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# Invasion from the Right: The Reform Party in the 1993 Canadian Election

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**“Invasion From the Right: The  
Reform Party in the 1993 Canadian  
Election”**

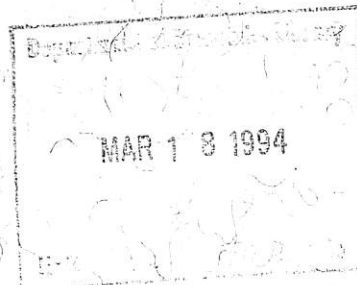
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Invasion from the Right:  
The Reform Party in the 1993 Canadian Election

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To be delivered at the University of Western Ontario  
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As a result of the 1993 general election, the governing Progressive Conservatives were reduced to two seats and the New Democratic Party to nine in the Canadian House of Commons; consequently, both lost official status in the House. Their losses meant gains for two new parties: the Bloc Québécois with 54 seats, all in Quebec; and the Reform Party of Canada with 52 seats, all but one in the four Western provinces. This unprecedented outcome raises the question of how new parties can successfully enter the political system when the odds are stacked heavily against them by the first-past-the-post voting system as well as by laws on party registration, funding, and advertising that work against small parties.<sup>1</sup>

This paper takes a closer look at the success of the Reform Party. It uses a simple spatial model of new-party entry, first suggested by Anthony Downs and later elaborated by Steven J. Brams and Réjean Landry, to examine the Reform Party's strategy during the election. It also employs both aggregate election results and survey data to test the application of the model.

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<sup>1</sup>Randall G. Holcombe, "Barriers to Entry and Political Competition," Journal of Theoretical Politics 3 (1991), 231-240; Filip Palda, Election Finance Regulation in Canada (Vancouver: Fraser Institute, 1991).

## The Problem of New Parties

Every Canadian province between British Columbia and Quebec has been governed by three or even four different political parties during the course of the twentieth century. And in Canadian federal politics, parties other than the Liberals and Conservatives (chiefly the Progressives, Social Credit and CCF/NDP) have won seats in every general election since 1921. The importance of new parties in Canada led to Maurice Pinard's well-known book, The Rise of a Third Party, whose hypothesis was that a new party was likely to experience success when two conditions coincided: (1) the system was so dominated by a single party that support for its traditional rival had fallen below one-third of the vote; and (2) the system was beset by a crisis, such as a depression or deep recession, that shook people's trust in established parties.<sup>2</sup> While this hypothesis accounted well for some cases, such as the emergence of provincial Social Credit in Alberta in 1935 and federal Social Credit in Quebec in 1962, it could not account for all cases, including important ones such as the rise to power of the Parti Québécois in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

Such evidence led Pinard to reformulate his model in more general terms: "A one-party-dominance system is only one type of a more general condition of structural conduciveness, that of the political non-representation of social groups through the party system."<sup>4</sup> Gagnon and

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<sup>2</sup>Maurice Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975/1971), 37.

<sup>3</sup>Maurice Pinard, "The Independence Issue and the Polarization of the Electorate: The 1973 Quebec Election," Canadian Journal of Political Science 10 (1977), 215-259; idem, "The Parti Québécois Comes to Power: An Analysis of the 1976 Quebec Election," ibid. 11 (1978), 739-775.

<sup>4</sup>Maurice Pinard, "Third Parties in Canada Revisited: A Rejoinder and Elaboration of One-Party Dominance," Canadian Journal of Political Science 6 (1973), 442. Emphasis in the original.

Tanguay, the most recent authors on minor parties in Canada, accept Pinard's reformulated view that "the non-representation of interests by the traditional parties" is "probably the most important factor in the creation of minor parties," particularly when accompanied by "a sudden deterioration of economic conditions."<sup>5</sup> It has also been noted in American history that third parties tend to arise after the two main parties have drawn together on crucial issues.<sup>6</sup>

This insight can be formulated more generally by use of the rational-choice analysis of party competition pioneered by Anthony Downs.<sup>7</sup> Down's best-known result is his analysis of the simplest case, in which competition is restricted to two and only two parties along a single dimension. With the assumptions he made, the result is the famous median-voter hypothesis, that the two parties will tend to locate themselves in the center of their society's political spectrum.<sup>8</sup>

If we relax the constraint that there can be only two political parties, is there a strategy by which a third party can enter the system and even displace one member of the duopoly? One possibility comes from a model developed by Steven J. Brams for American presidential primaries and extended by Réjean Landry to the case of party competition in a

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<sup>5</sup>Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, "Minor Parties of Protest in Canada: Origins, Impact, and Prospects," in Gagnon and Tanguay, eds., Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization, and Representation (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989), 239.

<sup>6</sup>Stepehn L. Fischer, The Minor Parties of the Federal Republic of Germany: Toward a Comparative Theory of Minor Parties (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 26; Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 181.

<sup>7</sup>Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 128-129.

