfied; it is the citizens of the region who experience grievances. Furthermore, the argument here oversimplifies the uniformity within regions. In western Canada, Alberta, and northern Italy, there is a wide range of diversity and by no means is it assumed that this is unimportant or that everyone in these regions supports the regional party.
injustice take the form of economic, political, and cultural grievances, which are interrelated to some degree. Appeals made by the parties reflect these grievances.  

The discussion in this chapter will highlight the parties’ appeals and their underlying basis. Throughout the analysis, one will notice that the grievances emphasized by the WCC and Reform Party are identical in many cases. When this is the case, there will often be greater detail and emphasis on the Reform Party’s expression of the western grievances, primarily because the WCC’s shorter and less successful existence resulted in a less articulate and well-developed package of appeals.

Before laying out each of the party’s appeals, it should be acknowledged that each party is a multifaceted and complex entity. The breadth and depth of the parties’ appeals vary and, in fact, if one considers each party’s entire platform, then of course some of its appeals will have tenuous or limited links to regional cleavages. A good example is the Reform Party’s emphasis on the need for the federal government to act with greater fiscal responsibility or for harsher sentencing for criminals. These themes may not involve regional politics per se, even though such calls may still have a disproportionate regional appeal. In addition, while all of the parties’ appeals are important, they will not be discussed here principally because this chapter illustrates that a convincing argument can be made that the parties’ main appeals are grounded in regional grievances. My focus, then, is on these grievances.

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The themes mentioned in this chapter will reappear later in chapter five in which I consider why people support the parties. 

110
Economic Grievances

To mobilize their supporters, regional parties often use economic grievances of one form or another. Regions both economically advantaged and disadvantaged have spawned a large number of regional parties. In the case of the Reform Party of Canada, the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC), and the Lega Nord, their bases of power were in relatively wealthy regions of the country. Consequently, economic grievances were not derived from feelings of deprivation but instead from the feeling that the region was shouldering more than its fair share of the economic burden of various policies—policies that were also clearly more advantageous to one or more other regions of the country—implemented by the central government.\textsuperscript{119}

WCC and Reform’s economic grievances emanate from policy decisions made by the central government, the most irksome of which to western Canadians was the creation of the National Energy Program (NEP) in 1980. Recall from chapter two that the NEP involved the Canadianization of the petroleum industry and the imposition of taxes and price controls on the production and selling of oil. It was imposed by a Liberal government led by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and quickly had its legitimacy challenged by the government of Alberta.\textsuperscript{120} “The immediate effect of this policy was to force western producers to sell oil and gas to Canadian consumers at substantially less than the world price” (Manning 1992, 120).

\textsuperscript{119} Zariski (1989) calls regional mobilization by rich regions “over-taxed development.”
\textsuperscript{120} See chapter two and four for more details.
“As western Separatists view the issue [NEP], the national government, acting on behalf of the heavily populated provinces of central Canada, has used its sweeping powers of taxation and its authority to regulate trade and commerce to abridge the ownership rights and management powers of the producing provinces—thereby allowing consumers [in Ontario and Quebec] to skim off much of the surplus generated from the exploitation of western resources” (Pratt 1981, 155).

The imposition of the NEP occurred just prior to the official founding of the WCC, and the ensuing controversy provided the WCC with a powerful catalyst to spur its growth.

The leaders of the WCC came out strongly against the NEP. Douglas Christie, the WCC’s founder, claimed that the NEP demonstrated most clearly that Mr. Trudeau, with a power base predominately in Quebec and somewhat in Ontario, did not need any western Canadian input and therefore took western Canada’s resources and divided them up among the rest of Canada.121 Party leader Howard Thompson commented that, “one half of Canada has been disenfranchised by the other, its wealth and cash flow diverted, its hopes for full-fledged equality and participation in the national dream dashed, its people brow beaten by Easterners [referring to Ontario and Quebec].”122 Gordon Kessler, leader of the WCC in 1982, demanded that “the NEP must be abandoned and competitive oil prices re-established.”123

The Reform Party’s opinion on the NEP echoes the WCC’s. Preston Manning, founder and leader of the Reform Party, estimated that the NEP and related tax policies resulted in a transfer of wealth between western and eastern Canada that amounted to

121 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie 10/1/96.
122 Tom Kennedy, Calgary Sun, 19 August 1982.
approximately $100 billion (Manning 1992, 121). The fact that Alberta produces the majority of Canada's oil means that this policy appeared to be a direct assault on its economic well being. At the time, oil and gas production was very important to Alberta's economy, contributing 23 percent of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product in 1980 (Barr 1984, 99). “Many Western Canadians saw the National Energy Program as a massive raid by a spendthrift federal government (the Trudeau government’s accumulated deficit at that point was $72 billion) on the resource wealth of western Canada, as well as a massive federal intrusion (through the use of federal taxing, pricing, and regulatory powers) into provincial jurisdiction over natural resources” (Manning 1992, 121). The Federal government’s policies in the area of national resources resulted in the belief among Reformers “that there exists overwhelming and undeniable evidence of unfair treatment of resource-producing regions under Confederation, especially in the treatment of western Canada” (Reform Party 1988, 5).

According to the Reform Party, economic discrimination against western Canada also occurred when the government awarded contracts. Federal government expenditures, as measured by government contracts, favored central Canada over the West. This opinion was best exemplified by an incident that occurred just prior to the formation of the Reform Party. In 1986, the federal government decided to award a government contract to a Quebec firm for maintenance on the CF-18 fighter jet despite a lower bid from a Winnipeg

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124 According to the NEP legislation, Alberta, with 10 percent of Canada’s population, collected over 80 percent of the all petroleum revenues received by the provinces (Milne 1986, 85).

125 “The contribution of what Statistics Canada calls “Mining” (which in Alberta is mainly oil and gas) was 23 percent” (Barr 1984, 99).
firm. This was known as the CF-18 fighter jet incident. At the time, Youth Minister Jean Charest said that, “the government knew the contract decision would cost it support in the West while winning support in Quebec. Similarly, other decisions will satisfy the West and anger other regions but that is one of the realities of trying to run a national government.”

Reform Party candidates repeatedly cited this incident as the last straw in a long series of discriminatory actions by the Federal government against the West. “For many Westerners, the CF-18 decision had the same odour as the NEP, only this policy was instituted not by the Liberals but by the new Conservative government, which was supposed to be introducing more regional fairness and balance into national decision making” (Manning 1992, 127). Stephen Harper, 1988 Reform Party candidate, claimed that Progressive Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney “has repeated the patronage and contract favoritism—like the CF-18 decision—that has given the West second-class status.”

In addition to its profound dislike of the NEP and CF-18 decision, the Reform Party held that Canadians paid more than their fair share of the federal government’s budget in so far as they paid more than they received in benefits. Reform MPs’ statements supported this conviction. “There [was] a growing sense of alienation in British Columbia (B.C.) that we [were] taken for granted. We [were] one of the two remaining provinces, 

BC and Alberta, that contribute more to the national economy than we get back."  

Another MP believed that a popular political cartoon captured these feelings. "There have been cartoons in the newspaper from time to time where there is a cow, standing on Canada with its head in Alberta and British Columbia and the udder being milked in Ontario and Quebec." In sum, the Reform Party argued that the general structure of the federal government's taxing and spending practices was unfavorable to the West, resulting in it regularly paying in more than it received.

In order to eliminate the cost-benefit inequity of membership in the Canadian federation, the RP proposed that all federal legislation be subjected to a regional fairness test. This would have involved public analyses of the regional distribution of the expenditures and revenues of all federal government policies and contracts (Reform Party 1988, 6). "These distributions would be analyzed on both an East-West and a North-South basis within Canada" (Reform Party 1991, 6). The objective of this policy was an even distribution of revenue payments to, and expenditures by, the federal government across all provinces. In other words, every province paid to the federal government exactly what it received in return.

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128 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/15/96.
129 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/13/96 a.
130 There is some empirical evidence to substantiate the Reform Party's claims. University of Calgary economics professor Robert Mansell, who has exhaustively researched and analyzed the flow of money between Ottawa and Alberta, provides further evidence to support the Reform Party's claims. "Ottawa has siphoned $1.5 billion from Alberta since 1986, while pumping billions in direct payments and subsidies into the booming economy of Ontario. Alberta remains the only province in the confederation to contribute more to national coffers than it gets back from Ottawa" (Dave Haynes, "Ontario economy gains at expense of Alberta," The Calgary Herald, 3 November 1988).
Not unlike the Canadian cases, the Lega Nord (LN) argued that central
government policies had negative economic consequences for northern Italy. At the center
of the controversy in the Italian case has been the government’s funding and operating of
the Cassa del Mezzogiorno (Fund for the South). As mentioned in chapter two, the
Cassa del Mezzogiorno was a government agency created after World War II to assist in
developing southern Italy. After initially making some progress in infrastructure
development, the funds became a source of patronage primarily for the Christian
Democrats (DC) and, it is generally argued, were dispersed in an inefficient and at times
corrupt manner. “The Fund for the South represented the first massive use of public funds
to finance the creation of a Christian Democratic political infrastructure (in addition to the
public works infrastructure that was the official objective of the programme) in the South”
(Nanetti 1988, 46). Thus, despite millions of lire having been allotted to the Cassa del
Mezzogiorno and years having been dedicated to assisting the South, the southern
question refused to go away. “Thus, the economy of the South is much more dependent
on transfer payments and public employment than is the case in the North and Centre
where income is generated to a greater extent by locally-based economic activity” (Nanetti
1988, 25).

This state of affairs did not go unnoticed by Umberto Bossi, leader of the Lega
Nord (LN). According to the LN, the operation of the Cassa del Mezzogiorno resulted in
wealthy northern Italy underwriting the South’s development and the lining of corrupt
politicians’ pockets, while many government services in the North remained mediocre. A
cause of great discontent in the North was, and is, the huge amount of money wasted in trying to support the state-run economy of the South (some US $1000 billion since WWII); while the Northern economy has always been productive and competitive on the world market (it would be even more so if we were independent)."¹³¹ Bossi has argued the choices to aid one economy damages the other, and vice versa.¹³² According to the LN, "in 1994, each citizen of the North paid on average almost US$2000 more than he received from Rome; each citizen living in the South received some US$4000 more than he paid in taxes."¹³³

Bossi has used vivid images to portray the unequal and unjust relationship between northern Italy and the central government. He has argued that the Roman government acts as if it is a colonizer of northern Italy using the region for its own self-interest. Speaking at a rally, Bossi delivered a speech against the "colonist[s] in Rome who robbed the North of its hard-earned money and its cultural identity."¹³⁴ One of the metaphors developed by the Lega Nord depicted a situation similar to the editorial cartoon

¹³² Quote taken from a speech made by Umberto Bossi to the Italian Chamber of Deputies on 5/30/96.
¹³³ Lega Nord. 1998, Fighting for the Freedom of North-Italy [online]. Available from World Wide Web:<http://www.leganordsen.it/eng/intro>. Scholarly work has generally corroborated Bossi's general characterization of the government's revenue and expenditure imbalance between northern and southern Italy. "A study promoted by the Regional Council of the Veneto Region shows that between 1985 and 1990 four northern regions, Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna paid 45 percent of national taxes, 62 percent of VAT, and 63.5 percent of local taxes. They were given by the State 33.9 percent of the funds redistributed to local and regional governments. Thus, for every 100 Lire paid to the State the Lombards received back for their own use 24.5, the Piedmontese 30, the Venetians 35 and the Emilians 37.” (Bull 1998, 296).
sympathetic to Canada. "Lombardy [was] not a cow to milk, a territory to dominate with foreign bureaucracies. Lombardy [was] not a fool that pays the debts of others" (Lega Lombarda 1993 a, 22). The resounding message was that the North paid money to the central government but did not receive the anticipated returns. Cesare Romiti, managing director of FIAT, commented, "I am not very sympathetic to their [Lega Nord’s] cause, but I [felt] that their protest [was] justified. ... It is only right that those who have contributed to the well-being of the country should receive adequate services from the State." 

The Lega’s proposed solution to this injustice is that Lombardy should have more control over its own tax revenue. The first platform written by Bossi in 1983 stated "the fruits of the work and the taxes of the Lombardi should be collected and managed in Lombardy" (Lega Lombarda 1993b, 25). "Bossi's insistence that the North needed to protect itself from the rest of Italy by acquiring control over policy-making and tax revenue has proven to be a big vote winner" (Gallagher 1993, 461; Mannheimer 1993b, 98). Unsurprisingly, the Lega promoted a federal system for Italy where the region had more control over its own taxing and spending.

The Lega Nord, the Western Canada Concept Party, and the Reform Party pointed to specific policies by the central government that they argued were economically

135 Notice Bossi’s clever use of history to draw parallels between the commune period and present day Italy. Author’s translation from Lega Lombarda a. "Il primo articolo" in Arnoldo Mondadori (editore) Il Bossi Pensiero. Milano: Panorama, 1993, 22.


137 Chapter five will show that Mannheimer (1993) has concluded that this message has been a big vote winner for the party.
disadvantageous to their region and advantageous to others. These policies highlighted the inequity in contributing to, and receiving from, the coffers of the public treasury. In Italy, this was exemplified by the inefficient and corrupt functioning of the Casa del Mezzogiorno, which funneled northerner’s tax money to help develop the South but usually was used instead to shore up southern politician’s party machines. Likewise, the WCC and RP argued that a specific central government policy, the National Energy Program (NEP), which drained the West of its precious wealth by subsidizing oil prices for businesses in central and eastern Canada, should never be allowed to occur again. It is clear in all three cases that the party leaders identified the central government as the enemy against which the region’s inhabitants must organize to protect their interests.

**Political Grievances**

In each case, the regional party argued that a representation deficit existed. The interests, needs, and desires of Albertans, western Canadians, and northern Italians were being ignored by the central government. The source of political grievance varied from one party to the other, but each argued that a political solution was needed.

In the case of the WCC and the Reform Party, political grievances stemmed from feelings of domination and exploitation by central Canada’s golden triangle, composed of Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto. “In Canada we have a very largely concentrated power circle, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, a little triangle and those of us who live outside that
triangle feel greatly left out” commented Reform MP, Ken Epp.\textsuperscript{138} Since 1968, opinion polls in the West, particularly Alberta, have confirmed that Westerners feel inadequately represented by the central government. The result has been a growing sense of alienation. A 1968 survey of Alberta revealed that 61 percent of respondents agreed, “the government in Ottawa is more concerned about the problems of Eastern Canada than they are about the problems of western Canadians” (Bell 1992, 143). “… In 1983, over 80 percent of Westerners sampled agreed that ‘the West usually gets ignored in national politics because the political parties depend upon Quebec and Ontario for most of their votes’” (Bell 1992, 143). It seems there was a significant increase in western alienation between 1968 and 1983.

This feeling of alienation and domination stems in part from the first-past-the-post electoral system (FPTP) and the structure of political representation in the Canadian federal government. The FPTP electoral system has produced a two-party plus system in Canada and has generally rewarded the two largest parties (Liberal and Progressive Conservative Party) and punished the minor parties (NDP and Social Credit). The electoral system in Canada has rewarded major parties that have straddled the cultural divide being popular in and outside of Quebec and generally understated the popular vote of third parties (Nevitte et al. 1995, 584-586). The regional interests being touted by the WCC and Reform have a difficult time being heard in a two-party system that must cater to Quebec and Ontario due to the structure of political representation.

\textsuperscript{138} Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, Ken Epp on 8/21/96.
Representation in the Canadian House of Commons is based on the population of each province, which, of course, is not an unusual formula for democracies. However, in Canada’s case, the distribution of the population means that, an inordinate amount of power is given to Ontario and Quebec relative to the other provinces. Ontario and Quebec control 176 out of 301 seats in the 1997 Parliament, and some people in the less populous provinces interpret this as unfair. Strict adherence to party discipline in parliamentary voting and the tendency for party leaders and prime ministers to be from Ontario or Quebec does not help matters either (Gibbins 1981, 194). Not surprisingly, there is the perception that most public policy reflects the wishes of the citizens in Ontario and Quebec, which leaves citizens in the other provinces feeling that the federal government does not represent them adequately. A Reform Party candidate (1988), Ken Copithorne remarked “the three mainline parties have frequently demonstrated that their priorities are in Central Canada with policies that pander to that area.”

Representation of the provinces in the federal government was central to the WCC’s political grievances as well. Doug Christie, founder of the WCC, commented

“the political, economic, and cultural power resides in central Canada, the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario, which contain about 80% of the seats in the parliament because they have representation by population alone and there is no regional representation in the Senate. You therefore have two provinces like New York and California running the entire legislative process and picking the prime minister…”

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140 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie on 10/1/96. I realize his commentary does not accurately reflect the provincial distribution of seats in parliament.
To remedy this problem, in 1982, Dan Fletcher of the WCC began promoting the Triple-E Senate. "We believe that an elected, equal and effective senate is essential if Canadians are to receive equality within confederation."\textsuperscript{141} The Triple-E Senate is quite different from what currently exist. Recall from chapter two that the Canadian Senate is an appointed and relatively weak chamber with unequal representation from each of the provinces.

Shortly after some WCC candidates advocated the creation of the Triple-E Senate, the Alberta government came around to their view. So it was not surprising that the Reform Party adopted this idea wholeheartedly. The first principle of its 1991 Blue Book is: "We affirm the need to establish a Triple-E Senate in the Parliament of Canada—that is to say, a Senate which is Elected by the people, with Equal representation from each Province, and which is fully Effective in safeguarding regional interests" (Reform Party 1991, 1). Creating the Triple-E Senate would put in place a federal institution to represent the provinces, in much the same way that the U.S. Senate protects state's interests.

Changing the structure of representation at the federal level has been considered at several federal-provincial summits addressing constitutional reform. Though each province has its own opinion about reforming the constitution, in the final analysis the stumbling block for a new agreement derives from the conflict between the positions of western Canada and Quebec.\textsuperscript{142} Although both emphasize political grievances against the federal government in their rhetoric, the solutions they propose are quite different.

\textsuperscript{141} Quote taken from Dan Fletcher’s 1982 campaign brochure.
\textsuperscript{142} Quebec in this case refers to the Québécois nationalist that are members and supporters of both the provincial based Parti Québécois and the federal Bloc Québécois.
Reform has proposed the Triple-E Senate while the Quebec nationalists desire a distinct society clause be included in any new constitution. Underlying the controversy over constitutional reforms were two very different conceptions of Canada.

To start with, "the government of Quebec had no enthusiasm for provincial equality, no enthusiasm for the popular election of another tier of federal politicians who would compete with the Quebec government for a voice in Ottawa, and no enthusiasm for strengthened national legislative institutions" (Gibbins 1995, 55). In the words of the current premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, "of course, when Westerners speak of Senate reform, they really mean watering down Quebec's influence" (Bouchard 1994, 225). On the other hand, Bouchard and other Quebec nationalists argue that, minimally, Quebec should be recognized as a distinct society in Canada's constitution, a proposal that the RP strongly opposes. "In addition to upholding the constitutional equality of all provinces and citizens, Reform also declares that 'the demands...of all regions of the country should be entitled to equal status in constitutional and political negotiations'" (Stark 1992, 147) Thus, when it came to negotiations on the constitution "...the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois provided voters with a novel opportunity to

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143 Certainly this sentence oversimplifies the much more complex process of constitutional reform. However, these competing positions were at the center of constitutional wrangling embedded in the Meech Lake Accords and the Charlottetown Agreement. "Distinct society" refers to the fact that Quebec is different from the other Canadian provinces. "There is, indeed, room for debate over the propriety and implications of inserting within the Constitution the statement that Quebec constitutes a distinct society" (McRoberts 1995, 80). Instead of constitutional guarantees, western Canada believes "that the best way to guarantee French Canadian language and culture is through individual rights, unlike recognition of collective rights, which would be discriminatory and illiberal" (Whitaker 1981, 36).
express sharply polarized views about the status of Quebec” (Nevitte et al. 1995, 590). This polarization jeopardizes the integrity of the Canadian state.

The differences of opinion between the West and Quebec are based on fundamentally different visions of Canada that are not easily reconciled. The Quebec nationalists might believe that Canada consists of a compact between two founding peoples, French and English, whereas the Reform Party believes this is an inappropriate description of Canada. Preston Manning remarked “the idea of Canada based on the two founding races, English and French, may have been an appropriate vision of Canada in the 19th century. But today it excludes over nine million of Canada’s twenty six million citizens who have nothing to do with either one.”145 For the Reform Party, Canada is a country composed of ten equal provinces not two founding peoples. “Reformers believe that New Canada must be a balanced federation, not an unbalanced federation where one province has special status or a special deal...”146

In many ways, the Lega’s political grievances were similar to Reform’s; the current state structure was not responsive to northern Italy’s interests. That is where the similarities ended, however, the underlying cause of this grievance was quite different. The Lega Nord’s rhetoric implied that Italy’s unitary state structure resulted in the domination of northern Italy, depriving regions of their economic and political autonomy. This was because of the party’s critical view of the unitary, centralized state. “No one here can delude himself that the nation-state Italy—risen in the nineteenth century, despotic and

centralist—can stay as it is without looking for an equilibrium point which is compatible with the principle of the territorial integrity of the state and that of the self-determination of peoples.”  

In order to overcome the oppression inflicted by the central government, the Lega Nord proposed the introduction of a federal state. In the Lega Lombarda’s 1983 program the party stated its support “for achieving Lombardy’s autonomy by overcoming the centralized state with a modern federal State that knows how to respect all the people that constitute it” (Lega Lombarda 1993 b, 25). Originally, the Lega Nord advocated a constituent assembly to draw up a new federal constitution for Italy in which the regions and the federal government in Rome both had specific powers. The plan was and, some might argue, still is to divide Italy into three regions—North, Central, and South—with a central government in Rome primarily responsible for things like trade and defense. “Obviously the Constitution imagined by the League [was] based on federalist principles, that is, on an equal exchange between the regional and federal state, both endowed with a non-exclusive sovereignty” (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 21). The federal structure implemented would entail a smaller bureaucracy and parliament with an upper house representing the regions (Gallagher 1992, 480).

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147 Quote taken from a speech by Umberto Bossi in the Chamber of Deputies on 1/10/96.
148 As mentioned in chapter one, I assume that the Lega Lombarda is the Lega Nord’s predecessor based on Umberto Bossi’s domination of both parties. Author’s translation from Lega Lombarda b. “Il primo programma” in Arnoldo Mondadori (editor) Il Bossi Pensiero. Milano: Panorama, 1993.
The Lega Nord’s disenchantment with the DC’s regime stemmed from the party’s domination over the government and state apparatus, known as *partitocrazia*, the party regime. The DC maintained its power by “establishing patron-client relations with their electoral constituencies” (Newell 1994, 138). This was possible because the DC colonized the bureaucracy, the state and parastate agencies, and government corporations (Kogan 1987, 3). The clientelistic and distributive policies benefited small and medium businesses in the North, while the South was tied to the DC regime through the control of grants and other resources (Woods 1995, 190). The politicization of the state led to substandard services and rampant corruption. Over time, the public became disillusioned, and the legitimacy of the DC regime decreased. As mentioned in chapter two, Eurobarometer surveys found “Italians to be more dissatisfied with their political system than the citizens of all other countries of the European Community (EC)” (Bull and Newell 1993, 204). Though the DC regime expressed a recurring obsession with reform, little political change occurred from 1948-1984 (Bull and Newell 1993, 205).

The revelation in 1992 of widespread corruption amongst the ruling parties only added fuel to the fire of political grievances. Now Bossi’s statements that Roman politicians were robbing the North became literal as opposed to figurative. The uncovering by state prosecutors of widespread corruption in the highest echelons of the political class was known as *mani-pulite* (operation “clean hands”). The investigations uncovered links between the Mafia and party leaders and revealed that politicians were accepting various kinds of bribes and payoffs. Former Socialist Prime Minister, Bettino
Craxi, was convicted for taking bribes and fled to Tunisia. Many other high-ranking officials in the Socialist and Christian Democratic Party, including former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, were also charged. The clean hands operation resulted in the realization that corruption was so widespread in Italian politics that it seemed to have become an accepted practice.\textsuperscript{150} As the exposés became more serious and widespread, it became evident that the DC regime could not recover.

Although the clean hands investigations certainly helped to legitimize the Lega Nord’s grievances against the DC regime, it is important to note that by the time they occurred, the Lega Nord had already begun its rise to prominence. Hence, the criminal investigations and fall from grace of the established parties should not be held solely responsible for the success of the Lega Nord. In fact, Bossi argues that the exact opposite is true. “I think I can observe that the cause and effect relationship is the contrary: it was not the revolt of the magistrate which made the political upheaval possible, but rather it was the defeat of the political parties which freed many judges from a long slavery” (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 3).

The Lega and other parties focused on the region’s lack of political representation due, in part, to the structure of the political system. In each country, the domination by the central government originated from different sources. Western Canada’s grievances stem from the perceived lack of balanced representation in Canada’s federal legislature. According to the Reform Party, the remedy for an unjust confederation was the creation

\textsuperscript{150} For more details, the corruption scandals are covered in detail in Mark Gilbert’s book \textit{The Italian Revolution}. Boulder, Colorado. Westview Press, 1995.
of a Triple-E Senate. In Italy, Bossi pushed for the creation of a federal state because he argued that the unitary state structure, in principle, oppressed the people. In Italy, the shortcomings of the unitary state structure were compounded by the lack of true competition between the right and left coalitions. The result was no real change in the Italy’s governing coalition between 1948 and 1994. Federalism may have been a tool to circumscribe the Christian Democrats’ grip on power.

**Cultural Grievances**

Cultural grievances also played a role in the mobilization of regional parties in Italy and Canada. However, the manifestation of cultural grievances in these cases were different from what are traditionally considered to be cultural grievances. The parties did not aggressively promote grievances based on language, religion, or custom. Rather, culture in the broader sense of “a set of ways of thinking about the world” was involved (Bell 1992, 25). Regional culture was tied to territorial interests and local affinity. To illustrate this point, an example might be the antagonistic feelings of many citizens living in Michigan and Ohio during football season.

