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RESEARCH NOTE

NOT FOR FAME OR FORTUNE

A Note on Membership and Activity in the Canadian Reform Party

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ABSTRACT

Although the party systems of contemporary mature democracies are very resilient, the failure of new parties to become major actors on the political stage is not preordained. Founded only a decade ago, the Reform Party has played a significant role in reshaping Canada's national party system. Using data from a large representative national survey, this paper investigates the beliefs, attitudes and behavior of members of Reform. Most Reformers joined their new party in response to purposive incentives, multivariate analyses indicating that such incentives are significant elements in a larger set of factors encouraging members to work actively for their new party. The ability of purposive incentives, rather than the lures of 'fame and fortune', to attract members and stimulate them to work on the party's behalf gives Reform important organizational advantages in its efforts to solidify and expand its position in the national party system.

KEY WORDS ■ party activism ■ party membership ■ Reform Party

Who joins political parties? What prompts people to become active party members? What difference does party organizational activity make? These are questions of long-standing concern to students of political parties and elections (e.g. Janda, 1993). In recent years, interest in these questions has been invigorated by research demonstrating that local organizational activity can have significant effects on parties' vote shares (Whiteley et al.,

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1994; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Denver and Hands, 1997; see also Black, 1984). That local parties' campaign efforts continue to matter in an age of nationally orientated, media-centred politics suggests that a party's short-term successes and long-term prospects will be enhanced if it can attract members and mobilize them to work on the party's behalf. Local organizational activity is especially crucial for new parties because they typically lack the financial and political resources available to their old-line rivals.

The paucity of such resources makes local organizational activity relatively more important for new parties, while making it more difficult for them to generate and sustain such activity. As a result, in the language of Clark and Wilson's (1961) classic typology of incentives for organizational participation (see also Wilson, 1962), new parties are forced to rely heavily on 'purposive' and 'solidary' rather than 'material' incentives. Lacking a substantial supply of patronage and preferments to lure members and stimulate their activity, new parties must offer prospective recruits the opportunity to work with others to achieve shared ideological and policy goals. But, following Olson (1965), rational choice theorists have long argued that purposive incentives are not enough to motivate political action (see e.g. Sandler, 1992; Aldrich, 1995). As Whiteley et al. (1994) state: 'rational self-interested individuals will not generally participate in any activity which produces collective goods.' What is required are selective incentives – rewards that can be withheld from individuals who choose not to participate.

If the Olsonian argument were strictly true, new parties would face daunting, perhaps insurmountable, difficulties in attracting and energizing members because they have precious few selective incentives at their disposal. But there is *prima facie* evidence that the argument has serious flaws – like their established rivals, new parties *do recruit members*, and some members *do become activists*. However, is there also evidence that persons recruited by new parties are responding in large numbers to purposive incentives? This research note addresses this question in a case study of members of a new party that has enjoyed demonstrable success in the 1990s. National survey data show that the party's policy proposals and ideological stance have played crucial roles in attracting members. In conjunction with a variety of other factors, policy and ideological concerns have also provided significant impetus for members to become activists in the party organization.

The party is the Canadian Reform Party. Founded only a decade ago, Reform has had a major impact on Canada's national party system.[1] Contradicting the conventional wisdom that new parties in mature democracies do not displace existing ones as major players on the political stage (Bartolini and Mair, 1990), Reform has dislodged the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) – perhaps permanently – as the principal right-of-center electoral option in federal politics. After winning more seats (60) than any

other party but the Liberals in the most recent (1997) federal election, Reform became the official opposition party in parliament. Reform's success has prompted research on the social backgrounds and policy orientations of delegates to national party assemblies (conventions), and forces affecting Reform voting in the 1993 federal election.[2] To date, however, there have been no systematic studies of the political attitudes and beliefs of rank-and-file party members, or of factors that affect how active such people are in local party organizations. This research note presents information on these topics. After discussing the study design, we briefly describe the socio-demographic characteristics of Reform party members in comparison with Reform party identifiers and voters for Reform and other federal parties. Then, Reformers' motivations for joining their new party and their ideological beliefs and policy orientations are considered. Types and extent of party activity are delineated, and a multivariate model of differential participation in the party organization is specified and estimated. The conclusion reviews the principal findings and discusses their implications for understanding the current status and future prospects of new parties such as Reform.