<sup>8</sup>Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, 118.

parliamentary system. Assume that a new party C is trying to break into a system dominated by old parties A and B. One obvious move would be for new party C to position itself just to the right of old party B (to the left of A would amount to the same thing).<sup>9</sup> If such a move were possible, C would be closer than B to most right-wing voters and should attract their support, thus finishing ahead of B. How many members C would elect would depend (in a plurality voting system like Canada's) upon the geographical concentration of the conservative voters for whom it was contesting with B. If such voters were evenly dispersed across many constituencies, it is possible that C's challenge would do nothing but produce a landslide for A, whose left-wing support would be unaffected. But whether or not C can elect many members the first time, the model suggests that it should be able to outflank and finish ahead of B, thus positioning itself to enter the duopoly in the future (see Figure 1).

#### FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

I call this model "Invasion from the Margin." In its simplest form, it is, of course, patently unrealistic. It predicts wave after wave of successful invasions from both left and right, leading to a virtual kaleidoscope of parties. In fact, politics does not look like that anywhere in the world; the tendency is always for a small number of parties to assume long-term dominance.

In addition to plurality voting, two other factors blocking "Invasion from the Margin" are inertia and imperfect information. Like any purveyor of goods and services, an established political party has a huge

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<sup>9</sup>Réjean Landry, "Incentives Created by the Institutions of Representative Democracy," in Herman Bakvis, ed., Representation, Integration, and Political Parties in Canada (Toronto: Dundurn, 1991), 446-448; Steven J. Brams, Rational Politics: Decisions, Games, and Strategy (Boston: Academic Press, 1985), 32-36.

advantage over a new competitor in reputation, credibility and name-recognition. To have any hope of success, the recent entrant must differentiate itself from the established party. That requires assuming a position not too close to the duopoly; for if C is only slightly different from B, why would voters who are used to B take the risk of supporting C, about whom they know very little? But taking a position far out toward the tail of the opinion distribution in order to promote clear differentiation carries its own risks. The end of the spectrum harbour extremists whose active support can be counterproductive for winning elections: communists and anarchists on the left, racists and fascists on the right. Thus, a new party playing "Invasion from the Margin" must find a position far enough away from its main competitor so that it can differentiate itself but must also draw an effective line beyond itself so that it does not get discredited by extremists.

Finally, even if the new party finds a workable position, its main competitor can respond by moving toward it. Since the established party is by hypothesis operating in the region of the opinion distribution where voters are most numerous, it needs to take only a relatively small step away from the centre to win back a substantial number of voters who might be attracted to the new party. For this reason alone, Downs dismissed "Invasion from the Margin" as unworkable. In his opinion, it would not enable a new party to break into the system, though it might succeed in moving the position of an existing party, at least for a time.<sup>10</sup> Downs' view should be kept in mind as one possible scenario for the ultimate fate of the Reform Party. However, his rejection of "Invasion

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<sup>10</sup>Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, 131.



from the Margin" is untenable as a general proposition, for there is at least one modern example of its success in Canada--the CCF/NDP.

The CCF/NDP established itself in Canadian politics by outflanking the Liberals on the left. As the model predicts, it had problems with extremists on the far left, but it eventually managed to drive out most of the communists and fellow-travellers. It vaulted over the barrier of first-past-the-post voting by relying upon the votes concentrated in the working-class neighbourhoods of major cities (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto); manufacturing centres (Windsor, Hamilton, Oshawa); and unionized natural-resource-extraction sites (mining, forest products).

#### The Reform Party: "Invasion from the Right"

The Progressive Conservatives in the 1980s espoused a number of positions shared by the Liberals and New Democrats: official bilingualism, multiculturalism, deficit spending, medicare and other social policies, and several waves of attempted and failed constitutional change (the Charter, Meech Lake, Charlottetown). This led to the virtual non-representation of more conservative voters. It is not surprising, therefore, that the 1980s saw several attempts to found a federal party to the right of the Conservatives. Seen in this perspective, the foundation of the Reform Party in 1987 was the third act of a drama that began with the formation of Confederation of Regions in 1983 and carried on with the establishment of Christian Heritage in 1986.

A mail survey of delegates to the Reform Party's 1992 national assembly showed that they considered themselves well to the right of the Conservatives. On a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (extreme left) through 4 (centre) to 7 (extreme right), they scored themselves on average

as 5.3 (strongly right of centre) and the Conservatives as 3.8 (slightly left of centre).<sup>11</sup> Eighty percent labelled themselves conservative and 86% saw the Reform Party as conservative.<sup>12</sup> About three-quarters of Reform members have never belonged to another federal party--but of those who have, 73% used to belong to the Conservatives and 7% to Social Credit.<sup>13</sup> These are the volunteers and donors without whom the party would quickly collapse.

