

**The NDP and the Third Party Curse in Canada**

**by**

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## **AUTHORS DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis evaluates the position of the NDP as Canada's third party in federal electoral politics. It analyzes three external factors, the electoral system, the party finance system and the effects of voter behaviour and low voter turnout on the electoral success of the NDP. This work aims to discover why the NDP is seemingly caught in what this thesis refers to as a third party curse. Each of the three external factors which are susceptible to change are analyzed individually to discover whether they have a negative effect on the electoral success of the party.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Fredrick Engelmann states that for many people the role of political parties in modern competitive politics is as dominant as the role a corporation plays in modern competitive economics.<sup>1</sup> Most political scientists today agree that political parties are vital connectors between society and the processes of government, and that they are instrumental in providing the political system with accountable leadership. William Cross stated it well when he said, "Parties lie at the heart of Canadian democracy."<sup>2</sup> To the general public, political parties are the most obvious feature of political life.

Although they are most prominent during election periods, they play a continuous role in the political sphere acting as a bridge between society and government. A political party is a means by which a populace can identify and assess the ideals of individual candidates. People use parties as symbols to which they can attach their allegiance and simplify the rules of politics.<sup>3</sup> The main goals of a political party are usually to promote a certain set of ideas or beliefs, and to enjoy electoral success by attaining power within government. Electoral success is defined in this thesis as the ability of a party to consistently form government or Official Opposition.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Engelmann and Mildred A. Schwartz. *Political Parties and the Canadian Social Structure*. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1967), 2

<sup>2</sup> William Cross. *Political Parties*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 3

<sup>3</sup> Richard J, Van Loon and Michael S. Whittington. *The Canadian Political System – Environment, Structure and Process – third edition*. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1981), 306

There are a few types of political parties in Canada. This thesis will refer to, a major party and a third party. A major party is a political party which has the electoral strength to form government with regularity and when defeated, usually constitutes the principal opposition to the party in power. There are two major parties in Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada and the Conservative Party of Canada. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Canada's two major parties were the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PC) and the Liberal Party of Canada. While both parties tended to be ideologically diverse, the Conservatives settled on the right of center, while the Liberals found success to the left of center. These two parties have long dominated Canadian politics; if we regard today's Conservative party as the successor of the old Progressive Conservative Party then the Liberals and the Conservatives have been the only two parties ever to form a federal government in Canada.

A third party is a political party which does not normally have the electoral strength to form government or Official Opposition. It consistently runs candidates in all federal ridings and may play a significant role in minority governments. The party, with regularity, ranks third in electoral support and normally elects enough MPs to have official party status in the House of Commons, which is presently set at twelve seats. What really distinguishes a third party from a major party is not only their position in terms of votes or seats in elections, but also their institutional status within

the party system.<sup>4</sup> Essentially, a third party is one that is not part of the “governing club” in that it is not considered a traditional governing alternative.<sup>5</sup> It is also important to note, that a third party at the federal level is not necessarily a third party at the provincial level.

The New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) is a third party which runs candidates in all federal ridings, and regularly trails the two major parties in electoral support. The history of the party can be traced back to the 1930s when the democratic socialist Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was formed. In 1958, the CCF formed an alliance with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and became the NDP.<sup>6</sup> Upon creation of the new party, Tommy Douglas, CCF Premier of Saskatchewan, was elected the party’s first leader. While the NDP has fared better in elections than its predecessor, it still has not seen the level of success that was hoped for. By 1988, however, the party formed its largest caucus to date with 43 seats, before suffering a dramatic drop to eight seats in the 1993 election. In the 15 years since, the party has grown in support but consistently remained in third party status. The ideology of the party falls centre-left on the Canadian political spectrum, promoting social democratic theories. While it has never formed the federal government, it has wielded considerable

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<sup>4</sup> Eric Belanger “Third Party Success in Canada” in *Canadian Parties in Transition*, eds. Alain-G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 83

<sup>5</sup> Belanger, 84

<sup>6</sup> Hugh G. Thorburn. “Parties in Canada” in *Party Politics in Canada*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Ed. Hugh Thorburn. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Ltd., 1996), 11

influence during times of minority governments. Today, the NDP remains the longest surviving third party in Canadian federal politics.

