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# The communicative ecology of social democracy: The case of the CCF/NDP

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THE COMMUNICATIVE ECOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY: THE CASE OF
THE CCF/NDP

by
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ABSTRACT

A good deal of scholarship on the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic Party has focused on the party's trajectory away from a form of prairie populist, social democratic politics towards a centralized, liberal democratic politics (e.g. Zakuta 1964, Young 1969, Cross 1974). This longitudinal study bears out a similar conclusion, but focuses specifically on changes in the party's communicative ecology over time. Using the work of Carey (1989) and Nancy (1991) the notion of communicative ecology, defined as the ways in which an institution communicates through non-mass mediated means is used to understand both how the party conceives of abstract categories such as democracy and citizenship as well as how they proceed with communicating these ideas.

DEDICATION


For Serena.  She knows why.

And for my parents.  Consider this a kind of abstract scrapbook of every lesson you've ever taught me. (Read closely. You'll even see evidence of the making-the-bed lesson).

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly I'd like to thank my good friend Jim. If I could get you a Tigers World Series ring with your name engraved on it, I'd be partway to showing you the depth of my appreciation. I can only be thankful that a perverse kind of serendipity intervened to pair you, an American Professor of Communication, with me, an impractical student with a penchant for a marginal Canadian political party. I'm glad we both trusted the logic. MA be damned, I got a wonderful friend out of this process.

Thanks also to the Honorable Howard Pawley. It is an absolute honor to have had someone of your dedication, service, and esteemed judgment on this committee. Your character and persistence have kept the party from wandering further astray than it has, while simultaneously motivating subsequent generations to keep fighting for it.

Finally, thanks to Dr. Susan Bryant. You've inspired me more than you probably know. If only the academy was conducive to fostering more academics with your gracious sense of balance.

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*Introduction*

　　Speculating about the problems of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and proposing solutions has long since been a past time of Canadian progressives (e.g. Berlin and Aster, 2001; Archer and Whitehorn, 1993; Archer, 1990). A theme which remains present throughout much of the discussion is one of considerable frustration and confusion: How can a party so *culturally* relevant to Canadian society remain so *politically* marginal? As Canadians, we take considerable pride in our alleged civility (think universal health care) *vis-à-vis* our American neighbors, while paradoxically ensuring the trivialization of the party (at the polls), to the peril of both existing and future "civilized" infrastructures. Desmond Morton hits on the sentiment when writing that the NDP has been "…treated like the Mounties and the Montreal Canadiens, important culturally but somehow not quite serious" (Morton, 1974, p. v).

　　A rich tradition of scholarship has developed over the decades addressing the issue of social democracy in Canada, much of which has been concerned with explaining the struggles of the New Democratic Party to offer a viable, social democratic parliamentary force. Lipset (1950) has detailed the struggles and early successes of social democracy and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Canada. Subsequent scholars have focused on the relative decline of organized social democracy in Canada. Azoulay (1997), Zakuta (1964), Young (1969) and Whitehorn (1992) have investigated the party's internal logic, using a sociological analysis in employing Michels' (1962) iron law of oligarchy to explain the decline. More recent scholarship, such as that of Boyko (2006) has looked to external factors and used a political economic

analysis to illustrate the degree to which the interests of capital, working with a complicit media, have been responsible for the decline of Canadian social democracy.

Regardless of the method, however, most critical scholars agree that a withering type of managerialism has beset Canada's ostensibly progressive political party. Increasingly, the NDP seems to look a lot like Tony Blair's "Third Way" Labour party, which very closely resembled Canada's Liberal Party, which in turn is marginally distinguishable from Canada's Conservative Party. Hyperbole aside, it is apparent from casual observation that the NDP has contracted a damaging kind of malady resulting in an effective surrender to the boorish neo-liberal ethic of TINA (there is no alternative). Political philosopher Chantal Mouffe has eloquently (however venomously) captured the submission of traditionally organized progressive politics to a strategy of unimaginative managerialism which represents "...no more than the justification by social democrats of their capitulation to a neo-liberal hegemony whose power relations they will not challenge, limiting themselves to making some little adjustments in order to help people cope..." (Mouffe, 2000, p. 5-6).

Critical political theorist Harry C. Boyte (2003) offers a useful distinction between the notion of managerial and participatory conceptions of politics worth citing here. The latter notion inspires "...the concept of the citizen as a creative, intelligent, and, above all, 'political' agent in the deepest meaning of the word, political—someone able to negotiate diverse views and interests for the sake of accomplishing some public task" (2003, p. 3). Managerialism, on the other hand, conceives of citizenship in decidedly different terms; "...political action is almost entirely about distributive questions—who gets what, when and how?" (Boyte, 2003, p. 3). Boyte argues further

that the managerial edict has rendered democracy such that, "...politics has become structured by a thin, even sickly conception of citizenship, the citizen as apolitical volunteer engaged in service" (2003, p. 4).

The current manifestation of the NDP is certainly subject to such criticism. The party's 2006 electoral platform promised that it would be "Getting Results For People" (NDP, 2006). By the end of election night, the party had garnered only 29 seats (the fewest of the four parties represented in Parliament) leaving one to wonder how exactly these promised results would be procured, even if in the conditions of a minority Parliament. The lack of electoral success aside, one is still inclined to question the ability (and even suitability) of the contemporary NDP to champion a left-of-centre project given the managerialist, possessive individualist and instrumental sentiment of their most recent electoral platform. These claims about the contemporary NDP will be more fully explored and substantiated in the final chapter and conclusion of this work.

However, there have been particular periods within the party marked by a more inspired progressivism, one thoroughly critical, participatory and transformative in nature. The predecessor of the current NDP, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), for example, presented a comprehensive alternative, as did the Waffle group of the 1970s. In both cases, the success and ability of each was mitigated by factors somewhat beyond their immediate control, and will be discussed in subsequent chapters of this work, though the immediate point here is to emphasize that this project, while critically orientated, will offer a dialectically conceived analysis. I take a lead here from Dennis Mumby (1997), who has taken to task the field of critical social science which he argues has largely theorized the phenomenon of social power relations too simplistically,

employing either a dominance or resistance model. It is more useful, rather, to read the history of the CCF/NDP dialectically, noting the specific circumstances of both moments of resistance and moments of cooptation in order to distill from the examination crucial elements that may aid in re-radicalizing the party.

Ultimately, this project aims to re-conceptualize organized progressive politics—specifically the ways in which organized progressive politics communicates with the public—within a transformative paradigm, one which assumes the necessity of fundamental and systemic shifts in the orientation and organization of Canada's progressive political party. The intended goal of the project is to make a contribution to the formulation of a renewed and robust progressive political force in Canada. More specifically, the following will offer a dialectical analysis of the communicative ecology of the NDP and examine the kinds of qualitative relationships (between the party, the state and the masses) produced as a result of those techniques.[1] While the analysis will consider various intended communicative articles, it will do so with an understanding that such artifacts are merely part of the overall communicative ecology of the party, and will in no way restrict itself to such documents. Rather, I will also embrace the ideas of French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy who posits community as communication, and those of James Carey, who understands communication as culture. A more thorough discussion of these considerations will be offered below.

Ultimately, this project will critically engage the NDP's ability to champion a progressive/socialist democratic project in response to politics in the contemporary period, though it will do so within an ontology which remains beholden to party

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[1] I use the term "communicative ecology" here to denote the totality of both intended (news letters, party platforms, etc.) as well as unintended communicative phenomena such as those made available following the analysis of Carey (1989) and Nancy (1991).

organizations. The analysis must reject claims made by progressives at opposed ends of a continuum of concern—on the one hand the traditionalist-staunch party politics supporters, and on the other quasi-anarchistic elements. In the former case, the central problematic arises from what amounts to an uncritical apology for the existing structures of neo-liberal and party politics generally, and that of the NDP more specifically, while in the latter, a too hasty and unfounded dismissal of the contingencies of traditionally organized democratic governance.

### Communication for democracy considered

There exists a large, interdisciplinary literature addressing issues of political communication which embraces concepts from various fields including political science, communications, psychology, history, sociology, journalism, and others. There is no universally agreed upon definition of what is meant by the term 'political communication' as a result. However, this analysis will proceed with one put forward by Robert Meadow, and remain cognizant of the limitations of definitional ventures identified by him, "Definitions, of course, can never be correct or incorrect, they are merely the premises from which logical analysis proceeds" (Meadow, 1980, p. 4). He argues further that there is no absolute point at which the exchange of messages becomes fundamentally political, or fundamentally imbued with political significance, making the process largely contentious and relative. It is also important to identify, as James Carey (1989) and Jean Luc Nancy (1991) do, various cultural elements and social relations as moments of potential communication. It is with the above considerations in mind that I will cautiously proceed with the following understanding of political communication as,

"…any exchange of symbols or messages that to a significant extent have been shaped by, or have consequences for, the functioning of political systems" (Meadow, 1980, p. 4).

The analysis to be undertaken in this project is not concerned with so-called 'effects research', nor is it to be a strict exercise in the political economy of political communication. Each of these approaches is intended to garner particular kinds of information about the function of communication in the political process, namely the general consequence, or results of the process as a whole. Often times, however, this kind of research (either intentionally or unintentionally) is focused on the message either *as it is received* or *as it appears through mass mediation.* In contrast, this analysis will concern itself mostly with non-mass mediated forms of communication and attempt to infer both the intended and unintended messages as (mis)constructed by various party architects throughout time. This project primarily seeks to analyze and critique the competency of the NDP to foster and champion a progressive itinerary—thus communicative documents, communicative strategies (both intended as well as unintended) and communicative phenomena of the NDP will be analyzed and used as a source from which to distill the general philosophical and ideological tenor of the party. The NDP's communicative ecology will thus be used to understand both how the party conceives of abstract categories such as democracy and citizenship as well as how they proceed with communicating these ideas. Again, the analysis is more concerned with what the NDP is communicating, either intentionally or unintentionally and their strategies of communicating, rather than the various messages its audience receives through the conflicted and ideologically charged process of mass mediation.

In order to make robust the inferential claims regarding the intended message of the party, this analysis will employ a broad understanding of the notion of communication. It will proceed within a framework which acknowledges various communicative documents produced by the party as a means of communicating specific ideas (for example various party platforms, constituency news letters, etc.) However, the analysis will also borrow on two notions of communication which also release a conceptual space for viewing other social phenomenon as communicative events. The first to be addressed bellow, James Carey (1989), understands communication as culture, where as French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy conceives of community as communication.

Carey undertakes a seemingly pedestrian project in his re-visiting of the notion of communication, however the results are anything but. Using a distilled kind of intellect, Carey offers two models which approach the notion of communication both conceptually and methodologically, a transmission and ritualistic model. Industrial cultures have overwhelmingly tended to view communication in terms of the former, which Carey argues is defined by such ideas as "…'imparting', 'sending', 'transmitting', or 'giving information to others'" (Carey, 1989, p. 15).

Informed by metaphors of geography and transportation, the transmission model is designed to view communication in terms of the extension of messages through space. The facilitation of capital, highlighted by essential moments such as the completion of various rail lines, invention of the telegraph, etc., has determined the projection of the transmission model, and clearly illustrates the orientation of the concept. Industrialized cultures remain oriented towards the transmission model, and Carey concludes, grounded

by an understanding that communication essentially means rationalization, "...a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people" (Carey, 1989, p. 15).

The contrasting notion, ritualistic communication, on the other hand, Carey defines with notions such as "...'sharing', 'participation', 'association', 'fellowship'..." (Carey, 1989, p. 18) and is mobilized "...toward the maintenance of society in time" (Carey, 1989, p. 18). At a conceptual level, the ritualistic model represents a particular way of understanding and approaching communication which privileges collectivist/participatory ideals over the individualistic/control ideals of the transmission model. Carey points to the central conceptual difference between the two,

> If the archetypal case of communication under a transmission view is the extension of messages across geography for the purposes of control, the archetypal case under a ritual view is the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality (Carey, 1989, p. 18).

Carey's distinction brings about a significant methodological consideration as well. In making the conceptual move from a transmission to a ritual model, one makes a shift away from the kind of scientific scholarship privileged in the North American tradition, towards one which places culture at the centre of inquiry. Carey contends that North American scholarship has largely denied the application of a ritual model of communication because the notion of culture is so evanescent. It is used within the academy largely to describe persons, places and customs in an "anthropological" sense, far outside the borders of North American society. Ethnocentrism has ensured that we largely fail to even attempt to identify and understand the existence of various cultures within our own society. As Carey contends, "...the concept dissolves into a residual

category useful only when psychological and sociological data are exhausted" (Carey, 1989, p. 19).

Engaging with the ritual model forces a focus on the culture of the seemingly ordinary, and will centre on an analysis of a whole different range of curiosities and problems. The kind of culture(s) produced/inspired by the NDP, and more importantly, the ways in which their communicative ecology and strategies determine that culture(s) suddenly become central aspects of the analysis. The party becomes not only a cultural phenomenon within a broader social milieu, but becomes a culture which produces culture. And this is the power of Carey's analysis—it offers a normative conceptual framework with which to engage with the notion of communication, while simultaneously offering a methodological framework with which to approach the analysis.

Jean-Luc Nancy's work on communication, it could be argued, is produced by the kind of analysis inspired by Carey. His focus is on community as a communicative event. Nancy's argument emphasizes the impossibility (and undesirability) of conceiving community as a rigid and unitary structure. In terms of community, "…there can be no 'common being' but 'in place of such a communion there is communication'" (Nancy, quoted in Schwarzmantel, 2007, p. 472). According to Nancy, the process of constructing community is fundamentally a communicative event which is never complete. It is an on-going process continually imbued with meaning making. The process of community making by community architects (strategies of its construction, restrictions of its membership, etc.) can thus be understood as a means by which specific characteristics of that community are being either encouraged or discouraged.

John Schwarzmantel (2007) has used Nancy's notion of community as communication in his conceptualization of an ideal active political community. He argues, "…political community can be achieved through a different style and new institutions of politics, which achieve solidarity through a greater faith in the associative capacity of citizens" (2007, p. 473). According to him, it is the duty of various community builders within society (for example, political parties) to communicate through the process of community building in ways that encourage participation and engagement.

Taken together, the separate analysis of Carey and Nancy (including Schwarzmantel's application) and the ways in which each conceives of communication will aid this project in investigating the various ways in which the NDP communicates through the process of its own community building. In addition, their work will help justify a critique of that strategy while simultaneously adding legitimacy to claims made about the particular kind of community (constituency) fostered by the party. To further develop a critique of the party and their particular communicative strategies and messages based on normative claims, it is necessary to briefly discuss key theoretical foundations with which the analysis will proceed.

*Chapter Two*

*Review of relevant literature*

In order to more fully elaborate the scope and direction of this project it is necessary to identify a number of relevant concepts and how they will be employed within this project. I will first briefly present the intellectual discourse about the relationship between the state and the economy. Next, I will provide a discussion which will wed together certain pertinent aspects of Antonio Gramsci's theorizing regarding the party specifically, and the politics of resistance more generally with that of contemporary strains of political theory regarding radical democratic politics. The resulting theoretical amalgam will stand as an implicit normative touchstone used to assess the various periods of the NDP's communicative efforts to be addressed within the body of this work. The goal here is to set out a framework with which to justify and legitimate a platform from which to wage a transformative critique, while simultaneously providing a normative framework for restructuring communicative and structural strategies for progressive political parties.

Implicit to the current work, and indeed implicit to most work situated within a critical paradigm, is the notion that the capitalist state is somewhat antagonistic to its citizenry. This is of course a clear divergence form classical liberal thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, whose concept of the sovereign state was imbued with limitless authority over a passive rank and file, unknowingly entered into contract at birth. It also differs from subsequent theorists such as John Stuart Mill who recognized both subjectivity and inequality as matters to be addressed by the state. This led to the development of a perspective which argued the state has a responsibility to foster its

citizenry as well as to seek legitimacy from them (Knuttila, 1992, p. 25.) While Mill does offer a response to the particular social, economic and political moment of early industrial capitalism, the work of Karl Marx goes much further in addressing the inequalities perpetuated by capitalism within complicit states.

The work of Marx must be understood in terms of his materialist epistemology. For Marx, capitalist society could only be defined in relation to the alienation and exploitation of citizens experienced under the social relations determined by industrial capitalism as a mode of production (Knuttila, 1992, p. 94). He argued the division of labour inherent to the capitalist mode of production breeds a central contradiction, a fundamental division of interest between the community and individuals. "And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community the latter takes an independent form as the *State,* divorced from the real interests of individual and community..." (Marx quoted in Knuttila, 1992, p. 95). According to Marx, the economic realm takes primacy over all others, and determines the structure of all societal relations and each state action.

As the twentieth century unfurled, however, Marxian orthodoxy proved too rigid a conceptualization to make sense of actually existing social, political and cultural conditions. A striking dialogue between Ralph Milliband and Nicos Poulantzas, which dominated much of critical political theory during the late 1960's and early 1970's, proved fertile ground for a re-conceptualization of the state within a neo-Marxist paradigm.

Milliband's initial effort, *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) was a pointed critique of pluralist theory--a notion which posits society as comprised of general parity

between equally able groups within society, which in turn are all equally governed by a benign state. Milliband used a Marxist analysis to illustrate the ways in which the concentration of capital had resulted in the centralization of power within a particular class, causing massive disparities in wealth, power, opportunity, etc. He then examined discrete parts of the state apparatus separately, the government, the police, the military, etc., and illustrated the ways in which these posts were *mainly* dominated by persons of the business or professional middle class (Knuttila, p. 108). This represented a scale-back of the kind of state conceptualized by Marx, while simultaneously offering a robust critique of early pluralist theory.

Poulantzas work was also critical of the rigidity of Marxism, though his strategy was to expand upon the notion of Marx's mode of production. He proposed a re-conceptualization of the notion, and argued for the existence of four separate categories, or sections in the mode of production; theoretical, ideological, economic and political (Knuttila, p. 109). "A mode of production", writes Poulantzas, "…is composed of different levels or instances, the economic, political, ideological and theoretical…The type of unity that characterizes a mode of production is that of a *complex whole…*" (italics original, Poulantzas, 1973, p. 13). Thus, for Poulantzas, the concept of class (that which results from the capitalist mode of production) is a far more complex formulation than Marx had conceived it. According to him, the various levels of the mode of production exercise a relative autonomy from the others, with each one operating differently, and each with its own power and influence.

Poulantzas, however, does suggest that the economic sphere is the determining factor in the last instance (Poulantzas, 1973, p. 14). However he also argues that it is the

particular function of the state (political level, imbued with autonomy) to act as a source of societal cohesion. That is to say, the state exists (in part) to mediate the continual negotiations within and between Poulantzas' various levels. This provides, according to Poulantzas, a measure of public accountability, which prohibits the state from simply always acting in favor of capital.

In their final analysis (after a prolonged debate, the details of which are beyond the scope of this effort), Poulantzas and Milliband arrived at a concept of capitalist society in which various mechanisms act to promote and sustain the relations of production resulting from capitalism. However, there are also various factions and sources of conflict and difference not only between, but also within particular classes. The state is understood as being relatively autonomous, given that it is expected to foster and maintain a certain measure of societal cohesion, in other words to act as mediator between and within various classes, in order to promote the continued existence of the relations of production inspired by capitalism.

Antonio Gramsci's conception of the state, although never fully developed, was quite similar to that of the above. Gramsci scholar Christine Bucki-Glucksmann argues that Gramsci's final word on the state was defined as "...dictatorship + hegemony..." (1980, p. 249). His work is centered on understanding the ways in which the state, often in the absence of coercive force, is able to maintain a generally high level of social cohesion over a passive citizenry, despite the massive inequalities perpetuated by capitalism. Gramsci was also motivated to uncover strategies by which this capitalist hegemony could be replaced by the hegemony of the proletariat.

***Gramsci, intellectuals, the party and the politics of resistance.***

Fundamentally, Gramsci's hegemony marks a concerted break from economistic forms of Marxism which narrowly posited the economic realm as the exclusive arena for the genesis of change, while also breaking from deterministic forms of Marxism which viewed social change arising unproblematically from nebulous, abstract historical laws. Gramsci developed a revised ontology, of which hegemony is a part, in order to better understand the processes of power, resistance and change, and in order to attempt to answer why progressive change had proven so elusive.

Gramsci's expanded ontology was directly determined by the general principles of hegemony—usefully understood here as the process by which power is created and re-created in society and which is facilitated by consent of the masses, requiring little or no use of force on behalf of the dominant hegemon. It is also important to note here, as does Mumby (1997) the abuse of the term hegemony in recent scholarship (used undialectically, to generally refer simply to American socio-political power) in order to more fully grasp Gramsci's intended meaning of the term. Hegemony is not intended as a necessarily pejorative term in Gramsci's writing, but "Rather as a descriptive term (or when speaking of the hegemony of the working class, a positive term) that functions as a means to explain how a particular group comes to exercise intellectual and moral leadership over other groups" (Mumby, 1997, p. 348). Mumby urges scholarship to engage with the dialectical nature of Gramsci's hegemony, as viewed through his larger philosophy of praxis, in order to "…recognize the implicative relations amongst communication, power and resistance" (Mumby, 1997, p. 343).

Hegemony then, as Gramsci intended it, was conceived as a process by which various groups, functioning both within civil society and the state, employ various tactics

and resources in order to secure power by consent. But again, it is important to emphasize the dialectical nature of the process—the power of any particular dominant hegemon is never totalizing, but merely exists at a higher level of strength in relation to other competing hegemonies. The key to any given hegemonic effort was, for Gramsci, the intellectuals. As he explains,

By 'intellectuals' must be understood not those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an organizational function in the wide sense—whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political organization. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 97).

Gramsci distinguishes two kinds of intellectuals: traditional and organic. Organic intellectuals arise out from the same origins as the assembly they represent. In addition, organic intellectuals furnish that class with "…homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 5). Traditional intellectuals, on the other hand have no such organically derived legitimacy, but rather present themselves as an "uninterrupted historical continuity" (Salamini, 1976, p. 10), and justify and legitimate their existence in much the same way as ecclesiastical hierarchies do in referencing the Apostles or Christ. As Gramsci scholar Leonardo Salamini suggests, "Their *raison d'etre* of their existence is the autonomy of their past and their caste-like position in society" (1976, p. 12). Gramsci argues,

…every 'essential' social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present) categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political social forms. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 6-7).

The role of the organic intellectual differs between dominant groups and oppressed groups. Roger Simon points to the key difference: "Whereas the organic intellectuals of the capitalists act mainly as individuals, Gramsci holds that the

revolutionary party must play a key role as the organic intellectual of the working class"

(1977, p. 80). Togliatti suggests that the organic intellectual of revolutionary action is in

fact a "collective intellectual" (Quoted in Femia, 1977, p. 80). This collective

intellectualism is by no means a socialist fictive—an ideal notion relegated to non-

importance: "For Gramsci, the formation of an educated proletariat was not a precept

relegated to a distant post revolutionary future, but an absolute precondition for the

success of the revolution" (Karabel, 1976, p. 171). It is clear that Gramsci advocated for

a measure of equality between the leaders and the led which was to be achieved through a

political community underpinned by a collectivist ethic.

Understanding society in terms of hegemony(ies) both facilitated and struggled

against by intellectuals in the Gramscian sense informs Gramsci's emphasis on the party

within civil and political society. Here Gramsci employs the Machiavellian notion of the

Prince, though he conceives of it in terms of an organic collectivity,

The modern prince, the myth prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual. It can only be an organism, a complex element of society in which a collective will, which has already been recognized and has to some extent asserted itself in action begins to take concrete form. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 129).

A fundamental aspect of the moral and intellectual leadership of Gramsci's

modern prince is a necessary altering of the relationship between the party and the

masses. It requires a redefining of the basic elements of the relationship between leaders

and led, and an extension of the rights and opportunities of the latter to effect a response

in the former. In other words, a party's legitimacy can be in part assessed in terms of

where the leadership comes from (organic/traditional) as well as the extent to which that

leadership organizes and strategizes in responsive and collectivist ways. Any ostensible

"proletariat", or progressive socialist democratic party deserving of the designation must strive towards creating such conditions—not only as an ideological principle, but far more importantly, in concrete structural and logistical day-to-day decisions. As Gramsci scholar Anne Showstack Sassoon argues, "The organizational form is always a *political question...*" (Emphasis original, 1987, p. 153).

One means by which the party can evolve in such a way follows from Gramsci's assertion that the party has the potential to expand organically throughout society, encompassing various other structural and organizational forms and pre-existing cultural, social and political institutions. But again, the success of such an ambition is predicated on the development of a patently and qualitatively different relationship between the various institutions and the masses. As Sassoon argues, "This unity must be of a particular quality based on a new concept of democracy and going beyond corporative demands to forge a new collective will. The party in its widest sense *assumes* the existence of diversity"(Italics original, p. 155). As the party expands collectively, it facilitates and fosters the creation of organic intellectuals of marginalized populations, people already existing in various cultural and social spaces. The truly progressive socialist democratic party cannot simply use its constituency (simply as makers of surplus value, for example), as would a bourgeois party, because it is predicated on the ethic of organic, collective leadership. The leadership of the progressive party ends up deriving directly from these re-engaged social and cultural spaces.

A final, but crucial consideration regarding Gramsci's work is his use of the dialectically conceived metaphors of war of position and war of maneuver. Both kinds of engagement are part of Gramsci's "duel perspective" for strategies towards fundamental

change in advanced capitalist systems. War of position refers to what Sassoon (1987) calls "trench warfare" (p. 193) and William Caroll (1999) more elegantly characterizes as an attempt "...to occupy or create new spaces for alternative identities, moralities and ways of life within the existing social, economic, and state structures" (p. 4). This model for resistance is one end (more passively oriented) of Gramsci's dialectic, while a war of maneuver is at the other end. This tactic is more related to direct action targeted at more immediate change, such as in demonstrations and strikes.

Gramsci privileged the war of position tactic as the only means by which a substantive and prolonged counter-dominant hegemonic struggle could be waged. "...in politics, the 'war of position' once won, is decisive definitively. In politics, in other words, the war of maneuver subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive..." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 239). However it remains clear that Gramsci did advocate for more direct action techniques as well.

Again, Gramsci emphasizes the dialectical nature of the concepts, "Some have reduced the theory of the 'dual perspective' to something trivial and banal...In actual fact, it often happens that the more the first 'perspective' is 'immediate' and elementary, the more the second has to be 'distant' (not in time, but as a dialectical relation)..." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 170).

Sassoon comments,

What begins to disappear in Gramsci's problematic is the question of whether a movement or period is "revolutionary" or not. It is rather a question of which pole of the dialectic is nearer at hand. Neither pole is wholly revolutionary or not revolutionary on its own. Rather it is the unity of the whole and the relation of the elements within it which must be analyzed (Sassoon, 1987, p. 194).