Studying Reform

National surveys conducted in 1990 and 1991 revealed widespread disaffection with Canada's federal political parties. Large majorities were dissatisfied not only with the governing Conservatives, but also with all the old-line opposition parties (Clarke and Kornberg, 1993; see also Blais and Gidengil, 1991). Since Canada's national party system lacks the anchor in public political psychology provided by strong, stable party identifications (e.g. Clarke et al., 1996: ch. 3), this widespread dissatisfaction was potentially consequential. It was apparent that the existing party system (see Epstein, 1964; Carty, 1992; Tanguay and Gagnon, 1996) was under stress, and that the next (1993) federal election would present a new party such as Reform with an excellent opportunity to make an electoral breakthrough. A study of public support for Reform and other parties carried out at the time of that election thus held the promise of being 'present at the destruction' of an old party system and 'present at the creation' of a new one. Accordingly, two coordinated surveys were conducted. The first was a telephone (CATI) survey of a representative national sample of 1469 individuals (weighted $n = 1496$) eligible to vote in the 1993 federal election.[3] The second was a mail questionnaire sent to a stratified (by province) random sample of 4000 Reform party members drawn from the party's official list of approximately 100,000 dues-paying members. The response rate for the mail questionnaire was 64.4 percent, with 2574 (weighted $n = 2593$) of 4000 questionnaires being returned.

Reformers: Who They Are, What They Believe, What They Do

Socio-Demographics

We first provide basic socio-demographic information on Reform party members in comparison with Reform party identifiers and voters for Reform and old-line (Conservative, Liberal, NDP) parties in the 1993 election. Reform members were similar to Reform voters in that a large majority were men (70 percent) who resided in the four provinces west of Ontario (68 percent) (Table 1). However, Reform members tended to be somewhat better educated than Reform voters and were marginally more likely to have professional or managerial occupations, and to enjoy higher incomes. The biggest difference was age – with an average age of 57, Reform members were much older than Reform identifiers (42) and Reform voters (47). Over two-fifths of the Reform party members indicated that they were retired.

Motives for Joining Reform

It is plausible that a new party like Reform would attract people who were particularly unhappy with the established parties. Accordingly, respondents in the party member and mass surveys were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of ten statements concerning the performance of the national parties. The response patterns were strikingly consistent. For every statement, Reform members had the largest percentages of negative responses, followed by Reform voters who, in turn, were followed by old-line party voters (Table 2). However, these differences were matters of degree, not kind. The impression that the established political parties had been 'tried and found wanting' by many Canadians, not just Reform supporters, is reinforced by the summary statistics at the foot of Table 2. On average, Reform members offered 9.8 negative judgments (of a possible 12) of the party system. Reform voters offered slightly fewer (8.7) and, although voters for other parties were not quite as critical, on average a clear majority (7.3) of their assessments of the party system were disapproving.

A battery of 16 statements was included in the party member survey to provide additional information on why people were motivated to join Reform. The statements had the following preface: 'People have different reasons for becoming a member of the Reform Party. Please indicate how *important* the following are for you.' Respondents were then asked: 'Please indicate which of the reasons above was *most important of all* when you *first* decided to *become* a member of the Reform Party.' Overwhelming majorities indicated that they had joined the party because of their issue concerns and dissatisfaction with the perceived failures of former prime minister Brian Mulroney and his Progressive Conservative government (Table 3). Thus, fully 96 percent stated that they were concerned about the upward

Table 1. The demographics of Reform party support, 1993 (%)

	Reform			
Characteristics	*Party members*	*Party identifiers*	*Voters*	*Old-line[a] party voters*
Age				
18–22 (New voters)	1	12	6	6
23–30 (Mulroney era)	4	16	10	9
31–46 (Trudeau era)	23	37	37	36
47–57 (Diefenbaker/Pearson era)	19	16	24	18
58+ (pre-Diefenbaker era)	53	20	23	31
Mean age ($\bar{x}$)	57	42	47	48
Education				
Elementary or less	5	5	4	5
Some secondary	16	14	14	15
Completed secondary/comm. college	41	54	51	46
Some university	16	9	10	11
Completed university (BA, BSc)	22	18	22	23
Gender				
Male	70	60	62	45
Female	30	40	38	55
Annual family income				
≤ $20,000	14	10	9	13
$20,000–39,999	32	32	24	30
$40,000–59,999	27	34	34	27
$60,000–79,999	14	11	12	14
≥ $80,000	14	14	21	15
Current/former occupation				
Professional	18	14	17	16
Managerial	19	18	16	12
Clerical, sales	14	16	22	23
Skilled, unskilled labor	32	31	27	28
Farmer	10	5	6	2
Homemaker	6	11	11	13
Student	1	6	2	6
Region				
Atlantic	2	2	3	12
Quebec	x	0	0	17
Ontario	31	37	35	45
Prairies: Manitoba	5	4	4	5
Saskatchewan	7	6	5	3
Alberta	28	30	27	6
British Columbia	28	22	26	12