With a consistent third party presence in Canadian federal politics, it is remarkable that such little scholarly work has focused on why such a party is seemingly caught in what the thesis will refer to as a “third party curse”. A third party curse is a situation that arises when a third party cannot move forward to become a major party because of the impact of external factors such as electoral rules, financial arrangements or civic engagement. The NDP as Canada’s third party has run unsuccessfully, as defined above, in every federal election since the inception of its predecessor, the CCF, in 1933, yet has remained a consistent presence in Canadian federal politics. For the purposes of this paper, the Green Party of Canada will not be considered a third party as it does not have representation in the House.

This research is significant in evaluating the future of party politics in Canada. Will the Liberals and Conservatives continue to be the dominating parties? Or is it possible for a third party to break through the two-party domination of Canadian politics? This thesis will provide an important foundation for answering these questions. Why have third parties been so unsuccessful in Canadian federal electoral politics? Do external factors inhibit the ability of a third party to become a governing party or Official Opposition in Canadian federal politics? In order to answer these questions, the thesis will examine the case of the New Democratic Party. The NDP is Canada’s longest

surviving third party in federal politics and has never formed the government or Official Opposition. It consistently ranks third in electoral support as well as seats won among parties competing in the majority of federal constituencies.

There may be an array of reasons why a political party fails to become “successful.” These reasons may be either internal or external. Among the internal factors (which, by definition, are under control of the party and its members) are such things as its platform, its electoral strategies and its leader and candidates. There are also external factors, some of which are shaped by legislation or the actions of individual electors. This thesis will examine three such external factors, each of which has been shaped by contemporary “political choices” and each of which appears to be susceptible to change:

- the Single Member Plurality electoral system – which has operated almost by default since before Confederation but has been subject to scrutiny in recent years;
- the party financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* – which have only been in operation since 1974 but have lately been amended significantly; and
- the trend towards lower voter turnout – which has been widely viewed as deplorable but not necessarily permanent.

### **The Canadian Electoral System**

The first factor to be discussed is the Canadian electoral system. The Canadian government is based on a parliamentary system of government; the federal Parliament

consists of the sovereign (represented by the Governor General), an upper house (Senate) and the lower house (House of Commons). Canada has a first-past-the-post electoral system where the candidate with the most votes wins – therefore an absolute majority is not needed in order to win an electoral district. Candidates can run for election in one riding only, either under a party label or as an independent with no party affiliation. Put simplistically, after the election, the party that has elected the most representatives because it won the most ridings normally serves as the governing party and the leader of the party becomes the Prime Minister. The party that has elected the second largest number of representatives serves as the Official Opposition. All elected candidates, both from the governing party and opposition, and other parties or independents, have a seat in the House of Commons where they vote on legislation and more.

The current first-past-the-post (FPTP) system has invariably contributed to the third party curse which has trapped the NDP in third party status because it favours a two party system through disproportionately distributing seats in the House of Commons in favour of the governing party. The most obvious inhibiting feature is purely statistical. A third party simply cannot gain legislative power if its support is too concentrated, as it will not be able to elect enough candidates to Parliament. On the other hand, if the support for the political party is too geographically scattered then it will also have trouble winning seats, as it will not have enough support in a

concentrated area to elect even a single candidate. As an alternative, the electoral laws in a country that uses a proportional representation system discourage a two-party system: the number of votes received determines the number of seats won. Therefore, new or smaller parties can develop an immediate electoral role, by gaining seats in the House. Maurice Duverger argued that the use of a proportional representation system would make a two party system *less* likely, making this type of system more favourable for a third party. Douglas Rae also noted that most electoral systems act as 'brakes' on the fractionalization of party systems by favouring a few strong parties at the expense of many weaker ones.<sup>7</sup> And much like Duverger suggests, Douglas Rae argues that there are no electoral systems that positively accelerate the development of small parties but some are *weaker* brakes against their development than others, therefore creating a more favourable scenario for a third party.

It is clear that the negative effects of the FPTP system are not universal to all electoral systems as a system of proportional representation would eliminate an enormous barrier to third party success in Canada. It would end the continual under representation of the third party. Chapter Two will demonstrate how the current first-past-the-post system negatively affects a third party from achieving fair representation in the House of Commons. It will also discuss how strategic voting as a result of the first-past-the-post system has cost the NDP electoral support, and how strategic

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas Rae. *The Political Consequences of Electoral Law*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967)

behaviour is dependent on the electoral system and declines as the proportionality of the electoral system increases, thereby lessening the negative consequences suffered by a third party.