What emerges here is that Gramsci's war of position and war of maneuver dialectic become not only conceptual and strategic considerations in terms of waging counter-dominant hegemonic and transformative change, but, and perhaps more importantly here, the dialectic becomes a method by which to assess party activity in various historical moments. As Sassoon indicates, one cannot necessarily comment on the degree to which a particular manifestation of a party is either revolutionary or non-revolutionary. However, one can surmise, by investigating the techniques and tactics of the party at particular periods, which end of the dialectic, and the degree to which that end is being employed at all, as a means by which to normatively assess the party's activity as either dominant hegemonic or counter-dominant hegemonic.

The following section will discuss more contemporary democratic theory (and abstract notions, such as "citizenship" crucial to it) which can be used to extend Gramsci's logic and will signal the kinds of qualitative changes in the relationships between various institutions, the party and the masses, required for a more thoroughly progressive and effective socialist democratic party.

*Contemporary democratic theory*

While one must caution against an historical revisionism that idealizes a time when politics, civic engagement and democracy were intimately ingrained in the experience of the everyday (Schudson, 1992) it is possible to identify periods when participatory ideals were not seen to be as radical as they currently are. The America of a century ago, for example, contained just such ideals. Expressed as a kind of popular ferment, citizens were educated in the arts of public engagement and governance (Boyte, 1992). Particular periods in the history of CCF/NDP also offer examples of a time during

which popular and mass participation in effective party governing was far less reviled than it is currently. Subsequent chapters will detail the various experiences.

However, with the development of large-scale industry, and government bureaucratization in response to population growth, these participatory ideals, as expressed in terms of popular political power, became far more difficult to effectively articulate (Boyte, 1992). "Against this background," Boyte argues, "The left made a Faustian bargain" (1992, p. 349). Rather than dedicate themselves to what was perceived as an unmanageable project (maintaining a robust participatory democracy) welfare state and socialist liberals re-organized their efforts around issues of resource distribution. This shift facilitated the burgeoning of a reliance on large-scale, bureaucratic institutions, such as unions, political parties and professional associations in a way that served to effectively sever citizens from direct and participatory governance (Boyte, 1992, p. 349). As Boyte comments, "All of these progressively detached popular participation and agency from politics. As a consequence, *justice, not power*, has formed the main axis of political debate in welfare-state politics" (1992, p. 349, italics mine).

The effects of such a shift should not be underestimated. This Faustian bargain represents an effective abandonment of the democratic project and all the inherent possibilities associated with it. What have developed, encouraged by an increasing reliance upon representative democracy and its imperatives, (the rationalization and professionalization of politics, large-scale-bureaucratic political parties, etc), are conditions in which the citizen is removed from meaningful political participation and notions of robust citizenship become forgotten artifacts. In part facilitated by these conditions of citizenship, and in part functioning to maintain them, the consumerist

culture resulting from mass capitalism has served to further ingrain the edict of managerial democracy. Anemic voter turnouts, apathy, alienation and a general disenchantment with the political process, are all among the common conditions of modern Canadian politics. The work of Jurgen Habermas, and the resulting dialogue constituted by the criticisms of his efforts, extends the logic of Gramsci's organic intellectuals and offers a potential framework with which to visualize the end democracy's reliance on managerialism.

### *Habermas and the public sphere*

"By 'the public sphere'" claims Habermas, "we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1989, p. 49). This seemingly simple claim is the basis of Habermas' seminal study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), which chronicles the emergence and transformation of the public sphere. To begin, Habermas initiates a distinction between what constitutes "public" and what constitutes "private". As many social and political scholars before him had done, Habermas traces this distinction to ancient Greece. In the early Greek city-states, there existed a strict delineation between the *oikos* or private realm and the *polis* or public realm. The enactment of public life happened in open markets and community assemblies, and was inclusive of any person conferred with the right of citizenship (a problem to which we will return). As John Thompson comments, "The Public sphere was, in principal, an open field of debate in which those individuals who were entitled to the status of citizens could interact with one another as equals" (1992, p. 175).

During the era of Feudalism, the "public realm" constituted a decidedly different concept according to Habermas. The public sphere no longer existed as a realm of debate and socio-political interaction, but rather as a representation—a realm in which "Aristocracy and nobility played out the symbolic dramas of majesty and highness before their subjects" (Goode, 2005, p.4). "Publicness" became a kind of staged event that was represented by the pomp and circumstance of monarchical display. As Goode notes, "The links between this 'representative publicness' and today's mass mediated spectacles of public life are thin: it was simply staged performance *before* the people, not *on behalf* of a public" (italics original, 2005, p. 4).

Early Mercantile Capitalism, which effectively re-ordered forms of institutional power, facilitated the emergence of a different form of publicness. The increasingly wealthy bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes, armed with the newly forming principals of the Enlightenment, began to demand, among other legal-positivist ideals, a return to legitimate public rule. Under these conditions, the idea of public authority experienced a significant transformation—the notion that the monarch represented public authority withered before the idea of a burgeoning state system premised on legalism and popular legitimacy. The 'public' sector thus emerged as a legitimately elected body of governance. Simultaneously, a civil society began to piece together within the refurnished economic realm of early capitalism. This private sphere was constituted by economic activity within the broader society, and came to define the intimate relations of the domestic realm (Thompson 1992, p. 176). The conceptual and practical space left between the realm of public authority (government) on the one hand, and the private realm of familial relations and economic activity on the other, created a necessity for a

kind of intermediary body, the bourgeois public sphere. As Thompson notes, what

emerged was "A bourgeois public sphere which consisted of private individuals who

came together to debate among themselves concerning the regulation of civil society and

the conduct of the state" (1992, p. 176).

Habermas' account of the rise the public sphere, in addition to the emergence of

capitalism discussed above, relies on two other historical developments. The first was

the rise of the popular periodical press (Thompson, 1993, p.176). Through the 17th and

18th centuries, as literacy rates increased, the exclusivity of publications lessened. The

English publishing enterprise, which began with mainly erudite fare, gradually shifted

focus to include more widely accessible publications concerned with political and

societal issues. In part, this led to the third development that served the creation of the

bourgeois public sphere, the rise of centers of sociability (Thompson, 1993, p. 176).

Typified by coffee houses and salons, spaces were increasingly available for which

functioning members of the public sphere (i.e. the literate, academics, nobility) could

gather as equals to discuss relevant issues. This then constitutes Habermas' ideal public

sphere, the conditions by which "…a rational-critical debate about public issues

conducted by private persons willing to let arguments and not statuses determine

decisions" (Calhoun, 1992, p.1).

This ideal however has little purchase on the current situation. Habermas notes

four structural spaces which have served to make "low-quality" rational discourse

endemic to current constitutions of the public sphere (Whipple, 2005, p.166). As

Sociologist Mark Whipple comments:

They are the manipulation on the part of mass media structures, expert cultures that
alienate citizens from any connection to formal democratic processes of decision making,

massive bureaucratization and rationalization resulting from the rise of corporate organizations, and the increased economic reliance on consumerism (p. 166).

At the conclusion of *Structural Transformation,* Habermas had little to be optimistic about. The public sphere appeared to be unalterably compromised—the ideal of an effective participatory democracy simply seemed unworkable within a global culture increasingly directed by the managerial rationality of mass-market capitalism. Yet as Whipple notes, Habermas remained normatively committed to both concepts of democracy and the public sphere as symbolic spaces ripe with emancipatory potential (p. 167). But, as Whipple asks, "Where then was Habermas to go?"(p. 167).

In order to reconcile this normative project, Habermas was forced to revise some of his initial conceptualizations. As cultural theorists John Downey and Natalie Fenton note, "Rather than seeing the public as cultural dupes in the manner of Adorno and Horkheimer, [Habermas] now emphasizes the 'pluralistic internally much differentiated mass public' (1992: 438) that is able to resist mass-mediated representations of society and create its own political interventions"(2003, p. 187). There were a number of important factors that inspired such a revision: The revolutions of Eastern and Central Europe in the late 1980's, the rise of decentralized media structures such as low powered radio and community news groups, and the dialogue of critiques waged against Habermas' initial work (Downey and Fenton, 2003, p. 187). The latter category, critiques of Habermas, comprises an important body of work in democratic theory. I will now turn my attention to a sampling of that work.

*The critiques of Habermas: Towards an ideal democracy*

Of the considerable body of work emanating from Habermas' work in the form of critique, none has been as robust as Nancy Fraser's. As Goode notes, "Fraser's reading

of Habermas has done perhaps more than any other to open up productive lines of inquiry...it is also one of the most frequently cited critiques..." (2005, p. 38). While Fraser identifies significant short-comings in Habermas' original work, she nonetheless argues that his idea of the public sphere "...is indispensable to critical social theory and democratic political practice...the same goes for urgently needed constructive efforts to project alternative models of democracy" (1992, p. 111).

An initial problem Fraser identifies with Habermas' ideal public sphere is the degree to which the model relies on an equality of the persons engaged in debate. Fraser argues that by insisting upon a "rational" discussion that involves a certain "equality" of participants, Habermas' ideal public sphere is in fact premised upon a number of significant exclusions (1992, p. 113). The very constituent elements of Habermas' ideal public sphere, rational debate among peers within bourgeois salons, Fraser argues, necessarily privileges a masculinized, bourgeois discourse that excludes, for example, women, working classes, etc. "A discourse of publicity touting accessibility, rationality, and the suppression of status hierarchies is itself deployed as a strategy of distinction" (Fraser, 1992, p. 115). Furthermore, "...declaring a deliberative arena to be a space where extant status distinctions are bracketed and neutralized is not sufficient to make it so" (Fraser, 1992, p. 115).

Rather than focus on *the* public sphere, Fraser argues for a conceptual and practical paradigm that incorporates notions of *multiple* and *counter* competing publics, Fraser labels these "subaltern counterpublics" (1992, p. 123). There are a number of relevant differences which need to be more fully articulated between Habermas' public sphere and Fraser's subaltern counterpublic sphere. Firstly, within Fraser's framework,

differences and inequalities in status between members of a discursive group are not bracketed out, as they are in Habermas' model. Instead, Fraser argues that in fact differences and inequalities should be "unbracketed" in order to accentuate them, thereby infusing such issues and concerns into public debate. Secondly, Fraser contends that the strict dichotomy, as proposed by Habermas, between the private realm and the public realm (here I use the word to connote the government) would in fact be detrimental to society in general and the public discourse specifically. Private matters (i.e. those of economic concern and those of the personal, domestic purview) must have purchase within public discussions, otherwise such concerns are prone to being institutionalized, that is to say rationalized within specialized state institutions. If such concerns, as Habermas would have it, were shunted from public dialogue, they would be funneled directly into various appendages of the government, which as Fraser argues, would "...serve[s] to perpetuate class (and usually also gender and race) dominance and subordination" (Fraser, p. 132).

A final aspect of Fraser's critique relevant to this discussion involves Habermas' insistence upon a strict delineation between the state and the public. Within this paradigm, Fraser argues that various citizen publics could only ever at best be *weak publics* "...whose deliberative practice consists exclusively in opinion formation and does not also encompass decision making" (Fraser, p. 134). Fraser argues that the emergence of parliamentary democracies, while representing a useful move towards more thorough democratization of society, also created a category of *strong public* (i.e. the parliament itself) (p. 134). Sovereign parliaments represent a loci of deliberation in which members of (that particular) public sphere are bestowed with the legal

authority/legitimacy to make decisions, that is to say, to enact legislation. Put another

way, "...parliament [is] the site for the discursive authorization of the use of state power"

(Fraser, p.134). Fraser is admittedly uncertain as to how exactly these weak, subaltern

publics should or can function as a check on state power (strong publics). However

Fraser is clear in explaining the intentions of her argumentation.

The bourgeois conception of the public sphere...is not adequate...What is needed, rather, is a postbourgeois conception that can permit us to envision a greater role for (at least some) public spheres than mere autonomous opinion-formation removed from authoritative decision making. A postbourgeois conception would enable us to think about strong *and* weak publics, as well as about various hybrid forms. (p. 136).

Critical theorist Chantal Mouffe offers a slightly different critique of Habermas'

public sphere relevant to the discussion. In addition, she offers another strain of critical

inquiry, not strictly associated with issues of the public sphere but which will nonetheless

serve the discussion. The success of Habermas' public sphere, and to a degree Fraser's

multiple-publics, hinges upon the possibility of rational debate within a deliberative

framework. Again, both models rely somewhat upon consensus—that is to say that there

is a certain expectation that the process of rational deliberation will yield a consensus

within the particular public. Mouffe, however argues that "...the belief in the possibility

of a universal rational consensus has put democratic thinking on the wrong track" (2005,

p. 3). For Mouffe, consensus remains a necessary element of any democratic project (p.

113), however she argues that models like Habermas' over-emphasize the role of

consensus on the one hand and obscure the effects of it on the other. While relying too

much upon consensus, such models may serve to reproduce inequalities, and serve to

legitimize a hegemonic force. Thus, Mouffe argues:

We have to accept that every consensus exists as a temporary result of a provisional hegemony, and that it always entails some form of exclusion. The ideas that power could

be dissolved through a rational debate and that legitimacy could be based on pure rationality are illusions which can endanger democratic institutions (2000, p. 104).

In other words, Mouffe cautions that too great a reliance on consensus can result in negating the possibilities of a radical kind of pluralism. Counter-publics, within the rational consensus model, risk being fully neutralized within the official discourse of the state, where dissent is managed and marginalized. Thus, Mouffe argues for an "agnostic" approach to politics, which recognizes both the fact that rendering a full consensus between publics is unlikely and that every decision made means that others are excluded. Though within Mouffe's model, these excluded desires are encouraged to remain actively engaged within the decision making process, recognizing the fact that the current decision is merely a "temporary result of a provisional hegemony" (2000 p. 4).

Mouffe contends that other democratic theorists fail to recognize the near impossibility of consensus because these same theorists fail to recognize the inherent conflict within the model of liberal democracy, which Mouffe labels the "democratic paradox" (2000). "On the one hand we have the liberal tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defense of human rights and the respect of individual liberty" writes Mouffe, "on the other the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty" (2000, p. 3).

As Mouffe argues, there is no compulsory relation between these two traditions, but rather only a socially constructed relationship articulated through western history. These two competing logics are "incompatible in the last instance"(2000, p. 5), and can only ever be temporarily reconciled in hegemonic dominance of one or the other. Currently, for example, it seems quite clear that neo-liberalism, and a particularly virulent strain at that, occupies the role of the hegemonic.

Failing to recognize the incompatibility of liberty and equality (or liberal democracy), and thus failing to understand that only hegemonic forms of stabilization can ever exist between the two means to deny the possibility of alternatives. Accepting the current structure as a naturalized fact means to dispose of "...a legitimate form of expression for the resistance against the dominant power relations" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 5). This is precisely the kind of surrender the left has accepted, such that so called "progressive politics" are "... no more than the justification by social democrats of their capitulation to a neo-liberal hegemony whose power relations they will not challenge, limiting themselves to making some little adjustments in order to help people cope..."(Mouffe, 2000, pp. 5-6).

Norberto Bobbio, another contemporary of Gramsci, claims that the litmus test for any modern democracy should be not "...who votes, but where they can vote..."(Quoted in Hirst, 1994 p. 23). Chantal Mouffe echoes this sentiment when arguing "...the political cannot be restricted to a certain type of institution, or envisioned as constituting a specific sphere or level of society" (Mouffe, 2003 p. 3). The central concern here, as it is with Gramsci's revolutionary party, is not a re-making of democracy, but rather a re-conceptualization of where democracy is allowed to happen. Work-place democracy, for example, premised on the ethic of collective rights and action is a potential strategy to empower social actors. Fundamentally, this involves the democratization of society, (i.e. support of Fraser's counter-publics, Gramsci's organic intellectuals) a process by which democratic principles are made to infiltrate various social and cultural spaces subjugated by non-democratic centers of power.

While Bobbio posits that this process begins with the individual, imbued with liberty against the state and reconciled in society by democracy, Mouffe interprets Bobbio's insistence on the individual as an obstacle to expanding the sites of democracy.

It is necessary to theorize the individual, not as a monad...that exists prior to and independently of society, but rather as a site constituted by an ensemble of 'subject positions', inscribed in a multiplicity of social relations, the member of many communities and participant in a plurality of collective forms of identification" (Mouffe, 2003, p. 97).

Breaking from the traditional liberal democratic notion of the individual allows for a collectivist reconciliation between liberalism and socialism, of which associational socialism is a manifestation. Paul Hirst argues that "If socialism has any relevance today, it is in raising the two linked questions of the democratic governance of private corporations and the democratization of state administrations" (Hirst, 1994, p. 98). Associational socialism encourages the organization of social groups into small and multiply determined, overlapping units which are able to challenge hierarchical and autocratic forms of power. This distributes the centers of power throughout society, as Mouffe argues, "Elections themselves do not guarantee democracy....A multiplicity of associations with a real capacity for decision making and a plurality of centers of power are needed to resist effectively the trends towards autocracy..." (p. 100).

It is a central contention of this effort that, as Chantal Mouffe has argued, "...the political cannot be restricted to a certain type of institution, or envisioned as constituting a specific sphere or level of society" (Mouffe, 2003, p. 3). Fraser's critique of Habermas, and her insistence on multiple counter publics also is a necessary move towards a more elaborate democracy. Though at the same time, I argue, as does Antonio Gramsci, that there does exist a historical articulation of aggregated desires, political will, etc., which is the political party, "...the first cell in which there comes together germs of a collective

will tending to become universal and total"(Gramsci, 1971, p. 129). Gramsci's proletariat party, constituted in the integral, or highest moral capacity, is intended to unite an entire spectrum of the population in various organizational forms. The party is thus the starting point, a means by which to ignite and encourage democratization of other social spaces. In other words, the proletariat party is specifically designed to create and encourage the conditions of associational socialism.

A central argument of this thesis is that the NDP has failed to resist the imposition of the neo-liberal order. They have reverted to an instrumentalist managerialism motivated by the politics of 'who gets what, when and how'. While these considerations are necessary, this thesis will implicitly argue they cannot be the sole considerations of an ostensibly progressive political party. It will be explicitly argued that the contemporary NDP has communicated a distorted variety of progressive politics and that they have done so in ways that represent a perversion of that same proud tradition. Put quite simply, the party will continue to be an ineffective combatant of neo-liberalism should they continue to communicate what they are communicating, and doing it in the ways they are currently doing it. The following section will detail the method by which the project will proceed and will outline the historical periods and documents to be addressed in subsequent chapters.

*Chapter Three*

*Method and epistemology*

There are four central aspects of this project which have determined the methodological approach required for its success. First and most importantly, this project is fundamentally critical, and thus by definition is attempting to be transformative. I am attempting to critique an existing institutional structure, and the social relations which determine it, with the hopes of arriving at a set of precepts by which progressive political parties may be made to become more justly organized, more thoroughly progressive and ultimately more effective. This requires a method which is critically oriented, one which challenges essentialism and implicit assumptions left unchecked by many methods. Secondly, this project is employing a broad definition of communication. In addition to conceiving of communication in traditional terms, the project will also use Nancy's notion of community as communication and Carey's notion of culture as communication. The project seeks to move away from 'effects' based research, and towards an understanding of political communication which is more cognizant of non-mass mediated forms of party communication. A third consideration, following from this, is that this project will attempt analysis of a wide variety of 'communicative' events, documents and moments. This demands a method that is suitable for the examination of both institutional structures as well as social relations, and which understands such communicative modalities as constructed from both. Finally, this project will address communiqués from various historical moments, thus requiring a method which encourages the researcher to situate the analysis within the broader socio-cultural environment of various historically specific periods.

Given the various goals of this project, and the various normative assumptions which guide those goals, I will proceed with two separate, although heavily related methods of inquiry. The first, based largely on Vincent Mosco's "reworking of political economy" (2006) provides a means by which critical research on social and structural relations may be responsibly done. The second, discourse analysis as understood by Fairclough (1992), offers a method with which to engage dutifully and critically with various texts, techniques and producers. The following will more fully explain both of the proposed methods, and will begin with the former.

Implicit to the very nature of a critical method based broadly on the Marxist dialectic is the notion that the method itself should be continually scrutinized and evaluated in order to ensure its continued relevance to the field of critical research. Critical theorists Lee Artz, Steve Macek and Dana L. Cloud write, "Marxism as a method of investigation and guide to action must be continually tested, retested, and updated according to the concrete conditions confronted" (Artz et al., 2006, p. 6). Thus, it is difficult to capture the totality of a critical method of this kind with one particular name or phrase. However, it will suffice to label the method to be discussed here as broadly within the political economy (PE) tradition. In order to convey more lucidly the scope of the method, it will be necessary to discuss the method in terms of its general philosophical thrust and its epistemological and ontological underpinnings.

Political economist Vincent Mosco broadly defines political economy as "…the study of control and survival in social life…" (2006, p. 88). He offers four "central qualities" (1993, 2006) that characterize the method. First, PE strives to understand the conditions of social change and historical transformation. Second, PE acknowledges and

attempts to incorporate the totality of society within its analysis. This inspires the often inter/trans/anti disciplinary nature of the PE field, and allows for analysis grounded in cultural, political, economic and social realms—and in fact strives, often, to theorize these realms as constitutive of a single whole. Thirdly, the method of PE is dedicated to a moral philosophy which seeks to extend the principles of democracy, equality and justice throughout all realms of social life, including the very process of intellectual work. And finally, the notion of praxis, or "...the fundamental unity of thinking and doing..." (Mosco, 2006, p. 90) orientes all work within the tradition of PE.

These then are the generalized guiding principals of the method. However, Mosco, in what he labels a "rethinking of political economy" (2006), offers a model for a renewed critical political economic method. According to Mosco's own rethinking, political economy[2] "...needs to be grounded in a realist, inclusive, constitutive, and critical epistemology" (Mosco, 2006, p. 95). Critical political economy (CPE) as a method can be considered realist in that it eschews the false dichotomy between social practices and concepts—that is to say, it is situated between ideographic approaches which argue solely in favor of the reality of ideas, on the one hand, and nomothetic approaches which hold that ideas are mere labels for the reality of human action, on the other (Mosco, 2006, p. 95). It is an inclusive method in that it dispenses with the notion of essentialism, and seeks to explain social practices and phenomenon within a variegated and diverse social field. Following from this, CPE is constitutive because it approaches the socio-cultural and political-economic realms as being mutually constructed, thereby

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[2] I will refer to this method throughout this essay as "Critical Political Economy" (CPE). While the use of the word "critical" may seem redundant, within this context, it is used purposively to signal the difference between traditional political economy methods and the one discussed here, a distinction which will be made apparent throughout the body of this discussion.

recognizing the limits of simple causal determination. Finally, the epistemology of CPE is critical in that "…it sees knowledge as the product of comparisons with other bodies of knowledge and with social values" (Mosco, 2006, p. 95). Thus, research conducted with the method of CPE can provide contrast to, and critique of, bodies of knowledge constructed by means of more traditional (read hegemonic) methods, while simultaneously providing a framework by which the method itself may be challenged.

"Ontology", writes Mosco, "is an approach to the meaning of being that, in general, distinguishes between seeing things as either structure or process" (2006, p. 96). Mosco argues that traditional political economy was characterized by an over-emphasis on the structures of social life (i.e. business firms, government). In contrast, CPE seeks an expanded ontology which situates issues of social change, social process and social relations more central to the method of analysis. Within the method of CPE there is an a priori understanding that social change is ubiquitous, evident in the fact that institutional structures are continually changing and adapting. Thus, as Mosco argues, "…it is therefore more useful to develop starting points that characterize processes rather than simply to identify relevant institutions" (2006, p. 96). This is not to suggest that CPE is an anti-materialist method, but rather that as a method, it is more attuned to the subtleties and nuances of existing social life than traditional political economy has been.

The above mentioned epistemological and ontological considerations aid in describing the method of CPE. However it remains necessary to briefly discuss the historical development of the cultural studies tradition in order to better understand the confluent nature of CPE. The following will illustrate the philosophical roots of the

method, as well as highlight the important contributions other traditions of critical theory have made to CPE.

The work of the Frankfurt School marks a notable shift in the ontological orientation of the early Marxist dialectic. The members all but inaugurated critical theories and methods towards the study of mass communication and culture. (Kellner, 1997, p. 13). As Kellner notes,

During the 1930s, the Frankfurt School developed a critical and transdisciplinary approach to culture and communications studies, combining critique of political economy of the media, analysis of texts, and audience reception studies of the social and ideological effects of mass culture and communications. (Kellner, 1997, p. 13).

The School's attempt to revive the critically reflective and dialectical nature of Marxist method not only retained, but also was explicitly determined by, Marx's epistemology. (Warren, 1984, p. 147). The principal importance of an updated Marxism was understood as the retention of a dialectical theory of society and a critical method for scrutinizing and altering society, not the development of a rigid and deterministic political application. It was a reaction to, and rejection of, the totalitarian application of dogmatic Marxism, and a return to the critical methods and traditions upon which modern political economy was built.

Kellner, in addition to noting the influence the Frankfurt School had on political economic analysis, also argues that the scholars of the school "…produced an early model of cultural studies" (1997, p. 13). These early critical theorists utilized an ontology and method familiar to modern political economy, such as the analysis of mass-mediation, the commodity and structures of power relations. However, as Kellner argues, their analysis was perhaps too totalizing, "…media culture was never as massified and homogeneous as in the Frankfurt School model" (1997, p. 15).

A central critique of the Frankfurt School came from what would become known as British Cultural Studies. Initiated by scholars such as Richard Hogart, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, the work of the early British Cultural Studies was concerned with conserving and protecting working-class culture against assaults from commercialized mass culture. According to Kellner, their work was "...part of a socialist and working-class-orientated project that assumed that the industrial working class was a force of progressive social change..." (1997, p. 15). In a sense then, the work of the early British cultural studies theorists was an attempt to re-valorize the working class as imbued with the potential to effect emancipatory change.

These developments led to the creation of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1963 (the Birmingham School) by Richard Hogart and Stuart Hall. The Birmingham School would, through a slight shift in ontology spurred by internal debate and in response to social, political and cultural ferment of the 1960s and 1970s, develop means by which subjective response and interpretive action could be theorized and analyzed. In addition, the Birmingham School theorists were among the first to employ the methods of class analysis, characteristic of the early political economists, toward other, culturally relevant sites of domination. As Kellner notes,

The Birmingham group came to focus on the interplay of representations and ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity and nationality in cultural texts, including media culture. They were among the first to study the effects of newspapers, radio, television, film and other popular cultural forms on audiences. (1997, p. 17).