Each of the parties, then, packaged together economic and political grievances with regional customs to create something that resembled a regional culture grounded in common experiences. The cultural grievances were linked to a specific territory, not an ethnic group. Though the parties did proactively engage in shaping a regional culture, they
were not always clear in their articulation of it. Instead, each party spent a great deal of
time pointing out what was NOT part of the region’s culture.\textsuperscript{152} Herein lies the link with
populist movements. Populism is often associated with protests against an “other” which
lies outside of the region (Harrison 1995, 5). So, while there is an element of populism in
the parties’ rhetoric, it is also the case that over time an articulation of regional interest
based on economic, political, and cultural grievances combined to create a rudimentary
regional identity.\textsuperscript{153}

In western Canada, once again, the source of cultural grievances was federal
government policy. There were two readily identifiable elements of the West’s cultural
grievances: a long-standing history of political discontent and opposition to the
government’s policy on bilingualism.

Western Canada’s political culture incorporates deep-seated grievances against the
federal government that stem back to its initial incorporation into the Canadian federation
and the federal government’s decision to keep control of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and
Manitoba’s resources after the regions had gained provincial status.\textsuperscript{154} The West’s
distinctive “experience was in part distinguished by alleged discrimination and
exploitation. In turn, the frustrations unleashed a steady procession of protests and radical

\textsuperscript{151} The assertion that the Reform Party is attempting to preserve or cultivate a western Canadian culture
is a bit more tenuous than the other cases examined here. Only during the party’s early years, 1987-1990, did it encourage the creation of a western Canadian cultural identity.

\textsuperscript{152} For example, it is clear from the Lega’s rhetoric that organized crime and laziness are part of
southern Italy’s culture but not part of northern Italy’s.

\textsuperscript{153} See chapter five for further details.

\textsuperscript{154} Alberta and Saskatchewan joined in 1905, British Columbia in 1871, and Manitoba in 1870
respectively but did not gain control over their resources until 1930.
ideologies" (Ray and Premdas 1990, 200). Thus, western Canada has been the home of a variety of populist parties and movements of protest. The result was that "regardless of whether the West [was] poor (pre-World War II) or prosperous (post-World War II), it [protested]" (Ray and Premdas 1990, 207).

Both the WCC and RP frequently made connections between themselves and past populist movements. Speeches given by Douglas Christie, the party’s founder, were often laced with traditional populist themes. His speeches referred to grievances pressed by earlier populist movements, including unfair railway transportation rates, protective tariffs on manufactured goods, and the need to reform Canada’s constitution (Harrington 1981, 34). The result was that some people have remarked that western Canada has a unique culture. “Former Prime Minister Trudeau felt that ‘there is a different culture in the West than there is in Central Canada’” (Ray and Premdas 1990, 201).

The second element of the West’s cultural grievances emanated from the Canadian government’s adoption of official bilingualism. In 1969, with the enactment of the Official Languages Act, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau embarked on a path that shortly led to Canada adopting official bilingualism that meant that all government documents and services would be conducted in both English and French and that students should be encouraged to become bilingual. This policy received a negative reaction in western Canada, most likely because the presence of very few French speakers made this policy seem out of touch with western Canadians. “In Parliament, seventeen Conservative MPs, all but one from western Canada, broke from their party and voted against the Official
Languages Act" (Tupper 1981, 96). In western Canada, citizens felt that “French was being forced down [their] throats”. On top of disliking the policy, the West also believed that official bilingualism indirectly discriminated against western Canadians. This was due to the policy encouraging civil servants, by giving them various rewards, to become bilingual. Westerners had very little incentive to learn French because there were so few French speakers located in western Canada, so they believed the policy was unfair. However, many French speakers are bilingual and hence this policy might be interpreted as favorable to them.

The Western Canada Concept Party and Reform Party were both adamantly opposed to official bilingualism. The WCC believed that provincial language rights are for provinces to decide. The WCC’s principles and goals stated that, “Alberta has a distinctive culture, and its official language is English. Those who voluntarily choose to become bilingual should be free to do so, at their own expense, but those who choose to remain unilingual should not be subject to discrimination.”

The Reform Party takes a similar stand on the federal government’s policy on bilingualism. For Reform MP Deborah Grey, the policy of official bilingualism makes no logical sense. Grey commented that if she were going to learn the language of her largest

155 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, Ray Speaker, 8/5/96.
156 The result of the Official Languages Act is impressive. In 1945, 12.25 percent of all employees in federal institutions were Francophones and by 1990, 26.7 percent were French speakers, more than the proportion of French speakers in the whole population, which was 24 percent (Dion 1992, 94).
157 For example, “competence in both languages is required for a number of positions in the public service (Bell 1992, 116).
non-English speaking constituency it would be Ukrainian. The Reform Party’s dislike of official bilingualism does not mean that it is against personal bilingualism in principle, only that it does not endorse the use of federal money to fund these programs, nor does it believe that civil servants should be rewarded for being bilingual. The vast majority of Canadians are unilingual, and so the party’s 1988 platform stated, “Let Quebec be Quebec and the West be the West.”

One of the sources of the West’s opposition to bilingualism can be derived from Canadian demographic trends, which has had a large impact on Canadian political culture. According to Daniel Bell’s book *The Roots of Disunity* (1992) the anti-French, anti-bilingual sentiments expressed by western parties such as Reform can be traced back to the migration of particular groups to western Canada. Historical analysis has shown that British Columbia was heavily influenced by British immigrants, while Alberta experienced a great influx of Americans (Bell 1992, 131). Using Hartz’s theory, the groups central to western Canada’s cultural grievances are the Loyalist/Tory and Liberal American fragments. The Loyalist/Tory fragment championed British values and loyalty to the crown and were the successors of Lord Durham’s hope “that eventually the stubborn francophone minority would be dissolved in an ocean of anglophones” (Bell 1992, 100).

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159 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/8/96.
160 Bell adopts Hartz’s fragment theory to explain Canadian disunity. “According to Hartz, societies of the New World base their political cultures on single European ideologies. In Europe, conservatism, socialism, and liberalism are merely parts of a varied political culture. But in the New World, the part often becomes the whole. Liberalism in America for example becomes a way of life; conservatism and socialism are excluded” (Bell 1992, 17).
Reform’s position on cultural issues illustrates its firm grounding in the Liberal American fragment. It believes that it is up to individuals to nurture their cultural heritage, whether in language, tradition, or religion. This is not the state’s duty. The state’s role is to make sure that everyone has the right to maintain his or her cultural tradition. These fragments glorifying individualism and British loyalty are antagonistic to the collectivist French Canadians who have despised the British since the conquest in the eighteenth century. Chapter five will show that the WCC’s and the RP’s anti-French appeals were quite popular with voters.

The cultural grievances expressed by the Lega Nord are quite similar to those of western Canada. However, its use of cultural grievances was more complicated than in the case of Canada. For northern Italy, there was not a long history of underlying grievances on which the Lega could capitalize. Umberto Bossi, leader of the Lega Nord primarily followed two different strategies to create a northern Italian identity. The first attempted to mobilize northern Italians by contriving a common ethnic identity, and the second was grounded in common territorial interests.

Initially, Bossi emphasized the cultural heritage of Lombardi, focusing on the dialect, history, culture, etc. He attempted to make a traditional argument based on ethnic self-determination by pointing to the very distant past of northern Italy’s city-states. However, Bossi’s attempt to organize Italians based on their ethnic “Lombard” identity failed terribly. “In spite of the efforts made to invent it, there is no nationalist Lombard or
Venetian consciousness” (Sassoon 1997, 262). In fact, “there is an academic consensus on the lack of cultural base or ethnic identities in northern Italy” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 5). Hence, Bossi quickly changed his focus from an ethnic-cultural discourse to a socio-economic one to create a northern Italian identity based on territory (Gomez-Reino 1998, 19).161 Bossi has argued that the need to achieve federalism pivoted on the socio-economic situation, not ethnic divisions (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 7). Conversely, he utilized historical memories and the present circumstances of northern Italy’s prosperity to create a territorial identity based on a community of interests juxtaposed against the centralist state (Diamanti 1993, 57; Allum and Diamanti 1996, 162). In fact, since 1996, Bossi has advocated the creation of a new multi-national northern state called Padania to exist within the new European Union without nation-states (Gomez-Reino 1998, 18).

Since localism dominates Italian identity, not nationalism or regionalism, Bossi was confronted with the dilemma of how to create a northern regional identity. First, he adopted “national symbols” from the northern communes’ ancient past. A flag with a medieval warrior raising a sword against the background of a red-on-white cross was designed to give the northerners a symbol similar to a national flag.162 According to Ilvo

161 Bossi’s change in tactics may have derived from the fact that “in the history of Italian politics, ethnicity was not, as Samuel Barnes writes, a ‘meaningful’ variable to explain political and electoral alignments” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 5).

162 This symbol is derived from a historic oath of allegiance by the Lombard cities against the Emperor Barbarossa in 1212. Hence, this symbol represents the unity of the North against the foreign oppressor.
Diamanti, the symbols and rituals undertaken by the party “[were] not about discovering the past, but about building a new identity.”

The Lega’s second strategy involved appealing to long-standing stereotypes. “Writing in 1927, Gramsci noted that northern Italians were inclined to regard the Mezzogiorno as a ‘ball and chain hobbling Italy’s social development’, to consider the meridionali as ‘inferior beings’, and to blame the South’s economic and social backwardness on the ‘laziness, ineptness and criminal nature’ of its inhabitants” (Gilbert 1993, 102). Giulio Savelli, the editor of the main League newspaper, argues in Che Cosa Vuole La Lega that a collision had occurred between the Mediterranean outlook of the South, shaped by relations of personal dependence, and the middle European identity of the North based on impersonal rule and individual rights” (Gallagher 1993, 618). The Lega’s rhetoric often stressed the industrious work ethic and upright moral standing of the North as opposed to a South that is associated with corruption, fascism, and the Mafia.

The party goes so far as to argue that northern Italy’s culture is shaped by its civic culture.

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“Padania is the north of Italy which has a civic tradition in the communes. Our project is based on our territory and civic traditions. Our inheritance is the communes with their elected powers. This is our political gene, the sense of autonomy and freedom. This sense remains in our cities and in our spirit” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 19-20).  

“...Lega publications began to talk about the North as ‘a multi-regional community sharing the same culture’. This culture of ‘hard work, honesty, civic pride and discipline’ was contrasted with a seemingly very different southern culture” (Gallagher 1994, 462).

At times, the Lega’s rhetoric bordered on being racist. “In coarse and scornful language, Bossi denounces the South as backward not only economically but culturally.”

“...The South of Italy has always lived on unproductive State-owned industries, unemployment benefits, fraudulent disability pensions, an over-inflated and inefficient public sector; public jobs are easily available in the South if one supports the local Mafia boss at the election.” However, the Lega carefully points out that playing on southern stereotypes is only a strategic move by the party. “We decided to exploit the diffuse anti-South sentiment in Lombardy, like in other regions of the North, in order to attract the attention of the mass public and the mass media.” (Lega Lombarda 1993a, 18). When accused of being racist or anti-South, the LN is careful to point out that the South’s sad state of affairs is due to Roman rule rather than the actions of the South. “We are not

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164 The Lega Nord even points to the study recently published by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work, as scientific evidence supporting the cultural differences and divisions between North and South (Gomez-Reino 1998, 20). In his research Putnam argues that northern Italy’s regions tend to exhibit a more civic culture than those of southern Italy. He posits that the civic culture of the North has fostered trust amongst the population and has had a positive contribution on the economic development of the region.


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anti-South; but we are against the way the South has been enslaved by the Christian Democrats and allowed to live off state hand-outs,” commented Bossi.\textsuperscript{167}

It is difficult to make generalizations about the underlying nature of the cultural grievances raised by the Lega Nord. There is not a well-developed literature on regional cultures in Italy. In effect throughout history, regionalism has not been prevalent in Italian society, instead localism has dominated coupled with a weak national identity. “Italians have a strong attachment to their city or village (campanilismo). The very particularism of their attachments makes the growth of larger identification difficult” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 5). “The Lega and the other parties know that the first loyalty of northern Italians is to their commune—Milan, Bologna, Mantua, Varese—rather than to the Italian state.”\textsuperscript{168} This may be why the political establishment found it very difficult to discredit the Lega and place it squarely outside of national interest (Gallagher 1993, 617).

A factor contributing to the Lega’s ability to mobilize voters based on regional themes was that the modernization of Italy had decreased the salience of the Catholic and Marxist sub-cultures (Mannheimer 1991a, 21). This situation was eroded further by the end of the Cold War. “The ending of the Cold War at the close of the 1980s destabilised Italian politics; it threw into question the left-right divide in politics which was already being eroded by domestic changes that weakened the importance of the ‘red’ and ‘white’ sub-cultures that had enabled the PCI and the DC to thrive as mass parties” (Gallagher

"No more class struggle, no more ideology of the left or right, only the fight for liberty from the state," stated Umberto Bossi. Moreover, according to Dwayne Woods, the subcultural organizations that supported the Catholic and Communist parties had begun to lose their appeal and importance to voters (Woods 1992, 70). In other words, prior to the rise of the Lega, Italy’s traditional subcultures had decreasing relevance for the public, which made the environment more conducive to the new party’s success.

To summarize, each party attempted to bring to the forefront of voters’ minds differences in regional cultures in Canada and Italy and attempted to link individuals’ common experiences with the creation of a regional identity. Bell’s work (1992) implies that western Canada’s distinct culture may derive from the mix of settlers that call western Canada home. Meanwhile, Umberto Bossi argues that northern and southern Italy are different by making broad generalizations about both populations. These generalizations focus on long standing stereotypes. Hence, Bossi describes northern Italy as industrious and southern Italy seems to be inhabited only by the fascists, Mafia, and people willing to cooperate with both groups.

**Concluding Comparisons**

Broadly speaking, the Western Canada Concept Party, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord all emphasized similar reasons for forming, i.e., central government policies

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had resulted in the region suffering various injustices. Each combined economic, political, and cultural grievances with different degrees of emphasis and linked them to the voter’s region of residence in their attempt to mobilize the electorate. Implicit in each grievance was that center-periphery conflict represented a zero-sum game, each region’s interests were pitted against another, whether it was the central government or another region. Unlike ethnic regional parties that identify similar types of grievances with belonging to an ethnic group, these parties charged that citizens living within a given territory needed to organize to protect their mutual interests.

All three parties implied that a region’s membership in a state should be based on cost benefit calculations and that western Canada and northern Italy were experiencing more costs than benefits. Whether or not this is empirically true does not matter; it is perceptions that count. In order to correct the situation, each party proposed a structural change in the distribution of political power within the state.

While the similarities between the cases are striking, of no less importance are the differences. Both the WCC and Reform Party emerged in regions that harbored longstanding grievances against the federal government. Center-periphery tensions between western and central Canada or western Canada and the federal government were not novel. The lesson learned from these cases was that longstanding grievances, even when accompanied by a serious aggravating factor such as the imposition of the NEP just as the WCC emerged, were not enough to create a significant regional party.
To some extent, the grievances articulated by the Lega Nord are entirely novel. They are novel, in that northern Italians have not previously participated in politics on the basis of regional interests. Even more ironic is that in this case, the center-periphery conflict has been initiated by the Lombards and Piedmontese who created the Italian state. Certainly, it cannot be denied that much of the Lega’s support has come from its emphasis on the failings of the Italian political system, a phenomenon that has existed as a grievance for the last 30-40 years in Italy. However, unlike the WCC and RP, the grievances articulated by the Lega were somewhat novel and of a relatively recent vintage.

It appears, then, that although all three parties emphasized a similar theme: action by the central government had resulted in the regions experiencing economic, political, and cultural grievances, the seriousness, longevity, and originality differed. The two parties, the RP and the LN, that became significant players in their respective party systems shared grievances that had lasted for different periods of time as well as being of different degrees of originality. The case studies above suggest that regional grievances alone are not sufficient for regional party formation; something else must also take place. The next chapter will consider one of the possible factors, the receptiveness of established parties. Perhaps if established parties are receptive to the region’s grievances, the regional party has a short-lived existence. However, the opposite is also true, new parties flourish when established parties are unreceptive to the grievances articulated.
CHAPTER 4

REACTIONS OF ESTABLISHED PARTIES

Regional grievances are necessary for regional party formation, yet many regions nurse them without producing regional parties. Given that this is the case, the next step is to shift the focus to other factors. Political scientists focusing on third party formation in the United States often argue that the inaction of established parties on issues of concern to voters is crucial in determining whether third parties become relevant players in the party system (Sundquist 1973; Rosenstone et al. 1984). In this study, examination of the established parties’ impact focuses on whether or not they co-opt the regional parties’ grievances and thus their raison d’être. If the parties are receptive to the region’s concerns, Sundquist’s work (1973) implies that the natural outcome is the ephemeral existence of the regional challengers as the adaptive established parties incorporate new demands. Thus, after a brief spell of success, the new party disappears without becoming a significant player in the party system (Sartori 1976).

If the basic premise of this literature is accepted, then in the story that follows, it is probable that the established parties were receptive to the concerns raised by the Western Canada Concept Party and not receptive to the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord. However, I would like to argue that the situation is more complicated than implied above. First, the
receptiveness of the established parties is not always a clear-cut issue. For example, does the established party clearly adopt some of the regional party's platform planks or does it just show sympathy for the group's concerns? In the first instance, concrete receptiveness is taking place; in the second, it is not. Secondly, it is also conceivable, of course, that timing may have an impact on the ability of the established parties to co-opt the region's demands convincingly. For example, if the established parties hesitate to act until the party is already a significant player in the party system, then any attempts to adopting the regional party's platform may lack credibility and be futile.

In the case studies that follow, it is probable that the established parties were promptly receptive to the concerns raised by the Western Canada Concept Party (a ephemeral party), showing not only sympathy but also adopting concrete proposals to alleviate the region's grievances. Conversely, since the Reform Party and Lega Nord have become relevant parties, it might also be assumed that the established parties were slow to respond to their demands and avoided directly adopting any of their proposals.

To determine whether or not the established parties were receptive to the regional challenger's concerns, this chapter will focus primarily on the public dialogue between the three new parties, the Western Canada Concept Party, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord, and the respective established parties in Canada and Italy. It will focus on the dialogue between the challengers and the established parties from the time the parties first began to organize until the completion of their formation stage. This should provide an accurate picture of the receptiveness of the established parties.
Western Canada Concept Party

The receptiveness of the established parties to the Western Canada Concept party (WCC) is a complex issue because it was a provincial party whose policy focus was directed at eliminating or reforming federal programs. As mentioned in chapter three, the WCC desired the elimination of the National Energy Program (NEP), bilingualism, and metrification and advocated better representation for Western Canada in the Canadian Senate and, depending on the leader interviewed, an independent western Canada. I will begin by discussing the receptivity of Alberta’s provincial parties to the WCC’s agenda.

The enactment of the National Energy Program (NEP) in the fall of 1980 outraged many western Canadians, including members of the WCC and the provincial government. Though it did not receive much media coverage, the elimination of the NEP was one of the cornerstones of the WCC’s election plank. The leader of the provincial PCP and Premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed, was very receptive to grievances about the NEP. Two days after the imposition of the NEP, the Alberta government launched a court case against the federal government to eliminate the NEP and also decreased the production, and hence export, of oil to central and eastern Canada (Harrington 1981, 38). The provincial government’s response was swift and decisive. However, the response lacked a degree of credibility because it could not stop the NEP from being enacted initially and, as time elapsed and the NEP remained unaltered, it appeared that there was nothing the Alberta government could do to remedy the situation.
Of all of the WCC’s proposals, the case for separatism received the most press coverage in Alberta, and thus most public discussion centered on this issue. Initially, Premier Lougheed appeared sympathetic to the WCC’s separatist position. For example, known separatists who were members of the provincial level PCP were not expelled from the party for their beliefs (Pratt and Stevenson 1981, 20). Lougheed commented that, “he could not agree with the aims of separatist groups but he could sympathize with the Albertans who were joining up. People are very angry. They feel discriminated against in the extreme” (Harrington 1981, 39). Most likely, Lougheed took this position because he thought he could use the publicity generated by the separatist groups to bargain with the federal government or because there was strong support for their position within the provincial PCP (Harrington 1981, 39).

On the other hand, the opposition parties in Alberta’s legislature condemned the WCC and other separatist groups. “In a series of press statements Thursday, leaders and would-be leaders of the NDP, Socreds and Liberals spoke out against the new movement to take Alberta and Western Canada out of the Confederation.”170 Meanwhile, “as separatism flourished, Lougheed was pressed to denounce the movement by opposition parties and constantly questioned by the press” (Harrington 1981, 39). In sum, the opposition parties unequivocally denounced the promotion of separatism in western Canada, while the provincial PCP appeared to be somewhat sympathetic to the separatists’ grievances.

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On the other issues raised by the WCC, the provincial government made little attempt to address the WCC’s concerns concretely. Instead, Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed focused on how the limited success of the WCC reflected on his government. After the successful 1982 by-election bid by Gordon Kesler, a member of the WCC, Lougheed pondered “that he was partly to blame due to his government’s poor communication with the public.”

“Lougheed, who admits the WCC has moved into a political vacuum that has opened up in the province, is returning to the streets to re-establish contact with the people.”

Even so, the Alberta premier believed the election of the separatist Gordon Kesler to the Alberta legislature was a greater slap in the face to the federal government than to his own because the WCC represented a protest against federal, and not provincial policies.

Likewise, the three Opposition parties at the provincial level, the Liberals, the New Democratic Party (NDP), and the Social Credit Party, not only shunned the separatists, but they were also not receptive to the grievances raised by the WCC. They could have made the elimination of the NEP or of bilingualism a part of their parties’ platforms or at least publicly discussed the need to do away with them. Instead, they concentrated on blaming the provincial and federal governments for the rise of the WCC. On two separate occasions, leaders of the NDP publicly blamed the behavior of the provincial and federal governments for the popularity of the WCC. “Ray Martin, president of the Alberta NDP,

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labeled separatism a ‘fungus’, which has been encouraged to grow by the twinned bullheadedness of the federal Liberals and the provincial Tories.”

After the election of Kesler in 1982, the new “Alberta NDP leader Grant Notley said Kesler’s election is a message to the ‘insensitive and arrogant’ federal and provincial governments.”

In short, with the exception of Lougheed supporting the elimination of the NEP, the governing and opposition parties of Alberta did not adopt any part of the WCC’s platform. The governing party publicly acknowledged that it understood the WCC’s members’ sense of frustration with federal government policies, while the opposition parties pointed out that the unfortunate actions of the federal and provincial governments led to the dissatisfaction that provoked the WCC to organize. Only the provincial government was quickly sympathetic to the party’s concerns after it formed, and frankly this may have undermined the WCC’s support because its actions gave validity to the grievances and may have led the voters to believe the PCP held similar views.

The Ottawa government, the focus of much of the WCC’s criticism, was un receptive and critical of the WCC. The reaction by Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was particularly negative. “Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau told reporters that western separatism was hysterical” (Harrington 1981, 28). Besides condemning the group as a bunch of right wing extremists, “Justice Minister Jean Chrétien warned westerners flirting with the idea of separation that their rich provinces could be poor some day and

need the rest of the nation’s support.”176 As time progressed, Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal Party did not change their position by becoming more conciliatory to the West. According to Maclean’s reporter Gordon Legge, “by placing the economy at the bottom of his personal agenda for the country and by failing either to acknowledge seriously or act upon western concerns, Trudeau has done more to alienate moderate westerners than any other single factor.”177

While the Liberals attempted to discredit and dismiss the concerns raised by the WCC, the federal Progressive Conservative Party appeared sympathetic, just like its provincial counter part. The former Prime Minister, Joe Clark, leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) and the Official Opposition, “said that it would be wrong for the West to leave Canada because of Liberal government policies on energy and the constitution.”178 “Western Canada shouldn’t separate “because of policies or problems that [were] not in the nature of the country but [were] rather in the nature of a particular political party. We should not allow our frustration with the Liberal government to blind us to the goodwill of the Canadian people” commented Joe Clark.179 In like fashion, former fellow cabinet minister Don Mazankowski condemned the Liberal government’s inaction on western Canadians’ concerns. He commented “the Liberal government is too busy wrestling with divisiveness in Quebec to realize its energy policies [were] spurring a

greater threat from west of Ontario.”180 “This government must stop attacking one region of the country while it accommodates another.” stated Mazankowski in a speech to the House of Commons.181 The PCP tried to diffuse the West’s grievances and redirect them by promoting the idea that it would gladly support the interests of the West. However, the federal PCP only spoke sympathetically; it did not adopt any of the WCC’s concrete proposals.182

The 1984 federal election provided the established parties with another opportunity to address the issues raised by the WCC. Prior to the 1984 election, both of Canada’s largest parties experienced a change in leadership. Joe Clark was ousted as the leader of the PCP by Brian Mulroney and, with the resignation of Pierre Trudeau, John Turner became leader of the Liberals. Shortly after becoming party leader, Brian Mulroney made several public statements highlighting his sympathy for the problems of western Canada. “The voice of western Canada will be heard as it hasn’t been heard for years if the Progressive Conservatives form the next federal government,” noted PCP Leader Brian Mulroney.183 Announced in September 1983, Mulroney’s shadow cabinet included several MPs from western Canada, and their departments accounted for 47.6 percent of all government spending.184 “That adds up to power, to real clout for western Canada and that’s the kind of clout you’re going to have in a new Conservative government,” said

180 “All western separatism needs is leader, warns Tory.” The Calgary Herald 6 August 1982.
181 “All western separatism needs is leader, warns Tory.” The Calgary Herald 6 August 1982.
182 It is impossible to tell whether or not the PCP was truly sympathetic or just acting politically astute. Regardless of its motivation, it very publicly acted sympathetic to the WCC’s demands, which must have had some impact on public opinion.
183 “Mulroney vows more clout for West.” The Gazette, Montreal, 30 November 1983.
Mulroney. Nonetheless, Mulroney never announced he would eliminate the National Energy Program (NEP) or official bilingualism or that he would support the creation of the Triple E-Senate. At best, it seemed that the NEP would be reformed along lines favorable to the West and perhaps Senate reform might be discussed, but that was the extent of any concrete promises. Mulroney’s actions and words rung of sympathy for the WCC’s grievances but not concrete receptiveness.