### **The Canadian Party Finance System**

The next factor to be addressed is the party finance system. The financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* also hamper the electoral success of the third party by favouring the two major parties. It is important for political parties to receive financial contributions from the state in order to prevent dependence on private donors and to guarantee a degree of financial equity between political parties. While reforms brought about through the *Canada Elections Act* in 1974 and Bill C-24 in 2003 have made significant contributions to the regulation of political dollars, there remains a bias in these provisions in favour of pre-existing major parties. For example, the quarterly allowance provided to parties based on the number of votes received in the previous election is a clear example of a bias in favour of the major parties as they are sure to have received the most votes, thereby receiving the most in public dollars. Furthermore, these subsidies were created as a measure to replace the funds that were to be lost as a result of the ban on corporate and union donations. However, the switch from corporate and union donations to public subsidies has resulted in a much larger monetary gain for the two major parties. Chapter Three will address these issues as well as others and evaluate their impact on the third party curse.

## Voter Behaviour and Voter Turnout in Canada

The final factor to be addressed is the trend towards lower voter turnout. For many Canadians, voting is the only form of political expression. So, when voter turnout begins to hit all time lows, it should become worrisome to the health of a properly functioning democracy. Additionally, what a lack of electoral participation means for governmental representation should be of great concern.

Voter apathy and low voter turnout are not problems that affect only third parties – in fact they affect every candidate and political party running in the election. However, the problem of low voter turnout is very unlikely to be uniform across major social categories.<sup>8</sup> Rather, the drop is almost certain to be accompanied by an enhanced degree of inequality between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. This decline is most particularly expected among groups including young people, immigrants, tenants and the poor - groups that are already considered to be participating at lower levels relative to those who are both socially and economically better off. This unevenness in electoral participation usually translates into distortions in representation. Chapter Four will show that these groups are also a strong base of support for the NDP, and that the low turnout rate from these groups negatively affects the electoral success of the party. The chapter will show that in countries where turnout is high, the link between socioeconomic status and turnout tends to be less strong, suggesting the demographics

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<sup>8</sup> CRIC, 29

of the voting population are similar to those of the general population. Since non-voters believe the government is unresponsive to their needs, and governments have little reason to respond to the concerns of non-voters, a vicious cycle presents itself where government response, or a lack thereof, further reinforces the belief among non-voters that governments do not care about the issues concerning them. It will demonstrate that the lack of civic engagement from the young has contributed to the effect of low turnout on the third party curse.

The thesis will analyze the impact of these three external factors on the success of the NDP in contemporary Canadian national politics. Whether a third party will see success following reconciliation of these factors is another question. The research will focus not on whether these factors are sufficiently responsible for the lack of third party success in Canada, but on whether they have inhibited the ability of a third party to achieve electoral success by contributing to the third party curse. The body of the thesis will be organized into three parts, with each external factor evaluated independently of the others. Once all three factors have been discussed, a summary and review of the findings will follow in the conclusion, including a discussion on the significance and implications of the findings of this research.

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The New Democratic Party of Canada has been a consistent presence in Canadian politics since its predecessor's (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) inception in

the 1930s. As the strongest third party in the federal sphere, the NDP has never come close to forming government. The following will show how the three factors briefly outlined above combine to create a “third party curse” which inhibits the ability of the party to gain power. Resolving the negative consequences brought about by these factors may not achieve the sufficient conditions for third party success in Canada. However, this thesis will argue that they inhibit the ability of a third party to break through the two party dominance of Canadian national politics.

It is important to reiterate that it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that these factors are the sole reasons why the NDP has never formed government at the federal level in Canada. Rather, its purpose is to demonstrate that there are external factors that prevent a third party in Canada from achieving electoral success. It is possible that the reform of these barriers alone will not lead to the NDP forming government. However, the reformation of these factors will be necessary if a third party is ever to see electoral success in Canada; however, whether or not they are sufficient conditions is beyond the scope of this project.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Canadian Electoral System

Since its first federal election in 1867, Canada has used the first-past-the-post electoral system inherited from Great Britain. However, over the past two centuries Canada's political, cultural and social reality has changed enormously, and the first-past-the-post system in today's society does not meet the diverse needs of Canadians, many of whom demand an electoral system which better reflects the society in which we live. If the electoral system is a contributing factor to the third party curse, one would expect to see an inherent bias in the system towards major parties and against a third party. One would expect to see this bias present today, as well as in previous elections, since Confederation in 1867. This chapter will show how the first-past-the-post system has discriminated against the NDP in Canada through disproportionate electoral results and invariably traps the party into the third party curse.