[a]Liberal, PC, NDP.
x = less than 0.5%

Table 2. Evaluations of the performance of Canadian political parties, 1993 (%)

	Reform members		*Reform voters*		*Old-line party voters*	
Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*
A. Don't tell about important problems	*87*	11	*73*	26	*64*	34
B. Look after everyone's interests	15	*82*	26	*72*	43	*52*
C. Big difference between words and deeds	*98*	1	*97*	2	*91*	7
D. Encourage political participation	21	*73*	35	*62*	39	*54*
E. Don't offer real choices	*71*	26	*61*	38	*55*	43
F. Help groups reach agreement	12	*79*	20	*72*	35	*56*
G. More interested in winning elections	*95*	3	*90*	9	*73*	24
H. Help to give people a say in politics	33	*61*	39	*56*	54	*40*
I. Do more to divide than unify country	*75*	19	*56*	35	*50*	45
J. Spend time bickering and quarreling	*95*	3	*94*	6	*90*	9
K. Recruit well-qualified candidates	18	*76*	40	*55*	50	45
L. Don't listen to ordinary people	*91*	6	*81*	16	*64*	32
Number of negative evaluations:						
Mean	9.8		8.7		7.3	
Median	10.0		9.0		8.0	
Mode	11.0		11.0		8.0	
Standard deviation	2.1		2.3		2.6	

Note: Horizontal percentages; percentages calculated using 'don't know' and 'no opinion' responses, which are not shown in table. Numbers in italics indicate *negative* evaluation of party performance.

spiraling national deficit and the country's other economic problems; 86 percent were worried about social pathologies such as juvenile crime and drug abuse; and 85 percent were displeased with the prime minister and his party. Large majorities also indicated that they had decided to join the party because they wanted the West to have a stronger voice in Ottawa, or because they believed that Quebec and various 'special interests' were exercising undue influence. Additionally, many stated that they had joined because they were keen to reduce the scope of government, and to ensure that it operated according to high moral principles. Finally, majorities said they

Table 3. Reasons for becoming a member of the Reform Party, 1993 national survey (%)

Reason	*Very important*	*Not very important*	*Most important*[a]
Fun and excitement of party membership	13	66	3
More equal provincial power, Triple E Senate	67	24	8
Friends or family are party members	22	49	1
Dissatisfaction with PCs, Mulroney	85	2	22
Individual freedom, less government	89	1	16
Want to run for public office some day	2	91	1
Special interests have too much power	86	1	9
People like me can exert influence in Reform	60	8	4
To help make business contacts	2	90	1
Concern with deficit, economic problems	96	x	31
To support a candidate I believe in	78	4	5
Better regional representation in Ottawa	75	6	7
Concern with social issues like drugs, crime	86	2	14
To support party leader, Preston Manning	66	8	7
Concern Quebec is too powerful	76	4	17
Concern with moral principles in government	96	1	29

[a]Multiple mentions coded.
x = < 0.5%

joined because they were attracted by Reform leader, Preston Manning, or a local Reform candidate.

As anticipated by the introductory discussion, very few Reformers had joined their new party in response to material incentives. Desires for personal advancement or material gain were almost wholly absent; only 2 percent indicated that making business contacts was a 'very important' reason for joining, and only 1 percent said this reason was 'most important' (Table 3). Similarly small numbers indicated that the possibility of making a bid for public office had prompted them to join. Solidary incentives also had relatively little appeal; most Reformers denied that the social aspects of party membership had encouraged them to join. Only 22 percent and 13 percent, respectively, said that having friends or family in the party, or the fun and excitement of party membership, were very important reasons for joining, and only 1 percent and 3 percent, respectively, said these reasons were most important. In sum, *pace* rational choice theorems concerning the inability of collective goods to motivate political participation, an overwhelming majority of Reformers reported that they had joined the party in response to purposive incentives. Policy and (poor) governmental performance mattered a great deal more in their decisions to become a party member than did fame, fortune, family or friends.