As a discipline then, Cultural Studies poses a broad based critique of positivism, while defending a more open approach to the inclusion of subjectivity and the social creation of knowledge within the processes of analysis and theorizing. In addition, Cultural Studies is inclusive in its approach to identity politics and does not necessarily

determine class to be privileged over any other culturally bound construct. It is the confluence of these tenets of Cultural Studies with the more structural-materialist tradition of political economy that create the potential for Mosco's rethinking of political economy, or what I have referred to as Critical Political Economy.

CPE as a method then can be best understood as a political economy analysis that is inclusive of some aspects of the cultural studies tradition. As mentioned at the beginning of this effort, it is difficult to approach the definition of this kind of method in any kind of conclusive way. Implicit to the very nature of the method is a built-in tendency to continually challenge the fundamental underpinnings of it, and the desire to search for more just and equitable rearticulations of it. However, Vincent Mosco offers a concise summation of the degree to which a critical political economy analysis and method can benefit from a cultural studies analysis.

Even as it takes on a philosophical approach that is open to subjectivity and is more broadly inclusive, political economy insists on a realist epistemology that maintains the value of historical research, of thinking in terms of concrete social totalities, with a well-grounded moral philosophy, and a commitment to overcome the distinction between social research and social practices. Political economy departs from the tendency in cultural studies to exaggerate the importance of subjectivity, as well as the inclination to reject thinking in terms of historical practices and social wholes (2006, p. 104).

In many ways the above discussion is easily reconciled with Norman Fairclough's "multidimensional" (1992) or "analytic dualism" (2005) critical discourse analysis (CDA), and in the case of the work to be undertaken in the current project, provides a fine methodological companion. The following will begin with a somewhat abstracted discussion of Fairclough's method, and then conclude by laying out some concrete tools of discourse analysis to be used within the body of this work.

Fairclough (1992) contends, "Discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations, and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations obtain" (p. 67). The strength of his methodological amalgam, his own brand of "multidimensional" discourse analysis, draws from his successful combining of language studies with critical social theory, and tempering the claim of each with a dialectical grounding. Thus in Fairclough's conception, neither texts (discourse) nor social reality can alone work to explain various social phenomena.

It is important that the relationship between discourse and social structure should be seen dialectically if we are to avoid the pitfalls of overemphasizing on the one hand the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand the construction of the social in discourse. The former turns discourse into a mere reflection of a deeper social reality, the latter idealistically represents discourse as the source of the social (P. 65).

Fairclough's emphasis on the dialectical is no coincidence—he has in fact argued that Marx was an early, unwitting discourse analyst (2000). And the method of CDA draws heavily from the critical posture of Marx's own work. Fundamentally, practitioners of critical discourse analysis assume the existence of unequal social relations which are perpetuated by those in society holding the balance of power. This unequal distribution of power (and thus justice, goods, etc.) is in part, perpetuated by discourse itself.

According to Fairclough, there are three discrete, though related entities which are relevant to the method of discourse analysis, "Any discursive 'event' (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice" (1992, p. 4). He arrives at this conclusion by combining the scholarship of two different, though not unrelated sub-fields of discourse

analysis, as mentioned above, that of language studies with that of critical social theory. In the former case, discourse is largely understood in terms of texts (written or spoken), and analyzed at the sentence, grammatical and lexical level, with some heed being paid to limited "contextual" elements, such as "newspaper discourse", "classroom discourse", etc. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3). While in the latter case, and here Michel Foucault is the exemplar, discourse is used to refer to various means by which knowledge and social practices are organized and structured.

Discourse, here, is understood as not only a reflection of social relations and realities, but in fact is a constitutive element of them. Here, various discourses are mobilized, employing language, texts and symbolic forms, towards the maintenance of particular social relations. Of key importance here is the emphasis on historical change as a site of analysis urged by CDA, which reveals the ways in which different discourses collide and combine during various socio-cultural moments, thus creating new power structures, new social relations, and new discourses.

Fairclough usefully employs Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a way of theorizing historical change in relation to manifestations of power (as articulated in various discourses) and also as a way of theorizing discourse as contributing to and being shaped by processes of change (1992, p. 92). Fairclough explains hegemony in terms of the "…articulation, disarticulation and rearticulation…" (1992, p. 93) of power (or "elements") in a dialectical process which is never complete, and always, more or less so, unstable. Thus, the study of discourse can reveal "…the contradictory and unstable equilibrium which constitutes a hegemony" (1992, p. 93) while the "…articulation and

rearticulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one at stake in hegemonic struggle" (1992, p. 93).

Discourse as a unit of study, and critical discourse analysis as a method is an effective means of critical social research, because "Discursive practice...involves processes of text production, distribution and consumption, and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors. For example, texts are produced in specific ways in specific social contexts..." (1992, p. 78). Thus, subjecting various NDP party texts to CDA will draw attention to various actors, social relations and historical circumstances which played a part in the production of the text, which can then be mobilized towards discerning the character of the party at given historical moments. In addition, the analysis can confidently comment on how various documents fit into the unending struggle for power within hegemony.

As Rogers (2004) contends, CDA researchers,

...are concerned with critical theory of the social world, the relationship of language and discourse in the construction and representation of the social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret and explain such relationships (p. 3).

An initial step in CDA is to consider the genres employed to mobilize a particular discourse. This brings into question various kinds of discourse (i.e. "official policy statement", "public feedback", etc.) and makes available for scrutiny questions surrounding why a particular genre was chosen and what that means in the process of power mediation. Following from this is the analytic category of framing. This seeks to make sense of, at the meta level, the general tone of the discourse, and at the micro level, various lexical, sentence and word choices. Closely related to framing are the notions of foregrounding (or emphasizing) and back-grounding (de-emphasizing). Here the concern is with what the producer of the discourse has chosen to privilege and what s/he has

chosen to neglect. A final consideration here is the issue of the ways in which identities (particularly political identities) are formed through discourse (see for example, Gordon, 2004). As Gordon (2004) argues, political identities are shaped during complex interactions, and utilize various power relations in a perpetually existing process.

With the above considerations in mind, this thesis will set out to critically engage various NDP communicative strategies in various historical moments in order to highlight various shortcomings and distortions in both the message of the party and means by which they communicate it. It is prudent to note here that while CDA will be used in the following chapters, it will not be mechanistically applied. Rather, for reasons of style and flow, as well as for practical reasons of working with archived documents which cannot be photocopied, this project will avoid directly mentioning every instance at which CDA is used. The project will also be concerned with distilling from the analysis moments and methods of social democratically inspired communications—successes, as it were, in the history of CCF/NDP. The concluding chapter of this work, informed by the ones which precede it, will offer precepts towards an alternative strategy for message creation and dissemination for social democratic parties. The bulk of this thesis will consist of a consideration of four crucial periods in the history of the NDP in order to arrive at the above mentioned precepts. Each of the periods to be addressed are briefly introduced below.

***Relevant moments/documents in the history of the CCF/NDP***

1) In order to illustrate the conservative shift of the party throughout time, an historical account of the message and strategy for constructing and delivering of the message(s) beginning with the founding of the New Democratic Party will be offered. It

will be argued that this transition from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) to the NDP represented a fundamental shift in the party's overall orientation to society. Various communicative documents will be considered here including the *Regina Manifesto 1932*, the *Winnipeg Declaration 1956* as well as documents which emerged from the creation of the contemporary NDP in 1961. I will discussion the processes by which each document was created as well develop an argument regarding the kind of political community each sought to communicate. This discussion will be framed within a consideration of the anti-communist tenor of the period.

2) Next, I will discuss the case of the Waffle and will highlight the ways in which the faction attempted to fashion a message alternative to that of the NDP proper. I will also discuss various strategies developed by the Waffle which were meant to offer an alternative means of constructing and communicating that message. Documents to be considered in this section include the *Waffle Manifesto*. I will illustrate the striking contrast between the NDP and Waffle in terms of the message and the strategy of its creation and dissemination promoted by each. It will be argued that the ultimate dismantling of the Waffle by the central authority of the party, and the draconian measures taken by the NDP proper signaled a significant moment of neo-liberal complicity by the party, which would act as an ominous moment for the future of the party. This discussion will be framed within a consideration of the remnant anti-communist sentiment of the time as well as the burgeoning neo-liberal ethic developing during the era.

3) Thirdly, I will discuss the years of neo-liberal consolidation within the western world, an era dominated by infamous personalities such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald

Reagan and Brian Mulroney. Here I will consider various NDP strategies drafted to compete against the tenor of the day generally, while highlighting the party's response to such relevant policies such as the Free Trade Agreement.. I will also discuss the various ways in which the NDP communicated through the kind of community they fostered during the era. The discussion will be framed within a consideration of the cementing of a neo-liberal hegemony.

4) Finally, I will consider the contemporary period (from roughly 1989-2006), and will focus on the NDP's 2006 electoral platform, *Getting Results for People.* In addition I will highlight the continued calls for "party renewal" which originated from both within the party and outside of it, and will discuss the party's response to such calls. This discussion will be framed within a consideration of the neo-liberal dominance of the contemporary period.

*Chapter Four*
*The Transition of Social Democracy in Canada: From the CCF to the NDP.*

To begin the story of the contemporary New Democratic Party is to begin with its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which was born with the Calgary Program in 1932. And to begin the story of the CCF is to begin in the prairie provinces of the young years of the twentieth century. It is there that, as Seymour Lipset's (1950) classic study identified, a particular brand of agrarian socialism took hold, with a contingent of ideological and structural imperatives which would come to determine the early character of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Though to begin the story of the CCF is to necessarily make mention of its ultimate demise into the maw of political history. This analysis will begin there, and will detail the more credible theories waged to explain the ending of the CCF. My intention here is not necessarily to prove or disprove the relative merits of the various theories, though it is necessary to recount them in order to build the arguments of this study. I mean here to build a brief exposition of the details of each of the dominant theories regarding the "fall" of the CCF in order to advance a central argument of this study, which is that the party's communicative ecology, regardless of other variables, played a significant role in the founding party's ultimate break-up.

The "protest movement becalmed" (Zakuta, 1964) is by far the most prevalent of the theories used to explain the demise of the CCF as a competing political party in Canada (Young, 1969, Cross 1974). What lies at the centre of the argument is the contention that the CCF began as a mass-popular movement and eventually evolved into an oligarchic cadre party, virtually indistinguishable from the "old parties". Zakuta

argues "...the party underwent considerable changes in character during its life span. It began as a rather radical and spontaneous political movement but eventually developed much of the outlook and structure of the 'old parties'" (1964, p. 4).

This analysis relies heavily upon Robert Michel's "iron law of oligarchy" (1962) which argues for the inevitability of grass roots movements becoming institutionalized, and adopting a more centralized (oligarchic) internal organizational structure. Young (1969) elaborates the influence of Michel's law, "On the assumption that the prime function of a political party as organization is to win elections...a party will resemble its competitors because party competition tends to produce the optimum machinery" (p. 140). Thus, Michel's law predicts an ultimate homogeneity between competing political forces in terms of both structure, and to a lesser degree, message. Within the ranks of the more radical members of the CCF, becoming like the 'old parties' was tantamount to treason against the socialist project.

Another school of thought regarding the transformation of the CCF takes issue with the position of the 'protest movement becalmed' tradition. One such argument, popularized by Gerald Caplan (1973) suggests that the CCF inflicted considerable damage to the cause of social democracy by not abandoning their more radical tendencies soon enough. The party failed to distance itself from, or more fully clarify the more ideologically charged sentiments of the *Regina Manifesto,* and thereby alienated a large percentage of the Canadian electorate. John Boyko offers a helpful summation of the argument, "This ideological confusion, it is argued, could have been addressed, but it was coupled with an absence of an efficient, centralized, professional, and adequately funded organization, rendering it impossible for the party to maneuver" (2006, p. 13).

A second position in disagreement with the 'protest movement becalmed' tradition is that of Allan Whitehorn (1992). Whitehorn's critique is chiefly concerned with the chronology of events as detailed by the 'movement' theorists. He argues that the CCF was very much a political party (with oligarchic tendencies) during the 1930s. "Indeed, it was founded as a party precisely to overcome the pitfalls of the protest movements and quasi-parties of the 1920s" (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 24). Ultimately, Whitethorn's critique is an attempt at reinvigorating the historiography of the CCF/NDP, which he argues has been far too reliant upon the 'movement' thesis. "Although the 'protest movement becalmed' framework can be useful", Whitehorn concedes, "it should not be belabored. The 'iron law of oligarchy' should not become a fetish" (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 29).

John Boyko, with his own (and also the most recent) theory rightly argues that much of the scholarship addressing the issue of the demise of the CCF implicitly argues "…the party's downfall was due primarily to actions that it took or failed to take. That the party's collapse was thus its own fault" (2006, p. 14). Boyko continues, "Missing in this conclusion and analysis is a substantive assessment of the actions of those who had undertaken to destroy the party" (2006, p. 14). Boyko's central, and convincing claim is that a 'hurricane', a concerted and organized propaganda effort by powerful business and media entities were ultimately effective in forcing failure upon the party, compelling it to re-build itself as the NDP.

Though the above represent nuanced theories which focus on distinctive variables to explain the reasons for the demise of the party, there are a number of relevant threads which unite each with the other. Firstly, each of the theories does allow (Whitehorn

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somewhat reluctantly) that the party did undergo significant ideological and structural

changes with the adoption of the NDP. Secondly, it is clear that each agrees (at least

implicitly) upon the fact that the party, in some capacity, failed to communicate with both

its membership and the wider general public in ways adequate to keeping the original

party afloat. While many of the above theories do address some of the structural changes

which occurred within the party throughout its existence, and do attend to outside

influences (in the case of Boyko's work), what remains under-analyzed is the

communicative ecology produced by the CCF during its tenure as a social democratic

force in Canadian politics. The following will narrate the rise and fall of the CCF,

cognizant of the above theories, but will do so with an eye specifically on communicative

aspects of the CCF.

### *The making of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation*

It is clear that the CCF was, at the beginning, a federation of discrete political

movements, with a clear political project. The opening sentence of the *Regina

Manifesto*[3] reads,

> The CCF is a federation of organizations whose purpose is the establishment in
> Canada of a Co-operative Commonwealth in which the principle regulating production,
> distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of
> profits (Original document reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 19).

The original name for the party agreed upon by delegates at the founding

convention in Calgary in 1932 was The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation

(Farmer, Labour, Socialist). The three terms included parenthetically illustrate the degree

to which the early CCF was attempting to knit together disparate, disaffected groups,

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[3] The *Regina Manifesto* came approximately one year after the *Calgary Programme*. While the *Calgary Programme* set out general precepts for the CCF, the *Regina Manifesto* articulated a developed ideological and policy-orientated platform. It was adopted by the party at the first national convention in July of 1932.

which were not necessarily in agreement on all fronts. There were among the founding

members of the group those not willing to call themselves socialists, and even among the

socialists of the group difference abounded as to what exactly was meant by the term

(Young, 1999, p. 194). However, despite these differences, as Young writes,

> Because all shared the same misgivings about the capitalist system and the
> working of Canadian politics, they were able to forget their doctrinal differences and
> agree to work together to bring about changes that would improve their lot and that of
> Canadians in general (Young, 1999, p. 194).

While there most certainly was a desire to assemble a cogent, political force able

to employ the means of Parliament towards substantive change, (as Whitehorn suggests),

there were no intentions on behalf of the party architects to construct the party in a

familiar, centralized structure. Rather the CCF was meant to "...co-ordinate the activities

of the member organizations..." (CCF constitution, quoted in Young, 1969, p. 141). The

new party was to bring together distinct factions including farmer, labour and academic

groups, "...in a nation wide organization based on an alliance of what were essentially

movements" (Young, 1999, p. 193). There was, at the time of the party's formation, in

fact a very large, however unorganized, body of progressives all seeking in various ways

to effect socio-economic change.

Many such radicals can be traced back to the year 1919, the year of the Winnipeg

General Strike, when workers from the western provinces met in Calgary and established

the One Big Union. Many subsequent political activists were radicalized during the

prolonged strike, particularly during the most violent moments of "Bloody Saturday"

(June 21, 1919) during which Mounties on horseback used lethal force against civilian

populations. Echoes from the Winnipeg General strike carried over to the federal election

in 1921 during which the Progressive Party managed to win the second most seats in

Parliament. Though as Cross (1974) suggests, "...the progressive movement was a confused and ineffective grab-bag of a party. A smattering of genuine radicals sat uneasily with the bulk of the group, who were simply disgruntled liberals and conservatives" (p. 6). Of the group, two members stood out as "genuine radicals", J.S. Woodsworth and William Irvine, a posture which isolated them in Parliament. As Irvine once quipped in a sitting, "The Honorable Member for Centre Winnipeg [Woodsworth] is the leader of the group—and I am the group" (Cross, 1974, p. 7).

Irvine's assessment, however, was somewhat misleading. He may have been "the group" within Parliament, however much of the activity leading to the formation of the CCF was most certainly extra-parliamentary[4]. Successive waves of European settlers to the Canadian Prairies had brought along a developed critique of capitalism which manifest most prominently as agrarian radicalism and socialism. Lipset noted in *Agrarian Socialism*, "...Saskatchewan has the largest cooperative movement on the continent and more local governmental units than any other American rural state"(1968, p. 245).

During the 1940s, Lipset reports, there were between 40 000 and 60 000 different elected positions in rural Saskatchewan—at the time equaling "...approximately one position available for every two or three farmers" (Lipset, 1968, 245). Lipset attributes the mass participation and political activism of the early agrarian socialists to the fact that elected positions which directly effect the rural populations were ineligible for anyone not from a rural area. In other contexts studied by Lipset, this was not the case, "In many rural areas on this continent, the community institutions serving farmers are controlled by

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[4] Which is not to suggest that the popular (extra-parliamentary) movement had no interest in parliamentary action: As early as 1924 The Farmers Union were formally endorsing Woodsworth's efforts to nationalize the banks (Lipset, 1968, p. 101).

members of urban business professional groups and neighboring towns" (Lipset, 1968, p. 246). The result, not unpredictably, was lower levels of interest and participation in local governance. Significantly, however in the case of Saskatchewan, the structure of grass roots participation provided "…direct channels of communication between the mass of farmers and their leaders"(Lipset, 1968, p. 248).

Another key piece to the formation of the CCF was The League for Social Reconstruction (LSR). The LSR was first established in early 1932, and was comprised of mostly urban intellectuals from central-eastern Canada. The group's founding manifesto stated that they were to be "…an association of men and women who are working for the establishment in Canada of a social order in which the basic principle regulating production, distribution and service will be the common good rather than private profit" (*LSR Manifesto,* quoted in Young, 1969, p. 31). The LSR was in effect, the think tank of the CCF, though there was never a formal affiliation made between the party and the LSR. More importantly, perhaps, the LSR gave the agrarians a kind of urban respectability—a vehicle by which their radicalism could be introduced and communicated in palatable ways to progressive urbanites, whether public intellectuals or blue collar unionists. It is worth noting that the LSR had very little to do with the early ferment which led to the organization of a unified progressive political force. Having formed not until 1932, the LSR admitted freely, "…it was the farmers and workers themselves, not some group of 'academic theorists' from outside who created the movement…" (LSR *Social Planning for Canada,* quoted in Young, 1968, p. 70).

While finances were always a chronic problem for the newly formed party the CCF nonetheless managed to garner considerable popular support (Zakuta, 1964, p. 45).

This was in part an effect of the kind of excitement inspired by the novelty of a newly formed party. However, the increasing support, which possessed a particularly high level of fervency among members, can also be attributed to various structural patterns preferred by the party and by various organizational priorities it pursued.

Within the founding ranks of the party, there were competing ideas as to the appropriate structure of the new party. There was a minority of members who had been distrustful of the formation of a party of any kind, (Zakuta, 1964, p. 41) though of course such ideas could be dispensed of quite easily, as the entire project of the CCF was explicitly meant to create if not a party, at the very least a party-like organization. Others had favored a more centralized structure, however as Zakuta writes, the mass base of support in the prairie provinces ultimately ensured the adoption of "...the traditional prairie solution, a popular movement of such magnitude as to make peaceful and orderly change irresistible" (1964, p. 42).

Organizationally, the CCF tapped into existing infrastructure, established for the most part, by the agrarians in Saskatchewan.[5] Elsewhere, CCF clubs were initiated and brought into the communicative fold of the existing groups and associations. Regardless of the specifics of the formation, the goals of the groups were largely educational. Electoral aspirations and the procedure of getting votes was, at this point in the history of the CCF, secondary to the educational aspirations of the party. The main concern was to build various communities of people well instructed in the basic tenants of socialism. If success was had in this respect, the necessary votes would come.

In a telling letter to Arthur Mould in 1933, Woodsworth wrote,

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[5] It was not until 1941 that the Ontario CCF passed a resolution which required jurisdictions to establish formal riding associations (Zakuta, 1964, p. 56).

I agree with you that the *main purpose of the CCF is not to get votes*, that is to get votes at any cost. But we are here to get votes, and the only way to do so is to constantly recruit fresh groups of people....(italics mine, quoted in, Young, 1969, p. 179).

The emphasis for such recruitment was centered on the local level, (various clubs, associations, etc.) which the party granted considerable autonomy. The CCF's initial constitution set in place formal mechanisms which attempted to maximize local autonomy (and thus, participation) while also attempting to maintain a certain level of organizational cohesion. Zakuta writes,

They [the CCF] set up clubs in order to maximize the general membership's participation, required annual conventions to ensure its control, and limited the role of central bodies, composed of the representatives of the component units, to 'co-ordinating' or 'correlating' the activities of these units, which thereby retained considerable autonomy (Zakuta, 1964, p. 42).

The involved public, therefore, "...found the movement so close to the centre of their lives that no clear distinction existed between politics, sociability, entertainment and even work" (Zakuta, 1964, p. 53). The party was not simply an entity which arrived sporadically during election campaigns, but rather provided members with "...a way of life, like belonging to a church group" (Melnyk, 1989, p. 136). Other CCF group activities involved,

...lectures and book groups complete with reading lists and study guides along with cultural and social activities including theatrical productions, musical performances, choirs, songbooks, poetry recitals, picnics, dances, bazaars, card games and various sporting events and teams (Cooke, 2006, p. 5).

Much of the tenacity with which people identified with the party can be attributed to the degree to which the party architects emphasized their educational role. While the various groups, clubs and constituencies were given considerable autonomy to function as they wished, and given wide birth in terms of policy development around issues

pertinent to the community, the party did expect that members be well versed on the central tenants of CCF principles.

For example, William Irvine authored a widely dispersed booklet in 1934 entitled, *Co-operation or Catastrophe?* In it, Irvine clearly articulates the failings and contradictions of the capitalist system while extolling the benefits of co-operative based socialism. He uses no uncertain terms and was unabashed about his polemical use of the capitalism-socialism dichotomy. In one representative passage, Irvine characterizes the governmental response to the depression; "The word 'depression' is a mild means of describing what future history may regard as the most unintelligent response ever made by living creatures to a given situation" (Irvine, 1934, p. 2).

The first two CCF manifestos, *The Calgary Programme* (1932) and *The Regina Manifesto* (1933) provide further evidence as to the fervency of the party's educative zeal, captured nicely by Woodsworth in a Chairman's address, "Making converts—yes, after all that is our job—leading peole to seek a new way of living, the cooperative way through which alone a true world brotherhood may be established" (Quoted in Young, 1969, p. 180).

The *Calgary Programme* was in fact only a provisional document penned by an amalgamation of western labour parties (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 36), some of which would not join the CCF. The document is a mere two paragraphs, the first of which attempts to describe "What is the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation?" (*Calgary Programme,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 18). The second paragraph sets out an interim program which calls for "The establishment of a planned system of social economy for the

production, distribution and exchange of all goods and services" (*Calgary Programme,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 18).

The following year saw the unanimous adoption of the *Regina Manifesto* at the party's first national convention. This document was a much lengthier attempt by the party to set out its platforms and structure. It was both a thoroughly anti-capitalist document, and one which fit into the populist tradition of the CCF (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 43). As Whitehorn argues, "The Regina Manifesto is probably better known and more frequently cited than any other CCF-NDP manifesto, and for many Canadians it is the touchstone of Canadian socialism" (1992, p. 38).

In its opening remarks (second paragraph) the manifesto boldly states the party's plan:

We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based upon economic equality will be possible (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 19).

Citing the "…chaotic waste and instability…" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 19) of the capitalist order, made more stark by the desperation of the depression years, the manifesto set out plans for fundamental change towards a socialized economy, though the party did not believe such changes could legitimately be had through violence of any kind. "It is a democratic movement, a federation of farmer, labor and socialist organizations, financed by its own members and seeking to achieve its ends solely by constitutional methods" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 19).

Following the preamble, the manifesto continued on to detail fourteen specific issues relevant to the overall platform of the CCF. The first section, one not uncommon

to socialists efforts, detailed the planning aspirations of the party. They proposed to establish a National Planning Commission, staffed by a range of various experts meant to coordinate economic activities. The commission, however, would not work alone, but rather would be accountable to both the Cabinet as well as Managing Boards of various industries set up within the newly socialized economy. The goal of the planning structure was to ensure that "...planning shall be done, not by a small group of capitalist magnates in their own interest, but by public servants acting in the public interest and responsible to the people as a whole" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 20). In addition, the manifesto also proposed to socialize (at each level of government) transportation, electric power generation, communications, "...and all other industries and services essential to social planning"( *Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 20).

Other sections expected of a socialist document included segments on agriculture, socialization of finance, taxation and public finance, social ownership, labour and emergency planning meant to deal with the realities of the depression era. Despite the sweeping changes detailed, the document was clear in establishing that it was not a proposal for a heavy-handed transition to a socialized economy, "...we do not propose a policy of outright confiscation. What we desire is the most stable and equitable transition to the Co-operative Commonwealth" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 20).

The manifesto also contained more forward-looking sections which illustrate the programmatic depth the party had developed by this early stage. Included were sections on external trade and amendments to the British North American Act (now known as the Constitution Act, 1867), which incorporated most notably the abolition of the Senate. A

section on social justice outlined the party's plans to create a commission comprised of various mental health officials, social workers, and socially-minded jurists in order to re-work the justice system, "...to humanize the law and bring it into harmony with the needs of the people" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 23).

The document ended with a strongly worded missive;

No CCF Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full program of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 23).