Following the 1984 federal election, which resulted in a victory for the Progressive Conservatives and Brian Mulroney, the WCC contested one more election, the 1986 Alberta provincial election, where it only received 0.65 percent of the vote. Shortly thereafter, the Reform Party organized and the WCC’s party leader Jack Ramsay joined it. In 1993, he became a member of parliament under the Reform Party’s banner.

By the mid 1980s, it appeared that the differences between the federal Liberal and Conservative Parties on the grievances raised by the WCC were fairly clear. At the height of the WCC’s popularity, the Liberals were unsympathetic to the West’s grievances, focusing instead on discrediting the WCC. Meanwhile, the federal Progressive Conservatives had publicly acknowledged all along that the WCC had legitimate concerns that needed to be addressed. It was sympathetic to the West’s concerns and eliminated the NEP once it was elected to form the government. However, Clark and Mulroney

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184 “Mulroney vows more clout for West,” The Gazette, Montreal, 30 November 1983.
185 “Mulroney vows more clout for West,” The Gazette, Montreal, 30 November 1983.
186 In 1985, Mulroney’s government eliminated the NEP and an alternative energy policy was adopted. It could be argued that the elimination of the NEP in 1983 was crucial to the WCC’s poor performance in 1986 but this cannot entirely explain the situation. After all, Reform formed in 1987 just one year after the WCC’s devastating electoral defeat.
never said they would eliminate bilingualism or adopt the Triple-E Senate. In short, sympathetic actions by the federal PCP and provincial parties may have contributed to the failure of the WCC, but they also left many reasons for western alienation to endure.

**The Reform Party**

Though there had been many federal initiatives from 1968-1986 that fanned the fires of western alienation, Preston Manning was not inclined to start a new party because he believed at the time that the more natural outlet for this anger was support for the federal Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party (Manning 1992, 92). For the fiscal and social conservatives who were the majority of the Reform Party’s members, the federal Progressive Conservative Party was the party that was supposed to represent the West’s interests (Nevitte el al. 1995, 590). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Progressive Conservatives under Joe Clark, a native Albertan, offered westerners some hope that their interests would be represented in Ottawa. “Joe Clark has had the best opportunity of any western MP to advance the West’s position in Confederation, first as the leader of a minority government and now as a high-ranking minister in a strong majority government. Yet he has been unwilling or unable to do so,” commented Manning.¹⁸⁸

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As of the 1987, several of the West’s grievances remained unaddressed: the Triple-E Senate did not exist, official bilingualism still did, and federal legislation still seemed biased against the West. “Despite Mulroney’s efforts to placate the West in the area of energy (through the Western Energy Accord of 1985), agriculture (through the Western Grain Stabilization Fund), and economic development (through the creation in 1987 of the Department of Western Economic Diversification), western discontent with the feds was a major factor underlying the formation of the Reform Party in 1987” (Bell 1992, 144). With the exception of eliminating the NEP, the PCP’s actions were sympathetic but did not show receptiveness. Mulroney’s initiatives did not address the issue of central concern: the West’s lack of political representation. According to one Reform MP, day-to-day problems still arise because Canada lacks a Triple-E Senate.189

Prominent PCP Members of Parliament attempted to defend the government’s record on addressing western Canadians’ concerns. According to MP Jim Hawkes from Calgary West, “there is no economic commitment that was made by Alberta MPs prior to the last election that has not been kept, period. The record of the federal MPs is absolutely first rate, it’s absolutely consistent and Alberta is getting the help that it needs.”190 However, Hawkes’ and others’ defense of economic development initiatives in some ways illustrated even more sharply that the PCP did not directly address any of the grievances central to Reform Party’s project.

189 Phone interview by author with Reform Party MP, 8/21/96 a.
However, for the Reform Members of Parliament, Mulroney’s first administration confirmed earlier suspicions that federal policy could reflect western Canada’s interests only if Canada’s political institutions were reformed. The policies implemented by Mulroney’s government were viewed as no more than a bandage to cover a gaping wound. Hence, the Reform MPs I interviewed were highly critical of the Progressive Conservative government’s record, particularly its dallying on eliminating the National Energy Program (NEP), fiscal irresponsibility, the absence of a credible plan to reform the Senate, and the unfair awarding of a government contract to a Quebec firm versus a Winnipeg firm.\(^{191}\)

As Reformer frustration grew and members of the governing party were arguing that the West’s interests were being represented, Mulroney made several overtures to Quebec’s voters. “Progressive Conservative Leader Brian Mulroney vowed yesterday that he would try to persuade the Quebec National Assembly to sign the new Canadian Constitution ‘with honor and enthusiasm.’”\(^{192}\) In essence, Mulroney proposed a new constitution that included a clause stating that Quebec was a “distinct society,” which was irreconcilable with the Reform Party’s position that Canada was a country of ten equal provinces. And thus, Mulroney’s peace offering to Quebec was not popular in western Canada. The Progressive Conservatives soon found that it was much easier courting the West and Quebec as the Official Opposition rather than as the government.

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\(^{191}\) This was known as the CF-18 fighter jet incident. See chapter two for details.

\(^{192}\) Graham Fraser, “Mulroney willing to reopen constitution talks with PQ,” The Globe and Mail, 7 August 1984.
The West and Quebec’s difference of opinion on constitutional reforms represented a conflict of interests that was a crucial flaw in the coalition of interests that elected the Mulroney government. Mulroney’s administration worked desperately to keep together a coalition composed of Quebec nationalists and western Canadians that were primarily francophobes (Johnston et al. 1994, 11-17; Neville et al. 1995, 590). The interests of these groups were at odds on several issues, particularly on reforming Canada’s constitution. ¹⁹³

By 1986, Mulroney realized that the PCP was losing support in the West. He reacted to this by appointing Don Mazankowski, an Alberta MP, as deputy prime minister. According to Ted Byfield, the publisher of two western Canadian news magazines, Don Mazankowski’s assignment was to halt the Tories’ slipping popularity in the West. To do this, it was publicly acknowledged that Mr. Mazankowski would have the daily ear of the Prime Minister. ¹⁹⁴ Mazankowski stated that, “talk of the West being discriminated against does a great disservice to this country. It only drives a wedge between East and West.” ¹⁹⁵ “Was the West at a permanent disadvantage to central Canada due to its relative electoral weakness in the Commons? Mr. Mazankowski rejected the idea strongly. ‘That idea is overstated and overplayed.’”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ See chapter three for the reason why these two groups were at odds over amending Canada’s constitution.
However, RP supporters’ opinions differed with Mr. Manzankowski. After talking with several members of parliament from the Reform Party, I concluded that the general feeling was that the Reform Party would never have emerged if the Progressive Conservative Party had been more receptive to its constituents in western Canada. Among the twenty-four Reform MP’s that I interviewed, there was the perception that the PCP’s overtures to the West were either not genuine or did not lead to tangible results.

“If I knew that the Progressive Conservatives would have responded and wouldn’t have been so scared to death of their leadership from central Canada, if there were mechanisms in place to make that safe, I don’t know that there would have been a Reform Party because I would have been happy enough with them... if they had been doing what they were supposed to do and what I voted them in for in 1984 [Senate reform, deficit reduction, regional fairness in awarding contracts], I don’t think there would have been any need for the Reform Party. But they blew it big time” commented Reform MP, Deborah Grey. 197

When the Reform Party finally did organize in 1987, Manning was quick to point out that the aim of the party was to force the federal government to institute some policies of crucial importance to the West, not to capture control of government. “If the old-line parties want to swallow us,” says Manning, “all they’ve got to do is swallow our platform.” 198 None of the established parties took up Manning’s offer. “So far the federal Tories, who stand to lose the most if the Reform party takes off, have been dismissing Manning’s outfit as ‘just another splinter group’” commented a reporter from the Toronto Star. 199

197 Phone interview by author with Deborah Grey, Reform MP 8/8/96.
In response to the Reform Party’s favorable showing in the 1988 Canadian general election, several members of parliament from both the Progressive Conservative (PCP) and the Liberal Party attempted to co-opt some of western Canada’s concerns. First, Jean Chrétien, leader of the Liberal Party, made overtures to western voters by promising an elected Senate if he became prime minister. “I recognize that Western Canadians have often felt that the Liberal Party was out of touch with the West. But I am determined to change that.” This appeal to western Canada never amounted to anything substantial, however, because Chrétien’s elected Senate did not include equal representation from each province. As mentioned in chapter three, the Reform Party promoted the creation of a Triple E-Senate, elected, effective, and with equal representation from each of the provinces. “The third ‘E’ of the so-called Triple E Senate stands for ‘equal,’ but that is one aspect of Senate reform Chrétien told reporters he doesn’t support.”

On the other hand, Prime Minister Mulroney’s new constitutional proposal, known as the Charlottetown Agreement, adopted some of the proposals from the Reform Party’s handbook. For example, he suggested that any new constitutional proposal be voted on

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200 In the 1988 federal election, the Reform Party won 15 percent of the vote in Alberta and 5 percent in British Columbia.

201 Lynda Shorter, “Chrétien pledges elected Senate to 400 Liberals,” The Edmonton Journal, 14 October 1990.


204 For a fuller explanation of the prime minister’s specific proposals and how they compare to the Reform Party’s positions, see George Koch, “Mulroney’s need for speed: a new Tory strategy,” British Columbia Report, 12/31/90, 11-12.
in a referendum by the entire country, that the House of Commons have more free votes, and that property rights be entrenched in the constitution. Of particular relevance was that Mulroney proposed an elected Senate. However, Mulroney’s Senate proposal did not include equal representation from each province nor did it meet the effectiveness criteria outlined by the Reform Party. Hence, at the end of 1991, Preston Manning believed the federal government’s proposals were in the right direction, but the Senate proposal still fell quite short of the party’s goals (Manning 1992, 308).

Instead of being receptive or sympathetic to the concerns raised by the Reform Party, the more popular response of the established parties was to try to discredit the party. One tactic of the established parties was to argue that support for Reform resulted in a wasted vote because the party would never become more than a western fringe party. These appeals to western voters were based on the idea of strategic voting. Chrétien commented, “the Reform movement will not take root in Central or Eastern Canada, which restricts it to the status of a ‘splinter party,’ unable to form a majority government and a poor choice for western voters seeking more power in Ottawa.”205 In short, “…the Reform Party is and will always be nothing but a regional protest party with simplistic policies, commented Chrétien.”206 The Progressive Conservatives also employed this tactic. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney commented, “Albertans must continue to elect

Conservatives, ... to keep their hands on the levers of power.” Mulroney implied that by voting for Reform, conservative voters would ultimately lose because splitting their votes between Reform and the Progressive Conservatives would make it impossible for either party to capture control of the government.

The last strategy the established parties used to discredit Reform was to accuse them of advocating policies that would be detrimental to Canada’s integrity. “Liberal Leader Jean Chrétien attacked Reform Party leader Preston Manning’s stand on bilingualism and multiculturalism yesterday as policies that ‘will lead directly to the breakup of Canada.’” “Canadians should end their honeymoon with the Reform Party and recognize its divisive national policies, federal New Democratic Party leader Audrey McLaughlin said Monday.”

The established parties appeared to concentrate their efforts more on discrediting the Reform Party than addressing the concerns it raised. Additionally, the Reform Party interpreted all overtures made by the Progressive Conservative Party, whether the elimination of the National Energy Program, the creation of the Western Economic Diversification Fund, or the appointment of numerous western MP’s to cabinet positions, as largely symbolic gestures lacking substance. It also suggested in its rhetoric that these actions were too little and too late. Finally, the PCP’s discomfort was aggravated by the

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209 Larry Pynn, “Reform party’s policies divisive, indefensible, McLaughlin says,” The Vancouver Sun, 30 April 1991.
government's countervailing need to address Quebec's interests. Maintaining support for Mulroney's government in the West and Quebec was an impossible task as long as the national unity issue was kept on the forefront of the government's agenda, which was the case for the majority of Mulroney's tenure in office.

*The Lega Nord*

The grievances raised by the Lega Nord were discussed extensively in chapter three. They focused on the net contribution made by the North to the government's budget, the inefficient and corrupt clientelistic system maintained by the *partiocrazia*, the North's perceived oppression at the hands of the unitary Italian state, and that each region's interests had been overlooked by the central government.\(^{210}\) The party's solution called for extensive and far-reaching reforms by the state, culminating in the creation of a federal system in Italy and in a host of new political, economic, and social powers being allocated to the regional level of government. How did the established parties react to the grievances and solutions proposed by the Lega? Particularly, did they show sympathy for the concerns and/or adopt concrete measures to address them on a timely basis? Or, as was the case with the Reform Party, did the established parties devote the majority of their energy to discrediting the party?

During the Lega's early years (1984-1990), the established parties appeared un receptive to the grievances it raised. In fact, the response to its rise was non-existent or

\(^{210}\) Recall from chapter two that *partiocrazia* refers to the established parties' tendency to run the government for their own benefit (Gilbert 1995, 5).
primarily to discredit it. For example, in Varese, the hometown of the Lega Nord leader Umberto Bossi, Mayor Maurizio Sabatini, a Christian Democrat, commented that the 1987 municipal election success of the Lega Nord suggested, “a vote of protest—a phenomenon which provincializes our city. Votes for the Lega are wasted and not ascribed to a clear political agenda. And the party’s assertions certainly do not solve our problems; rather it complicates them.” Other critics’ attacks were more vicious, suggesting the party was racist, egotistical, and involved in treasonous activity. For example, Cesare Romiti, the managing director of FIAT, commented that support for the Lega is due to the egoism of a rich region. After the 1987 election, Bossi complained that the Roman (established) parties portrayed the Lega as racist and that supporting it involved conspiracy against the state.

For the most part, the established parties were unresponsive to the grievances raised by the Lega Lombarda. While there were certainly several reasons why the parties were unresponsive, scholars have focused primarily on the parties’ self-absorption with coalition politics and internal issues making them too distracted to respond to the League’s rise. Not only were they divided from each other, but they also suffered from internal divisions making any sort of agreed reaction difficult. For instance, even though the established parties had long accepted that Italy’s political system needed to be reformed, an opinion

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promoted by the Lega, the parties were unable to agree on specifics (Smith 1997, 472). A 1983-1985 parliamentary commission that considered several reforms—from public parliamentary voting to reforming party financing—was unable to agree on a recommendation and instead submitted six different minority reports (Smith 1997, 473). Political scientist Tom Gallagher wrote “what [was] striking about the late 1980s [was] the failure of the ruling parties to deal effectively with the Lega once its capacity to inflict damage became clear. They were too absorbed with alliance-building and distributive politics; traditionally, fresh challengers had been co-opted but the Lega refused to be bought...” (Gallagher 1994, 461).

The League’s marked electoral success in the 1990 administrative elections forced the established parties to sit up and take notice of the party’s growing support. *Il Gazzettino* reported on 8 May 1990 that “at the headquarters of the government’s political parties it has been pointed out that the vote for the Leagues attests to the dissatisfaction of many sectors of public opinion.”

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti commented that the results of the 1990 elections reflected “the electorate [was] fed up and showed this by voting for the Leagues.”

The established parties’ silence on the grievances raised by the Lega ended shortly after the 1990 election. The new decade ushered in an urgency to reform the Italian political system like never before. The reforms proposed by the established parties were

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quite varied, but only a very few of them directly addressed the issues raised by the Lega Nord.

The first serious attempt by an established party to address northern grievances came from the Socialist Party (PSI) under the leadership of Bettino Craxi. In the spring of 1991, it began discussing regionalism and almost adopted a federalist position (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 2, 50). It even launched the idea of becoming a federation of regional socialist parties (Mignone 1995, 126). In the spring of 1991, Bossi offered to collaborate with Craxi if he would resign from the government and demand immediate elections “for which he could have presented himself as the only exponent of the Roman parties ready to sustain the reformist line” (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 2). However, Craxi vacillated, ultimately appearing to reject the offer because the Christian Democrats did not support the idea.

Yet Craxi did resign from the DC-dominated coalition in the spring of 1991, not to press for new elections but instead to force the government to consider his proposal for making Italy a presidential republic. Craxi wanted a national referendum held on creating an elected presidency, a position that Craxi coveted for himself. Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti did not endorse Craxi’s proposal. He and fellow Christian Democrats “[preferred] electoral reforms aimed at clear-cut parliamentary majorities and stable governments.” Thus, a stalemate over reform ensued. The result of Craxi’s actions was devastating for the PSI. According to Bossi, the PSI went into the next election without a

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216 “Italy; New life at 50,” The Economist, 13 April 1991, 46.
217 “Italy; New life at 50,” The Economist, 13 April 1991, 46.
clear or reformist political agenda, which ultimately contributed to their demise (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 2). The PSI would eventually disappear due to errors of strategy and tactics, among other things (Gundle 1996, 85).218

While the PSI and the DC led government squabbled about adopting a presidential system of government or a plurality electoral system, Mario Segni, a Christian Democrat, formed an interest group that worked to collect enough signatures to hold a referendum to modify Italy’s preference ranking electoral system, and it was overwhelmingly endorsed in 1991. The effect of the referendum was to eliminate much of the Mafia’s vote rigging.

The reforms considered by Segni, Craxi, and Andreotti in 1991 did not address the grievances raised by the Lega Nord. There was no a priori reason to assume that instituting a presidential system of government, eliminating preference rankings, or implementing a first past the post electoral system would give northern Italy more economic and political autonomy. Eliminating preference rankings may have helped eliminate political corruption, but this was only a secondary concern of the Lega. Craxi’s endorsement of federal-like principles was a substantial concession to the Lega, but they were not put into practice. Hence, though the established parties had started to appear sympathetic to the Lega’s cause by the close of 1991, substantive changes did not subsequently materialize. This became problematic for the established parties because the 1992 national elections made the Lega a significant player in the national political system.

With the exception of Mario Segni’s crusade to eliminate the preference ranking system, there was little concrete evidence that the established parties seriously considered implementing reforms until the electoral earthquake of April 1992. “As Indro Montanelli, the editor of the Milanese daily *Il Giornale*, has said, Italy’s leading politicians ‘speak of reform as if it were transubstantiation’; something theoretical and abstract, a subject for debate rather than concrete action” (Gilbert 1993, 106). However, that does not mean that political reforms were not needed. A *Times* correspondent commented that, “in the view of many foreign observers in Rome, the eventual disintegration of Italy, while unlikely, is not inconceivable unless deep electoral and institutional reforms are quickly implemented.”

Soon after the 1992 election, a bicameral parliamentary committee that was created to consider several reforms. First, the committee endorsed the first past the post (FPTP) principle that was then approved in a nation-wide referendum in 1993.226 According to Christian Democrat Ciriaci De Mita, the parliamentary committee chairman, additional reforms under consideration included ‘the German-style election of the prime minister by parliament and the transformation of the senate into a quasi-federalist ‘council of regions.’ The committee [was] reported to envisage neutralising the devolutionist appeal of the Northern Leagues by creating a ‘regional state,’ with tax-raising powers

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226 The new electoral system was not wholly based on FPTP principles. Three quarters of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate were to be determined by plurality voting, while one quarter of the seats would be allotted by the old proportional representation electoral system.

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transferred to regional governments.” This reform was particularly supported by the reformed Communist Party (Mignone 1995, 126). However, the committee was unable to find enough support to put forward this proposal, which meant it died in committee since the popular Mario Segni opposed these reforms.222

By the time the established parties had brought themselves to consider reforms that addressed the grievances raised by the Leagues, the mani-pulite investigations had begun.223 These investigations gravely undermined the existing parties. One by one, both famous and insignificant politicians fell, accused of corruption of various sorts. The legitimacy of the DC regime could not be rebuilt (see chapter two for details). From 1992 to 1994, the DC and PSI, the Lega’s chief opponents, were greatly handicapped by the findings of these investigations.

More so than their Canadian counterparts, the established parties in Italy had a difficult time addressing the grievances of northern Italians. During the first seven years of the Lega’s existence, there was very little reaction by the established parties to its rise. Until 1991, none of the established parties made any attempt to address the grievances or show much sympathy for the Lega’s cause. By the time the Christian Democrats, Socialist Party, or Communist Party decided it was necessary to react to the Lega Nord, the party had dealt them a serious election blow. The political climate was not in the established

223 Mani pulite (clean hands) was a codename used by policemen involved in uncovering political corruption in Italy.

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parties' favor, and the Lega, no longer in its formation stage, had become a formidable force in Italian politics.

**Concluding Comparisons**

The evidence indicates that, for the most part, the established parties were unreceptive to the grievances raised by the challengers. With the exception of the provincial PCP immediately attempting to eliminate the NEP and much later (1985) the federal PCP eliminating the NEP, the concrete adoption of proposals to ameliorate the region's concerns was non-existent. On the other hand, in many cases the established parties were sympathetic to the region's grievances. The degree of sympathy and its timing did vary across the cases.

In the WCC's case, the governing party at the provincial level and the official opposition party at the federal level all expressed, relatively quickly, sympathy for the grievances aired by the WCC. Most likely, this was because the rise of the WCC corresponded with the imposition of the NEP, which was disliked by westerners. The provincial and federal PCP's reactions made it appear that there was a basis to the grievances raised by the WCC and, more importantly, may have left the impression that they were willing to address these concerns. It seems reasonable to assume that the outpouring of sympathy made it difficult for the WCC to attract support and certainly helped contribute to its demise. For voters sympathetic to the WCC's cause, party loyalty and just plain inertia probably made it more logical for them to support the established provincial party instead of taking a risk on an unproven party. Although the federal PCP
eventually eliminated the NEP, the provincial and federal PCP did not address many of the grievances raised by the WCC leaving open a window of opportunity for the Reform Party.

Like the WCC, the Reform Party’s members and supporters fed off western Canada’s sense of alienation from Canada’s federal system. To address the alienation issue, the federal governing party, i.e., the PCP led by Brian Mulroney, made some concessions to the West’s sense of alienation. For instance, Mulroney’s government eliminated the NEP, created the Western Diversification Fund, and appointed many western MP’s to important positions in the government. However, the Reform Party publicly argued that these gestures were insufficient because they failed to address the West’s representation problem. The Reform Party believed it could only be solved by the creation of the Triple E-Senate, which had been the focal point of its initial platform.

While the PCP gradually displayed more and more sympathy for western grievances, the Liberals made fewer and only very vague gestures to address western Canada’s grievances. For example, Jean Chrétien, the Liberal Party’s leader, did discuss the possibility of an elected Senate (an important demand of the Reform Party), but his Senate proposal was very different from the one advocated by the Reform Party.

More than either of the Canadian cases, the established parties in Italy showed little sympathy for the concerns being raised by the Lega Nord and, in fact, seemed to ignore its existence to a larger degree than the other cases. Almost all mentions of the Lega Nord involved attempts to discredit the party. In particular, politicians attempted to
portray the LN as racists. It took politicians from the Socialist, Communist, and Christian Democratic Parties a substantial period of time to show public sympathy for the grievances articulated by the Lega. In 1991, there were at least superficial attempts to embrace federalism by the Socialist Party, but no concrete reform occurred due to the idiosyncrasies of the Italian political system based on stagnant party coalitions.

Using the degree of sympathy displayed by the established parties to compare the cases, they appeared to be the most sympathetic to the grievances articulated by the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) and the least to the issues raised by the Lega Nord. The sympathetic response time of the established parties followed this same pattern: the WCC was responded to first, followed by the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord. So, the established parties were almost immediately sympathetic to the WCC, yet they took almost seven years to do likewise for the Lega. What explains the variation in the established parties' actions?

The uniform western dislike of the NEP helped provoke the quick sympathetic response of the established provincial parties. The fact that all Canadian provincial parties are supposed to represent provincial interests made it possible for the governing provincial PCP to appear sympathetic (Macpherson 1953, 21). In Canada, provincial objectives often “[pitch] provincial governments and parties of whatever stripe against the federal government…” (Smith 1986, 90).

The circumstances were quite different for the RP and LN. When the Reform Party challenged the PCP, its receptivity was constrained by the PCP’s base of support.
The PCP’s electoral coalition was composed of Reform Party and Bloc Quebecois supporters, which saw their interests as opposed and the outcome as zero-sum. The PCP could not be receptive to the West’s concerns without jeopardizing its support in Quebec and vice versa. Hence, it threw some concessions to both groups, in the end making neither happy.

Like Reform’s case, established politicians in Italy could not be receptive to the North’s grievances without risking a loss in support. The DC and the Socialist parties had built extensive clientelistic networks in the South. It was determined in the mani pulite investigations that much of the clientelistic money was reaching the Mafia, particularly in Sicily (Smith 1997, 472). Additionally, the electoral returns presented in chapter 5 reveal that both the DC and PSI’s electoral base was becoming more and more dependent on support from the South in the 1980s. “In reality the PSI had become an alter ego of the DC: by 1992 it had become a thoroughly clientelist party particularly strong in the South” (Sassoon 1997, 260). Thus, eliminating the funds being channeled to the South, through the Cassa del Mezzogiorno or otherwise, would hit the heart of the established parties’ support.224

Receptivity was also hindered by intra-party politics. Established parties, especially the DC, were discouraged from attempting to implement reforms addressing the North’s grievances because attempts in the past had resulted in votes of no confidence as

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224 The PCI’s support declined precipitously in the 1980s, from a high of 34.4 percent in 1976 to a low of 26.6 percent in 1987. Hence, it was absorbed in internal reforms with little inclination to be receptive to the issues raised by the Lega (Sassoon 1997, 252).
the various factions of the DC did not uphold party discipline (Smith 1997, 437-439).225

The DC’s faction ridden organizational structure encouraged intense inter-party rivalry that often surfaced on controversial issues (Smith 1997, 438-439). Leading politicians were more worried about self-preservation and maintaining current benefits than about reforming the existing system to become more responsive to the public (Smith 1997, 474).