There is, however, one problem in interpreting the Reform Party as mounting an "Invasion from the Right": the party's leader, Preston Manning, does not see it that way. When pressed for an ideological designation, Manning sometimes calls himself a "social conservative," the term used in the book Political Realignment, which he helped his father write in 1967 when Ernest Manning was still premier of Alberta.<sup>14</sup> But more often, Manning denies that the terms left, right, and centre have any relevance to contemporary politics. He said as much at his speech at the Vancouver Assembly of May 1987, when he called on those in attendance to found an "ideologically balanced" new party with "a strong social conscience and program as well as a strong commitment to market principles and freedom of enterprise," a party of "hard heads and soft hearts, able to attract supporters away from the Liberals and NDP as well

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<sup>11</sup>Keith Archer and Faron Ellis, "Opinion Structure of Reform Party Activists," Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 1993, Table 4.

<sup>12</sup>Analysis of Archer and Ellis data by Michael Wagner.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Flanagan and Faron Ellis, "A Comparative Profile of the Reform Party of Canada," Canadian Political Science Association, Charlottetown, June 1992, 8.

<sup>14</sup>E.C. Manning, Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 56-70; Thomas Flanagan and Martha Lee, "From Social Credit to Social Conservatism: The Evolution of an Ideology," Prairie Forum 16 (1991), 205-223.

as the Conservatives."<sup>15</sup> He repeated these sentiments in his "Hockey Analogy," which he mailed to all party members in January 1990. There he compared the party to a hockey line of three forwards playing right (market), centre (populism) and left (social concern). The crucial thing in his view was to integrate these ideological perspectives; for "it is a virtual certainty that the politics of the 21st century will not be oriented on a right-left-centre basis."<sup>16</sup> Manning continued to say similar things in public down through the 1993 election campaign.<sup>17</sup> However, in spite of such statements, the Reform Party is considered, not only by its own members, but also by most political observers, to be on the right.

If "Invasion from the Right" was the Reform Party's major strategy in the 1993 election, the following statements should be true:

1. On one or more issues that were central to the campaign, the Reform Party would position itself to the right of the major party (the Progressive Conservatives) that previously stood furthest to the right.

2. The Progressive Conservatives would have to meet the challenge by either (a) moving to the right to recapture defectors or (b) moving to the centre to attract new voters from other parties. A choice of (a) should hurt Reform, a choice of (b) should help it.

3. There would be evidence that Reform's success was due to its positioning on the right rather than to other factors.

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<sup>15</sup>Preston Manning, "Choosing a Political Vehicle to Represent the West," in Ted Byfield, ed., Act of Faith (Vancouver: BC Report Magazine, 1991), 172.

<sup>16</sup>Preston Manning, "Building the Reform Team: The Hockey Analogy"; see also George Koch, "Looking leftward: Manning's search for new members angers the party's right wing," Alberta Report, February 5, 1990, in Act of Faith, 89-90.

<sup>17</sup>Preston Manning, "An Open Letter to the Members of Local 222, Canadian Auto Workers," August 6, 1993.

4. Reform would tend to do well in constituencies where the Conservatives did well in the past.

5. Given the ideological location of the other parties, Reform would attract more voters who previously voted Conservative than those who voted Liberal, and more who voted Liberal than who voted NDP.

6. Those who voted Reform would be more ideologically conservative than those who voted for other parties.

The remainder of this paper examines evidence from the campaign and the election relating to these six predictions. The evidence will show that the first five are strongly confirmed and the sixth probably will be when the data become available.

### The 1993 Campaign

The Conservatives were in a virtual dead heat with the Liberals when the writ was dropped (34% to 33% according to Environics, 36% to 37% according to Angus Reid), and far ahead of Reform.<sup>18</sup> However, as is now widely recognized, the 1993 Conservative election campaign was the most incompetent in Canadian history. Yet this collapse need not have benefitted Reform; the alienated Tory voters could have gone en masse to the Liberals and the BQ. The fact that Reform did benefit substantially is due to the precise nature of one of Campbell's major decisions--the way in which she vacated the right of the political spectrum, leaving Reform as the best option for "small-c" conservative voters.

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<sup>18</sup>Sean Durkan, "PM begins race in lead," Calgary Sun, September 9, 1993; "Grits, Tories start race in virtual tie," Calgary Herald, September 11, 1993.

Initially, Campbell appeared to want to occupy the right by making the deficit her main theme.<sup>19</sup> But she came under increasing pressure as she refused to discuss the details of how she would fulfill her leadership campaign pledge to balance the budget in five years. Her undocumented position on this issue looked vague in comparison to Reform's "Zero in Three" paper or even the Liberals' Red Book. This pressure led to a series of contradictory statements that in the end completely demolished her credibility on fiscal responsibility, the main issue for conservative-minded voters in the election.

On September 20 Campbell said that, contrary to earlier statements, she would release some details of her deficit-cutting plans.<sup>20</sup> But only three days later, while confirming that her government intended to "completely rethink our system of social security," she refused to discuss the substance of the issue:

You can't have a debate on such a key issue as the modernization of social programs in 47 days . . . . [An election campaign] is the worst possible time to have that discussion . . . because it takes more than 47 days to settle anything that is that serious.<sup>21</sup>

The next day, however, she partially backtracked by promising to set out "the principles that I believe must guide any useful debate on how we as a country must modernize our social programs."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Edward Greenspon and Jeff Sallot, "How Campbell self-destructed," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 27, 1993.