Table 4. Reform party members' evaluations of government performance, 1993 (%)[a]

Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*
A. Governments generally do good job providing services	47	47
B. Government too big and complex to operate efficiently	91	7
C. People expect more than any government can deliver	77	21
D. Can trust government officials to do what is right	19	77
E. Government provide better services if higher taxes	8	90
F. Governments always waste a lot of money	90	9
G. Governments blamed for problems not their fault	40	54
H. Most government officials are smart people	29	65
I. Governments don't work because too many regulations	80	14
J. Private businesses more efficient than governments	90	6
K. Governments spend too much because of special interests	96	2
L. Governments don't work because officials are dishonest	53	39
M. Deficits because people want more than will pay for	59	36
N. Problems facing government too difficult to solve	58	38

[a]*Note*: horizontal percentages; percentages calculated using 'don't know' and 'no opinion responses', which are not shown in table.

Ideological Beliefs

Consonant with their party's policy platforms and more general public image, most Reform party members' evaluations of government performance reveals a strong neo-conservative bent. When asked to think *generally* about government and how it works, huge majorities agreed that, *inter alia*, governments are too big and complex to operate efficiently, people expect too much from governments, governments invariably waste a lot of the taxpayers' money, governments make too many rules and regulations, private businesses are more efficient than governments, and government spending is excessive because of the influence of privileged interest groups (Table 4).

Similarly, most Reformers disagreed with the propositions that government officials can be trusted and are smart, and that governments would provide better services if tax rates were increased. Consistent with these responses, fully 73 percent of the Reform members placed themselves on the right of center on a summary seven-point left–right ideological scale, only 6 percent locating themselves on the left side of the scale (Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of Reform members on left–right ideological continuum, 1993 (%)

Left						*Right*	*Mean score*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	
1	1	4	22	30	31	12	5.2

Table 6. Attitudes of Reform members towards direct democracy devices, 1993 (%)[a]

Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*
A. National referendums take power from politicians and give it to the people	82	15
B. Referendums won't solve important issues	18	78
C. Canada should have a law so majority can recall MPs	93	4
D. Important questions decided by federal and provincial governments and not by referendums	20	73
E. If MPs disagree with constituents, they should do what constituents want	82	13
F. People should be able to petition to hold a referendum	92	5

[a]*Note*: horizontal percentages; percentages calculated using 'don't know' and 'no opinion responses', which are not shown in table.

Reformers' conservatism is coupled with strong advocacy of referendums and other devices of direct democracy. Thus, 82 percent agreed that referendums transfer power from the politicians to the people, 92 percent believed that citizens should be able to petition to hold a referendum, and 73 percent disagreed that important questions should be decided by the federal and provincial governments rather than by referendums (Table 6). There also was virtual unanimity (92 percent) that a majority of constituents should be able to recall their Members of Parliament, and over four-fifths (82 percent) insisted that MPs should adhere to the wishes of the people when there is a conflict between those wishes and what the MP thinks is right. Overall, these responses underscore the extent of Reformers' disaffection with the existing political order. They do not limit their complaints to the activities of particular politicians or the old-line parties, but rather bear a strong animus against governments and public officials *generally*. Consistent with the principles espoused by Social Credit and other earlier Canadian right-wing populist movements, Reformers believe power should reside with 'people' not 'politicians'.[4]

Recruitment and Activity Patterns

In keeping with Reform's recent arrival on the political stage, the vast majority of party members (87 percent) stated that they had joined the party during the past 4 years, and over half (54 percent) said they had been members for 2 years or less (Table 7). Consistent with the idea that they were simultaneously very dissatisfied with the existing party system and other aspects of the established political order *and* strongly attracted to Reform's specific policies and more general ideological stance, 80 percent of the Reform members indicated that they had joined the party on their own initiative rather than in response to an invitation to do so. This 'push–pull'

Table 7. Recruitment and activity profiles of Reform party members, 1993

	%	*Number of hours of party work per week*	*In 1993 election campaign*	*Between elections*
Mode of recruitment		None	48	75
Volunteered	80	1–4	32	22
Was asked to join	20	5–8	11	2
		9–12	5	1
Length of membership		13–16	2	x
< 1 year	14	> 17	2	1
1–2 years	40			
3–4 years	33			
> 4 years	13			
Party office-holding				
Yes, hold office	5			
No, but used to hold office	3			
No, never held office	92			
Party activities				
Convince friends to vote Reform	58			
Contribute money to Reform	52			
Recruit new party members	47			
Attend meetings in riding	45			
Attend party assemblies	17			
Fundraising	14			
Canvassing	11			
Take people to polls	11			
Scrutineer, poll clerk	8			
Work in riding office	8			
Attend national party assembly	6			
Mean number of activities	2.6			

x = less than 0.5%

recruitment process clearly came at the expense of the Progressive Conservatives. Although not asked if they had been *members* of another party before joining Reform, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) indicated that they had previously been Conservative party identifiers, whereas only 10 percent, 5 percent and 8 percent had been Liberal, NDP or Social Credit identifiers, respectively.