What conclusions can be drawn from the preceding discussion? Initially, I argued that successful new parties form when established parties are unresponsive to the challenger’s demands. This should be modified to consider that perhaps receptivity is not necessary; the established parties must make a public show of a strong degree of sympathy. I would like to suggest that one of the reasons the WCC failed to become a significant player in Canadian politics was because of the swift and sympathetic attitude displayed by the federal and provincial PCP. This made it difficult for them to offer a unique appeal to the public and gave provincial voters little reason to defect from their traditional choice.

On the other hand, the PCP’s sympathy to the Reform Party’s grievances did not seem to impede the party’s electoral performance. This is puzzling and might be because the sympathy was initially quite minimal and minor in comparison to the affronts the West felt from the Meech Lake Accords (1987) and Charlottetown Agreement (1991).226

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225 In the 1950s, the DC proposed changes to the proportional electoral system law to increase government stability and agrarian reform; both resulted in votes of no confidence (Smith 1997, 437-439).
226 As mentioned in chapter two, the Meech Lake Accords and Charlottetown Agreement attempted to modify Canada’s constitution to obtain Quebec’s ratification of the constitution.
At the other extreme, the established parties in Italy made little attempt to address the demands raised by the Lega Nord. This silence made it appear to Italians sympathetic to the LN that the only option they had to express this opinion was to vote for the new party. This allowed the Lega Nord to carve out a unique electoral niche in Italian politics. The relationship between the party’s message and its success will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

Finally, the fact that some amount of sympathy was shown by the established parties in all the cases leaves the impression that additional factors are needed to account for regional party formation. The role of established parties should be considered in more research of party formation, paying close attention to whether the established parties are sympathetic and/or concretely receptive to the grievances raised. In sum, this account demonstrated that the presence of grievances and the unreceptiveness of established parties, taken alone, is a poor predictor of regional party formation. The next chapter investigates the impact of the stability of political alignments as a decisive factor.
CHAPTER 5

ALIGNMENT STABILITY AND PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE

When successful new parties, like the Reform Party and the Lega Nord, arise, they spawn a flurry of research because, for the most part, since World War I there has been a freezing of social cleavages (Bartolini and Mair 1990), resulting in stable support levels for most parties in Western nations since World War II (Rose and Mackie 1988).\(^\text{227}\) In the event that a new party is electorally successful, speculation becomes rampant that a degree of thawing has occurred. The extensive body of research on the freezing and thawing of the social cleavages underpinning party systems derives from Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) seminal work.

Their research is relevant because cleavage or alignment instability is thought to be conducive to the rise of new parties (Tarrow 1994; Sundquist 1973; Mair 1984). Alignment instability may signal a weakening of the connection between established parties and voters, leaving the latter receptive to the appeals of new parties. Alignment instability itself may have various causes, e.g., established parties being inattentive to new issues (Sundquist 1973), a change in values (Inglehart [1987], 1990), major party failure (Rosenstone et al. 1984), the waning of cleavage politics (Franklin et al. 1992), or a

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\(^{227}\) If a cleavage is frozen, then there is a clear long-term bond between the electorate and a particular set of political identities and alignments. According to Bartolini and Mair (1990), the cleavage structures of each country in Europe have kept their salience and hence remain frozen.
change in the socio-economic base upon which the party relies (Przeworski and Sprague 1986).

Did alignment instability lead to the formation of the WCC, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord? If instability preceded the rise of these new parties, it may indicate that the parties acted opportunistically, riding a wave of electoral discontent. The implications of this scenario are that the actions of the new parties only played a minor role in the changes we see in Canada and Italy today, and that something other than, or in addition to, the parties unleashed the alignment instability. In this chapter, three indicators will be used to measure alignment instability: party volatility rates, turnout rates, and trends in the strength of party identification (Bartolini and Mair 1992; Mair 1984). If the electoral market were entering a phase of instability, one would expect to find increasing levels of party volatility, decreasing levels of party identification, and abnormally large fluctuations in turnout rates.

Regardless of trends in alignment stability before the new parties formed, we do know that alignment instability was substantial afterwards. Two venerable parties, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PCP) and the Christian Democrats (DC), experienced a collapse in their electoral support. Thus far, neither of them has regained its earlier electoral prominence.

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228 As mentioned in chapter one, party volatility refers to the change in a party’s percentage of the vote from one election to the next. I have decided to focus on party volatility because it would have a direct impact on the established parties’ strategies. See chapter one for a fuller explanation of party volatility.
It could then, also be the case that the new parties produced alignment instability by identifying and promoting regional grievances. In order to clarify lines in the direction of causality, the analysis includes an examination of attitudinal survey data. This data will help explain and measure individual attitudes and changes in electoral choices (Mulé 1993, 414). Since survey data of the regional electorates is limited, ecological data analysis is also used to produce as thorough an analysis as possible.

**Aggregate Data Analysis**

The indicators of alignment stability developed by Bartolini and Mair (1990) were designed to assess the relationship between parties and voters in the West European context. Therefore, it should not be surprising that these measures of alignment stability take a somewhat different form in the Canadian context. For example, party identification in Canada is generally weak (Clarke 1979), and hence individual volatility is great (LeDuc 1984). However, if the formation of new parties in Canada was the product of alignment instability, we would expect the Canadian indicators would change in the hypothesized direction. In other words, party volatility rates should increase, there should be great fluctuations in turnout rates, and party identification should decrease prior to the emergence of the WCC and the Reform Party.

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229 LeDuc claims that the normal relationship between parties and voters can be portrayed as a state of “stable realignment” (LeDuc 1984, 403). However, all scholars do not support the finding that Canadians lack party identification. Johnston et al. (1992, 79-84) claims that a core number of Canadians do have abiding party commitments, and that in the 1988 Canadian federal election they amounted to 65 percent of voters.
Before the WCC formed in 1981, there was a great deal of party volatility in Alberta. Between 1967 and 1975, electoral instability was significant. This is reflected in the Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) of Alberta’s increasing its share of the vote by 36 percent over two elections, while the Social Credit Party lost 26 percent of its vote over the same time period. The Social Credit Party, which had dominated Alberta governments for forty years, was on the decline, and the Conservative Party was assuming dominance of the provincial government. Volatility levels just prior to the 1982 election were minimal, as there were no substantial swings in support between the 1975 and 1979 elections (See Table 5.1). However, between the 1971 and 1979 provincial elections, it appeared that there was a decreasing trend in voter turnout (See Table 5.2). Yet I would argue that the trend is not as marked as might first appear. The high turnout in 1971, 72.0 percent, probably reflects the fact that it was a critical election in Alberta, resulting in the Social Credit Party losing control of the government after forty years in power and the Progressive Conservative Party assuming dominance.

Considering the data available, it seems that electoral volatility was returning to normal levels immediately before the 1981 emergence of the WCC. Political alignments were beginning to solidify after the upheaval experienced with the replacement of the governing party. Turnout rates were returning to normal after the large fluctuation in 1971.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
<th>Liberals</th>
<th>New Democratic Party</th>
<th>Social Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967-1971</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 5.2. Percentage Turnout Rate in Alberta's Elections, 1967-1979.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Turnout Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The RP first contested Canadian federal elections in 1988. An examination of party volatility rates for federal elections between 1968 and 1984 in western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia) revealed that while there were often large shifts in voter's support between elections, over the long term, support for the Conservatives steadily increased (See Table 5.3). Simultaneously, support almost
consistently decreased for the Liberals. However, just prior to the rise of the Reform Party, there was not a sharp increase in party volatility. The claim that Canada’s party system displays stable dealignment seemed to describe the data well (LeDuc 1984, 403). Turnout rates in western Canada also varied over time with no systematic increase or decrease present (See Table 5.4). And, contrary to expectation, there was a small increase in the strength of party identification over this period (See Table 5.5) (Grabarkiewicz 1995).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
<th>Liberals</th>
<th>New Democratic Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968-1972</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>-9.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-1974</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1979</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1980</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Year 1968</th>
<th>Year 1972</th>
<th>Year 1974</th>
<th>Year 1979</th>
<th>Year 1980</th>
<th>Year 1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to argue that the new parties capitalized on a wave of alignment instability, given that the range of indicators examined show inconclusive results in terms of the expected trends. However, in the Reform Party's case, just two elections after its formation, party volatility had increased tremendously, with the PCP losing more than 60 percent of its support (from 43 percent in 1988 to 16 percent in 1993 of the popular vote). These results suggest that additional factors should be considered. Correlation and regression analysis of aggregate and attitudinal data which tap into voters' motivations should help determine whether the new parties' were the primary cause or the effect of alignment instability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1974</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Strong</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Strong</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage ever to identify with another party</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


I realize Table 5.5 does not display party identification at the regional level in Canada. However, this is the best data available.
A similar analysis was done for the Italian case. The time period of interest was before 1983, when the Lega Nord’s predecessor, the Lega Lombarda, was founded. Party volatility displayed little change in northern Italy from 1968-1983, with two notable exceptions. First, the Christian Democrats’ support declined across the entire period, albeit at an initially slow pace. The decline of the DC’s support in northern Italy probably did not alarm the party substantially until the jump in party volatility that was evident between the 1979-1983 elections (See Table 5.6) (Grabarkiewicz 1995, 20). Secondly, the Communist Party experienced a temporary surge in support between the 1972-1976 elections. At the same time, the strength of party identification in northern Italy was remarkably stable from 1975-1985 (See Table 5.7).\footnote{The only indicator that showed a noticeable trend was voter turnout rates, which declined in Italy between 1968-1983 (See Table 5.8).} The change in turnout rates was not abnormally large. After considering all the indicators of alignment stability, the analyses suggest that a trend in alignment instability may have been materializing between the 1979 and the 1983 elections, but the time period was too short to allow a definitive judgment.

In all of the cases, the indicators examined have produced inconclusive results and did not display the expected trends. There is, in other words, no conclusive evidence that the new parties benefited from preexisting alignment instability. In order to determine whether or not it was the parties’ proposals which were prompting voters to vote for the

\footnote{This conclusion is based on data obtained from a Eurobarometer survey question asking respondents how close they felt to a particular party.}

\footnote{The drop was particularly evident between 1976 and 1983 and might indicate a rise in political indifference (Sani 1987, 26).}
new parties, this study utilizes correlation and regression analyses of aggregate and attitudinal data to determine who supported the parties and why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>PCI</th>
<th>PSI</th>
<th>PSDI</th>
<th>PLI</th>
<th>MSI</th>
<th>PRI</th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>PR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968-1976</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-1976</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1979</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1983</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Close</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Close</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathizer</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Close</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7. **Percentage of respondents in northern Italy that felt close to a specific party, 1975-1985.** The data source is the *Eurobarometer Surveys, 1975-1985.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Turnout Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Ecological and Survey Analyses**

The rest of this chapter attempts to explain the process underlying the collapse of the governing Christian Democratic Party and Progressive Conservative Party and the rise of the Lega Nord and the Reform Party. It hypothesizes that a crucial factor contributing to the party system change was the introduction of a regional cleavage by the new parties, a cleavage not necessarily new to either country but recently politicized and brought to the forefront of national politics. In order to understand better the relationship between regional cleavages and support for the new parties ecological and survey analyses were undertaken. First, correlation and regression analyses on ecological data were used to uncover where the parties were most popular. The regression analysis shed light on the relative impact of various factors on predicting a district’s support for the party, while
correlation analysis helped nuance the model by pointing out potential problems of multicollinearity, which masked some relationships.

Later, the ecological analysis will be complemented by secondary attitudinal survey data. These data are especially important because they allow me to make causal inferences about who votes and why for the regional party. In combination, these analyses will help elucidate why regional parties formed and will contribute to my understanding of each party's success.

**Western Canada Concept**

Who supported the Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) and why? These questions are integrally tied to the WCC’s platform. *The Statement of Independence* issued before the 1982 Alberta provincial election said that the party intended to follow democratic procedures to proclaim independence, support English unilingualism, protect property rights, simplify the tax system, and rescind the NEP (Harrison 1995, 76). Other themes prevalent in the rallies held by the WCC included their dislike of bilingualism and metrification, since these policies exemplified the alleged predominance of French Canadians in government jobs and the federal government’s indifference to the West (Harrington 1981, 34-36). On the eve of the November 1982 provincial election, the WCC

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233 For instance, did they vote for the regional party because of the party’s message or because of disenchantment with current parties? The answer to this question can help illuminate to what extent the actions of the parties accounted for their success.

234 The NEP imposed taxes and price controls on the oil industry in the early 1980s. Many western politicians have argued that this policy was detrimental to the West’s prosperity. See chapter two for further details.
had one provincial Member of Parliament, Gordon Kesler, who had won his seat in a by-election earlier that same year.

The provincial election’s outcome turned out to be a grave disappointment for the WCC. Though the party received 11.8 percent of the vote across Alberta, it did not win any seats in the legislature. Both before and after this election, the party experienced intra-party conflict. The result was that a majority of the original members left prior to the next provincial election in 1986.235 Although the party still existed on a smaller scale until the mid 1980s, it never again achieved the popularity of this earlier time period.

Who supported the WCC? The individuals in question were portrayed in the media as white men with rural roots, perhaps small businessman or people related to the oil industry. On 11 November 1980, The Calgary Herald reported that a November 1980 WCC rally was heavily attended by middle-class, middle-aged men. On both 21 November 1980 and 24 March 1980, it commented that there were extreme right elements within the party.236 For example, it was noted that a minority of the crowd attending a speech by Douglas Christie in November 1980 shouted, “Sieg Heil.”237 Meanwhile, the

235 A reconstituted Western Canada Concept Party, led by Jack Ramsay, did contest the 1986 provincial election. The WCC managed to run 20 candidates in Alberta’s 80 electoral districts and muster 0.65 percent of the vote. These results were considerably worse than those obtained in 1982 when the party ran 78 candidates and won 11.8 percent of the vote.


237 “2,700 at Edmonton separatist meet; Confederation gets boos,” The Calgary Herald, 21 November 1980.
media also reported that self-proclaimed “rabid right-wingers” and disgruntled farmers were attending the WCC’s constituency meetings.  

People associated with the petroleum industry were also arguably supportive of the WCC. They had replaced the farmers (Progressives, CCF) as the base for Alberta’s western alienation since the early 1950s (Dobbin 1991, 69). During the 1970s, the petroleum industry had financially supported “Independent Alberta,” a group dedicated to studying the plausibility of Alberta’s independence. Because the WCC was portrayed in the press as a fringe group, the oil companies’ support of the WCC was quiet, even though they were very angry with the National Energy Program, according to Virginia Byfield, a reporter and the wife of Link Byfield the owner of two western magazines. In light of this information, the statistical analysis that follows will attempt to gauge the support of the oil industry, small businessmen, and farmers for the WCC.

Correlation and regression analysis was performed on 1981 Canadian census data in order to determine if the above characteristics predict the party’s share of the vote. This exercise will help me construct a picture of the type of district that tended to support the party. I realize it is impermissible to draw conclusions about the types of individuals that supported the party, since aggregate data cannot be used to make statements about individuals. To do so would be to commit the ecological fallacy. This analysis can thus at best produce very tentative inferences.

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That being said, what riding characteristics are associated with support for the WCC? At the bivariate level, Table 5.9 shows that the districts in which the WCC had the best results were those that had a greater percentage of residents who were born in Alberta ($r = 0.604$), in which a higher percentage of the labor force was involved in agriculture ($r = 0.603$), in which the party spent more per capita in the riding ($r = 0.547$), in which a larger percentage of the population had only a ninth grade education ($r = 0.305$), in which a larger percentage of the population claimed a single ethnic origin ($r = 0.249$), and in which a larger percentage of the population claimed British origin ($r = 0.224$). The party did poorly in districts in which a larger percentage of the population was born outside Canada ($r = -0.605$), in which the average price of a dwelling was higher ($r = -0.378$), and in which a greater percentage of people were unemployed ($r = -0.161$). Also, in terms of age demographics, it appears that the WCC received more support in districts in which the residents were older. In districts in which a large proportion of the population was between 18 and 29, the WCC did quite poorly ($r = -0.515$), but they did better where the population was between 60 and 69 years old ($r = 0.221$). In light of the party’s aggressive campaign to eliminate the National Energy Program, it is quite surprising that the proportion of a districts inhabitants employed in the mining industry had little association with support for the party ($r = 0.061$). See Table 5.9 for these results.

The conclusions that can be drawn from correlation analysis are limited, and thus further analysis is necessary.\textsuperscript{240} In order to determine which of these factors had the

\textsuperscript{240} The problem with correlation is that is cannot speak to the relative impact of each of the factors on predicting support for the WCC, which a multivariate regression analysis can accomplish.
Table 5.9. Displays the degree of association in each Alberta district between the percent of WCC support received in the 1982 provincial election and various social, economic, and demographic characteristics using bivariate correlation. The following is a description of each variable: Agriculture denotes the percent of the population employed in agriculture and related industries, Mining denotes the percent of workers employed in mining, British Origin denotes the percent of the population of British Origin, Single Origin denotes the percent of the population of single ethnic origin, Born outside of Canada denotes the percentage of individuals born outside of Canada, Born in Alberta denotes the percentage of individuals born in Alberta, Age 60-69 denotes the percentage of individuals between the ages of 60-69, Grade 9 Education denotes the percentage of individuals who terminated their education in the ninth grade, average dwelling price denotes the average costs of a dwelling, Per capita spending denotes the WCC’s spending per capita in the riding, and unemployment denotes the percentage of people unemployed. Each of the variables reflects figures collected at the electoral district level in Alberta.

The biggest impact on the district’s support for the WCC, a regression model was estimated to predict which kinds of districts would provide the most support for the WCC. These districts had a higher percentage of residents born in Alberta, a higher percentage claiming only a single ethnic origin, and a higher percentage of the population, which claimed to be of British origin (See Table 5.10). Once these variables were accounted for, there was a negative relationship between the WCC’s support and the greater percentage of citizens in
the 60-69 year age category. The model developed explains 62 percent of the variance in the WCC’s support.

For the most part, the multivariate analysis confirmed the locus of WCC support portrayed in media reports. This portrait was far from cosmopolitan. It is associated with districts that were predominately composed of citizens who were not geographically mobile and were not open to “others,” whether strangers or foreigners. There was probably a rural element to the party’s support also, since the variable “born in Alberta” correlated 0.729 with the percentage of people employed in agriculture. This portrait of the WCC supporter seems very similar to Macpherson’s (1953) definition of petite bourgeoisie, the independent commodity producer (farmers and independent businessmen). Members of this disparate group share the feeling that increasing modernization, and for some increasing immigration, threatens their livelihood or ability to compete in the marketplace (Macpherson 1953, 226). This portrait of the WCC supporter is complemented nicely by other scholarship.241

It is impossible from this data to explain with certainty why individuals voted for the WCC. However, given the district profiles and the party’s platform, it is possible to speculate. The party probably attracted Canadian citizens of European (but not French) descent who felt threatened by the Canadian federal government’s policies on

241 For example, Elton (1984) reported that a survey question tapping into western alienation was more likely to be supported by males, those aged 45-59, those with a high school education, those employed as skilled or unskilled workers and homemakers, and those who supported the Conservatives federally (Elton 1984, 51).
Table 5.10. Predicting support for the WCC. In the order presented, the variables in the model include: the percentage of individuals born in Alberta, the percentage of individuals claiming a single ethnic origin, the percentage of individuals claiming British ancestry, the percentage of individuals born outside of Canada, the percentage of citizens between the ages of 60-69 years, WCC spending per capita in the riding, the percentage of people employed in mining or agriculture in the district, the average cost of a dwelling in the district, the percentage of people unemployed, and the percentage of citizens who terminated their education in the ninth grade.

bilingualism, metrification, and the National Energy Program. Perhaps they believed that British Canadian culture and their rural lifestyle were threatened by the country’s modernization, including its immigration policy. Immigration to western Canada had been increasing in the 1970s and 1980s, especially immigration by Asians and other visible minority groups. This group then might well have been driven by reactionary impulses and attracted by the WCC’s appeal to Canada’s past.
How does this caricature of the WCC’s supporters compare with the Reform Party’s supporters? Was the root cause of electoral instability in both cases changes in the voting behavior of the petite bourgeoisie, whose members and attitudes resemble the discussion of the WCC supporter above? 242 Or, did the WCC and Reform Party have different constituencies? How does this relate, if at all, to the parties varying degrees of success? In the concluding comparisons, these questions will be addressed. In the following section, the Reform Party’s and the WCC’s bases of support will be compared.

Reform Party

As of 1998, the Reform Party had contested three Canadian federal elections, 1988, 1993, and 1997. Though the party certainly made inroads into the electorate in the 1988 election, winning 8.6 percent of the vote in the West, it made its biggest advance in the 1993 election when it won 52 seats in the House of Commons and 18.7 percent of the national vote. The question, therefore, is where did the Reform Party find its support?

This section answers this question by analyzing the results of the 1988 and 1993 federal elections. While it is generally acknowledged that the Progressive Conservative Party has been hit hardest by the emergence of the Reform Party, it has also been the case that the party’s platform is grounded in regional appeals. Thus, I hypothesize that the variables associated with petite bourgeoisie (independent farmers and businessmen) (Beil

242 In chapter two I discuss Macpherson’s (1953) definition of petite bourgeoisie, the independent commodity producer (farmers and independent businessmen). “The petite bourgeoisie is at any time a collection of different elements, all tending, with the increasing subordination of all kinds of production to the direction of large capital accumulations, to lose their original functions and position” (Macpherson 1953, 226).
1992, 171; Macpherson 1953, 226), Canada’s British heritage (Johnston et al. 1992, 66), and those emphasizing Canada’s regional divisions will best predict support for the Reform Party. This hypothesis will be tested by carrying out regression analysis using Canadian census data and by reporting survey data results from the 1988 and 1993 national elections. The results of this analysis will help me draw some conclusions about why individuals supported Reform.

The 1988 Federal Election

It is generally acknowledged that the issue central to the 1988 Canadian federal election was whether or not Canada should sign the Free Trade Treaty with the United States. The election was thus a referendum on Brian Mulroney’s intention to support the agreement (Johnston et al. 1992, 141-142, 246). “The free trade emphasis helped the Conservative Party rally its troops because it cut through Canada’s binational divisions” (Johnston et al. 1994, 11). Free trade, which the Reform Party supported, was not central to its platform. Rather, Preston Manning’s 1988 campaign speeches addressed, “the need for more effective regional representation in national decision making through Senate reform; the need for greater fairness toward the resource-producing regions through the performance of regional fairness tests on major federal policies; and the need for parliamentary reform to make MPs more accountable to the people who elected them” (Manning 1992, 157). All of these issues tapped into the traditional grievances underpinning western alienation (See chapter two).
In the 1988 federal election, the Reform Party ran 72 candidates in the four western provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan). It performed best in Alberta, where its “support was strongest in the rural areas of the centre and South (averaging over 18 percent), and lowest in Edmonton (averaging 10 percent). We can identify two trends in Alberta: Reform party support rises as one moves from North to South, and falls as one moves from country to city” (McCormick 1990, 345). Though the party performed by far the best in Alberta, it managed to receive 8.6 percent of the overall vote in the western provinces (See Table 5.11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Average Percentage of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


By utilizing 1986 census data, I acquired a more detailed picture of the location of the party’s support. Bivariate correlation analysis indicated that the Reform Party

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received the highest percentage of support in the districts where: the party had spent a high percentage of their campaign limit \( r = 0.766 \), there was a high percentage of the work force employed in mining \( r = 0.509 \), there was a high percentage of English speakers \( r = 0.354 \), and a large percentage of the population was self-employed \( r = 0.242 \) (See Table 5.12). Meanwhile, the party did not do well in districts in which a large percentage of the work force was employed in manufacturing \( r = -0.420 \), in which a large percentage of families were low income \( r = -0.303 \), in which there was a larger percentage of unemployed \( r = -0.266 \), and in which immigrants constituted a large percentage of the population \( r = -0.256 \). These statistics suggest that the Reform Party’s 1988 electoral support was concentrated in districts that had characteristics similar to those where WCC support had been greatest. The bulk of the RP’s support came from non-urban districts, either rural or suburban districts with a high percentage of English speakers and self-employed.

A more parsimonious model of Reform support can be derived from the use of multivariate regression analysis. The model created included the socio-economic factors discussed above, together with the western provinces as dummy variables to capture any variation not explained by the other factors (See Table 5.13).\textsuperscript{244} The Reform Party only put up candidates in the western provinces in the 1988 federal election, so these were the only provinces included in the analysis. It seems that in the case of the Reform Party, campaign spending and Alberta had an independent significant impact on how well it

\textsuperscript{244} Saskatchewan is the excluded category for the provincial dummy variables.
performed in the 1988 election. The factors considered in the model explained 79 percent of the variance in the party’s support (See Table 5.13).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low income family</th>
<th>Mining</th>
<th>English speakers</th>
<th>Self employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.303*</td>
<td>0.509*</td>
<td>0.354*</td>
<td>0.242*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>of limit spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.266*</td>
<td>-0.256*</td>
<td>-0.420*</td>
<td>0.766*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.12. The degree of association in each Alberta district between the percent of WCC support received in the 1982 provincial election and various social, economic, and demographic characteristics using bivariate correlation. The following is a description of each variable: Low income family denotes the percent of low income families falling below a threshold determined by Statistics Canada, Mining denotes the percent of workers employed in mining and related industries, English speakers denotes the percent of citizens using English as their home language, and Self employed denotes the percent of citizens who are self-employed, Unemployment denotes each district’s unemployment rate, Immigrants denotes the percentage of population born outside of Canada, Manufacturing denotes the percentage of the total work force employed in manufacturing, and Percent of limit spent denotes the percentage of the limit spent by the Reform Party for that particular district. Each of the variables reflects figures collected at the electoral district level in Alberta.