<sup>20</sup>Susan Delacourt, Murray Campbell, and Edward Greenspon, "Liberal hopes on the rise," Toronto Globe and Mail, September 21, 1993.

<sup>21</sup>Jeff Sallot and Hugh Winsor, "PM won't touch key issue," Toronto Globe and Mail, September 24, 1993.

<sup>22</sup>Joe Sornberger, "PM promises more info on cuts," Calgary Herald, September 25, 1993.

On September 27, Campbell did put some deficit-reduction numbers on the table,<sup>23</sup> but it quickly became evident that they did not add up. In particular, she revealed in a visit with the editorial board of the Globe and Mail that she did not understand the difference between a decrease in the annual budget and a cumulative saving over five years.<sup>24</sup> Then, during the English-language leaders' debate, she was unwilling or unwilling to answer Lucien Bouchard's pointed question about how large the current deficit was estimated to be: "A simple figure. What is the real deficit?"<sup>25</sup>

Immediately after the debate, the Tories launched a series of attack ads against the Reform Party, using the image of a magician sawing a woman in half to satirize Manning's "Zero in Three" deficit-reduction program.<sup>26</sup> In coordination with this, Campbell began to attack Manning as "a right-wing ideologue who has completely lost sight of . . . the values that we have to preserve [in] our social programs and to create a caring society."<sup>27</sup> Emphasizing her new role as defender of the welfare state, she told Peter Gzowski that she "would throw [herself] across railway tracks to save the health care system."<sup>28</sup>

The net result was that, during a three-week period in the middle of the campaign, Campbell vacated the right of the political spectrum. Although she continued to criticize the Liberals for fiscal irresponsibility, her position lacked conviction because she was simultaneously posing as

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<sup>23</sup>David Steinhart, "Deficit plan unveiled," Calgary Herald, September 28, 1993.

<sup>24</sup>Edward Greenspon, "Tories' supposed strong point turning out to be anything but," Toronto Globe and Mail, September 29, 1993.

<sup>25</sup>Warren Caragata, "Debate: Insults outweigh ideas," Calgary Herald, October 5, 1993.

<sup>26</sup>Ross Howard, "Tories rush to attack with new ads," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 6, 1993.

<sup>27</sup>Sean Durkan and Bill Kaufmann, "Heat's on Reform" Calgary Sun, October 10, 1993.

<sup>28</sup>Tim Naumetz, "Cuts made on the run," Calgary Sun, September 29, 1993.

the defender of social programs against Reform. She thus marched away from the traditional ground that the Conservatives had always occupied.

The data show that the period when Campbell was vacating the right was precisely the time when Reform support shot upwards. Figure 2 is a compilation of national polls conducted during 1993.<sup>29</sup>

#### FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

It shows that Reform support during the campaign was static at 10-11% until about September 20, then rose quickly to 17-18% by the end of September and stayed at that level up to election day. Correspondingly, Conservative support held at about 35% until September 20, then fell off precipitously to the low 20% range by early October. It also dropped sharply again in the last week, at the time of the Tory attack ads featuring Chrétien's facial disability and of Campbell's public criticism of Brian Mulroney, Jean Charest, Don Mazankowski, and Robert de Cotret.<sup>30</sup>

The timing of these developments is crucial. Although Campbell made mistakes from the very beginning, Reform did not move ahead until Campbell began to vacate the right. Similarly, the Conservative mistakes at the end of the campaign, which did not have any ideological content, moved voters to the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, not to Reform. Reform could profit from Campbell's mistakes because, at the crucial time, Manning's statements had the effect of positioning the party on the right. He played "Invasion from the Right" with perfect timing.

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<sup>29</sup>"The voters speak," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 25, 1993.

<sup>30</sup>Edward Greenspon, Ross Howard, and Susan Delacourt, "Tories try to recover from goof," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 16, 1993; Julian Beltrame, "Kim targets Tories," Calgary Herald, October 17, 1993.

As planned, Manning began the campaign with a "let the people speak" phase.<sup>31</sup> He pursued this theme for about a week in an initial tour of Canada's major cities. Although the party did not move ahead in the polls, it may have been a useful exercise, allowing him to reconnoitre the landscape, so speak, while he crisscrossed the country. After about ten days of campaigning, he veered sharply to the right. The turning point came when he re-released the "Zero in Three" plan in a speech on September 20 in Peterborough, Ontario. Setting up an empty chair for Kim Campbell, Manning quipped: "We have done all the homework on this and all she has to do is to take notes."<sup>32</sup> The Globe and Mail again endorsed the plan, as it had done in the spring, giving Reform's campaign a major boost.<sup>33</sup>

The "Zero in Three" package, released at the time that Campbell was giving up the ground of deficit reduction, was bound to position Reform firmly on the right. It was so vigorously attacked by the other parties that it took on a life of its own and set the tone for the rest of the campaign. In being forced to defend various aspects of "Zero in Three," particularly the controversial cuts to Old Age Security and Unemployment Insurance, Manning had to appear as a conservative critic of social programs.