An electoral system that offers a fair playing field for all parties and does not favour a two party system would be beneficial for the multi-party political atmosphere in Canada. The current first-past-the-post system discriminates against third parties by encouraging or favouring a two-party system through disproportionately distributing seats in the House of Commons, usually in favour of the governing party. It is important to look at what the results in the House would be under a system of proportional

representation in order to truly understand how constraining the electoral rules of our current system are. The consequences of the disproportions created by the first-past-the-post system contribute to the third party curse in which the NDP is trapped.

Maurice Duverger observed a tendency in the 1950s and 1960s now referred to as Duverger's Law. Duverger's Law asserts that an election system of plurality rule, also referred to as first-past-the-post, whereby a candidate wins through a plurality of votes rather than a majority, tends to favour a two party system.<sup>9</sup> Duverger also said that both "the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favour multi-partyism".<sup>10</sup> Duverger's thoughts were that elections determined by a majority vote on only one ballot would "pulverize third parties".<sup>11</sup> Duverger's Law also applies to Canadian elections since the party that receives the plurality of votes, on a single ballot, as opposed to a second ballot or run off ballot, usually forms government.<sup>12</sup> According to Duverger, third parties are going to be permanent doormats in any plurality system as it will typically favour two party politics. Furthermore, even when the system functions with only two parties, the one that wins is favoured through overrepresentation since the proportion of seats that it receives is more than the percentage of votes received. On the other hand, the party that finishes second will suffer under-representation, as the proportion of seats it wins is smaller than the

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<sup>9</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*. (New York: Wiley, 1964)

<sup>10</sup> Duverger (1964), 239

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Duverger, "Factors in a Two-party and Multiparty system" *Party Politics and Pressure Groups* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972), 23

<sup>12</sup> Exceptions to this occurred 9 times in the 40 general elections since 1867: 1878, 1882, 1887, 1891, 1896, 1926, 1957, 1962 and 1979

percentage of votes received.<sup>13</sup> Where there is a third party, this gap between seats won and percentage of vote is usually quite large and the third party is usually more greatly underrepresented than the second party is, by suffering an even greater disproportionate vote-to-seat ratio. Duverger presents the scenario of an electoral district where there are 100,000 voters with moderate views, and 80,000 communist voters.<sup>14</sup> If the 100,000 moderate voters are divided into two parties, there is a good chance that the communist candidate may win the election if one of the moderate opponents receive more than 20,000 votes, thereby leaving the other with less than 80,000, which is a smaller number than that of the communist voters. Duverger argues that in the following election, if the two moderate parties do not unite, one will gradually be eliminated in a process of under-representation, in an effort to ensure the communist candidate does not win.<sup>15</sup> In Canada, the NDP has not united with the Liberals as per Duverger's hypothesis; however, it has also not been eliminated, yet. So, is the NDP an anomaly to Duverger's Law or is the party headed down the path of extinction?

Essentially, the role of the electoral system as Duverger saw it is to act as an accelerator or a brake.

An election by a majority vote on a single ballot has a dual effect: first, it poses an obstacle to the appearance of a new party, although this obstacle is not insurmountable (the role of

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<sup>13</sup> Duverger (1972), 23

<sup>14</sup> Duverger, (1972), 22

<sup>15</sup> Duverger, (1972), 23

the brake); secondly, it tends to eliminate the weakest party (or parties) if there are more than two (the role of the accelerator).<sup>16</sup>

This is similar to the scenario that presents itself in Canada. The FPTP system has made it very difficult, albeit not impossible, for new parties to emerge (the role of the brake), and while the NDP, the weakest party of the three main parties, has not been eliminated it has been held back from experiencing greater electoral success (the role of the accelerator).

In 1967, Douglas Rae reached much the same conclusions that Duverger had a decade earlier regarding the effects of electoral systems:

The statesman who must choose between electoral laws confronts a dilemma. On the one hand he may opt for highly proportional election outcomes, in which case he is likely to encourage the fractionalization of party systems over time. Or, on the other hand, he may opt to encourage the development and maintenance of two parties, or less fractionalized multi-party competition, with the price being less proportional outcomes.<sup>17</sup>

Duverger asserted that a system of proportional representation plays the opposite role of a FPTP system and does not slow down the development of new parties (which a plurality electoral system does). Duverger articulated the effects of the electoral system in the formulation of three electoral laws: (1) a majority vote on one ballot is conducive to a two party system; (2) proportional representation is conducive to a multiparty

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<sup>16</sup> Duverger (1972), 25