Taken as inspiring to some and unduly polemical by others (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 43)[6] the statement nonetheless provided an accurate summation to what was a thoroughly, moderate socialist program. The manifesto as a whole sought to assuage the public of the fears conjured by socialist projects of the past, by maintaining that the transition would come peacefully or not at all, and that individual freedoms would remain a priority of the CCF, "We stand for full economic, political and religious liberty for all" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 23). The manifesto also communicated both the increased role of the public in their governance as well as the benefits to be had by such a project. It heralded a reasoned collectivist approach to governance, one which would pursue a policy of co-operative action in all spheres. In addition, the document was clearly intolerant of the unrestrained individualism of the market economy. The *Regina Manifesto* was a clarion, uncompromising call for socialism, which, however unfortunately, was paid little heed by the party by the 1940's, and was all but abandoned by the late 1950s.

### *The transformation of the CCF*

[6] M.J. Coldwell, the party's longest serving leader had described the final sentence of the manifesto as "...a millstone around his neck" (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 43).

The Federal election of 1935 came quickly for the newly formed party, and they contested seats in only 48% of ridings (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 72). Despite running in less than half of all ridings, the party still managed to garner 8.8% of the popular vote, and win spots for 7 representatives in Parliament (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 72). There was an almost immediate response by the party to strengthen its electoral aspirations. An initial and significant structural shift came during the party's fifth national convention in 1938. Seeking more centralized control over the party, the convention voted to abandon the confederation structure of organization in favor of a structure more similar to the Liberal and Conservative parties (Young, 1969, p. 148). The convention also passed an amendment which stipulated that no provincial or federal candidate would be granted official status as a CCF candidate without formal party endorsement (Zakuta, 1964, p. 55).

Further centralization took place during the 1940 convention which granted more authority for the national chapter over the provincial chapters and decreed that any conflict between the national and provincial chapters would be resolved in favor of the former (Zakuta, 1964, p. 148). By 1943 the national office was instructing that all provincial documents (executive and council meeting minutes, educational literature, etc.) be sent to the national office. 1943 also saw the call for a 'publicity director' (Zakuta, 1964, p. 64), which marks a concerted shift in discourse from the previous emphasis on 'education'. As early as 1947 this change would have direct influence on the ways in which the party itself began to conflate publicity with education. In a letter from December 16, 1947, Donald MacDonald, in his capacity as 'Publicity Director', wrote,

Our publicity department is not organized along orthodox lines. As my aspiring title indicates, publicity or information is bunched together with education. The latter, of course, is directly [sic] chiefly to the movement itself; though not exclusively so (MacDonald, p. 7).

The party further curtailed the expression and communication of local autonomy in 1950 by ratifying a policy which demanded that the national party have editorial control over all provincial literature and party newspapers, while also granting the national executive with disciplinary powers vis-à-vis the provincial chapters (Zakuta, 1964, p. 149). By 1952, the national executive council determined that it should be the sole drafter of election programs, abandoning the traditional convention discussion and ratification of electoral platforms, during which representatives from local constituents and member clubs were given fair say in policy development.

The effect of these efforts at centralization necessarily left more power—not only effective, but perceived as well—in the hands of the party elite. As Young comments, "The party was ruled by a benevolent oligarchy that exerted more influence than the structure of the party implied" (1969, p. 156). This of course meant that increasingly, the possibility of local members being able to effect substantive change in their lives (through the party) became more and more remote. It is not then coincidental that, as National Party Secretary David Lewis wrote in 1946, "...we must face the fact that the dynamic which put us into the Major League three years ago appears to have petered out" (Quoted in Young, 1969, p. 152).

In addition to the structural changes taking place within the party, there was also a change in the party's literature.[7] The period from 1938 on through to the ultimate

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[7] Evidence of a softening of party rhetoric (and socialist philosophy) can been seen in documents from as early as 1945. A pamphlet entitled *Evolution vs Revolution* argues with a scientific authority that "Public Ownership is Evolution", thereby shielding the party from any accusation of wonton ideological

foreclosure of the party (which, for all intents and purposes was in 1958) saw a legion of

party literature released, the bulk of which now centered on election campaigns. But in

contrast to the earlier literature, characterized by gripping pieces such as William Irvine's

*Co-operation or Catastrophe?* (1934) much of the post-1938 literature was suggested to

be less than inspirational. A report assessing the CCF propaganda in 1945 contained

such comments as "The CCF propaganda is dull" (No author, 1945, p. 1) and "We regret

to report that your pamphlets are written in the ponderous, crushingly dull consciously

careful style of college these" (No author, 1945, p. 1). Although there were still critical

writings published by the party during this era, such as Watt Hugh McCollum's *Who*

*Owns Canada?* (1947), the bulk of which were certainly much more arousing and critical

than the literature of the contemporary NDP (as we will see in subsequent chapters), there

was a measured scale back in socialist rhetoric, culminating in the publication of the

considerably less socialist-inspired *Winnipeg Manifesto* in 1956. Certainly the moderated

literature was in part the response of a party attempting to distance itself from the perils

of Communist association during the Cold War era. While the paranoia of McCarthyism

seemed to have never taken as firm a grip on Canadian society as it did in American

society, there still remained an undercurrent of its sentiment. The period also saw a

decline in the party's support (tolerance) for various affiliate communities. The Co-

operative Commonwealth Youth Movement (CCYM), formed in the summer of 1934,

declaring "revolt" to be its watchword (Young, 1969, p. 261). The CCYM almost

immediately began serving common causes with the Communist Party of Canada, with

whom the CCF had always maintained a wary relationship with at best. However, at

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zeal. The same leaflet proclaims that "Socialism Supports Individual Ownership", an emphasis which
seems to pander to potential voters of a more conservative persuasion.

least initially, the party tolerated the CCYM's activism as Woodsworth deemed such ancillary group activity a way of staying in the "daily struggle" during the CCF's move towards moderation (Young, 1969, p. 265).

The CCYM produced its own publications, with partial funding from the CCF, and during the years 1947-1949 produced a national monthly newsletter called *Horizon!* (CCF-CCYM, 1949, p.1). In 1949 an official commission was struck by the CCF to strategize ways in which to strengthen the CCYM. In a memorandum to provincial executives about the meetings, David Lewis wrote,

> At recent meetings the national body of the both the CCF and CCYM have given much thought to the need for and problem of building a stronger youth movement. The need to do this becomes increasingly greater as the CCF itself grows older. New adherents and new blood are essential to further growth, and there can be no better source than a vigorous youth movement (Lewis, 1949).

However, Lewis' comments can be read as somewhat disingenuous[8] given that by 1955, the CCYM had bottomed out in terms of national membership, the chapter in British Columbia was defunct, and in his position as CCYM representative Cliff Scotton was compelled to write,

> Some well-worn phrases have been uttered in the past in relation to the difficulties of the CCYM, but I feel that it is necessary to reiterate that the movement as a whole must consider whether or not it wants to continue having a youth movement (Scotton, 1955).

With an increasingly centralized structure, a scale-back in socialist literature (and orientation) and lessening support for various affiliate community organizations, the CCF identity, and its relationship to citizens were becoming less clear. The relative economic calm of the 1950s, and the party's increasing comfort with the newly emerging tenants of liberalism demanded that the party lay out a new program to replace what they perceived

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[8] As will be explained in subsequent chapters, Lewis, along with his son, would help to dismantle another youth-orientated movement within his part during the 1970s.

as the increasingly irrelevant *Regina Manifesto*. The reorientation came in the form of

the *Winnipeg Manifesto,* which was published in 1956. At the time, the release of the

document caused a furor, "...as the nation's press and periodicals, friends and foes of the

CCF alike, unanimously agreed that it constituted a significant shift to the right" (Zakuta,

1964, p. 93).

While it is true that the party sought to moderate its use of socialist rhetoric in part

as a response to the concerted propaganda program by big business (Boyko, 2006), the

*Winnipeg Manifesto* also represented a very real ideological divergence from previous

CCF documents. At the root of this transformation was the central party's abandonment

of the notion that economic recessions were an unavoidable consequence of capitalism

(Zakuta, 1964, p. 86). The leaders of the party increasingly saw capitalism as less

antagonistic, and more manageable under the emerging rubric of welfare capitalism.

Rather than speak of *the injustice* of capitalism within a narrative which demonized the

entire system, the CCF of the mid-1950s was more likely to speak of specific "injustices"

caused by capitalism. Gone was the full-scale critique of capitalism, replaced by a kind

of welfare-state managerialism which earned the CCF the title of "Liberals in a hurry".

The CCF (and their critique) seemed to retreat towards the relative security of a few key

issues, as Zakuta suggests;

> Throughout the 1950s the CCF concentrated so heavily on the issues of increased
> old age pensions and, above all, of a national health plan that an unwary outsider might
> have concluded that they constituted the party's central reason for existence (1964, p. 87).

The *Winnipeg Manifesto* also signaled a significant change in the party's posture

towards both its constituents and potential constituents. The *Regina Manifesto* stated that

the party was "...a democratic movement, a federation of farmer, labour and socialist

organizations" (*Regina Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 19). The statement

establishes that such groups are autonomous entities *within* the party—that the party does

not exist without such groups. The *Winnipeg Manifesto,* in contrast states, "The CCF

welcomes the growth of labour unions, farm and other organizations of the people"

(*Winnipeg Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 31). In this statement, both the

groups and "the people" are not part of the party, nor or they part of any democratic

movement. The party of the *Winnipeg Manifesto* is an entity not of the people, but

merely one which "encourages" organizations of the people.

While the policy and rhetoric of the party continued towards moderation, it

simultaneously sought out other avenues by which to attract, not socialists, but "liberally

minded" individuals (Young, 1969, p. 132). Overwhelmingly, this was done by courting

labour unions.

The general election of 1958 put an exclamation point on the precipitous decline

of the CCF—the party's membership, financing and parliamentary seats were at their

lowest levels since 1945 (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 50). Modernizing the party's image, and

broadening the potential support base could not happen soon enough for the party

architects.

A simultaneous development, a merger between the Canadian Congress of Labour

and the Trades and Labour Congress, which resulted in the formation of the Canadian

Labour Congress (CLC) made the CCF transformation possible. Increasingly the CLC

was keen to play a more significant role in the political sphere, and viewed a chance to

affiliate with the CCF towards the formation of a new party one not to be missed (Young,

1969, p. 133).

In 1958, executive councils of both the CCF and CLC passed resolutions which outlined measures for exploring the possibility of formalizing a relationship with the other.[9] By June of 1958, the "CLC-CCF Political Committee" (later to be known as the "National Committee for the New Party") was formed, populated by a handful of executives from each group (Young, 1969, p. 133). In the period between 1958 and 1960 the committee hosted various intra-party education campaigns and seminars. One of the only efforts made by the committee to engage the wider public in the process of the new party formation was in the establishment of "New Party Clubs". However, even this small gesture seemed to be at most an exercise in political optics, as the New Party Clubs had no viable avenue with which to affect the policy of the new party, and were dissolved after the formal establishment of the New Democratic Party (Azoulay, 1997, p. 181). Indeed Azoulay contends "What unknowing observers witnessed in October 1961, therefore, was not the birth of a new, broadly based "people's" party, but the appearance of one" (1997, p. 181).

Walter Young notes,

If the CCF grew naturally from the grass roots, the party which succeeded it was grown artificially, from the top down, in the way the Liberal and Conservative parties came into being (Young, 1969, p. 133).

There is of course nothing intrinsically wrong with the desire of an ostensibly socialist party to court organized labour. However the ways in which the change occurred is problematic—ordained by a handful of CLC and CCF executives and absent of the popular infrastructure and input characteristic of the birth of the CCF. The communicative ecology employed for the construction of the NDP marks a concerted

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[9] Signs of the right-ward shift was evident in the CCF resolution, which for example, stated that the new party must, "...remain steadfast in its determination to introduce, *where appropriate,* public control and public ownership..."(Italics mine, CCF, 1958, p. 1).

change in that used for the construction of the CCF. Unfortunately, the events and tactics which led to the formation of the NDP would come to characterize the future party as much as the *Regina Manifesto* characterized the early CCF.

*Chapter Five*
*Emergent ideas and the politics of dissent within the NDP: The case of the Waffle*

This chapter will explore the response of the NDP to the emerging hegemony of the end of ideology discourse. It was an hegemony which insisted on universalizing the particularistic—specifically, it argued for the inevitability of capitalist structures of socio-cultural and economic organization. It will be implicitly argued that New Democrats were too willing in their acceptance of the discourse, and too willing to cede to the imperatives of it. During the course of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the party held steadfastly to a socio-economic critique (Keynesianism) which was increasingly irrelevant, insufficient, and criticized by a burgeoning progressive ferment of concerned citizen and student groups. One such group, led by an assembly of student activists (though backed by both citizens and party members) challenged the NDP leadership to engage with the new notions of progressivism emerging from the era, while simultaneously attempting to compel the party to re-engage the ethic of the CCF. And while the group known as the Waffle[10] was problematic in some respects (an issue which will be discussed in more detail bellow), the ways in which the party dealt with the organized dissent posed by the group suggests the beginnings of a rigidity within the party which would become emblematic of it in subsequent decades.

*A crisis on the left: The struggle between old and new*

The waning years of the 1950s had not been kind to leftist politics—radical purges from organized labour, fervent anti-Bolshevism and rampant McCarthyism all

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[10] How the movement acquired its unusual name is the stuff of folklore. Laxer (1996) reports that a participant at an early formation meeting is rumored to have said "I'd rather waffle to the left than waffle to the right" (p. 148). While Laxer, a founding member of the group, gives no indication as to who this unnamed person was, Morton (1974), for example, credits the comment to a young Ed Broadbent (p. 92).

leant to the construction of a decidedly hostile environment for progressives. Though

there was another, more pressing crisis on the left of the late 1950s; the absence of a

coherent and modernized critique of capitalist relations. The much-heralded success of

Keynesian economics, with its accompanying devout application of counter-cyclical

spending had insulated many (at least in the Western world) from the worst of poverty

and led countless others to conclude that economic instability had been solved.

Ostensibly, capitalism, however much a kinder, gentler application, had been pronounced

the winner—in deed leading Daniel Bell (1960), much earlier than the more notable

champion of a very similar idea, (Francis Fukuyama , 1992, *The End of History and the*

*Last Man*) to celebrate the end of ideology (Oglesby, 1969, p. 3).

Welfare state capitalism had become an almost undeniable discourse, the

applicability of which was largely uncontested as self-evident. An increasingly obsolete

leftist critique moved away from direct challenges of restructuring social relations,

towards devising means by which to extend the logic of the welfare state (and thus

capitalism) to those not currently under its purview (i.e. 'third world' countries).

Contrasting the concerted critique of capitalism of decades before, the left of the

late1950s and early 1960s was complicit in arguing for the export of capitalism.

The newly minted NDP, very much a product of the Keynesian discourse, would

find itself mid-decade in world much different than the one experienced by its

predecessor. At the national level, "The Quiet Revolution", ushered in with the death of

Maurice Duplessis, was well underway towards transforming Quebec culture.

Increasingly secular, urban and outward-looking, the Quebecois were displaying a

zealous effort towards shunting off the prerogatives of cultural and jurisdictional

dominance at the hand of various authorities (eg., the Catholic Church and Ottawa) (Hackett, 1980, p. 37). A simultaneous event, the development of the "New Left" (which was in part responsible for the transformation in Quebec) was gripping both Canada and the international community.

The New Left's analysis was predicated largely on a critique of the rigid form of economistic Marxism of the "Old Left" and skeptical of the notion that Keynesianism defined the limit of progressive politics. Ironically, it was in some respects, the success of Keynesian economics which allowed for a burgeoning middle class which bore the children of the New Left—a generation which introduced post-materialist notions to progressivism. Environmental, anti-oppression, and equality-based rights (somewhat decoupled from labour rights) rose to the top of the ferment in 60s and 70s. The working class trope was no longer sufficient to serve a generation which had largely secured economic stability. In addition, the successes of welfare state policies had created an increasingly conservative (and pacified) labour force which, believing it had no need for it, largely abandoned radicalism. This left a dearth in a logical site of progressive leadership. Carl Oglesby succinctly posed the question on the minds of a generation of would-be radicals:

The sharpest form of the question: In view of modern radicalism's unchallenged doctrine that the revolution is to be made by the army of industrial labor, how does the new radical dare to proceed (putting it mildly) in the conspicuous absence of that army? (Oglesby, 1969, p. 16).

The answer, not only his own, but that of a burgeoning progressive movement was unequivocal, "Students are the new working class...Students constitute the beginnings of a new historical class..." (Oglesby, 1969, p. 18). Accurate or not, this was a highly held sentiment of the era, one which would lead to the student protest and civil

rights movements, and would signal a socio-cultural and political departure from the immediate post-war years.

The student inspired New Left of the 1960s, was as Robert Hackett wrote, difficult to characterize because of its amorphous and heterogeneous composition. Nevertheless, certain themes did emerge:

Its concern with direct participation as the essence of democracy, its distrust of bureaucratized power and traditional electoral politics, its rejection of both corporate capitalism and bureaucratic Communism, its contempt for the values of middle-class consumer society, its overriding emphasis on spontaneity and decentralized direct action ("utopian activism"), its anti-imperialism, its growing recognition that corporate and political liberalism was a screen for exploitation and repression. (Hackett, 1980, p. 3-4).

This was precisely the essence of the movement which waged a concerted challenge to the NDP establishment which was seen as being mired in an unimaginative welfareism, increasingly centralized and bureaucratic, and exceedingly uninterested in substantive dialogue. The tumultuous period between 1969 and 1972 would bare out the truth of the suspicions, but in the process would also communicate to the country "…a brief glimpse of what a New Democratic Party with guts, brains and soul could have been like and what it could have done for Canada" (Smart, 1990, p. 177).

*The NDP meets the New Left*

The alliance between the CCF and CLC, which resulted in the NDP was unquestionably motivated by electoral aspirations, and the new professed electoral machine would be challenged early and often, beginning in 1962. In all, there were four federal and eight provincial elections in the six years between 1962 and 1968. At the Federal level, the party won 19 seats in 1962, hit a decade low in the 1963 election with 17, had 21 in 1965 and ended on a decade high with 22 in 1968. While the relative

success of the NDP in parliament was a slight improvement over the CCF, which had held 8 seats after the 1958 election, the party was still a middling parliamentary power at best, and a failed experiment in becoming a major national force at worst[11].

Throughout this period, the NDP pursed a largely economic program, centered on a broadening of welfare state policies, including universal health care (the successful test case which had been conceived of and implemented by the CCF in Saskatchewan years earlier) and increased and portable pensions. Though throughout the era, during which notions of the welfare state were all but mainstream, the modest purview of the party seemed less clear.

With Trudeau claiming to embrace the notion of a 'just society', many New Democrats got the uneasy feeling that the Liberal Party had successfully occupied their traditional ground—the advocacy of ever more advanced social programs (Laxer, 1996, p. 122).

While it is true that the NDP did exert some influence on the Liberal party towards adopting various welfare state policies, the NDP neither proposed, nor even devised anything as radical as the CCF notion of universal health care. As Laxer comments, "Ironically, however, the NDP has never been able to equal the CCF in pioneering a reform as fundamental as medicare" (1996, p. 121). The most robust ideas, radical critiques of welfare policy and scathing appraisal of the conditions imposed by capitalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s would not in fact come from the NDP proper, but rather from a faction within in the party, the Waffle.

By 1969, the NDP was by many accounts, increasingly obsolete as a both a Parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (socio-cultural) force. The party was even

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[11] In deed, Keith Archer (1985) found that levels of union support for the NDP after the merger of the CCF and CLC remained low and provided very little electoral success. While Archer does conclude that NDP-affiliated union locals were more likely to vote NDP than non-affiliate unions, he nonetheless concludes that, in terms of local union support, "...the transformation of the CCF into the NDP was, in many respects, a non-event" (p. 355).

relegated to a mostly spectator role in parliament in the CCF stronghold of Saskatchewan (Hackett, 1980, p. 5). Financially, the party was in ruin as a result of the torrid election pace of the 60s, and they had suspended many of their already meager extra-electoral activities (Hackett, 1980, p.5). The state of the party was such that two party stalwarts, who would later prove instrumental in dismantling the Waffle, felt compelled to comment in 1969:

While we indulge in nostalgic illusions, events are passing us by. Last June, the Trudeau thing snatched up a host of vital, radically-minded people and thrust them into politics...They were our kind of people and...we needed them. Instead, they saw us as stuffy, impotent and irrelevant (Quoted in Hackett, 1980, p. 5).

Despite the failings of the party, not all of it had been "...sleeping its way through the sixties..." (Cross, 1974, p. 15). A young academic, Jim Laxer, along with Mel Watkins, who had been employed by the Federal government to prepare a document on the force of foreign ownership in Canada (*Watkins Report*, 1967), gathered with other party members, including Ed Broadbent and Gerald Caplan, to informally assess the state of the NDP. It was a largely informal gathering, the participants of which were united by disappointment in the NDP. Watkins, writing in retrospect, speaks to the humble beginnings of the Waffle:

None of us ever sat down and said "Let's radicalize the NDP". It was much more of a spontaneous thing of a half dozen or so people realizing they were in the Party and fed up with it. We never set out to do what we ended up doing (Watkins, quoted in Hackett, 1980, p. 23).

In subsequent meetings, the group drafted the 26 paragraph *For an Independent Socialist Canada* (more widely known as the Waffle Manifesto). The Manifesto marked a return to the bold language and innovative ideas of the *Regina Manifesto,* though set within the emerging post-materialist ethic of equality, environmentalism etc. The authors

of the document, Laxer, Watkins and Caplan, had spent the time it took to draft the

manifesto building a more formal coalition consisting of citizens both inside and outside

the party. By the time the manifesto was ready for release, the group was in a position to

hold its own press conference, independent of the NDP. Thus, at an Ottawa press

conference on September 4th, 1969, the Waffle and their manifesto had a national debut.

The Manifesto begins, "Our goal as democratic socialists is to build an

independent socialist Canada" (Waffle Manifesto, reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 43). The

majority of the document proceeds to expand upon the two themes introduced in this first

statement: Canadian independence and socialism. Indeed for the Waffle, the two were

inexorably linked such that there could be no Canadian socialism without Canadian

independence vis-à-vis the U.S.

Maintaining the "...junior partnership..."(*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross,

1974, p. 43) with American enterprises, the manifesto argues, had reduced Canada to a

"...resource base and consumer market within the American Empire" (*Waffle Manifesto,*

reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 43). The U.S. empire itself was characterized by the

document as one defined by "...militarism abroad and racism at home" (*Waffle*

*Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 43). Though it was rife with strong nationalist

sentiment, the document was clear in explaining that the achievement of democratic

socialism was Waffle's primary concern.

An independence movement based on substituting Canadian capitalists for American
capitalists, or on public policy to make foreign corporations behave as if they were
Canadian corporations, cannot be our final objective (*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in
Cross, 1974, p. 44).

However, condemnation of U.S. policy provided the document with a launch for a

wider denunciation of capitalism, which "...creates and fosters superfluous individual

consumption at the expense of social needs" (*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross,

1974, p. 43). Furthermore, the Waffle argued,

The criterion that the most profitable pursuits are the most important ones causes the neglect of activities whose value cannot be measured by the standard of profitability. It is not accidental that housing, education, medical care and public transport are inadequately provided for by the present social system (*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 43).

The Waffle called for a fundamentally restructured economic system, clearly

beyond the measures prescribed by Keynesian economics, as a remedy to the disparities

and inequalities inspired by capitalism, including "...extensive public control over

investment and nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy, such as key

resources industries, finance and credit..." (*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974,

p. 45). In addition, the manifesto advocated for "...public ownership of the means of

production in the interests of the Canadian people as a whole" (*Waffle Manifesto,*

reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 44).

While the Waffle Manifesto stressed many of the fundamentals similar to its

antecedent, the *Regina Manifesto,* it made special emphasis of the social imperatives of

social democracy, arguing, "Socialism is a process and a programme" (*Waffle Manifesto,*

reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 44). Members of the Waffle were in part motivated by the

rigid bureaucracy and electoral emphasis of the NDP[12]—their critique sought to re-

engage the populist ideal in Lipset's *Agrarian Socialism,* which focused not only on

economic justice, but more importantly, community-centered and democratic social

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[12] A poll conducted at a 1971 policy convention found that 88% of Wafflers agreed with the statement, "The NDP should emphasize more left-wing ideas, even if that were to mean losing votes now, because there cannot be any significant social change in Canada until more people believe in these ideas". Only 25% of New Democrats agreed. (Reported in Hackett, 1980, p. 15).

justice. The Waffle urged, "New Democrats must now begin to insist on the

redistribution of power, and not simply welfare, in a socialist direction" (*Waffle*

*Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 44). The Waffle put such contentions to

practice within their own ranks, constructing a group structure far more decentralized

than that of the NDP proper. They aimed for a more democratic decision-making process

and structure, forgoing a more streamlined, though less democratic process, for a more

cumbersome, but more egalitarian system. Laxer recalls,

Decision making in the Waffle was far more chaotic than in the bureaucratized
mainstream NDP precisely because anyone, with any point of view, could insist on being
heard, often at considerable length (1996, p. 153).

The Waffle's insistence on such a quasi-anarchistic decision making process is

certainly, in some respects problematic. It enables a kind of tyranny of the loudest, most

energetic, or most stubborn—a scenario in which those with most meeting-acumen are

able to monopolize the proceedings, to the detriment of sincere collective discussion. In

addition, it is not clear that the Waffle ever had a formalized mechanism by which to

arrive at fundamental decisions—a key piece of organizational infrastructure they were

able to go without given that they never were in the position of having to govern the

country, constituencies or citizens.

However, the Waffle also promoted more traditional forms of democratic and

egalitarian participation. For example, the manifesto continues argues,

...in any strategy for building socialism, community democracy is as vital as the struggle
for electoral success. To that end, socialists must strive for democracy at those levels
which most directly affect us all—in our neighborhoods, our schools, our places of work.
Tenants' unions, consumers' and producers' co-operatives are examples of areas in which
socialists must lead in efforts to involve people directly in the struggle to control their
own destinies (*Waffle Manifesto,* reproduced in Cross, 1974, p. 44).

In the summer of 1969 the manifesto was circulated widely both inside and outside the party, and was met with many positive responses. Nearly 500 NDP party members publicly signed the document, and 20 constituency associations tabled and passed the manifesto while also submitting requests that it be debated at the upcoming fall federal convention (Smart, 1990, p. 178). Sensing that the document may pose a legitimate threat of being formally adopted at the convention, the NDP proper scripted a rebuttal of sorts, in order to mitigate the risk of being overshadowed by the upstart Wafflers. *For a United and Independent Canada* (coined the "Marshmallow Resolution" by many) was scripted by NDP architect David Lewis and United Auto Workers spokesperson Denis McDermott. It was an attempt by the party leadership to reign in the Waffle while simultaneously portraying itself as far more progressive than was actually the case. While the Marshmallow displayed a willingness to employ the words socialism and socialist more than in any other party document since the formation of the NDP, members of the Waffle felt this no more than shrewd politicking—an attempt to co-opt the dissent with thinly veiled rhetoric (Cross, 1974, p. 16). Stakes were high going into the convention due to the fact that the documents were to be debated, and ultimately voted on by convention delegates, a process which would choose either one or the other as the principal policy document for the intervening period until the next national policy convention.