Joining Reform is a form of 'checkbook' or 'credit card' political participation, requiring only that one pay an annual fee of $10. These dues provide a new party like Reform with a modest but useful financial base that would be very difficult or impossible to assemble from corporations, unions or other organized interest groups that are closely tied to existing parties and the

political-economic establishment. Although money is undeniably important, parties, particularly new ones, require more from members than just their dollars. As noted in the introduction, parties benefit from members' time and energy – especially during election campaigns. In this regard, Reform enjoyed considerable success in getting its members to become *activists*, with a majority (52 percent) saying that they had worked for the party during the 1993 federal election campaign (Table 7). Tasks performed are typical of activists in Canadian local party organizations (e.g. see Kornberg et al., 1979: chs 5, 6). Although few Reformers stated they currently hold (5 percent) or previously held (3 percent) a party office or had ever attended a national party assembly (6 percent), majorities or sizable minorities attended party meetings, tried to convince friends to vote Reform or join the party, and donated money to the cause. Predictably, activity levels subside in inter-election periods; 75 percent said they were inactive, and only 2 percent worked more than 4 hours a week in the periods between elections.

Modeling Intra-Party Participation

To investigate the role of purposive incentives and other factors that might account for variation in Reformers' intra-party activity levels, we specified a multivariate model of differential participation in the party organization. The dependent variable is a factor score derived from a principal components analysis of three variables – number of hours worked in the 1993 campaign, number of hours worked in periods between election campaigns, and number of activities performed.[5] Guided by previous research on activity in local party organizations,[6] the model incorporates several groups of predictor variables. One group includes motives for becoming a member of Reform,[7] evaluations of national and personal economic conditions,[8] an index measuring negative evaluations of the national party system,[9] summary measures of affect for the old-line parties and Reform,[10] and a measure of satisfaction with the practice of democracy in Canada.[11]

Given Reform's distinctive image as a neo-conservative protest movement, we hypothesized that negative evaluations of national and personal economic conditions, negative assessments of the party system, low levels of affect for the old-line parties, high levels of affect for Reform, and dissatisfaction with Canadian democracy would be associated with enhanced activity in the party organization. Similarly, those joining the party because of concern about issues such as the lack of adequate Western representation, the increase in crime, and the breakdown in morality and family values would be more active than those joining to use the party as a vehicle for personal advancement or because friends or family were involved. Also, given Reform's neo-conservatism and its populist enthusiasm for direct democracy, it was hypothesized that party members further to the right on the ideological spectrum,[12] those who distrusted government and evaluated government performance negatively,[13] and those who endorsed referendums

and other mechanisms of citizen control[14] would be motivated to be especially active in their party organizations.

Another group of predictors measures members' perceptions of Reform's electoral prospects at the national and local (riding) levels.[15] Assuming perceived lost causes do not generate enthusiasm and viable ones do, we anticipated that members who perceived Reform's national and local chances favorably were more likely to participate. Measures of party office-holding and expectations thereof constitute another set of predictors,[16] and it was hypothesized that people who hold offices or expect to in the future would be more active than others. Several socio-demographic variables (age, education, gender, income, province of residence)[17] were also included. Consistent with the political participation literature (e.g. see Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Verba et al., 1995; Nie et al., 1996), it was hypothesized that better-educated individuals and those with higher incomes would be more active than other party members. Although previous research has often reported that middle-aged persons are more active than those in younger and older age groups, many Reformers are older, retired persons. Since such individuals typically have more free time than those in the workforce, we expected that, among Reform party members, age would be positively related to party activity. Regarding gender, since earlier studies of differential activity in Canadian party organizations indicate that women are at least as active as men (Kornberg et al., 1979: ch. 8), we did not anticipate that there would be gender differences in party activity. Lastly, given Reform's Western origins and its relative strength in that region compared to other parts of Canada, province of residence was included to determine if there were organizational differences in various areas of the country that would affect intra-party participation rates.