Of course, "Invasion from the Right" never had the potential to win enough seats to form a government. Throughout the campaign, concern about the deficit was the top priority of only a minority of voters. In a ComQuest poll carried out October 11-14, 57% of respondents said that "the

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<sup>31</sup>Reform Party news release, "Manning says: 'Let the people speak!'" September 8, 1993.

<sup>32</sup>Norm Ovenden, "Manning outlines deficit plan," Calgary Herald, September 21, 1993.

<sup>33</sup>"The only deficit plan we've seen," Toronto Globe and Mail, September 23, 1993.



government should invest money in job programs and training programs, even if it means increasing the deficit, while 31% said that "the government should concentrate on reducing the deficit, even if it means more unemployment."<sup>34</sup> Around the same time, Environics, using different wording, found that 41% of respondents named unemployment as the most important issue, against 22% who named the deficit.<sup>35</sup> In emphasizing the deficit, Reform was appealing only to a minority of voters, but a minority concentrated geographically in Alberta and British Columbia,<sup>36</sup> and demographically in small towns and middle- to upper-income suburban residential areas. The concentration was sufficient to allow a party to win seats if it could come to "own" the deficit issue, as Reform eventually did. Thus the strategy worked well for breaking into the system, although a broader base of support may be necessary if Reform is ever to fulfil Manning's dream of forming a government.

In the final phase of the campaign, Manning put much emphasis on the idea of minority government. He repeatedly called upon voters to deny the Liberals a majority, thereby letting Reform hold the balance of power and act as the "fiscal conscience" of Parliament.<sup>37</sup> He also at times suggested that voters should make Reform the official opposition by giving them more seats than the Bloc Québécois:

. . . it is absolutely imperative that the balance of power in any minority Parliament be held by federalists rather than separatists.

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<sup>34</sup>Hugh Winsor, "Liberals near majority, Globe Poll finds," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 16, 1993.

<sup>35</sup>Environics tracking poll, October 14, 1993, three-day average.

<sup>36</sup>Hugh Winsor, "Liberals near majority, Globe Poll finds," Toronto Globe and Mail, October 16, 1993.

<sup>37</sup>Reform Party news release, "Manning says Liberals don't deserve a majority government; minority Parliament is best for Canada," Cambridge/Sarnia, October 12, 1993.

This is the way Reform can "beat the BQ" even though we are not yet present in Quebec.<sup>38</sup>

But even though Manning pushed these themes hard in the final days, they do not seem to have attracted any further support; Reform's vote share remained at the level achieved in the middle of the campaign, confirming that positioning on the right was the key to its success in the election.

This brief review of the campaign supports the first three predictions derived from the model of "Invasion from the Right":

1. Reform positioned itself to the right of the Conservatives.
2. The Conservatives reacted by moving to the centre, which benefitted Reform.
3. Reform's support rose when its ideological positioning was most visible to the public. Its support was static when Manning was stressing other issues not relevant to the left-right spectrum (populism at the beginning of the campaign, strategic voting at the end).

### Who Voted Reform?

Of the 52 seats won by Reform candidates in 1993, 35 had been won in 1988 by Conservatives, and 17 by New Democrats. Superficially, it seems as if Reform did well on both PC and NDP territory, thus raising doubts about "Invasion from the Right." However, survey data to be presented in this section show that, while the Conservative connection is valid, Reform actually attracted very few crossover voters from the NDP. Reform was able to take seats from the NDP because the NDP's support

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<sup>38</sup>Reform Party news release, "Manning offers Canada new federalism," Toronto, October 1, 1993.

collapsed, but that does not mean that previous NDP voters themselves went over to Reform.

That Reform did well on traditional Conservative territory is corroborated by a closer look at Ontario, where Reform won only one seat and did not come within 4000 votes of winning any others. Reformers did finish second in 57 Ontario ridings, but many of these second place showings were so far back as to be meaningless. A more significant indication of Reform strength in a riding was to get at least half as many votes as the winner. This happened in 23 constituencies, of which 22 had been Conservative in 1988 and one had been NDP--Ed Broadbent's old riding of Oshawa.

Table 1 displays the correlation coefficients between the 1993 Reform percentage of the vote in each constituency and the percentages of the votes obtained by the various parties in the same ridings in 1988. I have also added the 1988 Reform and PC votes together to create another variable in the 72 ridings in which there was a Reform candidate in 1988. The correlations are calculated separately for each province and then collectively for all provinces together. Because of their small size, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are treated as if they constituted a single province. Atlantic Canada is not included in the analysis because Reform contested only 20 of 32 seats in the region and nowhere finished higher than third place; its support in this region was too tentative for much profit to be derived from detailed analysis.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The most striking finding is that in each province, as well as in all provinces taken together, there was a strong positive correlation between the 1993 Reform vote and the 1988 PC vote. This confirms that Reform

did well in constituencies where the Conservatives used to be strong. It is also noteworthy that the correlation can be increased to 0.80 by treating the 1988 PC plus Reform votes as a single variable, i.e., two wings of an already dividing bloc of conservative-minded voters. In simple terms, Reform did well where the PCs used to do well because Reform appealed to the same kinds of voters.