Ultimately, the presence of the Waffle Manifesto (and the response of the Marshmallow document) worked to inject the 1969 convention with energy, dialogue and debate about substantive policy and ideological issues. And while the Waffle Manifesto was ultimately defeated, with only 35% of delegates voting in favor of it, the document

had a profound effect on both the convention and the party (Smart, 1974, p. 179). Many

Waffle resolutions, including those on foreign ownership, gender equality, Canada's role

in NATO, and the party's extra-parliamentary activity provided the basis for the co-

opting proposals of the Marshmallow document. The Waffle had effectively compelled

the party left-ward, and re-legitimized the socialist discourse within the party, but, as

Smart notes, "Most important[ly], it had restored to people in the NDP a belief in the

possibility of changing the party and creating a better politics in Canada" (p. 179).


### *After the 1969 convention: The Waffle in action, the death of the Waffle*


The relative success of the Waffle Manifesto at the convention inspired Waffle

supporters to continue meeting as a left-caucus within the party. They functioned as a

cogent political force within the NDP for three uneasy years, always on the margins of

NDP toleration, but always as a strong intellectual and activist force[13]. Smart (1990)

notes the ways in which the Waffle managed to not only maintain, but also build on their

support over the three years,

> We wrote about our ideas in *Canadian Dimensions, Canadian Forum, Last Post, This Magazines Is About Schools* or in the local papers. We went on television and radio. We held public meetings and rallies on the issues we cared about. We had a newsletter and eventually a small newspaper...we got our riding associations to sponsor or co-sponsor the rallies, panels and lectures we staged (p. 180).

Strategically, (a move which certainly contributed to their success) the Waffle

movement echoed the sentiment of the CCF in arguing that social democracy could not

come from a party alone, but must derive from and be supported by a broad base of

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[13] David Lewis, at the time an advocate of purging the Waffle, would in retrospect comment, "When the Waffle left the NDP, most of the brains left with them" (Quoted in Whitaker, 1990, p. 171).

popular support mobilized outside of Parliament.[14] Their alternative, plebian politics

inspired them to not simply contend elections, but rather to strive to exist as a continual,

justice-orientated force within the community regardless of whether or not an election

had been called. In this respect, the Waffle had a more subtle strategic analysis than that

of the NDP, one which rejected the stubborn binary of the parliamentary-extra

parliamentary debate. A point well illustrated in the collectively authored *A Strategy For*

*the Waffle*:

The serious immediate issue is what role the Waffle should play within the NDP.
Specifically, should it, like the NDP itself, engage chiefly in electoral politics, albeit with
a socialist content? Or should it work primarily to build and organize a mass movement
with limited emphasis on electoral activity? In an important sense, this is a false issue,
particularly given the present state of politics in Canada. The need is to combine
parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities, to see that they are more
complementary then competing activities" (Bazylinsky, *et al.*, 1971, p. 1).

Unfortunately, the seeming logic in the Waffle's argument regarding the

complementary nature of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activity would have little

chance to manifest. Given the relative marginalization of the Waffle within the NDP

establishment, the opportunity for the Waffle to affect effective Parliamentary activity

was severely stunted. As a consequence, the Waffle members aimed much of their effort

towards extra-parliamentary activity. Though as Laxer (1972) illustrates, they did not

want their endeavors to be simply instructional, instead they wanted to treat the extra-

parliamentary realm as a kind of popularly conceived legislature. "Our local programs

must go beyond education work. We must organize programs that assist in fights for

jobs…that contribute to the creation of an organized socialist base that is capable of

acting and not simply acquiescing" (p.3). And indeed the Waffle was able to, however

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[14] This is in direct contrast to one of the more staid elements of the NDP proper who hastily, and seemingly
without irony, dismissed the Waffle by commenting "Radical chic obscured the fact that taking to the
streets is a tactic of the weak" (Morton, 1974, p. 96).

briefly, successfully challenge the parliamentary-extra parliamentary binary--at the insistence of the Waffle, a federal party committee was formed to research and fund tactics of community organization and mobilization (Stevens, 1977, p. 96). The existence of such a committee exposed parliamentarians to ground level and grassroots concerns, tactics, strategies and struggles. However, and perhaps more importantly, the existence of the committee communicated to members of the grassroots an interest in their affairs within parliament.

Another effort central to the Waffle's attempts to fundamentally alter the familiar patterns of politics by opening parliamentary channels aimed at dispelling the structural misogyny and racism from the NDP. Varda Burstyn notes the Waffle compelled the NDP to "...come face to face with the way that women's oppression was expressed in its own ranks" (1990, p. 178). In addition to constructing their own leadership structure on the principal of parity (five women and five men) the Waffle actively sought structural change within the mainstream party, "...the Waffle became the conduit through which radical women's politics of the late 1960s entered and profoundly moved the NDP..." (Burstyn, 1990, p. 177).

Perhaps the most brazen of Waffle activity, and certainly the most condemned by the NDP (given the formalization process which had happened just a decade before) was their work to re-radicalize Canadian organized labour. Compelled by their nationalism, the Waffle took exception to the fact most of the unions that represented Canadian workers were based in the U.S. and functioned solely with U.S. leadership. They attempted to fashion a more robust and independent labour movement in Canada. "Our goal", they sated, "is a powerful labour movement based on the principles of unity,

militancy, democracy and independence" (Levine, 1990, p. 185). With the help of the Waffle, a group of trade unionists formed the Canadian Labour Congress Reform Caucus, a group which made considerable inroads towards radicalizing labour as well as bringing domestic leadership to Canadian unions. They were able to convince the CLC proper to adopt policies which went beyond the limited goals of economism and which saw the adoption of measures towards work-place democratization (Levine, 1990, p. 188). Their most impressive victory however, was in convincing the CLC to adopt a policy which ensured that members of the Canadian work force could elect Canadian Union leaders, thereby overcoming the existing structure of "...pure union colonization" (Levine, 1990, p. 188).

By 1971 the Waffle was gaining both support and enemies for their efforts. At the 1971 National Convention, a young Waffler, James Laxer, narrowly lost the party leadership to party giant David Lewis (on a fourth ballot vote of 612 to 1046). The results were much closer than many had expected and had the effect of emboldening the Waffle and of enraging the NDP. The Waffle's strong showing at the 1969 convention, while displeasing to the party establishment, was largely treated as a kind of curious anomaly. However the success of the Waffle at the 1971 convention, coupled with their rising popularity outside of the party, ensured the NDP would respond. Lewis' comments following the convention would foreshadow the Waffle purge to come, "No prizes from coming second" (Smart, 1990, p. 183). But more importantly the comment communicates the rigidity and elitism of the party and its unwillingness to cooperate with popular movements—even those with such strong support within the aprty. In addition,

that the leader of a perennial *third* place party would disparage so convincingly against a *second* place finish smacks of an absurd kind of defeatism.

With their mounting support, particularly among an increasingly radicalized faction within the labour movement, the purge of the Waffle was high priority for the NDP establishment. "The existence of the Waffle on a solid basis inside the NDP was deeply frightening to the leadership" (Smart, 1990, p. 183). Increasingly, the party's old guard feared the success of the Waffle, and demonstrated itself as exceedingly ossified and resistant to change. What the party establishment most feared was destabilizing its young relationship with the leadership of the Steelworkers and Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) unions, both of which were less than affectionate for the upstart Wafflers and their "treasonous" calls for the Canadianization of the labour movement (Levine, 1990, p. 188). An upsurge in both Steelworkers and CAW locals support for the Waffle had already brought discipline upon Waffle-supporting workers who were derided as "union radicals" by union leadership (Laxer, 1996, p. 159).

The surge in local union support by 1972 was even more alarming to the NDP leadership than was the Waffle's strong showing at the 1971 leadership convention. And while both the NDP and union leadership had begun to paint the Wafflers as merely a horde of unruly academic radicals, the claim held little truth—a point well illustrated by the wide support for a Waffle-organized public conference on the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact. (Laxer, 1996, p. 160). Held in the CAW stronghold of Windsor, ON, the conference was cosponsored by the heads auto union locals across Southwestern Ontario and was attended by over 400 people, including the Mayor of Windsor (Laxer, 1996, p. 60).

Shortly after the successful conference, talks to oust the Waffle began in earnest

between the union and NDP leaderships. John Smart notes the NDP "...planned very

carefully its response to the Waffle" (1990, p. 182). The first widely publicized attack

from the NDP came from Ontario party leader Stephan Lewis (son of federal party

leader, David). Lewis derided the Waffle as a divisive "party within a party" which had

no place within the NDP (Laxer, 1996, p. 160). A three-person task force was struck by

the Ontario party to decide how to react to the burgeoning success of the Waffle. No

Wafflers were invited on to the committee and no public consultation through

constituency ridings, or any other means was sought. The members of the committee

were:

Party President Gordon Vinhert; Gerald Caplan, a close confidant of Stephan Lewis who had originally supported the Waffle but had left the group following the federal NDP convention in Winnipeg; and long-time party activist John Brewin (Laxer, 1996, p. 160-161).

The report began with a feigned nod to full disclosure, with the authors writing,

"None of us is a Waffler" (Brewin, *et al.,* 1972, NDP), a simple fact known by anyone

with interest in the affair anyway. The authors went onto to divulge that they all

"...disagree more or less with the strategic objectives of the Waffle..." (Ibid) though

nonetheless claimed they "...approached the drafting of this statement with no

preconceptions about its contents" (Ibid). The most shocking (and hyperbolic) portion of

the document  addressed the wide-spread and growing popular support for the Waffle,

drawing reckless parallels between it and U.S. segregationist George Wallace.

It is still lead by a small group of well-known individuals who are commonly thought to speak for it. But at the same time, it has developed a growing body of supporters spread throughout the province, who are heavily concentrated in certain ridings. This second group represents a distinct current of opinion within the community, a current which is as dangerous to the NDP as George Wallace's populism is to the Democratic Party in the United States (Brewin, *et al..* 1972, NDP).

While it could be argued that the authors were in favor of a kind of ideological

conformity among legitimate party members, in deed that in fact the entire process was

meant to achieve just that, they took pains to ensure readers of the report that they were

not "...suggesting the imposition of some kind of personality test for membership in the

NDP" (Ibid). However, they did argue that the Waffle seemed to act as a magnate for

"...a *significant* number of people whose...political discourse makes *normal* democratic

activities nearly impossible" (italics mine, Ibid).

The NDP establishment had made clear with the report a number of crucial

points: Firstly, organized dissent within the party would not be tolerated. Secondly,

despite official policy the contrary, the NDP would no less suffer dissent even though it

may be backed by a "significant" number of ridings and citizens. And finally, the NDP

had made abundantly clear that "normal" political discourse would be defined by the

party alone, certainly not to be influenced by neither community nor citizen.

The luridness of the report, however, was to be overshadowed by the draconian

measures imposed on the Waffle and its supporters by the NDP. In June of 1972, after

the report had been well digested, a party executive resolution was passed that threatened

the Waffle members to disband on its own or risk being evicted from the party. In

addition to intimidating avowed Wafflers, the NDP leadership outlawed caucuses

comprised of backbenchers and dismantled the New Democratic Youth (NDY) wing

(Smart, 1990, p. 184)[15]. A majority of the Waffle members took the only real choice

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[15] The NDY probably sealed their fate with their own report, which was released in April of 1972, which was a kind of rebuttal to the Brewin report. In it, the NDY asserts that in some crucial ways the Waffle had "...not been radical enough" (New Democratic Youth, 1972, p. 1). They also offered their own assessment of the reasoning behind the purge: "When it [the Waffle] became collective, organized, and therefore increasingly effective, however, it was perceived as a threat that could not be ignored. It was because the

given to them, and opted to the leave the party. They immediately formed a new party, the Movement for an Independent and Socialist Canada, though with no public financing, no political infrastructure, and a potential constituency made timid by the disciplinary culture of the NDP, the Waffle officially disbanded only two years later (Penner, 1992, p. 103).

Cross (1974) comments, "One could certainly argue that the Waffle bark was worse than its bite, that socialist rhetoric camouflaged a fairly orthodox social democratic platform" (Cross, p. 16). And of course, Cross is correct in asserting that the Waffle project was, in many respects, fairly orthodox in its portrayal of social democracy. It was a moderate, social democratic project based on independence, a balance of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activity, and citizen participation. However, the ahistoricism of Cross' analysis obscures the degree to which the project was fundamentally unorthodox within the institutional mechanism of the particular socio-cultural moment. The NDP proper had spent the 1960s intentionally distancing itself from the social democracy of the CCF in an effort to garner both respectability and votes. The Waffle Manifesto was a palpable echo of the CCF and a direct and deliberate reproach to a decades worth of NDP efforts to reel in both the rhetoric and action of a former social democratic party. The Waffle movement, however well intentioned, could only ever have been interpreted as a hostile affront to a leadership who had intentionally cleansed the party of such sentiment less than a decade before. To a stolid leadership, whose agenda to muzzle the bark ensured a diminished bite, the Waffle was most certainly a radical project.

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Waffle increasingly began to appear as an organized alternative…that it could no longer be tolerated" (Ibid, p.2).

In many respects, the Waffle project was a product of the civil rights ferment and youth activist culture of the 1960s and 1970s, and so is subject to a similar kind of criticism. The quasi-anarchistic character of political organizations of the era were quite rightly condemned as an unsustainable model of democratic organization, and ones which as often as not served only to alienate large factions of the general public. The sometimes blind and irrational resolve and the rejection of any notion of compromise of some activists of the era certainly served to negate the rich socio-cultural and political possibilities of the 1970s. The Waffle, in some measure, was its own worst enemy.

However, to simply dismiss the Waffle as simply a radical-chic and hollow 1970s experiment is to belie, firstly, the kind of programmatic depth they developed in their three active years and subsequent mass popular support they experienced, not only within the party, but outside of it as well. Secondly, the argument serves to misdirect consideration away from what is the more interesting element, the ways in which the party dealt with the kind of progressivism argued for by the Waffle. Quite simply, the NDP establishment decisively communicated to an entire generation of progressives that they had no home within the party. The very people who, 40 years earlier would have been the leaders, intellectuals and activists of the CCF were resolutely dismissed within the ranks of the NDP. Improbably, Waffle activists such as Laxer, Watkins and Smart[16] have remained active in their dedication to the possibilities of the party for decades, though these remain the exceptions to the rule which has seen subsequent generations of progressives set their energies towards other projects.

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[16] In a 1990 article by Smart, the kind of almost irrational resolve of some remaining members is well illustrated, "Although I continue to work in the NDP, I do so in the knowledge that it is neither a socialist party nor a nationalist party and that it is not likely to change in either of those directions in the near future" (p. 178).

In a very fundamental sense, the purge of the Waffle preemptively communicated the inevitability of Thatcher's TINA conclusion to a generation of activists and progressives. The party, having resolutely displayed its abrogation of its progressive and imaginative role within society lost its status as a viable site of resistance. The NDP thus deprived itself of the energy and rigor to be had from the very constituency it needed in order to function as a coherent and robust progressive force.

## Chapter Six
### *Electoralism, professionalization and pollsters: The NDP in the 1980s*

If the Waffle incident served to illustrate the increasing emphasis on

professionalism and centralization, with attendant decreases in concern for populism and

tolerance for mass-based dissent, it would only serve to foreshadow the strategic and

communicative efforts to come. The further centralization of the party (in both an

organizational and ideological sense) would continue unabated throughout the late 1970s

and beyond. In the process, the party would continue to communicate both its lack of

political uniqueness (vis-à-vis the other major parties) and its intolerance of dissent.[17]

What had begun as an inspired project of popular democratic socialism, beholden to the

principles of participation, socialism and democratization of political, economic and

social spheres had, by the mid-1970s, made concerted efforts towards becoming an

electoral-based party in the Liberal tradition. In the words of Reg Whitaker, by 1990 the

NDP had met with some success in this regard, "The NDP wanted to be seen as a party

like other parties, and it has succeeded in producing a miniature replica" (1990, p. 170).

According to the typology proposed by Nelson Wiseman and Benjamin Isitt,

(2007) who divide the themes of Canadian socialism into four, twenty-five year quarters,

beginning in the year 1900, the fourth quarter (1975-2000) was not a proud one for the

NDP.

It was in the final quarter of the twentieth century that Walter Young's movement-party dichotomy revealed itself most explicitly or, to employ Zakuta's terminology, the process of 'institutionalization' reached its logical end (Wiseman & Isitt, 2007, p. 584).

The socio-cultural and political environment which had allowed for the

flourishing and success of the welfare state in the decade previous had turned decidedly

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[17] In deed in a 1993 book recalling Bob Rae's disastrous tenure as NDP premiere of Ontario Ehring and Roberts would label the party the No Dissent Party (p. 11).

against notions of big government budgets, re-distribution and Keynesian economics. By the late 1970s the Thatcher era was priming up and destined to spur a socio-economic revolution which would argue the absence of alternatives to the free market and herald the undesirability of big government. So-called restrictions were lifted from private capital accumulation, and the corporatist agenda sought to "...replace collective decision making by the operation of markets" (Pantich & Leys, 2001, p. 1).

Increasingly rationalized political, economic, social and cultural spheres were ushering in an era of unprecedented managerialism. The newly emerging technocratic class, however, was besieged by waves of global economic crisis—to which they responded with calls for increased deregulation and further privatization. The grand project of neo-liberalism was being pieced together, and in the process instituting a hegemony which would marginalize dissent, and all but erase the citizen from traditionally organized political discourse.

For its part, the NDP was to move into a new, post-CCF era in terms of leadership. In 1975, Ed Broadbent was elected party leader, marking the first time the NDP had elected a leader who was not previously a member of the CCF. Despite his reputation as "Honest Ed" in parliament, and regardless of having the highest approval rating of any federal party leader at points during his tenure, (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 190) Broadbent lacked both the charisma and oratory skills of either Tommy Douglas or David Lewis, qualities which would have been useful in election campaigns against the likes of Trudeau and Brian Mulroney. However, in the emerging age of mass mediated politics, Broadbent's down-to-earth appeal and working class background were utilized as a means by which to market Broadbent to 'ordinary Canadians' (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 189).

Despite his folksy, down-home image, Broadbent would display considerable political acumen in professionalizing the NDP's communicative ecology. Under his leadership, expert planning would become commonplace, and his era as leader would see the party introduce "...direct mail fund-raising and systematic polling" (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 203).[18]

The following chapter will outline the conditions under which the party was to develop a strengthening professionalization, continue its abandonment of its collectivist history, and adopt a rigid electoralism. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the NDP would continue unabated in their attempts to barter social democratic principles for votes in several election campaigns. While the role of the party leadership will be detailed, and is most responsible for the course of the party during the era, key policy developments, largely exogenous to the party's influence, would aid in facilitating the party's aspirations.

### Elections Act and political advertising

The period beginning in the mid-1970s saw the onset of mass mediated politics in Canada, characterized by increasingly sophisticated polling and marketing techniques, an increase in the use of communication technologies (and attendant decrease in person-to-person communication) and, significantly, an increase on the emphasis of the party leader (Ward, 1993, p. 483). Soderlund (1984) and his colleagues note that from the outset, Canadian television was "...dominated by US production styles and formats rather than

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[18] It is certainly too hasty to fully dismiss Broadbent's leadership (1975-1989) as damaging to the party—it is perhaps unfortunate for him that the era during which he led the party saw a dramatic increase in the professionalization of all major political parties in Canada. However, evidence does suggest that Broadbent did embrace and advocate for the problematic emergent patterns of organized politics, rather than resisting them.

by an indigenous, uniquely Canadian style" (p. 128). And while Soderlund *et al* remain cautious in assigning blame, they are certain about the outcome,

Whether due to the direct or indirect penetration of American political style or to the unique characteristics of television, nowhere is the change in style of Canadian campaigning more apparent than in the concentration on leadership (p. 128).

In the United States, where the president is elected as the embodiment of the executive branch, a leader-focused campaign is perhaps more understandable. However, as Soderlund *et al* point out, in Canada the Prime Minister is not directly elected, but rather gains the position according to the success of the other party members' contests at the riding level (p. 128). Nonetheless, by the mid-1970s, Canadian political parties were packaging and selling their leaders "...almost as if they were elected directly like the US president rather than being dependent on winning a majority of separate parliamentary contests..." (Soderlund, 1984, p. 128).

In Canada, the 1968 campaign saw the collision of the television era with the charisma of the highly televisual Pierre Trudeau, which cemented the subsequent era of television-focused and leader-centered campaigns in Canada (Ward, 1993, p. 481). By 1974, image-centered and trivial episodes, such as Robert Stanfield's infamous football fumble, were proving the importance of leader-image politics.[19]

The parties embraced broadcast media with enthusiasm, dedicating increasingly larger percentages of their advertising budget to television. Fletcher (1987) reports,

Expenditures on television advertising by the major parties jumped from $1.2. million in 1974 (45% of all advertising expenditures) to $3.6 million in 1979 (67%) and $4.6 million in 1980 (76%) (p. 350).

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[19] In the 1974 election campaign, Stanfield, a highly respected intellect with 'image problems', fumbled a football thrown to him during a staged media event. The coverage in the evening and next morning's media was widespread, further damaging his image and perhaps leading to the Conservative Party's defeat (Soderlund *et al,* 1984, p. 129).

In part a response to the increasingly mediated realm of election campaigns, and

in part an effort to update an obsolete policy, the *Election Expenses Act* was introduced in

1974. The financing laws previous to the Act had remained largely unchanged since

confederation in 1867, save for changes made by the passing of the *Dominion Elections*

*Act 1874*, which did little but to mandate provisions for disclosure of election expenses

by candidates. Although given that the *Dominion Elections Act 1874* remained silent on

who should administer and enforce the rules, it had little practical effect (Kingsley,

2006).

The adoption of the *Election Expenses Act* in 1974 brought dramatic changes,

including,

election expenses limits for candidates and registered parties…the requirement for both
parties and candidates to disclose their expenditures and revenues… [it] introduced the
first components of public financing through tax credits and the partial reimbursement of
certain election expenses. The legislation further included rules for allocating
broadcasting time for advertising purposes to political parties (Kingsley, 2006).

In addition, the Act stated that an independent commissioner be appointed for

ensuring the implementation and enforcement of the provisions within the Act. In 1977,

the role of the commissioner was further formalized within the *Canada Elections Act,*

with the creation of the Commissioner of Canada Elections, an independent officer

appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer (Kingsley, 2006).

The 1970s saw the revisiting of policy related to another long-standing act, the

*Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act,* of 1932. While the act set out the basic notions of

and guidelines for the strong tradition of Canadian public broadcasting, it was silent on

issues of political programming and election campaigns (Soderlund *et al.* 1984p. 117). In

1936, amendments to the *Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act* established a crown

corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The amendments required

that the CBC be charged with establishing preset broadcasting schedules, for both itself

and the private networks, dedicated to political messaging. In addition, the CBC was

meant, according to the 1936 amendments, to enforce rules of equal access and

representation for all parties and candidates (Soderlund *et al.* 1984, p. 117)[20].

The basic principals set out by the CBC regarding political broadcasting (in

formal statements of 1939, 1944 and 1948) remain largely unchanged to this day

(Fletcher, 1987, p. 347). However principles which required equal and fair opportunities

for all parties on all networks, and notions which discouraged against excess wealth

having undo advantage in the purchasing of airtime were often ineffective when not

backed by more substantive regulations. Thus, in the 1970s, new regulations (which were

advocated for by the NDP) were implemented.

The rules restrict paid advertising to the final half of the eight-week campaign, regulate
the allocation of paid and free time, limit campaign spending, and provide for
reimbursement from the federal treasury of half the costs of radio and television
commercials purchased by the registered parties (Fletcher, 1987, p. 348).[21]

The new regulations were a boon for the media-

starved NDP. The spending limits imposed by the regulations forced the Liberal and

Conservative parties to decrease their spending, while various tax credit regimes allowed

the NDP to substantially increase their expenditures (Fletcher, 1987, p. 349). In 1974

(the last election under the original guidelines) the NDP's percentage of total election

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[20] This somewhat clumsy arrangement was disposed of in 1958 with the creation of the Broadcast Board of Governors (BBG), which took over the role of regulating radio and television broadcasting from the CBC. In 1968, the BBG was replaced by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), and has remained charged with, among other tasks, regulating election broadcasts (Soderlund *et al.*, 1984, p. 117).

[21] The provision which allowed for advertising reimbursement were rescinded in 1983, "...on the grounds that it skewed party spending" (Fletcher, 1987, p. 348).

advertising spending by all parties was 6.8%. By 1979 (the first election under the new

regulations) that number had increased to 20.3% (Fletcher, 1987, p. 349).

*Dunsky and Fingerhut: The professionals take over*

The era of electoral politics, made possible in part by the new regulatory regime,

was ushered in with the technology which made mass communication media both more

abundant and more affordable in terms of both production and consumption. The

attendant rise in both the emphasis on and professionalization of electoral campaigns was

soon to follow. And while the Liberal and Conservative parties embraced the strategies

and techniques earlier than did the NDP, Canada's social democratic party would not be

far behind.

As late as 1972, the party's campaign guide was lamenting the professionalization

of politics:

In recent years, political contests in Canada seem to have been taken over by the
professionals…Party programs are based on market research, not principle…The New
Democratic Party exists to fight this trend. (Quoted in Cooke, 2006, p. 14).

The accusatory tone of the statement, however, itself part of a centralized

campaign guide, can be seen as somewhat disingenuous, given that the party, much to the

dismay of the remaining old guard CCF, hired an ad agency in 1965 (Morton, 1986, p.

62). Dunsky Advertising Limited, a political consultancy agency under the direction of

Menahem Dunsky, began in Montreal in 1960. By the mid-1970s, Dunsky would wield

considerable power within the party.

Party archives contain a litany of letters between Dunsky and key NDP officials,

including Party Federal Secretary, Clifford Scotton. It is clear that by the early 1970s,

Dunsky had asserted himself within the party's decision-making structure. In a 1972

letter to Scotton, pertaining to the lead-up to the 1974 federal election, Dunsky writes,

"Our company *lives in terror* of having to get approval of the party's executive after

many months of planning a program" (emphasis original, Dunsky, 1972, p. 4).