Parameter estimates indicate that many predictor variables behave as anticipated (Table 8). Several of these relationships suggest that purposive incentives do stimulate heightened activity in the party organization. Thus, those joining Reform because they want to increase Western representation in the federal government, those who are dissatisfied with the operation of democracy in Canada, and those who favor referendums and other devices of direct democracy are all significantly more active than other party members. Reformers who are most negatively disposed toward the existing parties and evaluate their performance most harshly also tend to be more active, as are those further to the right on the ideological continuum.

Although consequential for explaining Reformers' levels of party activity, purposive incentives are not the whole story. Rather, several other variables have significant and, in some cases, strong effects on intra-party participation. Members who are optimistic about the party's national and local electoral prospects are more heavily involved in their local organizations than are other members, as are those who hold party offices or expect to do so. Concerns about economic conditions are relevant too and, as hypothesized, negative evaluations of one's personal economic circumstances spur intra-party

Table 8. Multiple regression analysis of factors affecting party activism among Reform party members, 1993

Predictor variables	*b*	*Beta*	*t-ratio*
Demographics			
Age	0.33	.10	4.87***
Education	0.04	.06	3.06***
Gender	–0.02	–.01	–0.42
Income	0.01	.01	0.53
Province			
British Columbia	0.03	.01	0.68
Saskatchewan	0.16	.04	2.03*
Manitoba	0.03	.01	0.36
Ontario	0.18	.08	3.51***
Quebec & Atlantic	0.10	.01	0.73
Left–right ideological position	0.05	.05	2.80**
Government evaluations			
Limited capacity	0.02	.02	1.27
Trust	0.06	.06	2.92**
Inefficiency	–0.01	–.01	–0.65
Waste	0.01	.01	0.39
Satisfaction with Canadian democracy	–0.05	–.04	–2.23*
Citizen control			
Referendums	0.09	.09	4.91***
MPs as delegates	0.04	.04	2.26*
Dissatisfacation with party system	0.02	.04	1.90*
Party affect			
Old-line parties	–0.01	–.06	–3.25***
Reform	0.01	.10	5.11***
Economic evaluations			
Personal	–0.02	–.04	–1.83*
National	–0.02	–.02	–0.84
Reasons for joining			
Representation	0.07	.07	3.37***
Personal	0.01	.01	0.66
Morality, values	–0.03	–.03	–1.77*
Invidualism	–0.00	–.00	–0.15
Electoral prospects			
National	0.06	.04	2.09*
Riding	0.11	.10	5.09***
Party office-holder	0.64	.31	14.68***
Expect to hold party office	0.39	.28	12.66***
Constant	–4.10		–11.18***
R^2 = .40			
Adjusted R^2 = .39			

***$p \leq .001$; **$p \leq .01$; *$p \leq .05$; one-tailed test.

involvement. Regarding demographics, although gender and income are immaterial, the older and better educated are more active. Province of residence plays a statistically significant, but minor role; net of other factors, Reformers living in Saskatchewan and Ontario tend to be more active than party members who reside in Alberta or other parts of the country.[18]

Not for Fame or Fortune

Reform is a political success story of the 1990s. Sizable minorities of Canadians have voted for the new party in the last two federal elections, and the party has rapidly risen from obscurity to become 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition'. Some Reform supporters have became party members, and many party members indicate that they have become campaign activists. Very large majorities of the latter two groups did not join Reform to secure financial advantage or to launch a political career. Rather, they were responding to purposive incentives; the party provides a vehicle for expressing displeasure with the old-line parties and the political establishment more generally, and an opportunity for advancing a neo-conservative policy agenda. Many party members are Westerners voicing long-standing discontents about their region's status in a political system where the institutional arrangements of a Westminster-style parliament and a single-member plurality electoral system are stacked in favor of Ontario and, especially, Quebec. Such people are strongly attracted by Reform's proposals to increase the region's representation in the federal government. However, Reform is not wholly a Western phenomenon; substantial minorities of Reform voters and party members are Ontarians. Like their Western counterparts, Ontario Reformers have lengthy 'laundry lists' of economic, social and political grievances. And like Westerners, a large majority of Ontario Reformers believe that all the old-line parties and successive federal governments (Liberal and Conservative alike) have ignored them in favor of Quebec and an array of special interests. Reform's neo-conservative policies and promises to satisfy long-standing demands for representation, participation and recognition resonate strongly with its party members in all parts of the country.