Not surprisingly, there is an almost equally strong negative correlation (-0.79) between the 1993 Reform vote and the 1988 Liberal vote. Again, in simple language, this means that Reform had trouble attracting support in Liberal territory; the kinds of people who have historically voted Liberal (Roman Catholics, Jews, Francophones, visible minorities, urban "sophisticates") obviously did not respond well to Reform's appeal. Interestingly, however, the correlation between the 1993 Reform vote and the 1988 NDP vote is strongly negative only in Alberta (-0.79) and is virtually zero overall (-0.07). Although this finding requires further investigation, it probably reflects the fact that there are several distinct types of NDP voters--public sector workers; unionized industrial and resource-extraction workers; prairie grain farmers; the urban poor; ideological activists (feminists, environmentalists, gay rights, etc.)--distributed in a highly uneven way across the country.

Because of the well-known ecological fallacy, it is not safe to use data about aggregates--in this case, ridings--to make inferences about the behaviour of individuals. Fortunately, we can supplement the constituency data with data about individuals drawn from a national sample survey ( $n =$

1496) conducted immediately after the election by Harold Clarke.<sup>39</sup> Clarke asked respondents how they voted in 1988, which brings us to a test of the fourth prediction of "Invasion from the Right." Did Reform voters come more from former Conservatives than from former Liberals, and more from former Liberals than from former NDP supporters? The answer is contained in Table 2:

#### TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Outside Quebec, 38% of those who voted Conservative in 1988 voted Reform in 1993, as compared to a 15% defection rate from the Liberals and 11% from the NDP.<sup>40</sup> In general terms, Reform clearly drew more from the right than from elsewhere. On the other hand, recruitment from the Liberals and NDP was more than negligible; votes from these two parties were essential to winning some close races. In that sense, Manning's depiction of Reform as more than a party of the right may have had some payoff if it increased the rate of defection from the Liberals and the NDP.

It is also worth looking at retention and defection rates just in the four western provinces, where Reform won 51 of its 52 seats (Table 3):

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In the West, the Conservatives lost a massive 55% of their vote to Reform, and the Liberals 28%, as compared to only 9% for the NDP.<sup>41</sup> Again, the story is mainly one of recruitment from the Conservatives, but with a useful supplement from the Liberals and to a lesser extent the NDP.

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<sup>39</sup>Harold Clarke, *The Dynamics of Support for New Parties and National Party Systems in contemporary Democracies: The Case of Canada*, funded by the National Science Foundation. Data courtesy of Harold Clarke.

<sup>40</sup>On a goodness-of-fit test, chi square = 48.6, df = 2, p < .0000.

<sup>41</sup>On a goodness-of-fit test, chi square = 25.9, df = 2, p < .0000.

Nationally, fully 70% of those who voted Reform in 1993 had voted either Conservative or Reform in 1988. (In this survey, all respondents who had voted Reform in 1988 repeated in 1993, but the number was very small, only 11). For the West, the percentage of 1993 Reform voters who had previously voted Conservative or Reform rises to 81%. The Reform vote, especially in areas where the party was successful, was basically a secession movement from the Conservative Party, starting in a small way in 1988 and reaching large proportions in 1993. Switchers from other parties were a useful supplement in tight races, but were not numerous enough to affect the character of the coalition.

These data also show that the shift from the NDP to Reform which allegedly took place in British Columbia was illusory. There was no such shift. Only 9% of those in Western Canada who voted NDP in 1988 changed to Reform in 1993; and in British Columbia, according to Clarke's survey, the figure was even smaller, only 8%. Almost three times as many defecting NDP voters went to the Liberals as to Reform. True, the NDP lost 15 seats to Reform, but not through direct vote transfers. While the NDP was losing votes mainly to the Liberals in British Columbia, Reform was holding the vote it achieved in 1988, picking up more than half of the 1988 Conservative vote and almost a third of the 1988 Liberal vote, but adding less than a tenth of the 1988 NDP vote.

Overall, survey data confirm the fourth and fifth predictions, namely that

4. Reform did well where the Conservatives used to do well.
5. Reform drew its electoral support more from the Conservatives than the Liberals, and more from the Liberals than the NDP.

I do not yet have access to the survey data necessary to test the sixth prediction on the ideological propensities of those who supported Reform in this election. However, there is little doubt that, when such data become available, they will confirm the conservatism of Reform voters. As already noted, Archer and Ellis found that delegates to Reform's 1992 assembly considered both themselves and the party to be more conservative than any other Canadian party. A recent study, based on secondary analysis of Environics Focus Canada polls taken during 1991 and 1992, also found that Reform supporters were significantly more conservative than supporters of all other parties.<sup>42</sup> It would be surprising if survey data from the election were to show something different.