Dunsky further illustrates his resentment towards the populist and inclusive

tradition of the CCF in a lengthy post mortem account of the 1974 election (during which

the NDP dropped to 16 seats, down from 31 in the 1972 election). In the letter, Dunsky

argues for an increasingly centralized decision making executive, which will remain

largely above party scrutiny,

The way to do this, in my view, is for the party to create a Federal Committee—call it
'communications' or whatever…a relatively small, tightly knit, if possible representative
group of people who are *empowered to make decisions, and whose decisions will stick*
(emphasis original, Dunsky, 1974, p. 5).

Although Dunsky does allow that the committee should be representative, *if*

*possible,* he clarifies this view further into the letter,

I would rather see a small, more or less expert and cohesive committee, than a large,
more representative but non-expert and non-cohesive group although I recognize the
practical difficulties involved (Dunsky, 1974, p. 5).

What Dunsky is proposing amounts to the creation of an ideologically

homogenous, elite group of professionals which will be charged with control of the party

at the policy and decision-making level. He argues that his "…agency and other pros

should be intimately involved…" (Dunsky, 1974, p. 8) in the deliberations of the party,

effectively wresting the direction of the party from the hands of the public, contravening

the democratic processes of the party, and establishing within the party communicative

infrastructure which is disproportionately representative of private, professional and elite

concerns.

However to the political strategist, such concerns are often relegated to non-importance, trivial novelties easily disposed of should the need arise. Dunsky's own philosophy can be characterized as corporatist and anti-intellectual, advocating for a move to the already crowded centre of the Canadian political landscape. "It is time for the 'Ivory Tower' theoreticians to realize that it is not a theoretical model, it is a political party and that it is big business" (Dunsky, 1974a, p. 5).

Dunksy's comments, as chief party strategist, illustrate the degree to which the party had become unmoored from principle-based politics. The tenor of the discussion between party architects and experts such as Dunsky demonstrate the primacy of a kind of administrative rationality—a narrow minded electoralism which served to, in a sense, de-politicize the party in their efforts towards electoral success. The discourse of 'big business' which crept into the party during Dunsky's tenure represents a concerted break from the tradition of the party which saw members and citizens as collective stakeholders in the experiment of social democracy, to one which positioned the public as shareholders to be pandered to and manipulated. The pursuit of political ideals ceased to be the central justification for the party, but rather was replaced by the imperatives of the big business ethic in which ethically void notions of power and growth serve to govern all action. The party's emerging character, which caused a collective crisis of the party's self, led them towards increasingly centrist policies, and, inevitably, the Liberal party. Party member Lewis Seale, in a 1974 letter to Scotton, illustrates the degree to which the party had lost both its direction and faith in itself by pursuing a prescribed centrist agenda,

The principal policy plank that we projected—opposition to wage and price controls—was merely a faint echo of the Liberal stand. We may not have given the voters a good enough reason to support us rather than the Liberals; indeed, the best protection against controls was a Liberal majority" (Seale, 1974, p. 1).

Equally damaging to an ostensible social democratic party is Dunsky's (and indeed the party's) emphasis on cohesiveness as a necessary characteristic of the committee. Concentrating power within the party into the hands of a small, ideologically homogonous group was a strategy first used by the party during the purge of the Waffle—the memory of which echoed well into the 1980s and beyond. Ian Mcleod argues that the Waffle episode "...left behind a memory of division and a vigilant core of mainstream party regulars ready to weed out dissent" (1994, p. 11). One such party stalwart, Desmond Morton, has referred to the kinds of challenges waged by the Waffle as "...frightening and threatening..."(McLeod, 1994, p. 11) for the NDP, which he argues can ill afford to tolerate dissent in search of "...its own fresh definition" (McLeod, 1994, p. 11). A study released by NDP scholars Archer and Whitehorn in 1990 confirms the party met with some success in weeding out dissent. They conclude that while the NDP may prove ideological distinctive, it also displays the greatest amount of in-party ideological consensus in relation to the other major political parties in Canada (Archer and Whitehorn, 1990, p. 103).

The culture of professionalism, not so much started by Dunsky within the party, but made legitimate and systematic through his hiring would continue when the party "...quietly crossed the border..."(Morton, 1986, p. 217) to recruit the American pollster Vic Fingerhut just prior to the 1984 election. Fingerhut, who had a history of working with the Democratic Party in the U.S. and various labour unions on both sides of the border, is credited with creating the still heavily circulated NDP catch-phrase, 'ordinary Canadians' (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 217). Fingerhut was an experienced political pollster

and an astute strategist, hired by the party for his well-known ability of "...turning people around..." (Morton, 1986, p. 217).

Under the advice of people like Dunsky and Fingerhut, the party would further rationalize their efforts (the bulk of which were dedicated to electioneering) and accept the conventional wisdom that election campaigns must focus on the leader and that political messaging must be nothing more than short, pithy catch phrases. By the early 80s, "...the NDP (like other parties) made routine use of polls to define the "language" or stock phrases, that would appear in every speech and fundraising letter" (McLeod, 1994, p. 21).

Reducing complex political discourse to simple rhetoric is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the technique can been understood as an abrogation of a more thorough attempt at political education—of engaging citizens in meaningful discussion. As the structural obligations of professionalized politics calcify, there is an accompanying shift in the originating site of policy recommendations and development. The necessity of plowing constituencies in engaged policy discussions gives way to technocratic polling, the results of which are then filtered through a cadre of political elites. This was generally the shift experienced within the NDP during Broadbent's tenure. As McLeod comments, "Call it science or voodoo, the polls gave non-elected NDP strategists a big boost in power relative to backbench MPs and other traditional representatives of the grass roots" (1994, p. 22).

Another means by which decision making and policy formulation were further centralized during the era was through the changing party convention system. Party conventions have been a traditional and important policy formulation infrastructure

within the party since the CCF founding convention in 1932. During the first four years of the party's existence, the conventions were an annual event. However, since 1936, party representatives have met on a biennial schedule (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 106). Technically, party conventions are the primary policy development infrastructure of the party. Delegates vote on both policy issues as well as the key leadership positions charged with policy development and decision making between conventions (McLeod, 1992, p. 12).

Aside from party leadership, the conventions are attended by delegates, which are drawn from constituency-level party memberships and affiliated organization memberships (such as various union groups). The delegates are charged with bringing constituency-level policy proposals with them to the convention. The two most common means by which convention delegates are selected is through constituency level elections (one delegate permitted for every 50-100 constituency level party members) and affiliated organization representation, (one delegate for every 1000-1500 affiliated organization members) (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 106).

The character of the conventions changed significantly with their increasing size. In 1983, for example, 1433 delegates gathered, this in contrast to delegations of between 100 and 200 during the much of the 1950s (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 106). While having a larger number of people at the conventions suggests an increase in the democratization of decision-making, the practical difficulties of facilitating discussion and decision with such large numbers, in that particular forum, has meant, as Whitehorn suggests, "…it is possible that decision-making has shifted away from conventions as they have become larger" (1992, p. 106).

In an attempt to bring order to the conventions, with increasingly large delegations and expanding number of policy proposals, a committee is chosen by the convention chair and organizing committee. The committee is given final authority in hand-picking which resolutions are discussed by the convention. McLeod (1992) has suggested that this processes also ensures the avoidance of unseemly debate and divided discussion on more potentially fractious policy issues—unacceptable in the age of televised conventions and image-based politics (McLeod, 1994, p. 12). At the 1983 convention, for example, 500 resolutions were submitted by labour and local riding associations, with only 41 of those being included in the official convention discussion (McLeod, 1994, p. 12). McLeod argues, "In this way, the party avoids controversy and embarrassment" (1994, p. 12). Party conventions, heralded by party leaders as proof of their superior democratic structure vis-à-vis the other major parties, are certainly less influential in the decision making process than they appear to be. Wearing (1988) writes,

The Conservatives…[have]…no policy conventions, the Liberals have policy conventions but forget the resolutions once the conventions are over, and the NDP leadership makes sure it gets the resolutions it wants (Wearing, 1988, quoted in McLeod, 1994, p. 12).

This amounts to an institutionalization of window dressing by the NDP establishment—more the *appearance* of democratic procedures than the existence of democratic procedures. Inclusivity is, in cases like this, wielded somewhat cynically as a tool of manipulation. Citizens are ostensibly encouraged to engage with party policy development and decision-making, though the party has no real intention of following through with their democratically inspired rhetoric. A more pessimistic analysis might suggest that, during the age of professionalized politics, the notion of democratic participation became simply another means by which to sell a product.

*1984 sets the stage for the "Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement" election of 1988*

By the early 1980s, the global economy was still recovering from the oil price shocks of 1979-80, and the North American economy had shown considerable lethargy, sufficient enough to be categorized as a full-blown recession. The monetarist policy of the US Federal Reserve Board, coupled with Reagan's supply-side tax cuts rendered the US a net debtor nation, a position not familiar to the country since the end of the First World War (Laxer, 1996, p. 128), and Canada, ever prone to the fluctuations of the US economy, fell into its worse recession in fifty years (Frizzell and Westell, 1985, p. 1). Thus, the election of 1984 would be fought on economic issues, much to the chagrin of Broadbent and the NDP. Significantly, party polls had indicated that the public largely distrusted the New Democrats on economic issues. The NDP, however, took solace in the fact that the same polls indicated that Canadians trusted Broadbent as a defender of "ordinary Canadians" (McLeod, 1994, p. 21). Given the party's increasing reliance on poll results, the election committee settled on a strategy which would focus heavily on the personality of Broadbent, while being vague with details and downplaying substantive policy issues. National director Gerald Caplan explained in his election strategy report, "...if only in coded words—that specificity was out, particularly on the question of the economy and jobs" (Frizzell and Westell, 1985, p. 48).

There was little effort on behalf of the party to develop a more robust or updated economic critique in their acquiescence to political expediency. The consensus amongst the leadership was that the NDP had never been perceived as a competent manager of the economy, and that 1984 was better suited to downplaying the issue, rather than

dedicating resources to actual policy formation, thus instituting the public perception as a

self-fulfilling prophecy. Laxer writes that Broadbent and the party,

> ...remained wedded to the tried and true formulations of the past, thus helping to ensnare the NDP in the trap of appearing to represent policies from an era whose conditions would never return (Laxer, 1996, p. 130).

Exploiting the potential of fielding a "credible" and "trusted" leader, the party

decided on an "Us vs. Them" strategy, characterizing the "Them", John Turner (Liberal)

and Brian Mulroney (Conservative) as the "Bobssey Twins of Bay Street" (McLeod,

1994, p. 21). Broadbent was portrayed as the champion of "ordinary Canadians" ("Us")

and strategists insisted he utter the well-worn phrase at every campaign stop across the

country. In the end, the NDP staved off what many had predicated would be a disastrous

election, given the surging popularity of the Conservative Party. Despite the

Conservative's landslide victory (211 seats to the NDP 30, out of 282), the NDP

leadership concluded the election a marginal success, and credited their polling efforts

and slick campaigning for not suffering an even greater defeat. McLeod comments, "The

1984 campaign produced two important results...it entrenched the use of polling as a

guide to strategy...[and]...confirmed the NDP as Broadbent's party" (1994, p. 22).

The party moved into the 1988 election preparation period with confidence in

their professionalized campaigning. In the lead up to any election, the structure of the

NDP shifts slightly, relegating the federal executive and council as the principal decision

making unit to second behind the Strategy and Elections Planning Committee (SEPC)

(Whitehorn, 1989, p. 44). In 1988, the SEPC was comprised of members of the Federal

Executive, a representative from parliamentary caucus, one from the Participation of

Women Committee, a representative from the Canadian Labour of Congress, and a

representative from each provincial section of the party (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 44). However, in terms of effective campaign direction, the committee condensed to "...a very small inner circle of advisors to Broadbent" (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 45) for most of the campaign.

With the polls showing the party at 41% support nation wide in 1987, executives calculated that an historic breakthrough was at hand. As a result, the 1988 election budget was increased by nearly 50% over that of the 1984 budget, with projections of spending $7 million for the campaign. Nearly $4 million of that was allocated to advertising, direct mail fundraising and opinion research.[22] In addition, polling efforts were stepped up to achieve uniform focus across the country, rather than the 40 or so key ridings targeted during the 1984 campaign.

In terms of strategy, the party planned to remain firm in their tactics from the 1984 campaign; ambivalent to economic issues, focus on Broadbent, and repeat the mantra that the NDP was on the side of "ordinary Canadians". However, the party made one significant shift in strategy in deciding to focus their attacks more on the Liberals than the Conservatives. It was reasoned that any votes to be gained would be gained at the expense of the Liberals, not the Conservatives, so these efforts were more efficiently used in discrediting the former, not the latter. In addition, the SEPC decided it best to pre-empt any potentially damaging media coverage by neutralizing many of the party's more controversial positions (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 46). This included issuing a report which suspended, for at least one term in office, the long-time NDP commitment to pulling Canada out of NATO. The party executive also worked to silence provincial

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[22] The vast majority of which was dedicated to advertising, which received a budget of $3 million. Direct-mail fundraising was allocated $500 000 and opinion research given $330 000 (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 45).

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leaders critical of the controversial Meech Lake Accord, and published an election policy platform document absent of the terms socialism and social democracy (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 46).[23]

In addition, the party's central authority tightened its grip on candidates and requested a hollowing out of meaningful debate. As Whitehorn (1989) indicates,

In an effort to minimize adverse media coverage, the Broadbent itinerary stressed partisan NDP meetings or scripted photo opportunity sessions, and scheduled few unstructured settings such as talk shows. Instructions were also given that fewer persons were to talk to the press (p. 47).

The party efforts for a tightly-scripted, highly managed campaign would not only run afoul (McLeod, 1994, p. 23) but would ultimately alienate a generation of progressives, disenchanted with the party's treatment of the highly contentious issue of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US.

The issue of liberalized trade with the US was not new in 1988—it had surfaced in March of 1985, when then Prime Minister Mulroney announced his intentions to enter into free trade negotiations with the US. On October 1st of that year, Mulroney wrote to then President Reagan to propose "The broadest possible package of mutually beneficial reductions in barriers to trade in goods and services" (Mulroney, quoted in Westell, 1989, p. 8). The negotiations, largely concealed from the public, reached a conclusion in October of 1987 with an announced agreement between both countries.[24] Opposition to the proposal began organizing in earnest shortly after the announcement.

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[23] The 1988 election document proves a direct contrast to the *1983 Statement of Principals* (colloquially referred to as the "New Regina Manifesto"). Written as a gesture celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of CCF, and heavily influenced by nostalgia, the document contained more mentions of the terms "socialism" and "social democracy" than any document in NDP history (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 64).

[24] That the negotiation process went largely unnoticed in Canada speaks to the success of Mulroney's explicit communication strategy, and to a lesser degree, a complicit Canadian media. Mulroney's communication strategy document was leaked to the *Toronto Star*, which published the majority of it in

Both the American and Canadian governments agreed to implement the treaty on

January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1989. Mulroney, with a massive majority and plenty of time left in his first

term in office, was eager to pass the treaty as legislation in the House of Commons before

a fall election in 1989. However, Liberal leader John Turner urged the Senate to reject

the bill on the grounds that the Canadian people should have a chance to weigh in on

such an important decision. Turner proposed that an election be called, an effective

referendum on the issue. This was surprising to many, because Turner was basically

urging a non-elected (although Liberal-dominated) Senate to directly meddle in the

affairs of the elected House of Commons. However, as Westell (1989) points out,

> ...it worked for the Liberals in two ways. First, Turner had seized from the New
> Democrats the initiative in opposing free trade. Second, it forced Mulroney into an
> election in which the explosive and unpredictable debate on free trade...was certain to be
> the dominant issue" (p. 9).

Turner and the Liberals jumped from the campaign gate heralding opposition to

free trade. The consultant-derived strategy of attacking Liberals for votes, coupled with

the fact that NDP polls suggested that the party was least trusted among all parties on

"economic"[25] issues left the New Democrats with little to say on the issue (Whitehorn,

1989, p. 48). In fact, Broadbent failed to even mention the trade deal once in his opening

campaign address (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 48). When New Democrats were forced into

speaking about the trade deal, they were urged by lead strategists to link it to facets of

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September of 1985, a week before the formal negotiations began. The document admitted, "It is likely that the higher the profile the issue attains, the lower the degree of public approval will be" (Quoted in Hepburn, 1985, p. A1). The strategy was meant to manufacture "...benign neglect..." (Ibid) from the public and would "...rely less on educating the general public than on getting across the message that the trade initiative is a good idea. In other words, a selling job" (Ibid). In terms of dealing with dissent, the strategy laid out plans to avoid recognizing or meeting with coalition groups, but would meet with some individual groups in an effort to "...divide and neutralize..." (Ibid).

[25] This simplification of course obscures the intersection of the economic, in many instances, with the social, cultural and political realms. A fact overlooked by the party.

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perceived party strength, such as the environment or healthcare (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 48).

While Broadbent did eventually speak against the trade deal in some public addresses,

"...the NDP high command shied away from attacking the deal in television ads or media

events" (McLeod, 1994, p. 23).

Supporters of the NDP, at least, were justified in feeling let down by their party.

In January of 1988, before the election had been called, an economist from a labour-

nationalist coalition sent a letter to Broadbent requesting that the party formally join and

endorse the anti-FTA movement. The letter proposed to set up workshops and study

sessions throughout every region in Canada as a means by which to educate the electorate

on the details of the deal, and suggested that public forums be held in every riding in

order for the candidate to dialogue with constituencies and to receive feedback from

them. However, the letter was ignored, and the plan was never launched (McLeod, 1994,

p. 92). In addition to the party's strategic ambivalence to the anti-FTA coalitions, it

could be argued that the party did further harm to the efforts to stop the trade deal. Much

of the anti-FTA movement was funded by contributions from organized labour previous

to the election call. However, once the campaign period had begun, some local unions

pulled funding away from local anti-FTA groups to support local NDP candidates

(Huyer, 2004, p. 52). Given that the NDP failed to adequately represent opposition to the

trade deal, a fact that outraged the unions, the reallocated resources were lost to the cause

completely.

Outside the realm of scripted political campaigning, citizens across Canada were

organizing en masse in opposition to the trade deal. The ferment, in many ways, caused a

subversion of the traditional political processes of the election. Citizens felt somewhat

betrayed by their political leaders' lack of dedication to the issue. Canadian playwright

and political commentator Rick Salutin wrote of the phenomenon;

Even the familiar electoral process and its components—parties, leaders, campaigns built on empty slogans and on a search for the lowest common denominator—all started to wither and something else flared briefly: a national discussion...in which people got involved as more than just voters. As citizens" (1989, p. 36)

Rather than look to the ostensible progressive political party of Canada, citizens

were left to organize and mobilize themselves. A number of key regional and national

organizations began formal arrangements to oppose the deal in early 1987. The Canadian

Auto Workers (CAW), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the Canadian Union of

Public Employees (CUPE), the National Union of Provincial Government Employees

(NUPGE) and the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) joined forces with the

Council of Canadians, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC),

the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and many other anti-poverty, justice, and

community-orientated groups to found the Pro-Canada Network.[26]

It is important to note that participating in the coalition was, for many of the

groups, not necessarily a *prima facie* conclusion, that in deed some groups anticipated

negative consequences for doing so. For example, some NAC activists did question

whether or not their organization should be dedicating scant resources to matters of

general economic policy, a concern only tangentially related to their primary focus of

advancing women's rights (Bashevkin, 1989, p. 368). In addition, NAC participation in

the anti-FTA coalition "...represented a change from its earlier emphasis upon co-

operative relations with the federal government..." (Ibid), which threatened its position

as a "legitimate" public interest group with access to high-ranking politicians, and put

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[26] This was later renamed the Action Canada Network.

into peril a large portion of its funding, which came from the federal government.[27] Yet despite the consequences, both perceived and real, groups such as NAC, unlike the NDP, ultimately joined the coalition as a matter of principle.

Despite the strength of the Action Canada Network specifically, and the anti-FTA movement in general, there were various organizational, ideological and practical difficulties. For example Huyer (2004) notes of the difficulty in "...reconciling the hierarchical and institution-based structures of labour with the consensus-orientated, ad hoc decision-making styles of other popular-sector groups" (p. 51). Cy Gonick and Jim Silver called labour's participation "...disappointing..."(Gonick and Silver, 1989, p. 8), and were critical of the fact that labour assumed leadership over the anti-FTA movement, but then failed to offer any. In the case of organized labour in Manitoba, the authors argued, "By insisting on occupying and monopolizing the leadership role, while at the same time being incapable of delivering it...[labour]...stood in the way of an effective fight-back campaign" (Ibid).

The difficulties in organizing a nation-wide movement, with national, regional and local emphasis are clear, particularly when there is no previously existing organizational infrastructure to facilitate the effort. That the NDP remained largely distant from the FTA issue created a dearth in a logical leadership, resource base and infrastructure. It is impossible to say whether or not the party's involvement in the issue would have changed the eventual outcome of the FTA[28], though it is certain that by not

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[27] NAC did seem to suffer some retaliatory reaction from the Mulroney's government, which in 1989 announced that it would be scaling back NAC's annual funding by over 50 per cent, to $300 000 by 1992 (Bashevikin, 1989, p. 369).

[28] In the end, the NDP received 20% of the vote (43 seats), the Liberal Party 32% (83 seats) and the Conservative Party 43% (for a slim majority of 169 seats in a 295 seat Parliament). Despite the fact that a

taking a stronger stand on the issue the party communicated to the public its unwillingness to join in or support popular protest—even if the issue is consistent with NDP principles.

Then CAW president Robert White wrote in a letter to Broadbent, "I can tell you that I've never seen such a level of disappointment and anger among our activists" (Quoted in McLeod, 1994, p. 25). White condemned NDP leadership for relying so heavily upon American pollster Fingerhut's strategy (Whitehorn, 1989, p. 51). An editorial in *Canadian Dimensions* argued, "It [the NDP] has spent the last several years distancing itself from the social activists..."(What should we do..., 1989, p. 3). And concluded by suggesting,

The party will either rebuild itself from the bottom up, listening to its members, embracing and involving itself in the coalitions it abandoned during the election—or it will be abandoned by 'ordinary Canadians' just as it was on November 21 (Ibid).

The post-election back lash saw federal party secretary Bill Knight resign a few weeks after the November 1988 election, with Broadbent following in March of 1989. Though it remained unclear whether or not the party would take any lessons from the 1988 campaign, and whether or not they would be receptive to the critiques waged against it.

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majority of Canadians effectively voted against the trade deal, the majority Conservatives subsequently passed The FTA in parliament.

*Chapter Seven*
*Calls and rejections for party renewal: The contemporary period*

By the early 1990s, the CCF/NDP had been an active political party for sixty

years, a span throughout which the party made significant changes in party structure,

ideology and policy—all of which gravitated away from principle-based politics towards

electoral-based politics. The final piece of what amounted to a trajectory aimed at

becoming a centrist, professionalized cadre party was cemented with the relative electoral

success of the party's strategy in the 1988 election. Gaining 43 seats in Parliament was

seen by the party as a breakthrough, and was a result which served to confirm to party

architects the necessity for professionalized and centralized politicking. The party has

been so confident in their assessment of the cause of their success in 1988 that they have

continued to replicate the formula throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. The

party's strategy however, not only in terms of electioneering but during non-electoral

periods as well, has come under increasing scrutiny from progressives outside the party.

The party has responded throughout the period with continued (though largely

disingenuous) calls for party renewal. Despite the multiple calls, originating from both

within and outside the party, for a fundamental change in party structure, organization

and policy, the years between the early 1990s and present day have seen the party

ossified. Throughout the period, party architects have continually rejected the basic

claims of a more democratized, more inclusive, and less election-orientated party.

The following section will briefly highlight the period from the end of

Broadbent's tenure as party leader up to the current period, which finds the party led by

Jack Layton, a contemporary and keen student of Broadbent. The intervening years,

which saw the party led by two different women (the first of which was the first woman

to be elected leader of a federal party in Canada) were lean ones for the party. Losing

official party status in one election and precariously holding onto it in others, the party

has spent much of the last 15 years in simple survival mode. In the process, however,

party stalwarts have continually rejected the calls for party renewal, and consequently

have continued to alienate and disenfranchise members of the burgeoning Canadian left.

### The NDP in peril

Party scholar Nelson Wiseman wrote in a 1995 article, "The NDP appears to be in

its death throes, an expiring political force in Canadian politics. It is intellectually

bankrupt, financially broke and reeling politically" (p. 281). Wiseman's reaction was in

part due to the electoral collapse of the party in the 1993 election, which saw the party's

seat count reduced to nine, and had them lose official party status. Though his

observations were also a response to the continuation of uninspired NDP politics. "The

centre of the political spectrum…[is]…crowded; party differences appeared ideologically

less profound…many NDP postures have been logically inadequate and impractical"

(Wiseman, 1995, p. 282).

The party entered the 1990s led by Audrey McLaughlin, the relatively unknown

MP from the Yukon who filled the opening left by Broadbent's resignation in 1989,

marking the first time a federal party had been led by a woman. Memory of the party's

abandonment of the FTA issue and Broadbent's electoralism ensured that dissatisfaction

with the party was still high amongst progressives. Accordingly, McLaughlin spoke

strongly and often about the need for redefining the ways in which the NDP operated. In

her nomination speech in December of 1989, McLaughlin argued,

We must practice in our own party what we seek in Canada—power sharing. Especially
the inclusion of all those who have been left out of Canada…*My kind of leadership*

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*listens and consults.* I've seen countless examples where decisions were made *for* people without asking them what they needed (emphasis original, quoted in McLeod, 1994, p. 31).

In the lead up to the 1993 federal election, and in an attempt to mitigate the damage in party trust caused by the 1988 election, McLaughlin ushered in both a new formula for the Strategy and Election Planning Committee (SEPC) and a new lead pollster, Dave Gotthilf of Winnipeg-based Viewpoints Research. Following criticism that the 1988 SEPC was far too centralized, the SEPC for 1993 was expanded to include 50 members. However a steering committee of 25 members, and a further refined group of just 10 was at the top of the SEPC (Whitehorn, 1994, p. 44) . The ostensibly democratized (though functionally centralized) structure of the SEPC fell into the now familiar pattern of a leader-focused campaign. However, given that McLaughlin's popularity was nowhere near that of Broadbent's in the mid-80's, the party was reduced to negative advertising in an attempt to rescue the campaign as election day neared (Whitehorn, 1994, p. 54). Perhaps more detrimentally, the party's ads during the 1993 election were dark affairs, which were fatalistic and seemed to attempt to mobilize public fears. Lionel Lumb, director of the School of Journalism and Communications at Carleton University writes,

The NDP had the rawest ads...so full of crackling anger and emotion they seemed to leap off the screen at viewers. It was as if the NDP wanted voters to see themselves as victims of the Tories, victims of free trade, unemployment...But while the ads tossed problems at viewers like so many hand grenades, they offered no hope or solutions" (p. 121).