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Another factor, the percentage of the vote received by the Progressive Conservative Party in each district in the 1984 election, might have been important in explaining support for Reform but could not be included due to redistricting between the 1984-1988 federal elections.
Table 5.13. Predicting support for the Reform Party in 1988. In the order presented, the variables in the model include: dummy variables for Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba, the percentage of limit spent by the Reform Party for that particular district, the percentage of the total work force employed in mining and related industries, the percentage of citizens using English as their home language, the percentage of citizens who are self-employed, the percentage of the total work force employed in manufacturing, the percentage of low income families falling below a threshold determined by Statistics Canada, each district’s unemployment rate, and the percentage of the population born outside of Canada. Saskatchewan was the base for the provincial dummy variables.

The results indicated that socio-economic and demographic factors traditionally used to explain voting patterns do not explain a district’s support for the RP very well. Something else indigenous to Alberta seemed important in explaining the RP’s electoral success.
The model also indicated that campaign spending by the Reform Party had a significant impact on predicting support for it. This was not surprising, given the effect of campaign spending in other democracies. For example, in the context of U.S. congressional elections, Jacobson (1980) has shown that campaign spending by non-incumbents has a substantial impact on their share of the vote, primarily because high levels of spending give non-incumbents name recognition. The more voters knew about a particular candidate, the more likely they were to vote for them (Jacobson 1980, 36-37). "Most students of campaign finance [agreed]: money [was] not sufficient, but it [was] necessary for successful campaigns" (Jacobson 1980, 33).

Although the Reform Party did not win a single seat in the 1988 federal election, the Tory MPs from the West were concerned by its ability to eat into their support. Commentary in The Calgary Herald on 22 November 1988, observed that, "the city’s six MP’s (Calgary) areheading east with a strong message from Reform Party supporters, most of them disenchanted Tories, that Alberta politicians have to get a better deal for the West."\(^{246}\) The Reform Party, for its part, did not remain idle after the 1988 election. In 1989, it won a by-election and Deborah Grey became its first member of parliament.

In 1991, Preston Manning unveiled his vision for Canada. "New Canada should be a balanced, democratic federation of provinces, distinguished by the conservation of its magnificent environment, the viability of its economy, the acceptance of its social responsibilities and recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all its provinces and

citizens” (Reform Party 1991, vi). This vision was the basis for the party’s decision to reject the proposed amendments to the constitution known as the Charlottetown Agreement. The Agreement recognized Quebec as a distinct society, which the Reform Party rejected as contrary to the notion that Canada is a federation of ten equal provinces. “Reformers believe that the New Canada must be a balanced federation, not an unbalanced federation where one province has special status or a special deal. New Canada must be viable without Quebec, but it must be open and attractive enough to include a New Quebec” commented the party’s 1991 Blue Book.

The 1993 Federal Election

As the 1993 federal election campaign commenced, it was apparent that the governing Conservative Party carried a great deal of harmful baggage. The three issues that hurt it most were its preoccupation with constitutional questions coupled with its failure to resolve them; a feeble economy accompanied by a large deficit; and the appearance that the party was more concerned than its supporters were with placating Quebec (Johnston et al. 1994). The Reform Party capitalized on these weaknesses by emphasizing its deficit reduction proposal; its proposal for changing Canada’s political institutions, and its disagreement with federal immigration, bilingual, and multicultural policies. The results of the election were historic. The ruling Progressive Conservative

247 See chapter two for more details of the Charlottetown Agreement.
248 The decisive rejection (especially by the western provinces) of the Charlottetown Agreement by 55.2 percent of the voters nationally was seen as an indirect endorsement of the Reform Party’s agenda since the agreement was supported by almost all of English Canada’s political, business, labor, academic, and media elites (Srebnik 1997, 7).
Party went from 170 to 2 seats and the Reform Party from 1 to 52 seats. How can these volatile results be explained?

There are two common strategies for explaining voting behavior, one involving analysis of aggregate socio-economic data and the other involving analysis of attitudinal surveys. Both have been performed for the 1993 Canadian election. For the most part, analyses performed by Thomas Flanagan (1995) and myself complement the 1988 aggregate data reported earlier.\(^{249}\) The RP did well in districts with the following characteristics: they were previously Progressive Conservative Party’s seats, they were located in Alberta or B.C., and they were considered rural as opposed to urban districts.

“...The Party of the West does very well in explaining Reform’s performance—51 of 52 seats. The Party of the Right also does well; it seems as if Reform took over much of the traditional Conservative vote in Ontario and the West” (Flanagan 1995, 155).\(^{250}\) To determine the impact of the socio-economic factors on the Reform Party’s base of support, a regression model was estimated.\(^{251}\) Similar to the 1988 analysis, the model included a dummy variable for each of the provinces to account for variation not captured by the other socio-economic variables.\(^{252}\) The eastern provinces – Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island were combined and used as the base category. The resulting model indicated that the factors with the biggest impact on

\(\begin{align*}
249 & \text{Since the analysis was similar to the 1988 results I decided not to report them in depth.} \\
250 & \text{See Tom Flanagan. 1995. \textit{Waiting For The Wave}. Toronto: Stoddart, for a thorough analysis.} \\
251 & \text{Data for the regression model came from Eagles, Munroe.1995. \textit{The Almanac of Canadian politics}. New York: Oxford University Press.} \\
252 & \text{Quebec was not included in the analysis because the Reform Party did not put up candidates there.}
\end{align*}\)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model (R²=.892)</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta (1993)</td>
<td>30.692</td>
<td>0.694*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia (1993)</td>
<td>17.816</td>
<td>0.439*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba (1993)</td>
<td>7.833</td>
<td>0.134*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario (1993)</td>
<td>2.723</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan (1993)</td>
<td>10.921</td>
<td>0.187*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform Limit (1993)</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.221*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining (1993)</td>
<td>0.372</td>
<td>0.076*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (1993)</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employed (1993)</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>0.122*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing (1993)</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.161*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income family (1993)</td>
<td>-0.307</td>
<td>-0.124*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1993)</td>
<td>-0.208</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant (1993)</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatives (1988)</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.111*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 5.14. Predicting support for the Reform Party in 1993.** The variables included in the model, in the order presented, include: dummy variables for the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, the percentage of limit spent by the Reform Party for each district, the percentage of the total work force employed in mining and related industries, the percentage of citizens using English as their home language, the percentage of citizens who are self-employed, the percentage of the total work force employed in manufacturing industries, the percentage of low income families falling below a threshold determined by Statistics Canada, each district’s unemployment rate, the percentage of the population born outside of Canada, and the percentage of votes the Progressive Conservative Party received in the district in the 1988 Federal Election. Each variable reflects figures collected at the federal electoral district level.
explaining support for the Reform Party included: the western provinces (especially Alberta and British Columbia), the percentage of the limit spent by the party in the district, the PCP’s vote in 1988, the percentage of self-employed, and the percentage employed in manufacturing (see Table 5.14).\textsuperscript{253} It looks as if the Reform Party did well in western districts with where self-employed workers, former conservatives, and well-paid industrial workers lived.\textsuperscript{254} This finding strengthens Flanagan’s (1995) earlier assertion that the party of the West did a good job of describing the Reform Party’s support, and that the party may reflect a true sense of alienation on the part of western Canadians.\textsuperscript{255}

The importance of spending by the party in the 1993 election was comparable to the results for 1988. When the party came closer to its spending limit in the electoral district, the support for the party was higher in both 1993 and 1988. This may be because the party was still in the process of building its organization, making spending crucial for name recognition between 1988 and 1993 (Jacobson 1980, 36-37).

Some of the findings were contrary to expectations. Initially, it was expected that certain socio-economic indicators, such as the number of French speakers and immigrants, would have an impact on support for the RP. This was expected because the Reform Party was often portrayed in the press as a party capitalizing on disaffection with

\textsuperscript{253} Reform’s strategy of presenting itself as a Party of the People had only minimal impact on attracting support. Only a very few of the Reform supporters came from either the Liberal Party or the NDP (Flanagan 1995, 162-163).

\textsuperscript{254} The data suggests the party did not do well in districts in which workers were low paid since the party’s performance was inversely related to the percentage of low-income families that lived in the district.

\textsuperscript{255} “Survey research over the 1979-1985 period undertaken for the Canada West Foundation indicates that four of every five Western Canadians believe the Canadian political system favours Ontario and Quebec” (Elton 1991, 181).
immigration policy and the spoiled Quebeccois. For example, an article in *The New York Times* on 28 October 1993, expressed the typical caricature painted of the party by reporting that “the Reform Party, building on anti-tax sentiment, strong feelings against immigrants and traditional opposition to Ottawa based politicians, virtually swept Canada’s two most western provinces...” These contrary results may be partly accounted for by the 1988 Conservative variable. Attitudinal survey analysis may uncover whether or not this is the case as it is the best method to measure the relationship between individual attitudes and party preference.

Similar to the earlier analyses, the 1993 regression model points to the rural, Western and lower middle class (self-employed and well paid workers) character of the districts that supported the RP. The district description combined with the sentiments expressed by the RP echo Macpherson’s (1953) analysis of Alberta politics. He identified the petite bourgeoisie, the independent commodity producer, as the key to understanding politics in Alberta. It seems that this group may constitute important supporters of the RP. Perhaps the rural petite bourgeoisie was drawn to the Reform Party by its neo-liberal stance on economic issues (often referred to in the U.S. as conservative). Other studies have found that self-employed people are strong supporters of neo-liberal economics. In Britain, for example, the petite bourgeoisie are particularly strong supporters of free

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257 It is interesting to note that the self-employment variable in the model is highly correlated (0.898) with the percentage of the labor force employed in agriculture.
258 As mentioned in chapter two, Macpherson defines the petite bourgeoisie as independent commodity producers (farmers, their families, and others working on their own account) (Macpherson 1953, 15-16).
enterprise and individual rights, similar to the Reform Party (Heath et al. 1985, 15). The attitudinal data evaluated next should indicate whether or not the above suggestion is accurate.

A different perspective on 1993 election support for the Reform Party can be derived from attitudinal surveys. This is the method used by Johnston et al. (1994) and Nevitte et al. (1995) whose work comes to specific conclusions on which type of people voted for the Reform Party. “The accumulated evidence is suggestive, and it all points in the same direction: the Reform Party presented a defined issue-challenge to the right-wing of the Conservative Party, Conservatives defected to Reform in substantial numbers, and there are clearly identifiable differences in the issue preferences between those Conservatives who went to Reform in 1993 and those who did not” (Nevitte et al. 1995, 590). Nevitte et al. found that Reformers were less sympathetic to Quebec, to admitting more immigrants, or doing more for racial minorities and women than were supporters of the PC, NDP, or Liberal Party (Nevitte et al. 1995, 588-589). Johnston’s et al. (1994) study complemented Nevitte’s findings. It concluded that the anti-French stance of the Reform Party provided a strong attraction for its supporters (Johnston et al. 1994, 11-.

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259 Heath et al. (1985, 20-21) uncovered that the petite bourgeoisie were the most united and loyal supporters of the Conservative Party in Britain and were instrumental in Margaret Thatcher’s rise to power. Complementing Macpherson’s analysis, in Britain the petite bourgeoisie is thought to consist of farmers, small proprietors, and skilled manual workers, all of whom share the characteristic of being independents who are directly exposed to market forces and constraints (Heath et al. 1985, 16). Additionally, in Political Man, Seymour Lipset (1960) finds that right wing groups have consistently received support from small businessmen, farmers, and manual workers in isolated occupations, such as miners (Lipset 1960, 112-113).
Furthermore, Reform Party supporters are more inclined to express traditional values and cynical attitudes about the political class, and they are the least committed to funding a generous welfare state (Nevitte et al. 1995, 590).

The data indicates that Conservative defectors were attracted to Reform for issue related reasons (Nevitte et al. 1995, 591). Voters did not support the party simply to indicate that they protested the status quo, which has been the case with a large majority of supporters of other parties such as the Front National (Bréchon and Mitra 1992, 77).

A very specific group of primarily Progressive Conservative Party supporters voted for Reform because it emphasized issues important to them. The need for deficit reduction, the need to reform Canada’s institutions, and the need to change Canada’s immigration, bilingual and multicultural policies. The Reform MP’s interviewed by the author also mentioned the importance of issues. Ten out of twenty-four MPs believed the content of the Party’s platform made them popular. Raymond Speaker, MP explained, “you must have well-focused issues in the forefront of voters’ minds to be successful. For example, in 1993 it was the constitution and fiscal and economic reform.”

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260 Their study found that “respondents were very clear in seeing Reform as the only party committed to doing seriously less for French Canada than any of the others” (Johnston et al. 1994, 11). “...a voter at the anti-French extreme was four times as likely to vote Reform as a voter at the other end” (Johnston et al. 1994, 22). Earlier aggregate data does not reveal the strong anti-French component of the Reform Party’s support because Francophobes were found most readily in the Conservative Party and hence were included largely through the Conservative Party’s 1988 vote (Johnston et al. 1994, 22).

261 “A sizable proportion of the National Front vote consists of protest votes intended to act as a message to the government and thus the result of general discontentment...” (Bréchon and Mitra 1992, 77).

262 Phone interview by author with Reform Party, MP Raymond Speaker, 8/5/96.
In conclusion, the survey analysis complemented the findings uncovered by the aggregate data analysis while providing more detail about the attitudes of RP supporters. For example, the survey analysis highlighted the anti-French, anti-multicultural, and fiscal concerns of these voters. By combining these analyses, a portrait of the typical RP supporter can be constructed. It seems that Reform Party supporters tended to be petite bourgeoisie Westerners who held anti-French attitudes, were fiscally conservative, and were overwhelmingly former supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Why did these individuals support Reform? In 1993, voters flocked to Reform due to major party failure (Rosenstone et al. 1984). The established parties failed to represent Westerner’s interests. Canada’s political system had been constructed to reward parties that bridged the English-French speaking divide. Historically it has been almost impossible to win control of the Canadian House of Commons without having a strong contingent from Quebec. Contrary to traditional Canadian politics, Reform galvanized support by focusing on issues—the unresolved constitutional issues, its desire to preserve white Anglophone Canadian culture, and fiscal conservatism—that emphasized the country’s East-West division. These issues were presented by the Reform Party as a zero sum conflict between the Central Canada (represented by primarily Quebec and to a lesser extent Ontario) and the West’s interest. In this conflict, the Reform Party was the only party clearly aligned with the West.

The Liberals and PCP, on the other hand, were constrained by their Quebec bases of support. During the RP’s rise to prominence, the PCP had been able to control the
House of Commons only by constructing a coalition composed of Westerns and Québécois also referred to as a coalition of Francophones and Francophobes. As mentioned earlier, Mulroney, leader of the PCP attempted to keep the coalition together by tossing symbolic concessions to both sides. In the end, this strategy upset everyone. It was no help that the RP kept arguing the East-West conflict was zero sum, meaning Mulroney was either with the West or against it.

On the other hand, throughout the twentieth century the Liberals had managed to be a dominant party by maintaining a strong party machine in Quebec and Ontario. Since 1968, (except for a very brief period in the 1980s) the leader of the Liberal Party has been a French speaking Quebecois. The PCP was only able to govern Canada for part of the 1980s because Mulroney was a Quebecker and it was able to erode some of the Liberals support in Quebec. The Liberals had been weak in the West for a very long time and hence had no incentive to address the issues raised by the RP.

The similarities between the typical supporters and the issues emphasized by the WCC and Reform Party make for interesting comparison. Supporters of the WCC and Reform Party tended to be part of Macpherson’s petite bourgeoisie and were sympathetic to the themes of western alienation. The WCC and RP share similar constituencies, an emphasis on regional grievances, and major party unreceptiveness (although I acknowledge that the established parties were far more sympathetic to the WCC in comparison to the RP). However, the WCC failed to become a significant actor in Canadian politics. This suggests the need to consider other factors to explain the RP’s
significance and the WCC’s insignificance in Canadian politics. This will be done in the next chapter.

**Lega Nord**

In the 1996 national election, the Lega Nord achieved its greatest electoral success, winning 10 percent of the national vote and becoming the largest party in northern Italy and the fourth largest party in the country. Since the party’s first convincing breakthrough on the electoral scene in the 1990 local elections (See Table 5.15), scholars have asked, “who voted for the Lega and why?” This section will attempt to answer these questions.

Before discussing voting behavior in northern Italy, a brief methodological digression is necessary. Similar to the Canadian case, data collected on support for the Lega Nord has been of primarily two types: aggregate data and attitudinal surveys. However, the party has contested elections on a greater number of levels than Reform and thus, no study has examined its long-term support consistently using any one of them.\(^{263}\) Therefore, this analysis will examine both aggregate and survey data using several different units of analysis to understand the party’s support over time.

\(^{263}\) Unlike the WCC and RP, which contested strictly provincial and federal elections, the Lega has participated in national, local, regional and European wide elections, which accounts for the inconsistent sample populations. Meanwhile, national election studies always lack a sufficient number of Lega supporters in their sample size because of the regional nature of its support.
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardy</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Aggregate data collected during the early years of the Lega Nord’s existence (1985-1990) suggests a fairly consistent picture of its locus of support. During this period, the Lega received its greatest support in areas that had been predominantly Christian Democratic Party (DC) electoral strongholds (Natale 1991, 107). Conversely, the Lega did not do as well in the communes that had strongly supported the Communist Party (PCI) (Natale 1991, 106-107). The Lega was most popular in the provinces of Varese, Como, Sondrio, and Bergamo, areas traditionally of medium to high levels of economic development as well as a high concentration of small businesses (Diamanti

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264 The Lega received the most support in formerly DC districts but it also attracted support in lay party districts (Natale 1991, 108). The lay parties consist of the Liberal Party and the Republican Party (Farneti 1985, 75-77). Supplementing this with survey data for example, in the 1990 local elections, Lega supporters came overwhelmingly from many of the traditional parties. In fact, 40 percent were ex-Christian Democrats, 12 percent were ex-socialist/communist, 10 percent were from the lay parties, and 10 percent had been Lega supporters in 1987 (Natale 1991, 112).
Until 1990, this portrait of the Lega’s support was consistent across different types of election, whether local, regional, or national.\textsuperscript{265} Individual level survey data collected by researchers at the Osservatorio Politico Italiano reported trends similar to the aggregate data findings. In 1989, 1990, and 1991 they conducted comparable surveys about the characteristics of the party’s supporters in Milan. These surveys of Milan discovered that early support for the LN in 1989 and 1990 came from the traditional middle classes, who tended to be male, middle aged, identified themselves ideologically as center-right, and were often small business owners (shopkeepers) and white collar workers (Mannheimer 1991b, 130, 136; Diamanti 1993; 64).

Beginning in 1990, the Milan surveys uncovered a subtle change in the Lega’s base of support undetected by the aggregate data. The Lega came to acquire a broader constituency. For instance, female support for the Lega had increased: a 1991 survey suggested only a slight over-representation of support from males (Mannheimer 1991b, 131). Furthermore, by 1991 the Lega experienced an increase in supporters from the higher social classes, such as executives, college graduates, and entrepreneurs (Mannheimer 1991b, 131). Research on northern Italian’s attitudes directed by Renato

\textsuperscript{265} Over time, the party continued to be very popular in these regions.

\textsuperscript{266} In 1992, when the Lega made its substantial national breakthrough with 8.7 percent of the vote nationally and 17 percent regionally, the type of person supporting the Lega was not much different from previously. Supporters were mainly “independent middle and working class, with a moderate level of education, a relatively young age, of average cultural and social position ...” (Mannheimer 1993b, 90, 102). Ideologically speaking, the party’s supporters were no longer considered center-right in orientation. “...On average, the Lega electorate positions itself roughly around the center of the left-right line. In this respect, the Lega supporters seem to bear most resemblance to the Christian Democrats, since they too position themselves round the center” (Mannheimer 1993b, 93).
Mannheimer (1993) found that the ideological position of the party’s supporters had also changed by 1992. This research identified Lega supporters as locating themselves around the ideological center rather than the center right (Mannheimer 1993b, 90, 93).

To this point, the analysis has only discussed the source of Lega support; it has not discussed why individuals voted for it. In 1990, both the Università Cattolica di Milano and the Instituto Superiore de Sociologia conducted polls that attempted to answer this question. The Catholic University’s poll was done in Milan while the Sociology Institute conducted a poll in Lombardy. Both surveys asked citizens that had voted for the Lega Lombarda — what was the most important motive and listed different options from which to choose. Each respondent was able to offer more than one reason. Even so, the questions are comparable (Mannheimer 1991b, 143).

Renato Mannheimer reported the results of these efforts in a book he edited, La Lega Lombarda. In Milan, it was discovered that the primary motivational bases for voting for the Lega were (in order of importance), the party’s criticism of Rome’s inefficiency, the respondents desire to protest against traditional parties, the party’s anti-immigrant position, and its desire to protect their economy from the South (See Table 5.16). The Sociology Institute reported that, in Lombardy, the most important motivation was to achieve Lombard autonomy, to protest against Rome, to protest against the *partitocrazia*, and to protest against the disparity between North and South

267 Recall from chapter two that *partitocrazia* is the term used to describe how the DC and other established parties ran the Italian government in their own interests (Gilbert 1995, 5).
(Mannheimer 1991b, 144 -146). The data suggested that the Lombards were driven to vote for the Lega due to regional identity issues, more often than simply by the notion of protest against the government. On the other hand, the Milanese seemed to be motivated more by protest (Mannheimer 1991b, 143). The results indicate that the primary motivational basis for voting for the Lega differed between Milan and the rest of Lombardy. Even so, there was a great deal of support by both populations for the motivational statements that tapped into the conflict between the center and periphery in Italy, capitalizing on regional tensions between the North and South and the North and Center.

In 1993, Mannheimer (1993) directed a similar study that included all of northern Italy (not just Lombardy or Milan). In this survey research, the distinguishing characteristic of Lega supporters [was] their desire for greater territorial autonomy” (Mannheimer 1993b, 96). Similar to the 1991 study, Lega supporters were nearly twice as likely as the total sample to choose a particular party because it represented their own region (Mannheimer 1993b, 97).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>% of Lega voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To defend Lombardy from too many immigrants and foreigners</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To oppose the inefficient Roman bureaucracy</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South is strangling our economy</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protest against the political parties</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired of the Southerners</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because the Lega is different from the traditional parties</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16. Percentage of Lega voters in Milan indicating the following motivated them to vote for the party. The source for this data is: Mannheimer, Renato. 1991b. “Chi vota Lega e perché.” In *La Lega Lombarda*, ed. Renato Mannheimer, Milano: Feltrinelli, 144.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>% of Lega voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To protest against Rome</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I want Lombardy’s autonomy</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protest against the disparity of treatment between North and South</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protest against the party system and partitocrazia</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired of the Southerners</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because the Lega is different from the traditional parties</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protest against the inefficient public services</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.17. Percentage of Lega voters in Lombardy indicating that the following motivated them to vote for the party. The source for this data is: Mannheimer, Renato. 1991b. “Chi vota Lega e perché” In *La Lega Lombarda*, ed. Renato Mannheimer, Milano: Feltrinelli, 144.
Another survey conducted in December 1992-January 1993 found that Lega supporters in Lombardy and Veneto (two regions of northern Italy) were twice as likely as the public in general (24 percent of Lega supporters as against 12 percent of the non-Lega supporters), to support the creation of three macro federal regions (Diamanti 1993, 101). Likewise, Lega supporters were almost twice as likely as the general public (13 percent as opposed to 7 percent) to support the secession of the North from Italy (Diamanti 1993, 101). Extrapolating from the results obtained by Mannheimer (1993) and Diamanti (1993), it appears that many Lega adherents supported the party’s championing of regional interests as well as of a new constitutional division of powers.

The Lega’s use of the regional cleavage has persuaded scholars to examine the nature of identity politics in northern Italy. A poll carried out in Lombardy and Veneto shortly after the 1992 election asked residents which region they identified with most. The data revealed that Lega supporters in Lombardy and Veneto identified more with their region, Europe, and the North in that order, than the public at large did. Conversely, just as Lega supporters identified more with the North and Europe, they also felt more distant from Italy and the South than the public in general did (see Table 5.17 for the poll’s results). It appears that the Lega’s ability to link regional identity with economic issues, protest against the partitocrazia, and the need for constitutional reforms contributed to its electoral success.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Closely with</th>
<th>Percentage of All citizens Interviewed</th>
<th>Percentage of Lega Supporters (^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commune</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province-Region</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel distant from the South</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)The Lega in this table refers to supporters of the Lega Lombarda and the Lega Veneto.

Table 5.17. **Feelings of closeness to a specific territory.** The source of this information was Diamanti, Ivo. 1993. *La Lega Geografia, storia e sociologia di un nuovo soggetto politico.* Roma: Donzelli Editore, 100.

Scholars have suggested several explanations for the Lega’s success; each one has focused on changes in Italy’s socio-political environment during the 1980s and 1990s. Woods (1992) argued that the subcultural organizations that supported the Catholic and Socialist parties had begun to lose their appeal and importance to voters, making it more difficult for parties to mobilize their traditional supporters. Natale (1991) added that votes transferred from the DC to the Lega because the Lega was born in a period of socio-political crisis for the Catholic subculture (Natale 1991, 117). Mannheimer’s (1991) research complemented the aforementioned. He argued that modernization in Italy challenged the salience of the traditional subcultural identities of the Catholics and communist, which focused on the importance of religious and class cleavages (Mannheimer 1991a, 21). According to Mannheimer, this challenge resulted in the loss of the salience of left/right orientations (Mannheimer 1991a, 31).
Another popular explanation is that the fall of communism was indirectly key to the rise of the Lega Nord. This event's impact was felt in two different ways. First, the DC could no longer appeal to the electorate based on anti-Communist themes (Leonardi and Kovacs 1993, 53). Anti-communism was rendered obsolete because there seemed to be no chance that anti-democratic communists would ever control the Italian government. Again, this made it more difficult for the DC to mobilize their supporters and allowed differences within the anti-communist bloc to come to the surface. Secondly, and related to the first point, the dissolution of the PCI (communist party) and the accompanying PCI-DC balance meant that Milan magistrates investigating corruption by the partitocrazia no longer feared an alternation of government that would put anti-democratic forces, the PCI, in office (Waters 1998, 445). “In a system where the main reason for being of the governing parties was their ability to exclude the opposition, the removal of that opposition significantly undermines the legitimacy of the parties in government” (Waters 1998, 456). These tangentopoli investigations led to the conviction of several politicians from the Christian Democratic and Socialist Parties, thereby further delegitimizing the established parties.