#### Other Models of Entry

"Invasion from the Right" is not the only strategy with which the Reform Party has experimented. At least four other strategies for breaking into the system can be identified in the party's brief history. All amount to attempts to establish dimensions of political competition other than the standard left-right ideological dimension. Although ideological conflict is ubiquitous in democratic politics, there is in principle an unlimited number of potential issue dimensions.<sup>43</sup> Several authors have pointed out that parties can follow "preference-shaping" as well as "preference-accommodating" strategies.<sup>44</sup> That is, leaders need not be

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<sup>42</sup>Shawn Henry, The Bases of Support for the Reform Party of Canada: Riding a Populist Wave or Providing a Conservative Alternative? (University of Calgary, Department of Sociology, MA thesis, 1993), 133.

<sup>43</sup>Arend Lijphart, Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 127-149.

<sup>44</sup>Patrick Donleavy, Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice: Economic Explanations in Political Science (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991), 112-144.

bound by the existing distribution of public opinion; they can also seek to highlight new dimensions that were previously not the subject of overt political conflict. William Riker argues that political entrepreneurs on the margins are constantly trying to raise new issues, seeking dimensions of cleavage that will pry apart existing coalitions. He sees a "natural selection" of issues in which most such attempts fail but an occasional one succeeds in bringing about a major realignment.<sup>45</sup>

Lack of space precludes a complete discussion, but one can identify four alternative Reform strategies and comment briefly on their role in the 1993 campaign:

•"The Party of the West": When first established, the Reform Party took as its motto "The West Wants In" and only ran candidates in the four Western provinces in the 1988 election. At this stage, it strongly emphasized regional issues, such as the Triple-E Senate. But it decided to "go national" in 1991, and Manning hardly mentioned regional issues in the 1993 election, except for one or two speeches. But even though it is no longer "The Party of the West" in a formal sense, it still carries something of that identity.

This was obviously an important factor in the 1993 election. Of Reform's 52 seats, 51 were won in the West: 24 in British Columbia, 22 in Alberta, 4 in Saskatchewan, and 1 in Manitoba. This is partly, but only partly, because the Conservatives had been strong in the West. Clarke's survey also shows that a greater proportion of Conservatives came over to Reform in the West than in Ontario or Atlantic Canada:

Atlantic Canada	8%	Prairies	54%
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<sup>45</sup>William H. Riker, Liberalism Against Populism (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1982), 197-232.



Ontario

26%

British Columbia

56%

Beginning life as a regional party was of great help in achieving the territorial concentration necessary to win seats in the Canadian first-past-the-post electoral system. Ironically, however, Reform did not succeed in winning Western seats until it had become a national party. One can only wonder whether Reform could have won as many Western seats in 1993 if it had remained a Western party.

•"The Party of the Hinterland": Preston Manning's original strategy was to expand the Reform Party into a national party by attracting support in the "resource-producing regions," the "hinterland," i.e., "not only in western Canada, but in Atlantic Canada and in the rural and northern areas of Quebec and Ontario."<sup>46</sup> However, there is no sign that this strategy explains Reform's success in the 1993 election. Reform did poorly in Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Although Reform has strong rural support in Ontario and the West, that support is not located in the remote resource-producing "hinterland"; it is more of a small-town and agricultural phenomenon. And Reform also did very well in the affluent outer suburbs of metropolitan Toronto and Vancouver.

"The Party of the People": This is Manning's favourite notion, that the Reform Party is a "populist party" inheriting the tradition of earlier Western populist parties.<sup>47</sup> This ties in with his rejection of ideology, for there have been earlier populist movements of the left (CCF/NDP), right (Social Credit), and centre (Progressives). A populist issue-dimension

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<sup>46</sup>Preston Manning, "Choosing a Political Vehicle to Represent the West," in Act of Faith, 171.

<sup>47</sup>Preston Manning, The New Canada (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1992), 6-7.

amounts to emphasizing conflicts between the "elite" and what Manning likes to call "the common sense of the common people."<sup>48</sup>

Although populism is the most important thing in Manning's mind, and it undoubtedly motivates many Reform activists, there is no evidence that it is the prime determinant of Reform's electoral support. If Reform were really "The Party of the People" as Manning claims, it would recruit members and supporters more or less evenly from the other parties, yet all the evidence highlights the importance of defections from the Conservatives.

Be that as it may, populism continues to guide Manning's thinking. Shortly after the 1993 election, he drew up an expansion plan that called upon Reformers to recruit new support from the ranks of the NDP and the Liberals as well as the Conservatives, and to make the party "reflect the demographics of the Canadian population as a whole" by attracting new support in precisely those categories where Reform has been weakest: women, young voters, visible minorities, and francophones.<sup>49</sup>

•"The Party of English Canada": The constitutional claims of Quebec played hardly any role in the founding of the Reform Party but were quickly brought to the fore as the party became known for its opposition to the Meech Lake Accord. At Reform's Edmonton Assembly in November 1989, Manning deliberately took a polarizing stand toward Quebec:

If we continue to make unacceptable constitutional, economic, and linguistic concessions to Quebec at the expense of the rest of Canada, it is those concessions themselves which will tear the country apart . . . . A house divided against itself cannot stand.