The results of the 1993 election were "...dramatic and consequential..." (Clarke, 200, p. 121) and saw the traditional "two-party-plus" party system demolished. The 1993 election saw the rise of Preston Manning's rightwing grassroots Reform Party and Lucien Bouchard's separatist Bloc Quebecois (BQ)(which was vaulted to the position of official

opposition in its first ever election). Manning's brand of prairie populist politics, however conservative in orientation, harkened back to the Woodsworth era, and appealed to many former NDP voters. The upstart Reformers took a total of 17 seats previously held by the NDP, this compared to the 16 the party lost to the Liberals and one it lost to the Bloc (Whitehorn, 1994, p. 53). That the party abandoned their collectivism of the early CCF, and the extra-parliamentary activity of the early NDP in part enabled the rise of the Reform movement. And that they were perceived as abandoning Quebec (and a majority of Canadians) in joining with the "Yes" coalition on the Meech Lake Accord, in part facilitated the rise of the BQ (Whitehorn, 1994, p. 44)[29]. Though the Reform Party was to eventually merge with the Progressive Conservative Party, their brief tenure as a serious political force in Canada illustrated an appetite for popularly conceived politics. The virulent nationalism of the renamed Parti Quebecois (PQ) of course, remains.

In part a response to provide a left of centre platform for populism, and in part a response to the disastrous 1993 election results, discussions of party renewal, and reorientation back towards popularly inspired politics were restarted in the mid-1990s.

For many, McLaughlin's seeming commitment to decentralizing the power structure of the party, and the fact that she was the first woman leader of a major party in Canada were encouraging markers in an otherwise faltering party. Unfortunately, many within the existing party structure were reluctant to take the chances involved with a radical renewal process. For all McLaughlin's rhetoric and desire, she was able to achieve little in the way of fundamental reform within the party structure. Core party architects were simply too preoccupied with simple survival, given the party's tenuous

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[29] The party's dealings with constitutional issues, what Cooke (2004) has labeled the party's "constitutional confusion" has most certainly alienated many potential voters. This issue will be more fully discussed in the concluding chapter.

status in Parliament and the growing antipathy towards the party as a result of the catastrophic actions of NDP provincial governments, particularly in Ontario[30].

Bob Rae was elected Premiere of Ontario in September of 1990, holding a majority 73 seats of the 130 seat provincial legislature. Not only had Ontarians elected their first NDP government, they had done it in convincing fashion. Unfortunately, Rae's tenure as Premiere served to devastate the party's support in both provincial and federal politics. Ehring and Roberts (1993), writing during Rae's tenure, commented, "The CCF started off in 1933 with a promise to eradicate capitalism; the Ontario NDP in 1993 is governing as if it is hell bent on eradicating democratic socialism" (p. 302).

The early part of his mandate saw Rae introduce classic (and largely outdated) Keynesian policies. Broader structural particularities in the global economy, however, ensured that the increased borrowing and spending left the province further in debt (Knight, 1998, p. 108). Facing increasing political pressure from business, Rae employed the ideology and methods of the emerging neo-conservative movement and introduced draconian deficit control measures, turning focus away from unemployment and social services.

In a 1993 speech to business students at the University of Toronto, Rae gave his opinions on existing welfare programs, "My own view about welfare is that simply paying people to sit at home is not smart' (quoted in Monahan, 1995, p. 161). Rae's contempt of social democracy and antagonism towards traditional NDP constituencies was further illustrated by the imposition of cutbacks and wage controls on organized

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[30] In addition to the Ontario NDP, provincial NDP governments in both British Columbia and Saskatchewan also contributed to the national-level discontent in the early 1990s. Both governments focused heavily on debt and deficit reduction, employing neo-liberal tactics to do so, cutting funding to healthcare, education and other social services (McBride, 1996, p. 68-69).

labour in the public sector. Coined a "social contract" by Rae, the anti-labour policy (Bill 48) sought to cut $2 billion from public employee spending. Quickly dismissing policy alternatives drafted by organized labour, and holding only sparse and thinly veiled public consultations ensured that Rae achieved the policy he desired (Monahan, 1995, p. 190). Unfortunately, the measures were not simply the whims of the party leader, but rather were supported by the vast majority of party members. Party president Julie Davis, one of only three dissenting voices within the party, said after the vote to pass infamous Bill 48, "I feel as if someone has reached in and ripped my heart out" (quoted in Monahan, 1995, p. 210). She told reporters that within the party,

...group-think took over. People weren't really thinking, they were just acting. They convinced themselves that what they were doing was in the best interest of everyone. They stopped listening" (Ibid).

Throughout Rae's time as Premiere, and as public disapproval raged against Bill 48, Rae insulated himself by increasingly centralizing power in his own office (Ehring and Roberts, 1993, p. 302). Political economist Ron Sheldrick comments, "...there was a transformation in the representational structure that had developed...the policy process moved from a relatively open and democratic process to one that was insular and non-participatory" (1998, p. 39). By 1995, the majority of Ontarians who voted for the NDP in 1990 were all too ready to change allegiances. The electoral exodus saw the party reduced from 73 seats in 1990 to 17 seats in 1995 (Ibid). More importantly, the policies of the Rae government communicated further the failures of social democracy across Canada, and inspired increased resentment towards the notion of so-called social democracy throughout the country. Wiseman (1995) writes,

Such policy reversals did not resonate with the message the party leaders preached in opposition and which members had embraced fervently at policy conventions. The gulf

between leadership behavior in office and party members' older, unrevised ideological image of the NDP became so wide that the party lost core supporters who felt betrayed or ignored (p. 284).

At the federal level, the party elected a new leader in 1995, former Nova Scotia provincial leader Alex McDonough. Similar to her predecessor McLaughlin, McDonough spoke broadly of party reform aimed at a reorientation of the party towards its more populist roots. However a number of factors ensured the continued marginalization of the party, according to polls, which in turn dictated a focus on electioneering, to the detriment of any high-minded notions of party renewal. Firstly, an increasingly conservative socio-political environment, particularly in terms of fiscal management, coupled with the party's outdated Keynesian critique resulted in the increased irrelevance of the party. There simply was little public trust that the NDP could respond to the economic situation of the late 1990s. Although the party did manage to succeed in its modest goal to reclaim official party status in the 1997 general election, gaining 21 seats, they were nearly relegated to the political wilderness again in 2000, winning only one seat more than the necessary 12 to retain official party status. Another factor contributing to the dismal electoral fortunes of the NDP in the 1990s is the degree to which the party may have suffered under female leadership in a systemically male-dominated institution. Gidengil and Everitt (2003) for example illustrate the structural media biases experienced by female party leaders. They found that women leaders were "...subject to more interpretation by the media and [were] reported in more negative and aggressive language" (p. 209). They conclude that gendered mediation "...may hinder women's chances of electoral success" (Ibid).

*New millennium, same party*

By the end of the twentieth century the combined phenomena of ever-expanding global markets, intensified "free" trade regimes, the rapid growth of multinational conglomerations, and an acute dissemination of neoliberal economic hegemonies had ushered in what was to become colloquially known as Globalization. Popular mobilization against the corporatist ethic of unrestrained global markets, and the institutions advancing the agenda was fierce in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as illustrated by mass protests such as those in Seattle in 1999 and Quebec City in 2001. Unfortunately, at least in the Canadian context, the ferment largely overlooked traditionally organized politics as an effective means of change. Laxer comments,

The anti-globalization movement, demanding 'fair trade not free trade', stole headlines. Many of its young supporters, potential NDP backers who were joining civil-society groups, didn't see enough in NDP policies to support Canada's only mainstream progressive political party (2006, p. 1).

The abandonment of the party by citizens and civil society groups during the early popular ferment waged against corporate globalization bares striking similarity to the FTA situation 20 years earlier. In both cases, groups and individuals within civil society were responding to what they perceived to be an unresponsive and inaccessible institution. Participating in party politics, thoroughly electoral in orientation, was interpreted as at best a meandering path towards engaging in substantive and meaningful struggle. Thus, in both cases, the party was simply by-passed in favor of more direct action. Again, similar to both situations, the NDP ignored an opportunity to re-connect with citizens in a meaningful, dialogic way, choosing instead to continue on in familiar and uninspired ways.

The party's posture in the late 1990's, likewise in 1988, communicates to citizens not only it's lack of uniqueness vis-à-vis the other parties, but more detrimentally for a

so-called social democratic party, a justification for the structures of liberal democratic party politics. Rather than communicating, through action, structure, out reach, etc., a more inspired campaign aimed at democratization of the party itself, in addition to civil, social and cultural spheres—that is to say, joining in unequivocal terms the struggle against corporate globalization—the party establishment chose (at least initially) to simply reiterate the status quo and reinforce a hegemony it seemed unconcerned with challenging.

However, with mounting pressure from various sources to fashion a comprehensive response to the emergent patterns of globalization, the party initiated yet another renewal process. Nova Scotia Member of Parliament Peter Stoffer provided an initial impetus in an open letter to the party in which he called for fundamental internal reforms, including decision-making and party financing procedures (Stoffer, 2001, p. 1). Shortly after, in April of 2001, a group of party activists, under the name NDProgress organized a national conference to discuss policy, structural and organizational alternatives. In June 2001 Judy Rebick, CAW chief economist Jim Stanford and MPs Libby Davis and Svend Robinson formed the New Politics Initiative (NPI), the lead group dedicated to the renewal, or possibly dissolution of the NDP.

If the Waffle was inspired by mounting dissatisfaction with the NDP's ability to sustain a relevant social democratic critique in light of lingering anti-Communist rhetoric and the encroaching ethic of professionalized politics, the NPI (and the concerns they represented) was a response to escalating frustrations with the rise of corporate globalization left unattended by the NDP. Critics claimed that the party needed to bolster their resistance to corporate globalization by engaging civil society groups and giving

dissent a clear parliamentary voice. It was yet another call for a re-jigging of the party. In the moment of political ferment that was the initial popular opposition to corporate globalization, it is not surprising that the party's national convention in Winnipeg in November of 2001 would end up being dominated by the issue of party renewal.

In testament to the increased level of activism spurred by the notion of renewal, the convention was attended by over 1200 delegates, twice the number anticipated by event organizers (Mitchell, 2002, p. 27). The NPI had submitted a document entitled "New Party Proposition" previous to the convention, and had hoped for a thorough and engaged discussion of the contents of the proposal. While debate on the proposal was cut short due to "...procedural skirmishes..."(Ibid), leaving details of the document ill-understood, the convention was nonetheless required to vote on the proposal. A final tally of 685 against to 401 for the NPI renewal program meant an effective end to the most recent renewal process and the NPI. The group would dissolve in February of 2004.

After a largely uninspired leadership, McDonough stepped down as leader of the party in 2003, and the former President of Canadian Municipalities, Jack Layton, was elected leader. Described as "...very left, very Toronto..." (Cody, 2004, p. 59), Layton had initially been a supporter, however discreetly, of the NPI project, and Cody argues that proponents of the NPI were largely responsible for Layton's leadership victory (Ibid). However, despite the perception that Layton would move the party leftward to reengage both civil society and CCF ideals of the past, this was not to be the case. Under his leadership, the party would continue on its professionalized trajectory, and illustrate striking similarities with the party as it existed under the leadership of Ed Broadbent. Layton was able to convince Broadbent to emerge from retirement to run in the 2004

election, and the two were seen often on the campaign trail together (e.g., Curry, 2004, p. A5).

Layton's first election as leader, in 2004, saw the party follow a strategy consistent with that of the previous 15 years, though somewhat amplified. Leader-centered politics continued to dominate, the key campaign document entitled "Platform 2004: Jack Layton, NDP" (Whitehorn, 2004, p. 117). The party also spent an unprecedented $4.8 million on advertising during the 2004 election, a steep increase in the $1.8 million spent in 2000 (Ibid, p. 119). Of that comparatively massive sum, 91% was spent on television advertisements. Although the party had a web-based presence from as early as 1997 (Barney, 2007, p. 373), they reveled a new, more election-oriented site in the lead-up to the 2004 election (Whitehorn, 2004, p. 123). In addition, the party once again chose to focus on discrediting the Liberals, while rarely mentioning the Conservatives. Activist and chairperson of the Council of Canadians Maude Barlow commented that she initially felt pressure from the party "'...not to criticize Harper'..." (Quoted in Laxer, 2006, p. 3). However, as the election period approached, the Council joined forces with other progressive groups to form the Think Twice coalition dedicated to illuminating the extreme right-wing politics of Stephen Harper. "If the NDP was not going to talk about Harper's record...we felt we had to" (Barlow, quoted in Laxer, 2005, p. 3).

Discontent with NDP strategy would bridge the relatively short two-year period between the 2004 election and the 2006 election. The precarious Liberal minority government elected in 2004 was defeated in a non-confidence motion by a coalition backed by the NDP. Many of the same criticisms would surface, however, there were

other criticisms of the 2006 campaign, other than its strategic similarities to both the 2004 and 1988 election. The timing of the 2006 federal election was perhaps the most contentious issue (Stanford, 2006, p. A.13). Despite only holding 19 seats from 2004-2006, the party effectively held a great deal of power in Parliament. In combination with independent Chuck Cadman, the NDP could provide the minority Liberals with majority support in Parliament. They had used the position in Parliament to make the two-year period an encouragingly progressive one in the legislature. Rather than continue to attempt to extract progressive measures from the minority parliament, however, party strategists sensing a chance at electoral success, urged the party to bring down the minority government. As Stanford writes,

[The NDP] decision was made over the explicit objection of many progressive movements. They had used the Liberals' fragile majority position to extract impressive, important gains (child care, new legal protections for workers, the aboriginal deal and others); they wanted to solidify those victories, and win new ones. Aboriginal leaders, urban advocates, the child-care constituency and labour leaders (not just Buzz Hargrove, but others, including Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti) all wanted an election later, not sooner (Ibid).

Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union president Buzz Hargrove made perhaps the most stunning show of disapproval with the party by publicly advocating strategic voting—urging his members (and the general public) to vote for NDP candidates where they were likely to win, and to vote for Liberal candidates in all other ridings (Laxer, 2005, p. 3). Hargrove's suggestion marked a break in the relationship between organized labour and the NDP, a relationship formalized with the creation of the party in 1961. The long term ramifications of the strain between the party and organized labour created by Hargrove's actions remain to be seen.

However, in terms of other progressive bodies, Laxer writes that the party's decision to precipitate an election created, "...a veritable chasm within the broader left community" (Laxer, 2006, p. 23), and Stanford comments that the move "...badly tested the relationship..." (Stanford, 2006, p. A13) between the party and other progressives. This was simply the most recent example illustrating the trajectory of the party, with its attendant emphasis on managerialism and centralized electoral politics. However, the 2006 campaign saw the introduction of a more concerning strategy, one which seems to suggest the dawn of paternalistic politics within the NDP.

The party's platform for the 2006 election was launched by its title name "Getting Results For People" (NDP, 2006). Not only was the slogan prominently displayed on the front cover of the platform document (along with picture of Layton), it also made appearances on every page of the 45 page document in the form of a right page aligned footer (NDP, 2006). In addition, Layton used the phrase as a mantra, uttering the words at seemingly every opportunity (National Post, 2005, p. A10). The weakened notion of democracy communicated by the heavy use of the phrase suggests firstly that politics is simply a results based endeavor, obscuring the procedural and structural demands of a robust democratic conceptualization. The logic of the statement requires little of citizens, other than that they cast a vote, and only encourages that citizens suspend belief in the possibilities of democracy. The statement "Getting Results For People" illustrates the extent to which the contemporary NDP has become detached from the principles of the early CCF, which encouraged participation and inclusion, urging citizens to be active participants in both formulating desires and getting results. This issue will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

The NDP won 29 seats in the 2006, which marks a drastic improvement in the party's electoral fortunes from the previous decade. However, as Stanford (2006) suggest, the gains made deserved only one hand clapping. As mentioned above, the party's strategic decision to downplay the threat of Harper's Conservatives, while illuminating the Liberals shortcomings in an effort to peel away voters from them, coupled with the much derided timing of the election, were decisions much maligned by Canadian progressives. The 2006 election represented yet another situation in which the party sought to exchange principles for power. This has lead, predictably, to calls from the left for yet another fundamental reconsideration of party structure, organization, policy and principles. Stanford writes, "...some tough discussions now must take place. The left must bring its two personalities together, and soon..." (2006, p. A13).

Stanford's call for a union between the two personalities, while clearly a potential remedy to the ails of Canadian social democracy ignores the history of the (at best) tenuous relationship between the parliamentary left and the popular left in Canada. The institutionalization of progressive ferment that was the formation of the CCF, an explicit strategy continually reproduced throughout subsequent decades, initiated the very dichotomy which continues to haunt the party. That the dichotomy exists still, and thus necessarily the problems it precipitates, is testament to the difficulties in its overcoming. Which is not to suggest that the problems associated with a fragmented left are by any means insuperable. However, the problems of party dissatisfaction, apathy and abandonment may be worsening. Cross and Young (2004) have produced evidence to suggest that even those within the NDP party establishment, the card-carrying members of the party, have heeded the implicit message from the party leadership. They write,

Given that the CA [Canadian Alliance] and the NDP consider themselves to be mass parties...it is interesting that the Alliance and New Democrat members are among the least active. In fact, our data indicated that half of those members spend no time on party activity (p. 439)[31].

Cross and Young pessimistically, however accurately, conclude that Canadian political parties (including the NDP) leave much to be desired in as much as they represent a democratic means of interest aggregation and articulation within parliament. "The findings of our study paint a picture of parties as highly unrepresentative associations, with few members, and little vitality" (p. 441).

The concluding chapter will use this premise as a point of departure and will discuss key aspects of the NDP communicative ecology which have illustrated both its gradual withdrawal from social democratic politics and ideas, as well as the ways in which this posture has served to preserve the fragmentary characteristic of the Canadian left. Following this, a discussion, based on a comparative context, outlining possible solutions to the problem of Canadian social democracy will be offered.

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[31] The authors continue on to question the veracity of the received notion that the results of furnishing members with more opportunity for meaningful involvement will necessarily result in more active members. This of course implies that they NDP does in fact present the public with a democratized and responsive political option, an idea which this work explicitly challenges.

*Chapter Eight*
*Conclusion*

The proceeding chapters have provided an historical narrative of how the CCF/NDP organized its approach to the development of its constituency and its communication with them. The movement-to-party thesis, popularized in the Canadian context by Zakuta (1964), Young (1969) and Cross (1974) (each of whom used a variation of Michels' (1962) iron law of oligarchy) has been largely born out in the previous chapters. The trajectory of the CCF/NDP has been characterized as one which saw the party move from an origin of popularly conceived and participatory social democratic politics to a centralized and professionalized liberal democratic politics. This shift has been illustrated by focusing on the party's organizational infrastructures, institutional emphasis (whether movement building, electioneering, etc.), and ideological orientation (as illustrated through party documentation, policy, etc.). The central concern of this effort, however, has not been to simply demonstrate the trajectory of the party by critiquing the traditional tropes of political party investigation. Rather, as developed in the introductory chapters of this work (using the work of Carey, 1989 and Nancy, 1991) I have attempted to employ those familiar tropes towards an unfamiliar end—to inject them into an overall communicative ecology of the party.

Carey's work, which understands communication as culture, and makes the useful distinction between transmission and ritualistic models of communication, provides a methodological basis with which to investigate the communicative aspects of seemingly non-communicative events and structures. Engaging with the ritual model (defined by Carey as the maintenance of culture through time) forces a focus on the kind of culture(s) produced/inspired by the CCF/NDP, and more importantly, the ways in which their

communicative ecology (comprised in part by explicit decisions at the structural/organizational level) and strategies determine that culture(s). Carey's analysis illustrates the communicative aspects of structural realities and thus makes possible a union between a structural and communicative critique.

Nancy's work supplements and extends the logic of Carey's work by arguing that communities, the building/maintenance of which are ever-incomplete projects, are fundamentally communicative events which continually transmit particular messages to both potential and active members. The process of community making by various community architects can thus be understood as a means by which specific characteristics of that community are being either encouraged or discouraged. Taken together, the separate work of Carey and Nancy allow for the development of a critique of the party's communicative ecology by investigating the various organizational, structural and ideological patterns throughout the party's history. That is to say, a critique of the party can be made on the basis of the ways in which it communicates through the building of its culture/community.

The normative foundations buffering the central arguments of this work, introduced in the first chapter, were provided by Fraser's (1992) interpretation and critique of Habermas' ideal public sphere. Fraser argues for the desirability of multiple and counter publics (which she labels subaltern counterpublics) in order to move towards a postbourgeois conceptualization and organization of public governance. Critical political theorists Mouffe (2000, 2005) and Bobbio (2005) illustrate the ways in which hegemony functions within both the notion and practice of democracy to restrict the possibility of multiply determined sites of democratic governance. In addition, the work

of Gramsci, specifically regarding his thoughts on the hegemony of the proletariat and the possibilities of the political party and the role of the organic intellectuals were presented in the introductory chapter as notions relevant to the normative claims of this thesis. The work of Fairclough (1992) was used throughout the study to assess aspects of particular CCF/NDP documents and to determine the ways in which the documents either conformed with, or resisted various hegemonies. What follows engages the above ideas with a synthesized critique of the CCF/NDP communicative ecology (drawing on the historical information provided in the proceeding chapters). First I will discuss political communication in more traditional terms, specifically the ways in which technology has served to manipulate and centralize political messaging. Secondly, I will briefly introduce and discuss the work of Ursula Franklin, specifically her work on the notion of technology as practice, in order to attempt to address some agency-level responses resulting from the NDP communicative ecology. I will end the discussion with a few recommendations for the party which lead to a brief note on potential future work on the subject.

### Technology and communication

Advancements in polling and data collecting technologies over the last few decades have resulted in significant alterations in the functioning of political parties. In part, such technologies have enabled the development of the professionalized party which have come to rely heavily on advanced polling techniques which yield almost instantaneous results. The NDP began its relationship with polling data when it hired Dunsky Advertising in 1965. An astute pollster and ad agent, Dunsky joined the party with an eye toward establishing a "...small, more or less expert and cohesive

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committee..." (Dunsky, 1974, p. 4) at the centre of the NDP decision making structure. It was Dunsky who also cynically argued to the party leadership, that the party "...is not a theoretical model, it is a political party and that it is big business" (Dunsky, 1974a, p. 1).

Despite the changes in political parties ushered in with advanced polling technologies (precipitated in no small measure by the attitudes of the technology's practitioners) it is the advancements in communications technologies (used here in a more traditional sense) which have facilitated fundamental changes in the political landscape.

Stephen Brooks (2007) notes that in the first Canadian general election in 1867, candidates communicated in three ways, "One involved face-to-face contact with voters at public meetings, in town halls, and on street corners. The second was through posters and pamphlets. The third was newspaper coverage" (p. 355). He also notes that political candidates were not required to pay for political advertisements in newspapers, though many of the existing papers were blatantly, though transparently partisan (p. 355).

Since then, the communications technologies and strategies available to political parties have increased dramatically. From the advent of the television, to the remarkable rise of the Internet, parties face an ever-expanding range of communicative choices.

Without even mentioning the entire political economic critique such technologies have inspired, detailing the increased commercialization of political discourse, etc., there remain a number of concerning aspects of communication technologies within the political realm. Brooks, for example, highlights the phenomenon of 30-second democracy, noting that political parties employ "...the same techniques of persuasion that

the sellers of Viagra or automobiles would use" (p. 358). (It is significant to mention that

many European countries have explicit rules forbidding paid political advertising and

place minimum time requirements on televised, publicly funded spots, usually in excess

of two minutes)(Brooks, 2007, p. 357).

Others, such as Postman (PBS, 1996) and Miller (PBS, 1996) have detailed the

rise in image-based and leader-centred politics associated with the rise in televisual

media. The ability of images to invoke a visceral and emotional response (particularly in

the stunted time dedicated to a political ad) far outweighs the ability to conjure an

emotional response of even the most eloquently phrased language. Miller comments,

It really doesn't matter what a politician says anymore. It's not even necessary for a
politician to be lucid. If they look right, if the have the right golden glow and use the
right buzzwords...then the politician can succeed and I think that has to do with the
power of the image (quoted in Brooks, 2007, p. 358).

As mentioned in previous chapters, the NDP has followed the contemporary trend

of leader-focused policy as a strategy. Arguably the most famous NDP leader, Tommy

Douglas' popularity (both during his tenure as party leader and subsequently as a kind of

Canadian political icon) initially had more to do with his natural charisma and conviction

than as a result of a concerted political strategy. And certainly his contemporary

popularity (demonstrated by his naming as the greatest Canadian on CBC's Greatest

Canadian program of 2004) is in part a result of his role in ushering in universal health

care, and the centrality of the institution to Canadians. However, beginning with

Broadbent in the 1980s, and continuing on through to Layton, the NDP has used the tools

and methods of mass marketing to sell their leaders.

The 2006 campaign is one of the more stunning examples of the party's use of

leader/image politics, even more so than the 2004 campaign, in which the party's

platform document was entitled "Platform 2004: Jack Layton, NDP" (Whitehorn, 2004, p. 117). The cover of the 2006 election platform document, titled, "Getting results for people" was half-filled by a picture of Layton, suggesting of course that Layton would be getting the results. What this kind of political advertising (manipulation) obscures, of course, is the vast network of people who, *in addition* to Layton, participate in the NDP. As Snider (1985) writes, "...at election time, the leader has [tended to] become the party" (p. 148-149). In a sense, the discourse set out by the document (and it's developers) serves to relegate the work, ideas and efforts of every other party member to obscurity. It suggests the presence of a kind of monopoly, and communicates to party members and citizens their own ineffectiveness in both the party and their own ability to participate in procuring their own results. Fletcher (1987) writes that over-emphasizing a leader, "...downplay[s] not only local candidates and potential cabinet ministers, but also policies and issues" (p. 358). Additionally, this kind of leader-focused politics is wholly incommensurate within a parliamentary system. Other critiques aside, leader-focused campaigns in the U.S. are at least within the logic of the presidential system. However in the Canadian context, in which leadership is expressed in terms of a collective executive, leader-focused politicking can be interpreted as an assault on the parliamentary system of governance.