Certainly the fall of communism and the decreasing significance of the Catholic and Communist subcultures helped the Lega gain its electoral success. Yet this is only the beginning of the explanation. The evidence suggests that a great majority of the Lega's electoral success came from its introduction of a new cleavage into Italian politics, a territorial cleavage that emphasized the conflict between center and periphery and hence
could also capitalize on the long-standing disenchantment with the DC regime (Diamanti 1996, 113). The party promoted the creation of a northern regional identity by linking territorial identity to antagonism for the partitocrazia and the South (Mannheimer 1991b, 142). The shopkeeper (petite bourgeoisie) element of the DC’s support may have been particularly receptive to this strategy because of their grievances at the inefficiencies of the DC regime. For example, northern Italians often complain about Italy’s inefficient service sector (such as the postal service) or the inefficiencies involved in bidding on and being paid for a government contract. For “smaller companies the confusion in Italy’s bureaucracy has become the biggest obstacle to their continued growth.”\textsuperscript{270} For the small business owners that are so important to northern Italy’s economy, the Lega Nord’s championing of decentralization, laissez faire capitalism, and anti-partitocrazia rhetoric probably seemed like sweet music to their ears.

**Concluding Comparisons**

This chapter began by presenting the argument that alignment instability contributed to the rise of new parties. The evidence suggests however, that this may not

\textsuperscript{269} As mentioned in the introduction, some academics discuss the Lega Nord in terms of extreme rightwing or populist politics (Betz 1993; Kitschelt 1996; Woods 1995). Yet empirical research implies this label is unfounded. Though it is the case that Lega supporters do seem to be somewhat against non-traditional lifestyles and outsiders in general, “this is less important and less statistically significant than other elements in differentiating the Lega supporters from other voters” (Mannheimer 1993b, 102). “Thus, the Lega’s anti-southern stance has more to do with its fundamental anti-partyocracy attitude than to any primordial racist motivation” (Leonardi and Kovacs 1993, 59). The right-wing dimension of its appeal is very small in comparison to its regional and anti-partitocrazia elements.

\textsuperscript{270} Alastair Bruton, “The Devil’s Own Kingdom,” The Guardian. 12 November 1993.
be the case. Instead, it indicates that new parties were the cause, not the product, of alignment instability. Hence, “elections are not just about how voters choose. They are also about how parties and leaders shape alternatives from which the choice is made” (Johnston et al. 1992, 3). At any one time, there are several cleavages, such as class, religion, rural versus urban, or center versus periphery, that a party can possibly exploit to its advantage. Identities can be manipulated by parties to some degree, and this may result in a change in the salience of each cleavage (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, 10). In two successful cases, the Lega Nord and the Reform Party, the introduction of a different line of cleavage resulted in profound changes in both countries’ party systems. Voters switched in sizeable numbers to these new parties because of their ability to package together economic, political, and cultural grievances and link these to regional identity.271

However, the introduction of a regional cleavage into Canadian and Italian politics is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for electoral success. The Western Canada Concept Party (WCC) also fought elections over regional issues (the conflict between western and central Canada), but it disappeared shortly after it formed. The differential success might be explained by variation in the political salience of the regional cleavage. In the case of the WCC, Progressive Conservative Party leadership at both the provincial and federal level offered extensive, quick, and sympathetic overtures to the grievances raised by the WCC. By recognizing the seriousness of the WCC’s grievance against the NEP, the PCP made it very difficult for the WCC to mobilize their supporters around this

271 Certainly in the 1990s, the Lega Nord was also attractive to voters because it was a “new” party and not associated with the discredited DC dominated regime.
issue. However, even the PCP refrained from concretely adopting most of the WCC’s proposals which allowed the grievances to smolder. The situation was different for the Reform Party and the Lega Nord.

In the case of the Lega Nord and the Reform Party, the salience of the regional grievances was reinforced by the established parties’ unwillingness to be receptive to the concerns they raised. In fact, Mulroney’s ambitious attempts at easing regional tensions in Canada by making Quebec a happy member of confederation actually exacerbated regional tensions. The established Canadian and Italian parties were both supported by electoral coalitions that found the regional grievances raised by the new parties either unpalatable or too complicated for consideration. In both cases, the established parties displayed delayed and/or inadequate sympathy for the grievances raised by the Lega Nord and the Reform Party. In the Italian case there was very little sympathy and no receptiveness until it was too late for the established parties. As a result, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Canada and Italy’s party systems underwent massive transformation, as some citizens decided that regional grievances would form the basis for their voting decisions.

Which voters were attracted to the regional cleavages introduced by the new parties? The electorates of the parties shared some commonalties. The Reform Party and the Lega Nord both attracted the self-employed (most likely shopkeepers and independent farmers), some white-collar workers and people with an average education. The comparison with the WCC support is more difficult given the data available. The WCC’s

272 The WCC was not constrained by its electoral base because all provincial parties are supposed to stand up to the national government to preserve provincial interests (MacPherson 1953, 21).
support was strongest in districts in which a large percentage of the citizens had British ancestry, in which many citizens were born in Alberta, and in which the percentage of citizens that had intermarried with "other" people was lower. On attitudinal measures, the electorate of the Lega Nord and the Reform Party both held positions that were less sympathetic towards a specific part of the country, the South and Quebec, than the supporters of other parties. Both also attracted citizens that held cynical opinions about the political class. This may have reflected the established parties’ long-term failure to address the interests of western Canada and northern Italy. On the other hand, Reform’s supporters were notably to the right of the Lega ideologically and, in this respect, more similar to the WCC.

Finally, this chapter has not fully addressed why the Lega Nord and the Reform Party were qualitatively more successful than the Western Canada Concept Party.\textsuperscript{273} The salience of the regional cleavage, which is based in part on whether or not the established parties addressed the issues being raised by the new parties, had an impact on the parties’ success. However, it seems unlikely this was the sole determinant of success, especially since in large part the established parties were unresponsive to all of the grievances raised. This indicates that the established parties’ failure to represent citizen’s political demands (Rosenstone et al. 1984, 181) combined with the introduction of a new issue that

\textsuperscript{273} Successful party formation in comparison to failed party formation is discussed extensively in chapter one. Recall that successful party formation results when a party achieves political relevance by holding coalition or blackmail potential (Sartori [1976], 1991, 321).
crosscuts old lines of party cleavage (Sundquist 1973, 23) was not enough to explain party formation or failed formation. Additional factors need to be considered.

Thus, there is a need to examine the actions of the participants involved in forming a new party. One such actor, a political entrepreneur, can have a substantial influence on the party’s fate. Chapter six will discuss how political entrepreneurs, through their leadership skills, contribute to the success of each party.
CHAPTER 6

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL ENTREPRENEURS

The last substantive chapter of this study presents a re-cap of the essence of the argument and evidence. The central thrust has been that the formation of a successful regional party hinges on a favorable political opportunity structure (POS) coupled with an astute political entrepreneur. Among the elements of the political opportunity structure considered thus far (i.e., the politicization of regional grievances, the receptiveness of established parties, and the stability of political alignments), the greatest variation among the cases has been seen in the nature of the reaction of the established parties. While in all of the cases the established parties were unreceptive to the grievances, they appeared to be at least somewhat receptive in the case of the WCC (See chapter four). The result was that the entrepreneurs of the WCC might have been working from a slightly disadvantaged position from the outset because, to some extent, the established parties co-opted their grievances. However, this situation did not necessarily doom the WCC to failure. Political outcomes are not determined by the political opportunity structure alone: entrepreneurs can also have an impact on a party’s fate.

This chapter will focus on the political entrepreneur, a transformative leader who “recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower” and makes
use of it to further his/her ends (Burns 1978, 4). As you may recall from chapter one, entrepreneurs are the key figures in translating socio-economic and political grievances into political action. The term “entrepreneur” rather than “leader” has been adopted for this section because only a particular type of leader is the focus of this chapter, a leader who excels at innovative, insightful, and strategic leadership.274

The analysis that follows will compare the three entrepreneurs, Douglas Christie, Preston Manning, and Umberto Bossi, by adopting the framework developed by Tucker (1995). Thus, it will focus on three key activities undertaken by each entrepreneur: defining the situation, formulating a plan of action, and implementing his vision by keeping party members and voters mobilized. The objective is to determine each entrepreneur’s success in each of these activities and the degree to which each activity contributed to the party’s success or failure. I would expect to find that successful party formation is associated with a political entrepreneur who offered a novel diagnosis of the situation, a well thought out plan of action, and a cohesive party organization.

**Douglas Christie (WCC)**

**Defining the situation**

When Douglas Christie set out to form the separatist Western Canada Concept Party in 1980, he was clear in his assessment of western Canada’s situation. He believed

274 See chapter one for further explanation of my decision to chose “entrepreneur” rather than “leader” in this study.
that the structure of Canada's institutions made it impossible for western Canadians to influence the federal government.

"It was necessary to establish a new party as a vehicle for western Canadian independence because it seemed to be the only way to free the West from the bankrupt federal system. The federal system was bankrupt in the eyes of western Canadians because central Canada, reflected by the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, have all the political, economic, and cultural power, and therefore all of Canada's federal institutions reflect the wishes of those provinces only."\textsuperscript{275}

According to Christie, an inequitable relationship existed between eastern and central Canada. This was reflected in a host of issues including the imposition of the metric system, the federal bilingual policy, and the National Energy Program. In the summer of 1980, Christie traveled across western Canada, speaking at local gatherings to win support for his vision.

**Plan of action**

Christie had decided early on that forming a political party was the best means to further his goal of creating an independent state comprised of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba—the four most western Canadian provinces. The WCC was to contest only provincial level elections because, he argued, the provinces had the power and right to secede.\textsuperscript{276} Once the WCC had won control of the governments in each of the western provinces, it would use various means to obtain independence. Initially, Christie envisioned that a Board of Directors

\textsuperscript{275} Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
\textsuperscript{276} Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
consisting of three representatives from each province would govern the WCC. However, his plans never reached fruition. One contributing factor was that electoral laws required that the WCC register as a party in each province and, once this occurred, every ambitious person in each province sought to be the party’s official spokesman.  

**Implementing Christie’s vision**

In Alberta, the emergence of ambitious individuals was particularly acute, resulting in five or more of them competing for the leadership of the Alberta WCC. These individuals distrusted Christie’s attempts to exert his authority and accused him of being an authoritarian leader. They also disagreed with Christie over the nature of the future western state. Christie wanted to create a unitary western Canadian state, and the Alberta membership wanted a federal state. One year after Christie brought his message to Alberta, local leaders broke ties with him, effectively eliminating any influence he had over the Alberta wing of the WCC in 1981. At that point, Christie’s influence on western politics began to diminish more generally.

No doubt Christie was a leader of the WCC, but not an entrepreneur using Tucker’s framework. Although he had clearly defined western Canada’s grievances

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277 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
278 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
279 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
280 From this point on, WCC refers to the Alberta branch of the WCC. Christie continued on as head of British Columbia’s branch of the WCC, but it was not very successful.
and his solution to the situation, (independence), he could not convince others to support him. Albertan party elites disagreed with his goal to establish an independent, unitary western state, and many even questioned the need for independence. Hence, he failed to obtain support for implementing his vision, an essential component of entrepreneurship. After all, anyone can have a good idea; the difficult part is attracting support and achieving implementation.

Did anyone else rise to become the Alberta WCC’s entrepreneur and fulfill Tucker’s criteria? When the break with Christie occurred, Howard Thompson, Al Maygard, Wes Westmore, Dr. Fred Marshall, and Gordon Kesler were prominent leaders within the party. Initially, this group was able to mobilize a large number of supporters. A typical meeting in a small town of 1,500 people would bring out 400 participants, which was a remarkable number for a political rally. This is even more impressive considering that turnout was the result of a two – by – four inch ad in a local paper, without door-to-door canvassing, political posters, etc.\textsuperscript{281} The party’s rallies in rural areas attracted the biggest proportion of residents.

The rallies centered on slogans and emotional rhetoric, not policies or platforms. For example, \textit{The Calgary Herald} reported on 19 February 1982 that Kesler had referred to the National Energy Program as the “national extermination policy.”\textsuperscript{282} Although the leadership was initially able to mobilize many supporters,

\textsuperscript{281} In an interview with the author on August 5, 1996, Ray Speaker claimed that he had held political meetings in that part of the province for years and it was very very difficult to get even 250 people to a meeting.

even beginning to carve out a niche in the electorate, it never developed a clear plan of action.

**Plan of action**

The WCC lacked a clear, coherent platform. Ray Speaker, leader of Alberta’s Social Credit Party, met with the WCC several times and recalled that initially meetings were held despite the lack of any platform at all. In fact, as late as August 16, 1982, the *Alberta Report*, a weekly magazine, noted, “any official WCC policy platform is still far from complete.” Speaker encouraged the WCC leadership to develop a solid platform, but after meeting with them several times, he could tell that they still had not put much thought into it. The only platform Speaker saw was written on a used envelope and consisted of ten simple phrases. Table 6.1 displays the party’s earliest formal statement of principles, which was adopted in 1984. Speaker was particularly critical of the WCC’s lack of policy development, arguing that “radical, poorly thought through positions and promises that separating now [independence] will solve all our problems are public deceptions.”

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283 During the Alberta WCC’s infancy, Ray Speaker, a member of the Alberta legislature and leader of the Social Credit Party, met with the party’s leaders several times. He was interested in helping or working with the party. The comments by him are from a phone interview with the author on 8/5/96. It is also important to note that Ray Speaker also served as a member of parliament for the Reform Party during the 1993-1997 session.


285 Phone interview by author with Ray Speaker, 8/5/96.

286 I was able to collect campaign literature for the period before 1984 from members of the WCC but no formal party platform. There is an overlap in the themes of this platform and material dated earlier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We Believe That:</th>
<th>WCC’s Statement of Principles, 1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albertans know what is best for Alberta, The creativity of the individual is the driving force in a free economy, Private initiative is best, Jobs and wealth are the product of private enterprise, The strength of the family is the strength of the nation, The family farm is essential to a healthy agricultural economy, Bilingualism and metcreation should be voluntary, The community should support the deserving needy, Citizens must have a right to initiative, referendum, and recall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1. The WCC’s Statement of Principles, 1984.

Implementing Kessler’s vision

Perhaps the party had a difficult time drafting a platform because of rampant internal divisions. Although Howard Thompson, Al Maygard, Wes Westmore, Dr. Fred Marshall, and Gordon Kesler all agreed on the West’s grievances and the need to organize a political party, they could not agree on much else. Intra-party conflict arose because the leaders disagreed, among other things, about the party’s primary goal of secession. This turmoil was acknowledged both privately and publicly. For example, Preston Manning sat in on one of the WCC’s leadership meetings and recalled the following incident:

“I asked them, ‘is your advocacy of separatism simply a tactic to draw attention to western grievances, or is it a genuine objective that you intend to pursue as such?’ Right away, the great weakness of the WCC
manifested itself. Three of them said separatism was only a tactic to get attention; the other three said it was a real goal to be vigorously pursued” (Manning 1992, 91-92).

Kesler and Thompson both led factions that believed good government should be emphasized first and foremost, not independence. Meanwhile, another faction, led by Al Maygard, argued that the party’s primary goal should be independence for the West. For the former group, the threat of independence was to be used as a tactical weapon to extract concessions from the federal government. The latter group believed that independence should be the party’s primary and immediate goal. *The Calgary Herald* reported on 6 May 1982 that “opinions on this issue (independence) vary from one extreme to the other, with some WCC members saying Alberta would immediately declare independence if the party gets 51 percent of the vote in the next election and others saying separatism is only a loud threat to make Ottawa listen to the West.”

The tension between these positions would continue to plague the party throughout its history. However, the depth of this conflict did not become apparent until after its by-election win.

Gordon Kesler’s by-election victory gave the WCC leadership another chance to display entrepreneurship. Kesler won a seat in the Alberta legislature with 42 percent of the vote on February 19, 1982. The Olds-Didsbury district Kesler subsequently represented was overwhelmingly rural in nature, the largest town having only 3,000 residents. For more information see, Bruce Winning. “Separatist takes first place in 53 of 55 polling stations,” *The Calgary Herald*, 19 February 1982.

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289 Kesler won a seat in the Alberta legislature with 42 percent of the vote on February 19, 1982. The Olds-Didsbury district Kesler subsequently represented was overwhelmingly rural in nature, the largest town having only 3,000 residents. For more information see, Bruce Winning. “Separatist takes first place in 53 of 55 polling stations,” *The Calgary Herald*, 19 February 1982.
the WCC, the euphoria was short-lived. Instead of directing the party and implementing his vision by convincing the party members and the electorate to support it, Kessler’s victory and ambition aggravated intra-party conflict. After his successful by-election bid, Kesler’s campaign manager claimed that Kesler would be the party’s new leader and official spokesman, reported *The Calgary Herald* on 19 February 1982. Meanwhile, Al Maygard said “he [intended] to retain the mantle of leader, unless the party executive [forced] him to pass it on to Gordon Kesler, the party’s new and only MLA.” A direct confrontation between Kesler and Maygard over the independence issue occurred at an executive board meeting in May 1982.

“The division on the board [reflected] the split within the membership on the question (of independence), a split which [had] grown increasingly acute of late.” The meeting concluded with Al Maygard, leader of the WCC, and Wes Westmore, president of the WCC executive board, resigning and proceeding to lock the party’s offices, disconnect its phone lines, and freeze its assets.

The exit of Al Maygard and Wes Westmore meant that the party leadership contest held in the spring of 1982 was between Gordon Kesler and Howard Thompson. Both were from the moderate faction of the party and both believed independence for western Canada should only be pursued as a last resort against an unresponsive federal government. After a vote by the membership, Kesler became

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the new party leader. However, his election did not heal intra-party divisions; rather it increased them. According to Jean Ferguson, a member of the WCC’s executive committee, “after winning the leadership contest, Kesler forgot that we all helped elect him. He was too young and too immature to know he had to unite the party, so instead he turned his back on Howard Thompson and his supporters.”

In the fall of 1982, the fractured WCC contested the Alberta provincial general election. The party ran 78 candidates and received 11.8 percent of the vote in the election, but not a single candidate was elected. Even Gordon Kesler failed to retain his seat. Shortly afterwards, the party began to unravel, and many members left it.

In the midst of the upheaval, Jack Ramsay, an avowed separatist, returned to the party. He became the WCC’s fourth party leader in four years. Between 1984 and 1985, Ramsay reorganized and relaunched the WCC. Like earlier leaders, Ramsay’s leadership advocated moving in various directions. The party half-heartedly embraced separatism, toyed with combining its organization with other fringe parties, and then decided to endorse separatism, all within three years. Ramsay’s attempts to attract more support by changing the party’s positioning

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293 Phone interview by author with Jean Ferguson, a member of the WCC’s executive committee, 10/10/96.

294 It is important to note that Kesler may not have retained his seat in the legislature because he decided to run in a different electoral district.

probably hurt the WCC more than helped it because such maneuvering was reminiscent of its earlier indecisiveness.

Once again, it seemed that the WCC's leader lacked the skills necessary for entrepreneurship as outlined by Tucker. Ramsay did not have a clear vision or a coherent plan of action, nor was he able to mobilize members or voters. In the 1986 Alberta provincial election, the WCC put up twenty candidates, while another 18 former members of the party ran in various ridings as independents. Overall they received only 0.65 percent of the vote. Soon after this disappointing performance, the party disintegrated.\footnote{Phone interview by author with Jean Ferguson on 10/10/96.} Ramsay would later become a member of the federal parliament for the Reform Party.

The WCC failed to win a seat in an Alberta general election, despite a heightened awareness of grievances due to the imposition of the National Energy Program (NEP), the leadership's agreement about the West's grievances, concurrence on the need to organize a political party, and the early mobilization of a large number of individuals. The WCC never fulfilled Sartori's criterion of relevance in Alberta's party system, never mind Canada's. The party's biggest problem was that it lacked a political entrepreneur.

Before discussing the WCC's missing entrepreneur, there is a need to address the obvious problem of rapidly changing WCC leadership. It is difficult for a leader to act entrepreneurially when he or she leads a party for just a year or two.
“The WCC just didn’t have an identifiable leader. There wasn’t really one person at the top that all the people looked up to; no one that they said ‘that is our man.’” Douglas Christie commented, “the problem with the Alberta WCC was that it was run by a bunch of amateurs and the press ate them up, due to their lack of organization, discipline, and coherent leadership.” The press never failed to mention the party’s internal disagreements over separatism and never failed to report the airing of personal attacks. According to former WCC executive Howard Thompson: “the WCC had great potential, but personalities got in the way” (Harrison 1995, 79).

Second, although all of the WCC’s leaders clearly articulated the West’s grievances, each had a difficult time formulating a plan of action. Although each potential leader argued for various objectives such as secession, restructured federalism, or good government, there was also a tendency to avoid emphasizing a specific goal. Individual leaders also periodically changed their objective. This vague and shifting behavior probably occurred because each leader was trying to gain the support of the various party factions.

Finally, each leader failed to mobilize party members to support his position. Instead, internal division centered on zero-sum conflict. Diane Ablonczy, a former

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297 Phone interview by author with Chuck Strahl, former member of the WCC and Reform MP, 8/28/96.
298 Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
member of the WCC, summed up the situation well, "the WCC lacked vision, members harbored a large range of perspectives, there was never a clear mission, and the goal to accomplish was unclear." WCC leaders failed miserably on two (establishing a course of action and implementing it) of the three criteria Tucker deemed necessary for entrepreneurship (Tucker 1992, 38-39).

What lesson can be learned from this case? First, the evidence suggests that not all party leaders are capable of entrepreneurship or even leadership. "Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers" (Burns 1978, 18). It is not apparent from the evidence that any of the WCC’s leaders, or any combination of them, fulfilled this basic definition of leadership.

Second, it is probable that the public airing of the party’s policy disagreements further undermined the party’s credibility, making it very difficult for them to mobilize support. Internal dissension over the party’s goals was fatal: "... these internal problems seriously reduced tangible outside support for the parties. While many business leaders were sympathetic to at least some of Knutson’s and Christie’s ideas and sentiments, most were loath to attach themselves to parties that seemed doomed from the start to obscurity" (Harrison 1995, 79). Combined with

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300 Phone interview by author with Diane Ablonczy, former member of the WCC and now Reform MP, 7/8/96.
301 Elmer Knutson was the leader of the Western Canada Federation, a separatist interest group existing in the early 1980s. Many of this group’s members eventually joined the WCC.
the sympathy shown by established parties—especially the provincial and federal Progressive Conservative Party—to the grievances raised by the WCC, the party was almost certain of electoral defeat. So, after emerging as a bright light on the political scene, the WCC’s flame quickly began to flicker, and it only continued on as a meager shadow of its former self. This was the case despite the fact that all individuals involved with the WCC agreed in essence that western Canada was disadvantaged in the Canadian federation and something needed to be done about it.

**Preston Manning (Reform Party)**

While the WCC’s leaders and Preston Manning defined western Canada’s problems similarly, the histories of the parties’ leaderships diverge sharply. Unlike the revolving leadership of the WCC, the Reform Party has had a single, largely unchallenged leader since its creation. Manning, although not charismatic, has excelled at the three leadership activities outlined by Tucker. But before discussing Manning’s entrepreneurial abilities, it is important to review Manning’s career before forming the RP.

As the son of Ernest Manning, Premier of Alberta and Social Credit Party leader from 1943-1968, Preston Manning, always had an interest in politics. During the 1960s and 1970s, Preston was periodically active with the Social Credit Party and in 1972 even considered running for parliament as a Progressive Conservative Party candidate (Manning 1992, 90). However, until the mid 1980s, Manning had
never seriously considered forming a new federal party because he felt that the more natural outlet for western Canadian frustration was support for the Progressive Conservative Party and the NDP (Manning 1992, 92). “By 1986, however, it was becoming clear to me [Manning] and to others in western Canada that the federal Conservatives, despite the presence in their ranks of some very able people, could not meet the expectations they had actively and deliberately raised in the 1984 campaign” (Manning 1992, 125).

Such dissatisfaction with the PCP encouraged Preston Manning and Ray Speaker to reach out to the public and attempt to convince them that they had the solution to the West’s problems. According to Ray Speaker, “in 1985-1986 we [Ray Speaker and Preston Manning] set up a series of seminars in the major cities of the province [Alberta] to try to popularize different ideas so that they had basic public support. By 1987 we could tell that the people wanted something different, an alternative to the current old line parties.”

Manning argued that, “the time was ripe to create a new federal political movement in the West dedicated to systemic changes that would make the West an equal partner in confederation” (Manning 1992, 132).

Despite Manning’s conviction that the time was right to form a new party, he hesitated to form one. Instead, he set out to build consensus among a large group of sympathizers about the need to form a new party. Manning and a few

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302 Phone interview by author with Ray Speaker, Reform Party, MP, 8/5/96.
sympathizers—Ray Speaker, Frances Winspear, Cliff Fryers, and Stan Roberts among others—organized a conference in Vancouver called Canada’s Economic and Political Future. The conference was held to determine whether or not forming a new federal political party was the appropriate vehicle to address the West’s concerns. After some brief discussion, it was decided that the group could not achieve their goals by functioning as an interest group, and for this reason it was necessary for them to create their own federal political party (Manning 1992, 132-134).

In short, even before the party’s inception, Manning exhibited entrepreneurial proclivities by following his intuition that the time was right to form a new party and taking deliberative steps to ensure that his goal, the creation of a new party, was supported by sympathetic activists. With later initiatives he always made sure that he had broad support for his ideas, which made it appear that members were truly participating in the process. This was much different from the WCC’s experience. In that case a group of leaders with varying ideas attempted to lead the party from the top down. The opinions of the WCC’s members were not solicited as they were by the RP.