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<sup>48</sup>Reform Party of Canada, Statement of Principles, no. 14, in the Blue Sheet [1993], 2.

<sup>49</sup>Preston Manning, tape recording, "Countdown to Victory," December 2, 1993.

Following Manning's lead, the Assembly voted to adopt a hard-line position toward constitutional demands from Quebec:

The Reform Party supports the position that Confederation should be maintained, but that it can only be maintained by a clear commitment to Canada as one nation, in which the demands and aspirations of all regions are entitled to equal status in constitutional negotiations and political debate, and in which freedom of expression is fully accepted as the basis for language policy across the country. Should these principles of Confederation be rejected, Quebec and the rest of Canada should consider whether there exists a better political arrangement which will enrich our friendship, respect our common defence requirements, and ensure a free interchange of commerce and people, by mutual consent and for our mutual benefit.<sup>50</sup>

While this strategy undoubtedly contributed to the rapid growth of the party between elections, it did not play much of an overt role in this election. Manning referred to it only obliquely by asking voters to make Reform, rather than the Bloc Québécois, the official opposition. If "The Party of English Canada" had been in play, Reform support should have been generalized ideologically, geographically and demographically across English Canada, not concentrated as it was.

The overall conclusion is that "The Party of the Right," working with the residue of "The Party of the West," accounts for the Reform Party's success in the 1993 election. "The Party of the Hinterland" is now only of historical interest. However, "The Party of the People" and "The Party of English Canada" are still of potential importance--the former because it

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<sup>50</sup>Reform Party, Principles and Policies, 1990, 7; Paul Brenner and Peter MacDonald, "A national agenda: Manning calls Quebec's bluff," Alberta Report, November 6, 1989, in Act of Faith, 76-78.

dominates the mind of the party's leader, and the latter because Canada may still face a secession crisis in which politics would polarize along linguistic lines.

Thus, the identity of the Reform Party is not fully fixed. Not long ago it was "The Party of the West"; it was effectively "The Party of the Right" in this election; it is "The Party of the People" in Manning's mind; and it could easily become "The Party of English Canada" in a secession crisis. Interestingly, this multivalence is an intrinsic part of Manning's own thinking on strategy, which to him is more a matter of timing than positioning. He has repeatedly characterized his strategy as "waiting for the wave." In his words, we "keep positioning ourselves so that when the next wave comes along, we can ride it higher and longer."<sup>51</sup> In this perspective, Manning's use of various strategies represents attempts to ride particular waves as they come along. Over time, pressure from members and supporters will tend to give the Reform Party a stable conservative position on the ideological spectrum, but Manning's strategic open-mindedness may also create further new identities for the party.

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<sup>51</sup>Joan Bryden, "Reform's 'ship' dead in the water," Ottawa Citizen, February 8, 1993. Manning used the same analogy in a taped "Fireside Chat" to all candidates, February 12, 1993.

**Table 1**  
**Correlation of 1993 Reform Vote Percentages with 1988**  
**Percentages of Various Parties<sup>52</sup>**

	1988 Percentages				
<u>1993 Reform %</u>	<u>% Liberal</u>	<u>% NDP</u>	<u>% PC</u>	<u>% Reform</u>	<u>% (PC + Reform)</u>
BC	-.45*	-.20	.45*	.47*	.61**
Alberta	-.71**	-.79**	.52*	.63**	.86**
Sask./Man.	-.50*	-.20	.87**	.54*	.84**
Ontario	-.60**	-.14	.61**	—	.61**
<u>All provinces</u>	<u>-.79**</u>	<u>-.07</u>	<u>.60**</u>	<u>.73**</u>	<u>.80**</u>

\* p < .01

\*\* p < .001

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<sup>52</sup>Reform percentages for 1993 were calculated from returns printed in the Toronto Globe and Mail, October 27, 1993. Other data were taken from Monroe Eagles, James P. Bickerton, Alain-G. Gagnon, and Patrick J. Smith, The Almanac of Canadian Politics (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1991).

**Table 2**  
**1993 Vote By 1988 Vote (Omitting Quebec)**

1993 Vote	1988 Vote			
	NDP	Liberal	PC	Reform
NDP	43	3	3	0
Liberal	41	79	26	0
PC	5	3	33	0
Reform	11	15	38	100
	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	202	228	323	11

gamma = 0.67

Kendall's tau = 0.48

p < .0000

**Table 3**  
**1993 Vote By 1988 Vote (Four Western Provinces)**

1993 Vote	1988 Vote			
	NDP	Liberal	PC	Reform
NDP	61	2	6	0
Liberal	26	66	18	0
PC	4	4	23	0
Reform	9	28	55	100
	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	64	53	162	11

gamma = 0.67

Kendall's tau = 0.52

p < .0000