The Internet presents an opportunity for political parties to transcend the unidirectional and leader-focused politics of the television/print age. Rodgers (2003), for example, observes the unique features of the Internet which can potentially be of benefit to political actors. While Small (2007) notes of the interactivity of web-based technologies, which allow for the possibility of dialogic communication between parties

and citizens, he also points out that the Internet presents the possibility of addressing

specific regional, and even individual concerns: "While television...allowed parties to

speak to national audiences, the unique features of the Internet allow them to speak to

regional and private ones" (Small, 2007, p. 645). Despite the vast potential, however, it

seems at least thus far that parties have been reluctant to exploit the various potentials of

web-based communication technologies. Instead, as Small (2007) argues, the Internet

has been used largely as means by which to extend the logic of leader-focused politics.

Event calendars, campaign diaries, photo galleries and news stories all documented the
activities and pronouncements of the party leaders on the campaign tour. Indeed,
websites should be thought of as part of the leaders' tours (p. 648).

The contention that the introduction of the information and communication

technologies (ICT's), enabled by the rise of digital technology, have produced gains in

democratization are dubious at best. The NDP's foray into digital democratization

includes a one member, one vote leadership contest in 2003 which perhaps created more

participation but did not promote a meaningful dialogue . The leadership election process

was extended beyond the spatial confines of the convention hall as members were able to

vote on-line for their choice of leader during the convention weekend. However, as

Barney (2007) points out, such plebiscitary instruments, when not coupled with

substantive dialogue, "...actually undermine[s] deliberative public-spirited

democracy..." (p. 376). In addition, Barney notes,

...it is not at all clear that the move from delegated to direct election of party leaders has
been an unambiguous democratic gain, as the expenditure of power, resources, and
influence once applied to delegate selection contests has now been transferred to the
recruitment of masses of new members whose sole involvement in the party is the
minimalist act of voting for the machine that recruited them (p. 376).

Other uses of the Internet by parties seem to be no more inspiring. Small (2007) concludes that Internet use by parties has the overall effect of centralizing campaign efforts. She found that party websites were largely targeted at media outlets—designed primarily to facilitate mass media reporting on the party. Small writes, "Instead of targeting communication to voters, it appears that Canadian parties use the web to reach out to the mass media" (2007, p. 652). In a qualitative analysis of 98 stories appearing on the major political parties' websites over the 36-day election campaign in 2004, Small concludes bluntly, "...these stories were press releases" (p. 652). Of course it is clear that the press release is in no way structured to promote either democracy, or a better understanding of complex issues. Rather, it is designed specifically to fit readily within the formulaic format preferred by the contemporary corporate media. As Zittel (2004) remarks, "The function of the press release is to provide news to the mass media...Press releases do not aim at the ordinary citizen and do not provide comprehensive access to information" (p. 85). While accurate in some respects, Zittel perhaps misses the more crucial point. Press releases are in fact directed at both media outlets *and* citizens. The paired down and simplistic rhetoric of political party press releases targeted at citizens serves to feed the process of citizen de-politicization. Often void of substantive content, these kinds of documents forego attempts at nuanced understanding of issues for more banal purposes centered on the selling of messages through unproductive partisanship.

While all major party websites in Canada offer other means by which citizens may access information, namely through voter-initiated email, it seems as though this function is less than effective in practical terms. Small (2007) and Clarkson (2001) each set out to test the usefulness of voter-initiated email to party representatives, and both

found the results disappointing. Clarkson sent two emails detailing questions on substantive policy issues to each party in the 2000 election, and received only three responses, one from the NDP and two from the Bloc Quebecois. In 2006, Small sent out a request for information regarding each party's stance on same-sex marriage. She received no responses during the course of the campaign, and only one (from the Conservative Party) a month after the election had taken place. As Ireland and Nash (2001) argue, party non-response to voter email certainly contributes to the perception that the party is unorganized and inefficient. More importantly, it communicates to voters a disinterestedness—as Small suggests, "…it may appear that the party does not care about hearing from voters" (2007, p. 653).

In total, it seems as though Canadian political parties simply use the Internet as a way to streamline the logic of traditional campaigning. Visitors to party websites are prompted to either join the party, volunteer for the party or donate to the party, "…all functions that campaigns performed long before the Internet. The technology just does it more efficiently and inexpensively" (Small, 2007, p. 654). It is also worth noting that these familiar functions are easily quantifiable, and used as indicators with which to make claims about a party's (or a campaign's) health or effectiveness. Yet what remains absent is an assessment of, for example, the amount and quality of constituency-level dialogue created by a party or campaign. It seems as though NDP has rejected this more dialogic potential of the Internet, a function which has been used effectively by other progressive groups and movements for years. As Small (2005) notes, during the 2004 campaign, "…not one major party operated a discussion forum on their website" (Quoted in Barney, 2007, p. 378). Rather than use the Internet as a potential site of virtual community

building, capacity building, education or empowerment, the NDP seems to be simply following other parties in using the technology in familiar and uninspired ways—an unimaginative continuation of the party's penchant for aping the other mainstream parties in their application of communicative technologies.

### The division of political labour

I now want to introduce a concept useful for thinking about agency/constituency level responses to the party's communicative ecology. The concept to be developed here will be referred to as the division of political labour. The term "political" in this context should be understood in a broad sense—that which encompasses both the institutions of governance, as well as the societal actors involved in the continual negotiation of political identity vis-à-vis each other and state level institutions.

The basis of the inferential framework comes from the work of Canadian scholar Ursula Franklin, specifically from her work in *The real world of technology* (1990, 1999). Franklin conceives of technology primarily as practice—a practice which has served to structure (in part) the development of human history. Franklin writes, "Technology involves organization, procedures, symbols, new words, equations, and, most of all, a mindset" (1999, p. 3). Understanding technology as "...formalized practice..." (p. 7) allows Franklin to make a link between technology and culture, because, as she writes "...culture, after all, is a set of socially accepted practices" (p. 7).

Franklin argues further that technology understood as practice, and the accompanying development of particular cultures around particular technologies, serves to structure social relations and identify/justify hierarchical relationships. "The common practice that a particular technology represents...lead[s] to the 'right' of the practitioners

to an exclusive practice of the technology" (1999, p. 8). The discourse of any technology, therefore, encourages a process reliant upon stratification and necessitates the development of an expert culture.

The arguments Franklin makes regarding technology as practice, however, do not apply to all technologies equally. Franklin makes the analytic distinction between holistic and prescriptive technologies to further nuance her arguments. The former, she suggests, are generally associated with the notion of craft, or the artisan. That is to say, the individual retains a large measure of control and autonomy over the process. Prescriptive technologies, contrastingly, identify and partition discrete steps in a given process, each of which is completed by different individuals. In other words, prescriptive technologies encourage the kind of division of labour identified by Marx (and entail the associated socio-political and economic maladies associated with the division of labour). Significantly, Franklin identifies the fact that holistic technologies are generally defined as a specialization by product (leaving much of the process to be determined by the doer) while prescriptive technologies are characterized by a specialization by process (leaving the doer alienated, with no control over either the process or the product) (p. 12). For example, one can think of a pen as a technology conducive to allowing a more holistic set of practices, whereby the user can easily choose where to use it, how to use, etc. Alternately, a keyboard can be thought of as a more prescriptive technology which serves to structure the activity of writing far more than the use of a pen. Moreover, Franklin argues that prescriptive technologies are designed specifically for control, discipline, command, and organization (p. 15), all of which lead to certain efficiencies and

effectiveness, though Franklin cautions, "...they [prescriptive technologies] come with an enormous social mortgage" (p. 16).

Unfortunately, as Franklin identifies, the tendency for prescriptive technologies to marginalize and supercede holistic technologies is a wide-spread characteristic of the modern condition. In effect, a kind of technological ethic, or logic, premised on abstract notions of efficiency, control, and management prevails and permeates distinct social, political, cultural and economic realms, based on specious arguments of effectiveness. The prescriptive model—itself the preferred logic of capitalism—has displaced the multiple logics of varied end goals (such as justice, equality, etc.) with a prescribed teleology of efficiency for efficiency's sake and has in the process privileged the kind of democracy which in turn further promotes the prescriptive ethic. Franklin comments,

And today, the temptation to design more or less everything according to prescriptive and broken-up technologies is so strong that it is even applied to those tasks that should be conducted in a holistic way. Any tasks that require caring, whether for people or nature, any tasks that require immediate feedback and adjustment, are best done holistically (p. 17).

The political realm (and here I use the term in a more narrow sense, to connote the activities, procedures and processes of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary governance) is certainly comprised of tasks best served by holistic technologies. In as much as the political party is a site of interest aggregation and articulation, it is clear that much of its work is (or ought to be) concerned with caring for both people and nature in a responsive and flexible manner. However, in acquiescence to a managerial logic governed by notions of efficiency, the political realm has come to be dominated by prescriptive practices. The professionalization of politics and the attendant development of expert cultures (leaders, pollsters, strategists and advertisers) has led to an increasing

emphasis on control, and on managing the numerous variables associated with elections, most significantly, the voter. Franklin herself has argued, "In political terms, prescriptive technologies are *designs for compliance*" (Itallics original, p. 16).

The proceeding chapters have illustrated the degree to which, in Franklin's terminology, the CCF/NDP has abandoned the methods of holistic technologies, while conscripting the tactics of prescriptive technologies. Lipset's (1940) account of the early years of the CCF in Saskatchewan illustrates the existence of a profoundly collaborative and participatory politics. Recall that he reports between 40 000 and 60 000 different elected positions existed in rural Saskatchewan alone, at the time amounting to "...approximately one position for every two or three farmers" (Lipset, 1968, p. 245). Additionally, the party regulations in place at the time explicitly encouraged local participation, while specifically discouraging the development of a professionalized political elite. The regulations were such that any elected position, which would have any bearing on rural areas, had to be filled by a person from that area. As Lipset writes, such arrangements provided "...direct channels of communication between the mass of farmers and their leaders" (p. 248).

Local autonomy was further preserved and encouraged through this early social democratic formula by the ways in which the party understood its own role in the process of politics. The emphasis of the early CCF was on education, not electioneering; coordinating, not co-opting. The original organizational infrastructure was built in such a way as to maximize local autonomy and participation, while encouraging only an amount of centralized authority required to maintain an adequate level of cohesion. The party provided a kind of supportive infrastructure (albeit an ideologically specific one) through

which party members could exert meaningful and effective influence. In short, the party's communicative ecology provided incentives to participate through avenues of effective inclusion. As a result, citizens responded with a kind of political enthusiasm unfamiliar to the contemporary period, infusing the political struggle into their everyday lives, such that members "...found the movement so close to the centre of their lives that no clear distinction existed between politics, sociability, entertainment and even work" (Zakuta, 1964, p. 42). In effect, the early days of the CCF illustrate the kind of radical democratization of social and cultural realms characteristic of the democratic theory of Mouffe, Bobbio and Gramsci. A kind of associationalism, premised on the non (or anti) capitalistic principles of mutuality and co-operation was inspired by the party, and in turn created the kind of organic intellectuals—local leaders—discussed by Gramsci as integral to the project of democratization.

Additionally, the politicization of the citizen was furthered by other means which encouraged not only education and participation, but creativity, community and recreation. Citizens were not only *active in*, but (and more importantly), were *engaged by* the party. This all led to an intellectual, creative and activist kind of ferment. As Cooke details, constituency members held a wide range of activities;

> ...lectures and book groups complete with reading lists and study guides along with cultural and social activities including theatrical productions, musical performances, choirs, songbooks, poetry recitals, picnics, dances, bazaars, card games and various sporting events and teams (Cooke, 2006, p. 5).

Beginning with the formation of the NDP (which formalized the relationship between the CCF and CLC), and extended by successive waves of centralization and professionalization, constituents have been systematically removed from the centre of party activity to its periphery. Displaced by the so-called experts of contemporary

politics—pollsters, strategists and advertisers—citizens no longer have neither the clear channels of influence on the party, nor the incentive to pursue the dilapidated and largely symbolic channels that remain. The communicative ecology of the party has made clear, through organizational, structural and policy initiatives that citizens are meant only to vote, not meddle in the business of a professional political party.

What has developed within the NDP amounts to a political division of labour, whereby a specialization by product (community, social democracy, etc.) has been subjugated by a specialization by process (chiefly, electioneering). That the party shifted its central focus away from educational activities and principle-based politics, towards the pursuit of parliamentary power (again, as illustrated by any number of instances, the creation of the NDP, the party's downplaying of the FTA in the 1988 campaign) has caused this fundamental reorientation in emphasis. Process has superceded product and this development has birthed a logic which dictates the ways in which the party functions, as well as the ways in which the party responds to citizens. The political artisans of the early CCF, politically educated, engaged, creative and willingly active, each had a genuine role in piecing together a meaningful product, whether towards that of community, or social democracy. This, contrasted with the contemporary condition in which the citizen, a post-modern service economy worker heeding the party's message, relegates themselves to an alienated position on the electoral assembly line. And while the meaningful work of policy development, party organization and ideological orientation is reserved for the hired professionals, the citizen is left toiling away at the uninteresting and unengaged work of door-to-door appeals and vote casting. Barney (2007) writes of the dwindling party membership in Canada,

After all, what could be the incentive to participate in a political party when the substance of this participation—pitching commodities, scanning barcodes, and surreptitiously gathering customer information for distant processing—resembles so closely the job description of telemarketers, and even these diminished activities are on the verge of being automated and centralized out of existence? (2007, p. 375-376).

There is, of course, always a need for this kind of political grunt work—door-to-door appeals have been one of the most persistent forms of democratic politicking. However, when a political division of labour becomes institutionalized, whereby the citizen becomes structurally excluded from the possibility of a more holistic participation (e.g. door-to-door appeals coupled with local decision making autonomy) the conditions of apathy seem likely to persevere.

That the NDP has, for decades, continually abrogated its role as a social democratic party—as a site of resistance, democracy and citizen engagement—has no doubt lent to the wide-spread apathy in progressive circles for contemporary organized politics. The unadorned answer to the question *why* the party has continued thusly can in part be explained by the imperatives of Gramsci's hegemony—the party has simply folded itself into the mechanisms and processes of state-level hegemonic politics. And, as a result, it has relentlessly adopted the "essential" elements of such a pursuit; centralized organizational structure, liberal democratic ideology and excessive electoral emphasis.

A second part of the answer lies in the fact that the party has failed to understand the importance of it's own communicative ecology. While the party certainly does, in some cases, represent a more progressive alternative to the other mainstream parties (for example, regarding the environment) it does so in ways quite similar to the other parties, not exactly inspiring an engaged response from social actors and groups of the activist

community. The NDP, despite any policy marginally more imaginative than that of the other parties, still functions fundamentally as a bourgeois, liberal democratic party. The communicative ecology it has built around itself stifles popular participation and engagement and communicates little more than the structural status quo. The party has been too consumed with the trifles of communication (i.e. professionally devised, mediated electoral ads), at the expense of a concern for the more substantive issues of its communicative ecology.

Again, this is readily illustrated by the fact that chronically under funded constituency offices subsist miserably while simultaneously the party continues to expend considerable resources (financial, human and time) on election-specific advertising. Where once the CCF was a permanent and consistent social, cultural and political fixture in communities, the contemporary NDP exists almost exclusively as an election-time entity. It is a perverse conclusion indeed, but one nonetheless apparent: The party has chosen to dedicate its finite resources to the imperatives of hegemonic politics (e.g. political advertising), to the detriment of its political communicative ecology.

The following will address the some issues related to a robust communicative ecology, and discuss an instance in the international context of a political party dedicated to its own communicative ecology.

### *Missing the mark: Communicating the status quo*

Billing itself as an alternative to the mainstream political parties has been increasingly difficult for the NDP. In terms of structure and policy, the NDP continually communicates to constituents a decided lack of uniqueness. Beginning with the dissolving of the CCF, and the subsequent creation of the new party, which sought to

engage 'liberally minded individuals', the party has maintained its position at the centre of Canadian politics. In the process, it has demonstrated a lack of courage, vision and conviction—but more importantly, the party has communicated to citizens the impossibility of an alternative in the realm of organized politics. Instead, the party has repeatedly suggested to citizens that professionalized, centralized and liberal democratic politics are an inevitability—conditions to be lamented perhaps, but certainly not challenged.

Commenting after yet another constitutional failure during which the NDP supported the governing party, much to the chagrin of party constituents, former NDP premier Howard Pawley noted[32],

The rejection by the Canadian public of the Charlottetown Accord, harmed the NDP more than any other party because we were seen as part of the elite of political, business, media and labour leaders...The NDP is seen as too anxious to accommodate itself to the elite, and worse still, not offering anything different, we are no longer seen as an anti-establishment party (1994, p. 181).

The consequence of Pawley's accurate assessment has resulted, certainly in a lack of faith in the party by citizens, but more importantly in a concerted move away from party politics by many. Regarded as a party too determined by the interests of the political, business, media and labour elite, many progressive Canadians have opted to bypass the NDP in favor of more direct avenues of political activism. What remains at stake, however effective the efforts of groups within civil society, is reclaiming a progressive and collectively conceived site of resistance within Parliament. The parliamentary/extra parliamentary dichotomy (expressed also as governed/government)

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[32] It is worth noting that the Charlottetown incident is only one example of the party's record of mishandling constitutional issues—the Meech Lake process was no more successful for the party. For more on this, see for example Cooke (2004), *The constitutional confusion on the left: The NDP's position in Canada's constitutional debates.*

accepted by both the party and citizens, however, is the result of, in Mouffe's terminology, a provisional hegemony. Perpetuated by the expert culture so pervasive in politics and used to justify various levels of power relations, the NDP has done little to resist the imposition—which amounts to an effective expulsion of citizens from the nation's organs of governance. Returning to the party's 2006 campaign slogan illustrates well the point—"Getting result for people" communicates the degree to which the party effectively excludes citizens for the processes of governance, reinforces the hegemony of expert cultures, and ultimately accepts the terms of contemporary politics. The power relations between state/public and government/citizen are thus reproduced—the institutional apparatus again established as an inaccessible, even antagonistic force. Other examples abound: the party's purge of the Waffle, its strategic decision in the 1988 federal campaign, its continued rejection of the calls for party renewal throughout the 1990s.

All of these decisions reflect the party's acquiescence to a limited form of liberal democratic politics in which the citizen becomes vestigial to the processes of governance and party formulation. Bobbio's perspective makes explicit what is at stake—if the true test of modern democracy is not *who* gets to vote but *where* they are allowed to vote, what can be said about the internal democracy promoted by a party which so consistently and thoroughly quashes dissent, discourages meaningful participation by constituents and awards professional strategists effective and exclusive decision making powers? In the upper echelon of the party, crowded with hired strategists and pollsters, where can the citizen cast their vote?

While participatory notions may seem parochial, quaint remembrances of the CCF days, but ultimately inapplicable in the contemporary period, there are examples of such formulations in the international context. The Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party) in Brazil offers a particularly relevant example of a political party challenging both the structures of neo-liberalism as well as the governed/government dichotomy. The example is particularly relevant to the Canadian situation because, as Langille (2001) notes, the PT has successfully addressed two problems endemic to the NDP over the last 40 years. Firstly the PT has managed to develop a structure which bridges the party with social movements. Secondly the PT has made effective use of its country's intellectuals (something the NDP has failed to do, largely a legacy of the Waffle purge in the 1970s).

Born in 1964 as a result of the military dictatorship, the PT has never sought electoral success, but rather has focused on building a broad-based participatory and progressive force. However, electoral success has come: As of 2001, the party had mayors in 187 cities, federal deputies in 56 districts and 5 senators and governors (Langille, 2001, p. 40).

In terms of structure, the PT is comprised of a wide range of progressive social movements and organized labour, though the party offers no formal affiliation to groups. Rather, only individuals are allowed to join the party, but remain free to be members of their respective movement/labour groups. This allows for both the party and the members to retain a certain measure of autonomy vis-à-vis the other, while also encouraging debate, dissent and discussion within the party. As Langille notes, "It encourages different viewpoints within its ranks rather than impose one monolithic ideology" (2001, p. 41).

More importantly, however, the PT is "...actively developing a new culture, a 'way of being' more than an ideology" (Langille, 2001, p. 41). It challenges the tenants of contemporary politics left un-checked by the NDP, and seeks primarily to re-engage Brazilian citizens in the process of governance. In the city of Porto Alegre, citizens even participate in the metropolis's budgetary process (Langille, 2001, p. 45). An elaborate formula of neighborhood councils, delegates from which make up the city-wide Participatory Budgeting Council, decide on local spending priorities. These are then passed along by the Council to the Mayor's office who can either accept the budget as is, or propose amendments. Illustrating the degree to which the PT places effective power in the hands of the citizens, the Council can over-ride any of the Mayor's proposed changes if 2/3 of the Council agrees. Langille notes,

People do participate—even poor people find their opinions matter—and they can help dictate whether the city builds sewers, streets, parks or playgrounds. City officials estimate that 100 000 people...participated in the process in 1996, including 1000 groups or associations...[T]his process is proving to be efficient, open and transparent, accountable, honest and productive...The process is now being copied in over 70 other cities, including Sao Paulo, and at the state level.

A key source of the success of the PT, in many ways similar to the CCF, lays in the party's focus on democratization of other cultural, social and economic realms, *in addition* to efforts aimed at distributive justice. As Boyte (1992) identifies, progressive political parties have largely moved away from attempts at managing a robust kind of participatory politics, towards issues of resource distribution. "As a result, *justice, not power,* has formed the main axis of political debate in welfare-state politics" (Italics mine, Boyte, 1992, p. 349).

Communicated by the party over successive decades, this message has served to inspire the conditions of apathy so rampant in contemporary society. The NDP has

neither provided citizen access to popular power nor has it articulated any kind of alternative from which to base such a project. The NDP simply has not communicated any kind of substantive alternative to neo-liberal politics—its ailing critique has remained fixed on the simple notion of redistribution, taxation, health care and the like. Certainly such issues are crucial, but not to the extent that they should exclude concerns of redistribution of power. The party has abrogated its role as educator and has failed to communicate to citizens the complexities of contemporary injustices, leaving a population largely under nourished, and too willingly accepting of the conditions of neo-liberalism.

The work of Gramsci, Mouffe and Fraser signal the kinds of qualitative changes necessary towards both educating and empowering citizens. Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual and Fraser's notion of multiple counter-publics offer a frame work by which the NDP could begin a profound and much needed renewal process. By inspiring, supporting and accepting multiple counter-publics (in cultural, economic, social and political realms) the party can begin the process of developing the kind of organic intellectuals necessary to the progressive party.

***Building a social democratic communicative ecology: Recommendations for the NDP***

An eminently necessary fist step, and one signaled earlier in this chapter, is for the NDP to reject the course of hegemonic party politics it has been on for the last 45 years, and reallocate resources (human, financial and time) away from simple electioneering, and towards their own communicative ecology. In concrete terms, this means scaling back on the millions of dollars spent on nationally mediated electoral campaigns in order to free up resources to rededicate to constituency level offices and organizations. Such a

reallocation of funds should not be interpreted as move away from communicative efforts, but rather as a move towards deepening and substantiating the party's communicative ecology.

An influx of resources at the constituency level would allow party offices to develop the kind of programmatic depth and availability necessary to building the constituency office into a common and local site of progressive ferment and culture. Recalling Carey's notion of communication as maintaining culture through time, not simply the extension of messages through space, aids in understanding the kind of communicative ecology possible through an active constituency office. Making meeting space available for various community groups, hosting educational workshops, and inviting the kind of activity which results in co-operation and coalition building between disparate progressive forces in any community ought to be the goals of a constituency office dedicated to building a solid and progressive communicative ecology. In short, a constituency office could be a hub from which a broader project of democratization of social spaces is launched. What exist currently as separate spheres of sensibilities—culture, politics, and everyday life—can become fused together by the grander sensibility of democracy. A dynamic local constituency office could be a place at which the conditions to resist the structuring of life according to capitalistic principles are resisted against in favor of fostering conditions under which life becomes structured by autonomous and collective democratic principles.

Such efforts would aid considerably in healing the culture of mistrust currently existing between the party and various social movements and progressive organizations. A remnant of the Waffle purge, but deepened by successive waves of real or perceived

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slights (such as the 1988 election strategy, the party's initial response to globalization), the unproductive antagonisms which dominate the relationship between party and the activist public can only be alleviated through dialogue—a process which could at least begin at a revitalized constituency office.

The most dynamic scenario would see a true dialogue take place, at the local level between activists and party, a civic circumstance of discourse and deliberation —not mere discussion premised on residual anxieties and power struggles. The role of the party would be to mobilize its resources and intellectuals towards framing the distinct desires of groups and individuals into broad (and politically manageable) aggregates based on modernist themes of justice, equality, etc. The party could facilitate in, as Baioccchi (2003) phrases it, "...deploying a language of commonality of needs as a vocabulary of public interest" (p. 52).

At present, the relationship between the party and the vast network of available academics is also strained, again a persistent discord which began in the 1970s with the Waffle purge. The party needs to effectively reintegrate the academic realm back into its organizational form—create structures and opportunities by which the vast resources (intellectual, time, research budgets) of the academy can be utilized effectively. The party's outdated and underdeveloped economic critique (for example) is wholly unnecessary given the many progressive academics and university departments with specialization in such concerns.

Finally, the party must reclaim its collectivist, social democratic and progressive past. The incremental compromises made by the party, bargained for attempts at electoral success have not been effective. The NDP is a perennial third (or fourth) place

party which is, in many ways, less progressive than the Liberal party of 30 years ago, and scarcely more progressive than the Liberal party of today. A longitudinal analysis, such as the one contained in this study, illustrates the severity of the discrete decisions made over time—each one of which was more or less destructive to the principles of the founding notion of the party, but when taken in whole are shown to be nothing less than catastrophic. Put quite simply, the party must begin to reverse its trajectory, or at best risk becoming irrelevant to progressive movements, and at worst, risk being detrimental to them.

In part, the recommendations above attempt to address the perilous discipline of social psychology, particularly the social psychology of mobilization. Recent scholarship has addressed the shortcomings of resource mobilization theories and the more recent new social movement theories (see, for example, Carrol, 1997). And while such efforts have been productive, much more work remains to be done. The enigmatic relationship between structure and agency presents fertile ground for further investigation and analysis. The embryonic notion of institutional communicative ecologies as identified here, presents a framework with which to synthesize a structural and agency-based analysis. Future work would benefit, for example, from a more thorough and detailed account of citizen response to various tenants of the party's communicative ecology.

For the time being, however, the fact remains that Canada does have a (marginally) progressive political alternative from which to both learn from and build upon. Certainly the New Democratic Party currently offers a somewhat limited progressive alternative (a result of deficiencies such as those illustrated in this study) yet it still presents a very real potential to become otherwise. This study ultimately places its

faith in the thousands of Canadians working to re-energizing the party—their passion,

struggle and dedication remain the impetus and inspiration for discovering, developing

and maintaining a progressive and democratic alternative.

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