Defining the situation

Manning was always very clear about the RP’s reason for existing. It formed because the West was tired of being ignored by the federal government. Manning commented in his book, The New Canada, “we felt that the West’s constitutional
concerns were never given the same priority by the national government as those of Quebec. Nor were the West’s economic aspirations ever given the same priority as those of southern Ontario” (Manning 1992, v). Western Canadians felt that no party represented them in Ottawa. The MPs that western Canada sent to Ottawa did not represent their interests; instead their function was to explain unacceptable Ottawa positions to their constituents (Manning 1992, 126).

**Plan of action**

How did the newly formed Reform Party seek to address the grievances of western Canadians? Unlike the WCC, Reform did not recommend secession as the solution to western Canada’s problems; in fact, just the opposite. The motto taken from the party’s founding convention was “The West Wants In”. However, the West wanted in to a “New Canada”. Manning proposed the creation of a “New Canada,” and he constructed a detailed party platform to achieve this goal. Table 6.2 outlines some of the party’s cornerstone policies that consistently appeared between 1988-1993. Substantial detail on most of these policies has been given in chapters three and five, and thus need not be discussed here.

At this point, however, I would like to elaborate on Manning’s conception of the “New Canada” because this concept is essential to understanding the constitutional impasse in Canada that pits the West against Quebec. Manning believed, like Lord
Durham, that Canada is composed of two nations warring in the bosom of a single state (Manning 1992, viii). However, Manning argued that the two nations were not the English and French: on the contrary, they consisted of the Old and New Canada. Manning made the argument that it was necessary to create a “New Canada” because the “Old Canada” was in danger of disappearing. He stated that acceptance of its social responsibilities, and the recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all its citizens and provinces” (Manning 1992, viii).

“The Old Canada that is dying defines itself as ‘an equal partnership between two founding races, languages, and cultures,’ the English and the French. Its leaders have focused their attention, not on building a federation of equal provinces, but on building a federation of founding peoples distinguished by official languages policy and government-supported culture” (Manning 1992, viii). Under such leadership, “Old Canada has become a ‘house divided against itself.’” Reformers seek a New Canada—a Canada which may be defined as ‘a balanced, democratic federation of provinces, distinguished by the sustainability of its environment, the viability of its economy, the acceptance of its social responsibilities, and the recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all its citizens and provinces” (Manning 1992, viii).

By and large, the Reform Party’s platform reflected Preston Manning’s personal philosophy about Canada and its future. “It [was] his (Manning’s) vision really of a new and better Canada that has attracted a large percentage of the candidates and MP’s.”

There was widespread agreement among academics and the members of parliament that I

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303 Lord Durham was the High Commissioner and Governor-General of British North America in 1838 during which time, he wrote a famous report on the state of the Canadian nation. For additional information see Morton, Desmond. 1997. A Short History of Canada. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 50-54.
305 Phone interview by author with Reform Party Member of Parliament, 8/15/96.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Constitution</strong></th>
<th>The Reform Party fully endorses the Triple-E Senate concept: Elected by the people; Equal representation from each province; Effective in safeguarding regional interests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Policy</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Reform Party supports public analyses of the regional distribution of the expenditures and revenues of all federal government policies and contract as a routine part of the legislative process. These distributions would be analyzed on both an East-West and a North-South basis within Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>The Reform Party stands for freedom of speech. We are opposed to comprehensive language legislation. In no way do we discourage personal bilingualism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Reforms</strong></td>
<td>Reformers support direct public approval of legislation, especially on major moral issues and matters that alter the basic social fabric. Reformers believe that voters should have a mechanism to remove MPs who will not represent their interests in Parliament. Reformers believe that voters should be able to get vital concerns on a national referendum ballot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal</strong></td>
<td>The Reform Party supports requiring the Government of Canada to balance the budget in each three-year period or to be obliged to call an election on the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social policy</strong></td>
<td>We believe that Canadians have a personal and collective responsibility to care and provide for the basic needs of people who are unable to care and provide for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada’s Identity</strong></td>
<td>Reformers say that Canada is not a federation of founding races or ethnic groups. It is a federation in which the equality of all its provinces and citizens is recognized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigration</strong></td>
<td>The Reform Party supports an immigration policy that has Canada’s economic needs as its focus and that welcomes genuine refugees. The Reform Party opposes any immigration policy based on race or creed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> The regional policy statement came from the “Reform Party of Canada’s Principles and Policies,” 1990.

interviewed that Manning’s biggest impact on the Reform Party has been his vision and his ability to translate it into concrete policy proposals. Interviews with several Reform Party MPs revealed that Manning’s convictions have left a notable imprint on the party’s platform. The MPs believed that Manning’s strength is his clear and articulate vision of Canada. “We have a leader in Preston Manning who is able to articulate in a very concise and very accurate manner a new vision for Canada that was both practical and very imaginative in the sense that it provided clear focus and clear direction not only for now, but also for many years to come, and that is very very significant for attributing success to the Reform Party.” Reform MP Deborah Grey commented that, “Preston is a real visionary, and an astute person.”

What was the basis of Manning’s vision? There were three distinct but overlapping perspectives evident in it and the Reform Party’s platforms. Each of these perspectives – western alienation, conservatism, and populism – has been linked by scholars to various aspects of Manning’s message. The conservative element of Reform’s message emanated primarily from Manning’s upbringing. Throughout Manning’s childhood, his father Ernest Manning was the premier of Alberta. The elder Manning’s government linked religious fundamentalism and right-wing free enterprise to create a very conservative government (Harrison 1995, 306-307).

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306 Phone interview by author with Reform Party member, 8/21/96 b.
307 Phone interview by author with Deborah Grey, Reform Party MP, 8/8/96.
In 1987, Manning made a speech about the party’s “commitment to individual freedom, responsible private enterprise, modest government, and respect for traditional Judeo-Christian values” (Harrison 1995, 112). On 3 November 1987, The Calgary Herald reported that, “the Reform Party has found a leader who can make the ultra-right agenda sound moderate.”

Western alienation was evident in the party’s initial slogan, “The West Wants In,” and also provided the foundation for the party’s platform and western base of support (See chapter five for details). Preston Manning believed that western alienation was “a conviction shared by generations of western Canadians that their region and interests have not achieved equality with the constitutional and economic interests of Quebec and Ontario, and that systemic change is necessary to achieve such equality” (Manning 1992, 118). According to The Calgary Herald on 25 November 1990, “the Reform Party has become the primary vehicle for those afflicted with western alienation.”

308 In Storming Babylon, Sydney Sharpe and Don Braid argue that all of Manning’s positions can be traced back to a variant of Christian fundamentalist politics that views the world in black and white terms (Sharpe and Braid 1992, 193). Yet another conservative influence on Alberta and the party has been the American conservatism brought to Canada by the owners of the oil industry (Dobbin 1991, 14; Harrison 1995, 30). These conservative proponents are really classic liberals supporting free-market economics and little government intervention in the economy.


Finally, the populist element of Manning’s vision addressed the need to defend and promote the interests of the common people against the political elites. One method for accomplishing this was by promoting direct democracy through referendums, recall, and initiative (McCormick 1990, 350). According to former party strategist Thomas Flanagan, Manning’s populism also involved opportunism. “Manning’s political strategy [was] mainly a matter of timing and communications. It was based on giving expression to currents in public opinion that established politicians ignore and riding those currents as they turn into waves. It also involved sensing new waves as they begin to swell” (Flanagan 1995, 165).

Implementing Manning’s vision

In addition to his impact on the party’s platform, Manning orchestrated the party’s electoral strategy, especially in terms of deciding where the party should put up candidates. Initially, the party limited itself to contesting elections in western Canada; yet, at the same time, its founding constitution said that its aims were to eventually become a national party. According to Thomas Flanagan (1995, 46), this strategy was a result of Manning’s astute understanding of Canada’s electoral

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system. He realized that he needed a strong localized base of support to win seats due to the country’s First Past the Post electoral system. On the other hand, he realized that he could only change federal legislation in favor of the West if his party won office. If the Reform Party won all the seats allotted to western Canada, it would still only control 27.5 percent of all the seats in the Canadian House of Commons. This was inadequate for governing. As a result, Manning pushed the party to contest seats across Canada after 1990.

Thomas Flanagan, the party’s former strategist, has posited that Manning was so able to dominate the party’s direction because he is the consummate heresthetician.³¹² "His ability to control the agenda and manipulate situations was superb. If he was given time, he always [found] a way to preserve his position and pursue his own objectives" (Flanagan 1995, 173). Another scholar, Murray Dobbin, argued that Manning convinced party members that his ideas were their own and thus they quite willingly changed their mind and supported his position (Dobbin 1991, 128). At the same time, “he (Manning) [paid] attention to what people [told] him, and he does make changes, (but) he retained control of the process. He [wanted] to be the author at every stage from setting the agenda through conceptualizing the problem to choosing the exact words of the final document” (Flanagan 1995, 166).

Manning’s dominance of the RP’s agenda was quite different from Douglas Christie’s experience. Christie was unable to control and manipulate the WCC’s

³¹² According to William Riker, a heresthetician is an individual who is able to structure decision-making situations to his advantage (Riker 1986, 8).
agenda. Conflict was zero-sum within the WCC, meaning that members seemed to think their positions were incompatible and compromise was not possible. Christie lost his directive function in the Alberta WCC as soon as the first major conflict erupted. He was unable to build a consensus around his vision. It is difficult to say why this was the case. It could have been due to his management style—he indicated in the interview that the members complained he was a dictator—or it could have been because Christie was from British Columbia and the Albertans distrusted him because he was viewed as an outsider.\textsuperscript{313} At any rate, Christie was never able to dominate the agenda or command the support of party members in a manner similar to Manning.

Has Preston Manning’s vision always guided the party? For the most part, the answer is yes, but that does not mean his leadership has gone unchallenged. Alternative leaders have arisen to both the left and the right of Manning’s position. The first formal leadership challenge occurred at the party’s founding convention in Winnipeg. In that confrontation, according to \textit{The Calgary Herald} on 2 November 1987, Stan Roberts, a left-center liberal with pan-Canadian views and the only other leadership contender, alleged irregularities in party finances and delegate registration. As a result, Roberts and about twenty delegates left the convention and the remaining delegates unanimously elected Manning as leader.\textsuperscript{314}

Another very public challenge was initiated by Thomas Flanagan, one time Director of Policy, Strategy, and Communications for the Reform Party. Flanagan, a

\textsuperscript{313} Phone interview by author with Douglas Christie, 10/1/96.
steadfast conservative, was highly critical of Manning’s populist inclinations, as evidenced in his book (Flanagan 1995, 126). However, interviews with Reform MPs revealed that Flanagan was probably not the only person challenging the party’s ideological direction. A noticeable division could be discerned between two different blocks: those who wanted the party to become a truly “small c” conservative party (meaning conservative but not supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party) and those who supported the elements of western populism. The party sought to appeal to both. However, since the 1993 election, some of the prominent members of the conservative faction have become frustrated by the party’s path, arguing that the party’s expansion into Ontario and the East has been hindered because it has continued to carry the cross of western alienation, which obviously limits the appeal of the party in central and eastern Canada.\footnote{Phone interview by author with Reform Party MP, 8/13/96 b.} Many of these members, including Reform MPs, have subsequently left the party.

It seems that Manning has been able to weather internal party challenges with relative ease for two reasons. First, when the Reform Party was created, it filled two electoral niches in Canada. It stepped into the void to the right of the centrist Progressive Conservative Party, and it spoke to the western cleavage in the electorate. Neither was represented when Reform arose in 1987, which allowed Manning to outflank his critics both outside and inside the party because it became difficult for rivals to form alternatives. In other words, ultra-right conservatives or
pure western populists within the Reform Party who were unhappy with Manning’s agenda would have had a difficult time forming an alternative party since he did address some of each of these group’s concerns.

Secondly, Manning never stood alone against his challengers; he always had a well-established group of lieutenants to sustain his power and strategy. Part of the explanation of Manning’s immediate and steadfast core of supporter’s stems from Ernest Manning’s legacy. Former Social Credit Party members and personal friends staffed many of the party’s key positions in the early years. According to one Reform Party MP, “the former Social Creditors played a key role in the 1988 electoral campaign. This was true in my own district.”

Although many of Manning’s earliest supporters may have been attracted to the party because of past affiliation with his father, many of them became permanent followers because of Manning’s personal qualities. Several of the members of parliament I interviewed seemed to admire Preston. The following is a sampling of quotes about Manning from fellow members of parliament:

- “He is truly a very brilliant man, but above all he has character.”
- “I just trust him explicitly; he is a man of his word; he is very sincere.”

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316 Similarly, the Reform Party also attracted support from the Social Credit Party’s residual electorate. “Probably 10 percent of our total vote can be attributed to these circumstances” noted the MP. The information about the crucial role played by the former Social Credit activists and electorate came from a phone interview with a Reform Party MP on 8/13/96.

317 To my knowledge, the most prominent members of the Reform Party with ties to Social Credit were Ray Speaker, Werner Schmidt, Bob Mills, John Duncan, and of course, Manning himself.

318 Phone interview by author with Reform Party MP, 8/6/96.

319 Phone interview by author with Ken Epp, Reform Party MP, 8/21/96.

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"After spending three years with him in the House of Commons, there is no question in my mind that he is the most intelligent person in parliament today" \(^{320}\)

Manning’s ability to create and maintain a strong base of support within the party has been essential to its success. It has meant that the party’s objectives have remained coherent and clear, and there have been few serious challenges to his leadership. For the most part, the party has presented a united front. Thus, the press has been unable to portray the party as a bunch of disorganized and ambitious extremists as it had done in the case of the WCC.

In sum, the evidence presented indicates that the Reform Party would probably not have formed without Preston Manning. He has almost single handedly built the Reform Party. His strength has been his ability to take his vision of the “New Canada” and simplify it into concrete proposals palatable to western Canadians. His keen recognition that he needed to build consensus for his ideas has helped the RP avoid the problems suffered by the WCC. Both the party membership and its electorate have followed his lead. Unlike the experience of Christie and others, Manning managed to mobilize support for his definition of the situation and plan of action and thus fulfill this study’s definition of entrepreneurial leadership (Tucker 1995, 19).

\(^{320}\) Phone interview by author with Reform Party MP, 8/12/96 a.
**Umberto Bossi (Lega Nord)**

Umberto Bossi’s role in the Lega Nord was similar to Preston Manning’s in the Reform Party. He was the party’s principal founder and long-standing leader. Bossi’s initial interest in politics came about because of a chance meeting with Bruno Salvadori, the leader of the Union Valdotaine, a party that represents the French-speaking minority in Val d’Aosta. In 1979, Salvadori was working to create a common electoral list composed of autonomist movements, federalist forces, and regional forces for the European parliamentary elections. Salvadori met with groups existing in Italy’s special regions of Val d’Aosta, Trentino Alto-Adige, and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, and with interested groups in Veneto, Piedmont, and Lombardy (Gomez-Reino 1998, 13). Bossi happened to hear Salvadori speak in Lombardy and, after friendly discussions with him, decided to organize the Lega Lombarda Autonomista, a political party organized in Lombardy to promote federalism in Italy. Initially, the Lega’s meetings consisted of a small group of concerned citizens and friends meeting in people’s living rooms to discuss preserving Lombardy’s culture and promoting Lombardy’s economic prosperity and political autonomy (Vimercati 1990, 11). Within a year, 1984, Bossi had simplified the party’s name to the Lega Lombarda.  

Before Bossi organized a party in Lombardy, parties had been established in Piedmont (the Rinascita Piemontese) and in Veneto (Liga Veneta). The Liga Veneta

321 Lega Lombarda translates into Lombard League in English.
had already won a few seats in local elections under its leader, Franco Rocchetta. During the early 1980s, these three groups cooperated in various ways, including loaning each other money and collaborating in the publication of party journals (Gomez-Reino 1998, 13). Although Bossi got involved in politics later than the leaders of the other parties, by the end of the 1980s the impact of the other groups on Italian politics would pale in comparison to that of the Lega Lombarda and its leader.

**Defining the situation**

Bossi has consistently portrayed northern Italy’s situation as a region oppressed by an abusive, selfish, party-dominated, centralized state. Under the thumb of the partitocrazia, northern Italy has been unable to realize its full potential. Thus, Bossi speaks of the Roman colonizers, who exploited and plundered the North for the benefit of the established parties and their clienteles. This definition of northern Italy’s situation was novel in Italian politics.

Like Preston Manning, Umberto Bossi had spent years studying and developing his vision of the future of Italy. A history of the party written by Vimercati (1990) discussed Bossi’s early obsession with ideological elaboration and organizational development (Vimercati 1990, 9). Initially, he spent a great deal of his time writing articles for the Lega Autonomista newspaper and letters to party organizers issuing ideological directives. Bossi’s comprehensive vision for Italy’s future was outlined in his book *The Revolution* (1993), which argued that the only
way northern Italians can be freed from the oppressive, centralized Italian state run
by corrupt politicians is to have a revolution. The “Revolution” suggested by Bossi
and Daniele Vimercati consisted of five reforms: institutional (from centralism to
federalism), economic (replacing big business with small and medium sized
business), political (removing the corrupt partitocrazia), social (emphasizing
capitalist relations as opposed to welfare ones), and cultural (moving from a
homogeneous to a multi-cultural society).\textsuperscript{322}

Bossi was able to translate his revolutionary perspective into concrete
proposals, which were primarily communicated to the public in speeches and
election manifestos (posters). Election platforms were rarely used by the Lega to
spread its message. However, I was able to acquire a very early election platform,
circa 1983, which captures the essence of Bossi’s vision. The themes mentioned in
the Lega Lombarda’s 1983 program are quite similar to those raised later by the
Lega Nord. In fact, for the most part, the party’s goals remained consistent between
1983 and 1994, the main difference being the relative emphasis placed on various
objectives (See Table 6.3).

The cornerstone of Bossi’s thinking has been implementing federalism in
Italy. Although Bossi’s rhetoric mentioned secession at times, he claims there was
never any indecision on the issue. “The Republic of the North was not so much a
provocation as a tactic. Federalism was our divine law, or now, you could say, our

\textsuperscript{322} The revolution described is a summary of the points made in Bossi, Umberto and Daniele Vimercati.
divine parliamentary mission.”

“Obviously the Constitution imagined by the League is based on federalist principles, that is, on an equal exchange between the regional government and the federal state, both endowed with a non-exclusive sovereignty. From now on the citizens will not be put under by the massive and suffocating power of the centralized State...” (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lega Lombarda Program, 1983</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) We are for the autonomy of Lombardy by overcoming the centralized state with a federal one that respects all its people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) We support giving preference to Lombards in the assignment of housing, work, and social assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) We believe that the fruits of the work and taxes of the Lombards should be collected and managed by the Lombards similar to the system that exists for Trentino and Sud Tirolo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) We will create a pension system for Lombard workers that is safeguarded from the numerous disability pensions distributed by the Roman parties through clientelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) We support an increase in the number of Lombards employed by the public school system and public administration in Lombardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) We reaffirm our culture, history, Lombard dialect, and social and moral values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) We promote the need for easy credit for craftsmen and farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) We will fight with effectiveness delinquency, the Mafia, and racketeering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) We are for the construction of a federal Europe based on respect for all peoples on the continent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Many scholars have credited Bossi with the clever appeals made by the party. Bossi’s unique strategy politicized economic and political grievances and linked them to territorial identity, creating a basis for the representation of conflicting interests (Allum and Diamanti 1996, 162). Another way to think about Bossi’s strategy is that instead of engaging in the rhetoric of class politics, Bossi publicized a different cleavage rooted in the conflict between center and periphery (Diamanti 1993, 55). This was new to Italian politics. Bossi borrowed from arguments used by the “special administrative regions” in Italy, which harbored ethnic minorities, and then applied a similar logic to Lombardy.\textsuperscript{324} It purposely mobilized people based on territorial identity and long-standing prejudices.\textsuperscript{325} The party made appeals based on regional identity, not ethnic identity. Anyone living in northern Italy regardless of ethnic background (even if they were of southern origin such as Bossi’s wife) was considered a potential supporter.

**Plan of action**

Bossi was very attentive to the party’s organization and structure; thereby making sure he had the means to achieve his goal. He worked at the grassroots level to spread methodically the reaches of the organization. The result was that the party’s organizational structures (local office and membership drives) always preceded its electoral expansion in new regions (Vimercati 1990, 11). While

\textsuperscript{324} As suggested earlier, Bossi borrowed ideas from a friend, Bruno Salvadori, leader of the Union Valdotaine, a party from the Valle D’Aosta region.

\textsuperscript{325} See chapter five for more on who supported the party.
attempting to mobilize support in Lombardy, he simultaneously promoted cooperation among the regional leagues (Rinascita Piemontese and Liga Veneta) of northern Italy. It was Bossi’s initiatives that led to the creation of the Lega Nord in 1989.\textsuperscript{326} He initiated the founding of the Lega Nord due to his conviction that a unified federated organization would create strength (Gomez-Reino 1998, 16). “It was no small achievement for Bossi to knit together under his leadership regionalists previously keen to maintain their own identities” (Gallagher 1994, 462).

Since the Lega Nord adopted a federated party structure, it might be presumed that decision-making was decentralized, at least down to the regional party leaders. However, the situation was quite the contrary. Bossi deliberately constructed a highly centralized party because he wanted to avoid the fractures, schisms, and resulting hatreds experienced by the Liga Veneta in the 1980s (Vincenti 1990, 32). Bossi believed that “the antidote to factionalism was a tightly centralized party, with a pyramidal structure that avoided infiltration and centrifugal tension” (Vincenti 1990, 32). Hence, Bossi and his faithful lieutenants ran the party. “Bossi runs a tight ship, controlling the League’s activities in minute detail and ensuring that his is the principal voice in policy making” (Gilbert 1993, 100). “One could describe it as a model based on a form of charismatic centralism” (Diamanti 1996, 120).

\textsuperscript{326} The Lega Nord had a trial period between 1989-1991, which allowed the Leagues to get used to the idea of a unified organization (Gomez-Reino 1998,16). The original members of the Lega Nord were the Lega Lombarda, Liga Veneto, Piedmont Autonomista, l’Union Ligure, La Lega Emiliano-Romagnola and the Alleanza Toscana.
The party elites had tight control over both the ideological direction of the party and the admission of members into the party’s leadership ranks. The most important criterion for selection into party leadership was fidelity to the leader (Magna 1993, 31). For example, “delegates to the League’s decision-making body, the Congress nazionale, were overwhelmingly drawn from the movement’s original members, the so called soci ordinari, who, despite their name, enjoyed extraordinary privileges” (Gilbert 1993, 100). The soci ordinari regularly revoked the membership of party members they did not like (Vimercati 1990, 33).

Implementing Bossi’s vision

As with Reform, Bossi’s domination of the party has received criticism from within its ranks. Very early in the party’s history (mid 1980s), there were no serious challenges to Bossi’s leadership, primarily because the other large regional leagues, the Liga Veneta and Movimento Autonomista Piemontese, were plagued by internal dissension. Bossi benefited from the internal dissension in Veneto and Piedmont because none of those leaders had the time or energy to challenge him. These conflicts gave Bossi the opportunity to act as an arbitrator between the groups and further strengthen his political leverage. The lack of serious conflict in the Lega

327 In the late 1980s, Bossi’s sister formed a competing party in Varese, but it did not last very long nor did it challenge the Lega Lombarda’s dominance in the region. In fact, its only attraction seemed to be that its name included the word League (Vimercati 1990, 21).

Lombarda’s early years allowed Bossi to consolidate his dominance over the Lega Lombarda and eventually the Lega Nord.

That being said, since 1990 Bossi has experienced several challenges to his leadership, none of which seriously disrupted the party or its continuing growth in electoral support. In 1991, some members of the party advocated collaboration with the Christian Democrats and Socialists in local elections in order to form governing coalitions. Bossi objected to this idea because he did not want his party associated with the delegitimized parties. The conflict resulted in Bossi expelling Franco Castellazzi, the party’s second in command (Woods 1995, 200). This resolution of the conflict displayed Bossi’s control over the party’s electoral strategy and solidified his leadership over a now more cohesive party organization.

Another row involved an especially vocal critic, Franco Rocchetta, leader of the Liga Veneta. He denounced Bossi’s leadership for its Bonapartism and Lombard centralism (Allum and Diamati 1996, 168). The conflict between Rocchetta and Bossi involved the party’s goals and the struggle for influence over the party. “Rocchetta [was] a supporter of ethnic themes, while Bossi never missed the occasion to explain that it [was] a waste of time.”329 While Bossi paid lip service to this theme, he emphasized much more the connection between economic and territorial interests. Unlike other regional movements, which focused on ethnic identity, the Lega emphasized the common socio-economic situation of the northern

329 G. Passalacqua. La Repubblica 7 December 1993 8.

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regions in order to achieve support for federalism (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 7).

After all, according to Bossi, thousands of years of migration have made ethnic divisions extremely complicated and perhaps impossible to discern in advanced industrialized societies (Bossi and Vimercati 1993, 7). The conflict between the two came to a head in 1994 and resulted in Rocchetta being dismissed from his post as President of the Northern League, a largely ceremonial position, and expelled from the party by Bossi. \(^{330}\) Bossi’s removal of both of these competing leaders from the party illustrated that “Bossi [continued] to enjoy sweeping powers” (Gallagher 1993, 617). \(^{331}\)

Even with leadership schisms, Bossi has been able to continue mobilizing the electorate effectively. Perhaps one of the reasons for his persistence at the head of the party is the idiosyncratic nature of his personality; he is charismatic and has a knack for symbolic politics.

“Bossi was personally responsible for the League’s eye-catching flag, a red cross on a white background with the super-imposed figure of a medieval warrior, and for such attention-grabbing events as the giuramento di Pontida, when thousands of the League’s members gathered to swear an oath to free Lombardy from Roman domination at the site where, in the

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\(^{330}\) Later that year Rocchetta formed a new party, La Liga Nathion.