The 1997 federal election demonstrated that Reform's strong electoral performance in 1993 had not been a 'one-off' event. By maintaining its base of support in the West, the party was again able to translate votes into seats effectively. As the official opposition in parliament, Reform now has an opportunity to develop the image of being a major federal party – one that has a realistic possibility to become a national government – among voters in Central and Eastern Canada. This is especially important in Ontario, the region where the party *must* be successful if it is to be a serious contender to win a federal election. Although Reform has been successful in attracting sizable numbers of Ontarians to become party members, its electoral performance has been less impressive. In 1993, 20 percent of Ontario voters

opted for Reform and the party gained only one MP from the province. Its 1997 performance in the province was slightly worse – slightly less than 19 percent voted Reform and the party did not win a single seat. However, there is some evidence that Reform does have the potential to make a breakthrough in Ontario – 34 percent in our 1997 national election survey stated that they would consider voting for the party.[19] A votes-to-seats translation model[20] suggests that with this level of support, Reform would have won upwards of 50 Ontario seats.

Whether the party can rally the cohort of Ontario voters it needs to continue its march to national power remains to be seen. However, in an era when skyrocketing campaign costs place new parties at a severe disadvantage, the membership of parties like Reform provides a significant counterweight: low maintenance costs, ideological coherence and organizational stability all derive from members who require 'neither fame nor fortune' as incentives to contribute their money and their time to the cause. In combination with the ability to translate votes into seats, such a membership base can help new parties to gain entry to, and perhaps permanently reshape, long-lived and seemingly invulnerable national party systems.

Notes

1 Reform was formed in 1987 by Preston Manning, the son of Ernest Manning, a former, long-time Social Credit premier of the province of Alberta (Flanagan, 1995). Like Social Credit in an earlier era, the new party attracted Western Canadians who viewed it as a vehicle for expressing a combination of populist right-wing ideology and feelings of regional alienation (Macpherson, 1953; Irving, 1959). Reform's appeal included advocacy of major changes in the Senate to strengthen Western representation in the federal government. The party also championed direct democracy devices such as initiatives, referendums and recall petitions. These institutional and procedural reforms were combined with a neoconservative agenda of deficit reduction, cutbacks in social programs, the rejuvenation of traditional moral values and virtues, and the end of alleged privileged treatment of special interests at the expense of ordinary people. The combination of regionally concentrated support and a single-member plurality electoral system helped the party to win 52 seats in the 1993 federal election.

2 Reform's policies and ideology are analyzed by Flanagan (1995), Laycock (1994) and Sigurdson (1994). On Reform's performance in the 1993 federal election, see Clarke and Kornberg (1996) and Ellis and Archer (1994). Archer and Ellis (1994) present data on the demographic characteristics and issue attitudes of persons who attended Reform's 1992 national assembly (convention).

3 The project was funded by a National Science Foundation (US) grant (SES-931135). The survey of the electorate was conducted by Canadian Facts, Toronto, Ontario. Technical information about the survey is available from the authors upon request.

4 Analyses reveal that the policy and ideological concerns of Western Reformers are very similar to those of party members residing in other parts of the country.

The only substantial difference is the tendency of Westerners to emphasize the need to enhance their region's representation and influence in federal politics. Archer and Ellis (1994: 302–3, Table 7) report similarly small regional differences in their analysis of the beliefs and opinions of Reform national assembly delegates.

5 The three activity variables are organized in terms of a single factor which explains 72.2% of their variance. The factor loadings range are: campaign activity (.74), inter-campaign activity (.70), number of activities (.73).

6 See, e.g. Eldersveld (1964), Clarke et al. (1978), Kornberg et al. (1979), Miller and Jennings (1986), Whiteley et al. (1994) and Aldrich (1995). For recent literature reviews in comparative perspective, see Janda (1993) and Dalton (1996).

7 Responses to the 16 statements regarding reasons for joining Reform (see pp. 78–81 and Table 3) are scored: 'most important' = 4, 'very important' = 3, 'somewhat important' = 2, 'not very important' = 1. A principal components factor analysis yields four factors which explain 46.5% of the item variance. Based on the factor loadings, we label these factors 'representation', 'personal', 'morality, values' and 'individualism', respectively.