\(^{331}\) More recently, Bossi had a confrontation with Roberto Maroni, president of the Lega Nord’s parliamentary group, over its coalition strategy. He challenged Bossi’s decision to leave the governing coalition (December 1994) led by Berlusconi. At the League Congress held in February 1995, he formally challenged the leader and, upon losing, left the Lega and parliament. The government crisis brought on by Bossi resulted in 50 of the Lega’s 177 members of parliament leaving to form a new party, the Italian Federalist League (Farrell and Levy 1996, 147). Though this confrontation and the result were certainly damaging to the party’s immediate power in Rome, it was not as severe as the numbers indicate. This was mainly because many of the party members that left had few ties to the LN versus the Forza Italia as their seats were the result of an election pact between those two parties.
twelfth century, twenty Lombard and Venetian townships had met to form an alliance against Frederick Barbarossa” (Gilbert 1993, 100).

He exploits symbolic politics not only in his actions but also through words. Bossi really shines when speaking in front of a large crowd. Philip Jacobson, a reporter for The Times, commented on 17 April 1993, that “with his direct, sometimes crude, rhetoric, peppered with asides in the Lombard dialect, he is a formidable performer, a born rabble-rouser.” Members supported Bossi for many reasons, not just his inspiring performances. Bossi’s aides were “fiercely loyal, attracted by his energy and boundless confidence in his self-appointed mission to change Italy.”

Bossi’s profound impact on the Lega Nord and, for that matter, Italian politics, is unquestioned. For example, Robert Graham, writing for The Financial Times on 2 August 1993, commented that “[Bossi] is the sole genuinely new leader to emerge in Italy at a crucial moment of political transition. The League, founded in 1984 as a regional autonomy movement for Lombardy, is virtually his invention.” In addition, Ed Vulliamy of The Guardian noted on 30 January 1993 that “[the Northern League] has precipitated a remarkable rebellion in Italy’s North and played its part in a crisis at the heart of the country’s rapidly changing politics.” Scholar Mark Gilbert, stated “much of the credit for the League’s

An unbroken run of electoral successes must be attributed to Bossi" (Gilbert 1993, 100). However, it remains the case that few commentators have identified exactly what Bossi did to make the Lega Nord a success.

Bossi’s organizational activities were crucial in laying the groundwork for the successful mobilization of the electorate. He built the Lega Nord carefully from the ground up, expanding from region to region. He is the key person associated with defining "The Northern Question" and designing the party’s platform. His impact on mobilization has been felt through the party’s vision, its organizational structure, and his superior oratorical skills. Bossi has been able to retain control of the leadership and even increase its electoral support despite several challenges from within his own party. According to Tucker’s criteria, Bossi provided entrepreneurial leadership.

Concluding Comparisons

In light of Tucker’s framework, how did each leader contribute to the party’s success? In each case, the leader had a substantial impact on determining the need to organize a party, defining its raison d’être, and drafting its objectives. Where the parties differed was the degree to which the entrepreneur controlled the party’s goals and was successful at mobilizing the party around his agenda.

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336 The reference to the Northern Question is a play on words. Italian politics was always preoccupied with the Southern Question; Bossi has now raised a question for the North.
Clearly the starkest contrast among the three cases is in the coherence, sophistication, and clarity of each leader’s goals. Both Manning and Bossi spent years reading political scholarship and developing their ideas about how politics should be conducted in Canada and Italy. They both recognized the existing grievances of potential followers and persuasively articulated a portrait of a new and better society for Canada and Italy, respectively (Burns 1978, 4, 20). Hence, their visions seized and created opportunities for a new type of politics in their countries.

On the other hand, in the case of the WCC, no single leader directed the party’s vision. Hence, its message to the public lacked coherence and clarity. Instead of clearly defined goals, competing agendas existed, resulting in a party composed of various factions all struggling to gain the upper-hand. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for entrepreneurial leadership to exist.

However, the WCC’s biggest problem was not individuals with multiple agendas—all the parties had that to some degree—but the nature of its enduring conflict over goals. In the case of the WCC, the conflict was framed as two irreconcilable options, secession or renewed federalism. There was no middle ground for the contending groups to negotiate over, and it was impossible for both to be the party’s goal.\(^{337}\) This is a classic dilemma suffered by many regional parties.

Intra-party conflict also occurred over the goals of the Reform Party and Lega Nord. Recall that within Reform, some members wanted the party to be a truly

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\(^{337}\) Conflict in the WCC did not have to be zero-sum. The leadership could have remained vague on the secession issue.
conservative party and others emphasized the western populist element. A similar situation occurred in the Lega: the leader of the Liga Veneta wanted greater emphasis on ethnic goals while Bossi focused more on linking economic and territorial interests. In both cases, these objectives are not, however, a priori incompatible and thus both entrepreneurs struck a compromise of sorts by including elements of competing agenda’s within the party’s goals. For example, Reform’s platform included deficit reduction and the right to referendum and recall. In this situation, conflict was not zero-sum; it was possible for both sides to win. This was not the same type of conflict that existed in the WCC. In that case, the conflict was presented as a zero-sum game, with clear winners and losers.

Furthermore, the description of the entrepreneurs’ activities offered by party members persuaded me that the successful entrepreneurs, Bossi and Manning, purposely constructed their party’s platforms to take into account the factions within their respective parties. Interviews with Reform MP’s and Tom Flanagan’s book *Waiting For the Wave* depicted Manning as an astute politician who was aware that he could manipulate institutions, like the first past the post electoral system and public opinion, to his advantage.

Similarly, Bossi’s decision to change the emphasis of the party’s platform contributed to the Lega’s success. His politicization of the center-periphery conflict was novel, especially in its application to Italy’s commercial heartland, Lombardy. Initially, the Lega Lombarda emphasized the cultural, historical, and linguistic
(dialect) commonality of Lombardy. However, over time the Lega shifted focus. “As a member who was directly involved in the creation of the Lega Nord with Bossi put it: We moved from an ethnic-cultural discourse to a socio-economic one. Though we point to a socio-economic logic...we do have the cultural element” (Gomez-Reino 1998, 19). Bossi is often credited with making the decision to change the party’s emphasis from one based on historico-cultural references to one based on a community of interests (Diamanti 1996, 118). “As regards the greater leadership capacity of the Lombard League thanks to Bossi, it was not just a case of personal charisma (although there was also an element of this), it was above all a question of strategy, of conception and of proposals” (Allum and Diamanti 1996, 162).

Interestingly, despite very different personalities and political backgrounds, Bossi and Manning were able to maintain control of shifting party factions and support from the membership. This was crucial to each implementing his plan of action. These cases suggest that the success of the entrepreneur was not determined either by the degree of charisma (which Bossi possessed but Manning did not) or political connections (which Manning had in abundance but Bossi lacked). Hence, this analysis challenges the common sense notion that an individual’s background and personality is decisive in predicting the success of political entrepreneurs. The experience of Reform and the Lega Nord suggests that successful entrepreneurship is not defined by the qualities which the leader bring to his or her task, but the way in
which he or she responds to the problems which arise when trying to develop an effective new party.

The implications drawn from these cases depend in part on the researcher’s presumptions. Initially, I thought that the entrepreneurs simply had an impact on the success of the Reform Party and the Lega Nord. Given the evidence provided by party members and accounts of the parties’ internal histories, it might be argued that these parties would not exist without the presence of Manning and Bossi. They were integral actors in every aspect of the party’s development. They directed the parties’ raison d’être, plan of action, and mobilization strategy.

But, this chapter’s conclusion is not just the obvious observation that entrepreneurs matter. From the above case studies, it is possible to draw some conclusions about which parts of Tucker’s framework were crucial and how.\(^{338}\) For entrepreneurs, the difficult task is not so much diagnosing the circumstances or formulating the party’s objectives; it is mobilizing party members and keeping them united. Particularly crucial as the party grows in popularity is minimizing and managing intra-party conflict to avoid embarrassing and potentially lethal splits in the membership. Successful entrepreneurs need to prevent internal conflicts from being too polarizing, from being portrayed as completely irreconcilable, without the possibility of compromise. Such polarizing conflict creates a situation where some

\(^{338}\) As mentioned on the first page of this chapter and in chapter 1, Tucker’s framework focuses on four activities undertaken by the entrepreneur: how the individual defined the situation, formulated a plan of action, carved out a niche in the electorate, and kept party members mobilized.
party members are winners and others are losers. Even when conflict focuses on a single issue, it is possible to create a win-win situation, or at least ambiguity. This was the WCC’s leadership’s primary shortcoming. The WCC entrepreneurs could have left the secession issue murky by arguing that its threat would be used as a bargaining chip to negotiate a better deal for the West in the confederation. They could have also suggested that the question of secession be postponed until a later date, to be raised and discussed only after the membership saw how much (or how little) could be accomplished by concerted action within confederation. They may have even emphasized an entirely different part of their platform. The depth and nature of the intra-party conflict over goals was a crucial factor in explaining the WCC’s ephemeral existence and the Reform Party’s and Lega Nord’s success. This I credit in part to the foresight, skill, and control displayed by Manning and Bossi.

Although some Reform Party and Lega Nord members may have complained that Manning and Bossi governed each party using authoritarian means, I would argue that their power was not that of a naked power wielder, such as Adolf Hitler. On the contrary, the above paragraphs describe transformative leadership.

“Transformative leadership recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower” (Burns 1978, 4). Manning and Bossi are both visionaries, skillful politicians who, despite their different styles (pedantic versus charismatic), were able to persuade members to stay united behind their leadership, which was absolutely essential to their party’s success.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Why do regional parties form? The aim of this dissertation has been to answer this question by testing the following hypothesis; regional parties form when regional grievances exist, when established parties fail to address the region’s concerns, when political alignments lack stability, and when a political entrepreneur skillfully mobilizes popular support. While other scholars have used all of these variables in one way or another, this study’s contribution has been to consider systematically their combined role in explaining regional party formation. 339 This study produced some surprising conclusions about the role each of these factors played in the formation of the WCC, RP, and LN. To illustrate this point, this chapter begins with comparing the unique circumstances of each case (See Table 7.1 for an outline). Then, the chapter will consider grievances, established parties, alignment stability,

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339 As mentioned earlier, party formation includes institutionalization, organizational consolidation, and political relevance (Kalyvas 1996, 114). Political relevance is defined as parties that can theoretically hold blackmail or coalition potential in the legislature (Sartori [1976] 1990, 321). Hence, I am not trying to explain the rise of stillborn or politically irrelevant parties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Grievances</th>
<th>Established Parties</th>
<th>Alignment Instability</th>
<th>Political Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| WCC        | a) Economic, political, and cultural grievances  
b) Long-standing grievances  
c) Aggravating circumstances the NEP | a) Provincial PCP displayed a little concrete receptiveness and later federal PCP  
b) The federal and provincial PCP quickly displayed sympathy while the federal governing party and other opposition provincial parties showed none. | a) Inconclusive trends in alignment stability  
b) Regional cleavage produces minor instability | a) Identified the problem  
b) Lacked clear, consistent goals  
c) Failed to implement vision due to zero-sum conflict  
d) Christie and other leaders lacked members support |
| Reform Party | a) Economic, political and cultural grievances  
b) Long-standing grievances  
c) Minor aggravating circumstances CF-18 fighter jet | b) Delayed minimal sympathy by the established parties                                 | a) Inconclusive trends in alignment stability  
b) Regional cleavage produces great instability | a) Identified the problem  
b) Coherent, clear goals  
c) Positive sum conflict  
d) Manning born into a group of supporters |
| Lega Nord  | a) Economic, political and cultural grievances                                  | b) Very delayed sympathy by the established parties                                   | a) Inconclusive trends in alignment stability before party arises with the exception of a gradual decline in the DC’s support  
b) Regional cleavage produces great instability | a) Identified the problem  
b) Coherent goals  
c) Predominately positive sum conflict  
d) Bossi had a long standing group of supporters |

Table 7.1. Comparing the WCC, Reform Party, and Lega Nord in terms of grievances, established parties, alignment instability, and political entrepreneurs.
political entrepreneurs and their relationship to the formation of a politically relevant regional party.

While it is widely accepted that grievances emerging from cleavages drive the party formation process (Urwin 1985; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Pinard 1971; Esman 1975; Hugelin 1986; Zariski 1989, etc.), few have attempted to examine how the nature of the grievances affects the formation of regional parties. The Western Canada Concept Party, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord, all shared with varying degrees of emphasis similar types of grievances. Each party claimed that their region had experienced economic, political, and cultural grievances as a result of oppressive central government policies. The parties argued that the solution to their circumstances involved diminishing the power of the state, and thereby restructuring the distribution of power, through either altering the constitution or seceding.

There were also some idiosyncratic features to the grievances. In the case of the WCC and RP, a western Canadian identity pre-existed due to the long-standing nature of the grievances as well as the formation of third parties in western Canada. The situation was quite different in Italy. Although undoubtedly some northern Italians were upset with the inefficiencies of the Italian government, and many probably believed the Lega Nord’s stereotypes of southern Italians, there was no long-standing culture of northern grievances or a history of alternative parties. Northern Italy, which was usually discussed as northwest and northeast Italy, had been studied by some scholars (economist), but it was
not part of political discourse. Many of the Lega’s proposals were either entirely new or at least had not been seriously discussed (federalism) since unification (1861).

Finally, it was also surprising to discover that the presence of a serious aggravating event, similar to the crisis factor posed by LaPalombara and Weiner (1966), was not decisive in explaining party formation. In the WCC’s case, the imposition of the NEP which could be considered a serious aggravating factor, occurred just prior to the party’s formation. Yet, this did not guarantee relevant party formation. Alternatively, a minor irritation, the CF-18 fighter jet incident, preceded the RP’s formation and in the Lega’s case no catalyst event has been identified.

The nature of the grievances did not seem to have much impact on the party’s formation. The determination of whether a regional party formed did not depend on whether grievances were original or long-standing, prior to a catalyst event or not. The grievance’s significance stemmed from their articulation and accompanying resonance with the public as shown in chapter five. The results of this dissertation indicate that grievances were necessary for regional party formation, but not sufficient, thus, confirming initial expectations.

Based on the findings of other scholars (Sundquist 1973; Rosenstone et al. 1984; Kitschelt 1986), I postulated that regional parties would form when established parties were unreceptive to regional grievances and, conversely, that when established parties were receptive to regional grievances, new regional parties would not form. Contrary to initial expectations, the relationship between unreceptive established parties and party
formation is not so clear. For while the established parties showed very little receptivity to the Reform Party and Lega Nord, the established parties’ receptivity was not much greater to the demands of the WCC, which failed.\textsuperscript{340}

On the other hand, if sympathetic overtures are considered the differences between the cases are stark. Sympathetic overtures were the most numerous in the case of the WCC and the least likely in the case of the Lega Nord. Additionally, the timing of the established parties’ sympathetic responses varied between the cases. In the case of the WCC, the established parties appeared to be almost immediately sympathetic to the grievances it raised; in the case of the Reform Party, the established parties’ sympathetic response lagged; and finally, the established parties in Italy seemed to be very slow in acknowledging the grievances raised by the Lega.

Overall, it seems that only some of my initial hypotheses were confirmed. The results of this study suggest that when established parties are unreceptive to regional grievances, new parties are likely to form. However, it also suggests that regional parties may fail if established parties are quick and firm in their expressions of sympathy for the region’s grievances rather than concretely receptive. The quick sympathetic responses to the demands of raised by the WCC may have been enough to hinder the implantation of a new regional party.

\textsuperscript{340} The WCC was the only party to have received some concrete receptiveness to their concerns when Alberta’s Premier, Peter Lougheed, made a concrete attempt to block the imposition of the National Energy Program (NEP), the elimination of which was a cornerstone of the WCC’s platform.
Another factor considered was the stability of political alignments. Initially, this study posited that political alignment instability should occur prior to the rise of the new parties because alignment instability indicates a breakdown of the relationship between parties and voters (Tarrow 1994; Piven and Cloward 1979). The ungluing of this relationship should have provided a window of opportunity for the entrepreneurs. The lesson from these cases is that alignment instability was not a necessary condition for regional party formation. There were no clear long-term trends in party volatility, party identification, or voter turnout for any of the cases.

Instead it looks as if the regional parties created the volatility by filling the grievance gap and targeting their appeal. The scholarship of Nevitte et al. (1995), Johnston et al. (1994), Mannheimer (1993) and Diamanti (1993a) suggests that voters supported the Reform Party and Lega Nord, in part, because they affirmed the grievances and the solutions offered by the parties. The importance of this to party formation is not entirely clear because there are some indications that the public was also sympathetic to some of the themes raised by the WCC. The lesson taken from these cases may be that the voters' affirmation of a party's platform is not of over-riding importance if the party lacks professionalism or leadership.

Finally, a significant contribution of this research has been to unravel the puzzle of political entrepreneurship. While many scholars have argued that political entrepreneurs are important (Tarrow 1989; Aldrich 1995; Frohlich et al.1971), there still remains little research about what entrepreneurs do that is so important for the success of a party.
Although an entrepreneur never led the WCC, each party’s leadership did have some things in common. For example, in the cases analyzed, Christie, Manning, and Bossi were all clear about their raison d’être—their region suffered grievances.

However the WCC’s, RP’s, and Lega Nord’s situations diverged sharply in regards to the rest of Tucker’s (1995) criteria.\(^{341}\) Manning and Bossi had a clearly defined plan of action: an objective and a strategy to reach it. Despite having very different personalities and political backgrounds, Manning and Bossi were both able to implement their plan of action by maintaining a core group of loyal supporters and guiding internal party disagreements toward positive-sum outcomes. Thus far, they have been able to weather internal challenges to their leadership and retain voters’ support. This is quite different from the WCC’s leadership experience.

In the WCC’s case, none of the above factors existed. The numerous leaders of the WCC wavered on the party’s plan of action and had a variety of goals and strategies.\(^{342}\) Party conflict was zero-sum—creating winners and losers. Christie was quickly toppled from the party’s leadership because he lacked a core group of supporters. Subsequent leaders followed in Christie’s footsteps but internal conflict continued to be very divisive and no single leader was able to amass enough support to stay at the helm. It is difficult to discern exactly which problem hurt the WCC’s leadership the most since the key factors of the entrepreneur’s success were inter-related, and this makes it difficult to

\(^{341}\) As you may recall from chapter one and six, Tucker’s criteria of entrepreneurship focused on problem definition and formulating and implementing a plan of action.

\(^{342}\) For example, the leadership sought secession and revamped federalism and whether or not to merge with other parties such as the almost defunct Social Credit Party.
disentangle the relationship between a coherent plan of action, a core group of loyal members, and positive-sum internal conflict. However, it seems that a key factor for the WCC’s leaders would have been to minimize the divisive affect of internal conflict. The result would have been a more stable and coherent plan of action and the party would have maintained a more professional image. This may have been the crucial difference between success and failure.

The most significant finding of this research was that the entrepreneurs’ ability to implement their plan of action by gaining support of both the membership and voters was crucial to party formation and failure. Future research needs to focus on the entrepreneur’s management of internal party dynamics, particularly if internal conflict is zero- or positive-sum. Additional research is needed to examine how entrepreneurs obtain the support of a core group of members that act as their backbone during leadership challenges. In order to gain further insight into the entrepreneur’s management of internal party dynamics and how it affects party formation, future research should test this framework on other cases of failed and successful party formation.

**The Relationship Between Factors**

Next, this study considers the factors (grievances, unreceptive established parties, and alignment instability) and the nature of their relationship to party formation. This dissertation shows that regional grievances, unreceptive established parties, and skillful entrepreneurs are all essential ingredients to successful regional party formation. While it was initially postulated that a sequential, additive process of variable interaction exists
with each variable having an impact on the next—from grievances to unreceptive established parties to alignment instability to the emergence of a political entrepreneur and a regional party—this does not seem to depict the situation accurately. It seems that a different and more complicated process takes place.

While the analysis indicates that unreceptive established parties and regional grievances are important to regional party formation, it also hints that these factors may not have to precede party formation. While grievances and unreceptive established parties existed prior to the formation of the Reform Party, it is much less clear that this situation existed for the Lega Nord. Minimally, Bossi’s articulation of northern Italy’s grievances was surprising and at least somewhat novel to the Italian political system. So while grievances and unreceptive established parties are necessary for party formation, their temporal relationship to the emergence of the political entrepreneur may vary. In some cases, these conditions may be pre-existing while in others, they may develop the condition alongside the appearance of the entrepreneur. In any event, these factors seem secondary in importance to the actions of the political entrepreneur in causing party formation and failure.

The entrepreneur is the crucial linch-pin that harnesses and/or creates these factors (grievances and unreceptive established parties) and uses them to establish a political party. Whether the entrepreneur uses or creates these factors, a reciprocal relationship exists between the entrepreneur and the grievances, and between the entrepreneur and the established parties. The entrepreneur both seizes and creates grievances while
simultaneously interpreting, monitoring, and reacting to the actions of the established parties and the voting public.

In addition to the entrepreneur’s role in party formation as the coordinating mechanism that interacts with the other factors, Manning and Bossi had an independent impact on the party formation process and without them their parties probably would not have formed. They had a direct impact on party formation through their vision, plan of action, and management of internal party affairs. The study suggests an entrepreneur can just as easily fail if he does not have a clear plan of action as well as the ability to manage party members to implement his vision. While the entrepreneur is crucial to the argument set out here, his impact was conditional; it was only fruitful in combination with the other factors (e.g. grievances, receptiveness of established parties).

Although it was hypothesized that alignment instability was important prior to party formation, the results suggest that it may have an impact after the party’s initial attempts in the electoral arena. Survey data indicated that the messages of both Reform Party and Lega resonated with the public and contributed to their electoral success. Nevertheless, as I mentioned earlier, the relative importance of this factor on party formation is questionable. Future research on party formation or failure should focus more on the impact of alignment instability.

This dissertation has demonstrated that the model of party formation described above—a reciprocal relationship between the entrepreneur, the grievances, and the established parties, combined with the independent impact of the entrepreneur—is a
plausible avenue to party formation. It is also a simplified representation of a more complex process. Other types of relationships may exist between these factors as well as between these factors and party formation. For example, grievances and unresponsive established parties may also have a direct and independent influence on party formation. However, the impact of these relationships on regional party formation is less significant in comparison to those illustrated earlier.

**Competing Explanations**

Scholars may point to other factors to explain the formation of the Reform Party and Lega Nord. The most popular explanations point to circumstances outside of the parties’ control. The logic of these arguments is that if these events had not occurred, then the names of Manning and Bossi would only be obscure footnotes in history books—similar to Christie. As discussed in chapter five, the fall of communism, the *mani pulite* scandal, disgust for the *partitocrazia*, and the diminishing importance of Italy’s Catholic and Communist’s subcultures are often cited as reasons why the Lega Nord has become a significant force in Italian politics (Leonardi and Kovacs 1993; Waters 1998; Natale 1991; Mannheimer 1991).

In contrast to the Lega’s case, fewer Canadian scholars have been willing to attribute the formation of the Reform Party to circumstances outside of its control. If anything, the constitutional stalemate and its prominent position in national politics during the 1980s and 1990s could be argued to have accounted for the Reform Party’s formation. Wiseman (1995) comments “the failure of Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords was
devastating to the long-established party system because the long-established parties had refused to divide on the issue, to provide any kind of sharp alternatives” (Wiseman 1995, 236). This allowed the Reform Party and Bloc Québécois to offer voters a clear alternative. Following this logic, if the Meech Lake or Chalottetown accords outcome would have been different, the Reform Party would have failed.

While the circumstances specific to Italy and Canada certainly contributed to the formation of the Reform Party and Lega Nord, their importance is small in comparison to the factors discussed in this dissertation. In both Italy and Canada, many of the circumstantial factors mentioned had been in existence for many years before the formation of the Lega and Reform Party. This raises the question, why did the Lega and Reform Party form in the 1980s rather than earlier? In Italy, disgust with the partitocrazia and the eroding of the Catholic and Communist’s subcultures were both long-term transformations. In the Reform Party’s case, the current constitutional crisis is so rooted in the past that it is impossible to pinpoint a starting date (Weaver 1992, 4). Weaver (1992) believed “the crisis that arose over ratification of the Meech Lake Accord [was] just the latest manifestation of this chronic discontent [with Canadian governing institutions]” (Weaver 1992, 3). “For many Western Canadians, the heat of the National Energy Program–inspired battles between Alberta and Ottawa in the early 1980s–provided a better environment for forging a new party than did the 1987-1993 period” (Archer and Ellis 1994, 281). A major shortcoming of these explanations is that they cannot account for why parties form at one moment in time and not another.
As I argued in the introduction, the formation and failure of parties should not center on global or country-specific circumstances. Parties do more than simply react and capitalize on changes to their environment; they are complex organizations with specific resources, leadership structures, compositions, and electoral strategies (Ross 1992, 44). The actions they take, whether to incorporate new groups, choose particular electoral strategies, or become plagued by intra-party disputes, all derive from the choices made by the entrepreneur and the party’s members. Regional party formation is best understood when the actions and choices of parties are studied in conjunction with other circumstantial evidence, otherwise our knowledge of their development is incomplete at best, and wrong at worst.

Broader Contributions

Though this research set out to evaluate a theory of regional party formation, in principle, I would argue that it can be applied to party formation in general, as there appears to be more similarities than differences between regional and other types of parties. In the context of comparative political parties, it fits into the larger debate about the role of structure and choice in determining political outcomes. While the argument presented has structural elements comprised of regional grievances and alignment stability, it also focuses on the choices of actors, whether it is established politicians or political entrepreneurs. The theoretical significance of this account is that it outlines the important contributions political entrepreneurs bring to party formation.
Finally, this research demonstrates that a vitally important function of parties continues to be the representation of cleavages. While the WCC, the Reform Party, and the Lega Nord may attract voters with various socio-economic backgrounds, unlike the traditional class-based parties, they certainly attract people from very specific geographic areas. So contrary to Franklin et al. (1992), there has not been a breakdown of cleavage politics, just a shift in the cleavage emphasized from a class to a regional one.

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343 Although the evidence is still fragmentary, it may also be the case that one social class, the petite bourgeoisie is most susceptible to regional mobilization, perhaps because they have the most to gain. A study compare voting behavior amongst a large number of regional parties including those mobilizing citizens around ethnic grievances would help us better understand which groups are attracted to these parties and why.


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