8 The questions measuring evaluations of national economic conditions were as follows. (a) 'Thinking *generally* about how the Canadian economy is doing these days, would you say it is doing: (i) very well, (ii) fairly well, (iii) not very well.' (b) 'Over the *past three or four years*, do you think the Canadian economy has: (i) gotten better, (ii) gotten worse, (iii) stayed about the same.' (c) 'In handling the economy, would you say the *federal government* has done: (i) a very good job, (ii) a good job, (iii) a poor job, (iv) a very poor job.' A principal components factor analysis of these three items yields one factor that explains 55.1% of their variance, with factor loadings of .78, .72 and .73, respectively. The following questions measured evaluations of personal economic conditions. (a) 'Thinking about *your own* economic situation, how satisfied are you? (i) very satisfied, (ii) fairly satisfied, (iii) a little dissatisfied, (iv) very dissatisfied.' (b) 'Do you think that government has a great deal, something or not much at all to do with this? (i) a great deal, (ii) something, (iii) not much, (iv) don't know.' Answers to these two questions were combined to yield an index ranging from +4 (very satisfied and government bears a great deal of responsibility) to –4 (very dissatisfied and government bears a great deal of responsibility).

9 This is an additive index based on responses to 12 statements concerning performance of the national political parties (see pp. 83–84 and Table 2). Negative responses are scored +1 and other responses 0.

10 Party affect is measured using 100-point thermometer scales. Affect for the old-line parties is measured as the average thermometer score for the Liberal, PC and New Democratic parties.

11 The question is: 'On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way *democracy* works in Canada?' Response categories are scored: 'very satisfied' = 4, 'fairly satisfied' = 3, 'not very satisfied' = 2, 'not at all satisfied' = 1.

12 The question is: 'People often classify themselves as being on the 'left' or 'right' in politics. On a scale of 1 to 7 indicating left versus right, where would you place yourself?' The seven-point scale runs from 1 (left) to 7 (right).

13 Responses to 14 statements on evaluations of various aspects of government performance (see p. 82 and Table 4) are coded: 'agree' = 1, 'disagree' = –1, 'don't

know' = 0, and subjected to a principal components factor analysis which explains 43.2% of the item variance. Based on the strength of factor loadings for various items, the resulting four factors are labeled: (a) limited capacity, (b) trust, (c) inefficiency, and (d) waste.

14 Responses to statements A, C, E, and F in Table 6 are scored: 'agree' = 1, 'disagree' or 'don't know' = 0, and responses to statements B and D are scored: 'disagree' = 1, 'agree' or 'don't know' = 0. A principal components factor analysis yields two factors which explain 52.3% of the item variance. The strength of factor loadings for various items indicates that the two factors tap attitudes towards referendums, and MPs as delegates, respectively.

15 (a) Estimates of Reform's national electoral prospects are measured using the following question: 'If you had to guess, approximately how many seats in the House of Commons do you think Reform will win in the 1993 federal election?' Since it is plausible that the motivation force of anticipated Reform success in winning seats is subject to diminishing marginal returns, we compute the (natural) logarithm of the respondent's estimate of the number of seats Reform would win. (b) The question used to measure estimates of Reform's local electoral prospects is: 'What about your *local* riding – how would you rate Reform's chances?' Response categories are: 'excellent chance to win' = 4, 'good chance to win' = 3, 'some chance to win' = 2, 'not much chance to win' or 'don't know' = 1.

16 The party office-holding question is: 'Do you hold an office (e.g. riding president) in the party organization?' Responses are scored: currently hold office = 3, formerly held office = 2, never held office = 1. The expected party office-holding question is: 'Do you expect to hold an office in the party organization in the future?' Responses are scored: 'yes, definitely' = 4, 'probably' = 3, 'maybe' = 2, 'no' = 1.

17 Age is the (natural) logarithm of respondent's age in years; education is a six-category variable ranging from elementary school or less (scored 1) to completed university degree (scored 6); gender is scored: man = 0, woman = 1; annual family income is a five-category variable ranging from $20,000 or less (scored 1) to $80,000 or more (scored 6). For purposes of the regression analysis, province of residence is measured as a series of 0–1 dummy variables for British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec and the Atlantic provinces (combined). Alberta is the reference category.

18 A regression model of intra-party participation that includes the six province of residence dummies, but no other predictors, explains only 0.3% of the variance.

19 The survey was conducted by Canadian Facts' Senior Project Director, Peter Wearing.

20 Details are available from the authors upon request.

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