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Law*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 144

system; (3) a majority vote on two ballots is conducive to a multiparty system, inclined toward forming coalitions.<sup>18</sup> He argued that the single member plurality system

accentuated the geographical localization of opinions: one might even say that it tends to transform a national opinion... into a local opinion by allowing it to be represented only in the sections of the country in which it is the strongest

while in a system of proportional representation

opinions strongly entrenched locally tend to be broadened on the national plane by the possibility of being represented in districts where they are in a small minority<sup>19</sup>

A PR electoral system encourages minority nationalist agendas by lowering the barriers to representation for small parties that may represent minority views by granting many of these parties a decisive role in the formation of government. The ability of a proportional representation system to deliver seats to those outside the major parties promises representation of a wider spectrum of public opinion and lowers some of the barriers that prevent third parties from achieving electoral success. A system of proportional representation would reduce the likelihood of the NDP remaining in the third party curse. This means that the electoral system currently in use does affect the success of a third party by making it suffer the negative consequences associated with a system which favours two party dominance.

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<sup>18</sup> Duverger (1972), 23

<sup>19</sup> Duverger (1964), 383

In an article written in 1968, Alan Cairns documented many of the distortions that the Canadian electoral system has produced over the period from 1921 to 1965 and argued that the cumulative effects of these on political parties and representation in Canada were very serious.<sup>20</sup>

The electoral system has made a major contribution to the identification of particular sections/provinces with particular parties. It has under-valued the partisan diversity within each section/province. By doing so it has rendered the parliamentary composition of each party less representative of the sectional interests in the political system than is the party electorate from which that representation is derived. <sup>21</sup>

These distortions have continued beyond 1965 into present day Canada. In 1993, the Bloc Quebecois, a regional party which nominates candidates in only one province, formed the Official Opposition with only the fourth highest share of the popular vote. In 2004, the NDP received 15.7% of the popular vote, but received only 19 seats (or 6.2%) of the seats in the House. Yet, the Bloc, with only 12.4% of the vote received 54 seats, or 17.5% of the seats. In 2008, the Green Party of Canada received more than 900,000 votes across the country, yet did not win a single seat in Parliament. These examples show that the distortions are still present in Canada today, and demonstrate how the system continues to work against third parties and those with wide national support such as the NDP.

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<sup>20</sup> Alain C. Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. (Vol. 1, No. 1 March 1968)

<sup>21</sup> Cairns, 62

It is rare that the percentage of seats a party receives in the current Canadian electoral system is equivalent to the percentage of votes received. This distorted conversion results in a configuration of parties in Parliament that inaccurately reflects their level of voter support, and thus that the FPTP system does not accurately reflect the preferences of the Canadian electorate. The NDP is the party that most often suffers from the ill effects of this electoral system. The percentage of seats the NDP received in the House, in almost every election, has been less than its entitlement based on the percentage of the popular vote it received. As a consequence, if voters see that the NDP is not increasing in electoral support, it may result in the view that the party is not a viable contender, making them less likely to vote NDP. The perceptions created and perpetuated by the electoral system as well its statistical consequences may also have an affect on electoral results.

Cairns' major assertion is that the electoral system generates greater disproportions in legislative seats than is warranted by the social divisions in the country. Cairns never denied that social cleavages were unlikely to create a multiparty system in Canada irrespective of the electoral system in use, but his claim was that the electoral system *exaggerates* rather than moderates the impact of the cleavages. Likewise, while it is not possible to predict what results the NDP would yield without the influence of the first-past-the-post system, the claim is that the system exaggerates rather than moderates the impact of social cleavages. One of Cairns most controversial

claims was that the electoral system discourages parties from being nationalizing forces because of the electoral rewards to be reaped from concentrated support. Cairns asserts that this punishes national third parties that are not regionally concentrated. The NDP is such a party, as its support is widely distributed across the country, unlike the concentrated support of the Bloc Quebecois (Table 2.1). Cairns' theory further explains how the electoral system affects the third party curse. The support of the NDP as demonstrated in Table 2.1 is widely concentrated and the first-past-the-post system punishes the party for it.

**Table 2.1:** 2006 Canadian Federal Election NDP vote share by province

	<b>NDP Vote Percentage</b>	<b>Bloc Vote Percentage</b>
<b>Nfld</b>	13.6	0
<b>PEI</b>	9.6	0
<b>N.S.</b>	29.9	0
<b>N.B.</b>	21.9	0
<b>Que.</b>	7.5	42.1
<b>Ont.</b>	19.4	0
<b>Man.</b>	25.4	0
<b>Sask.</b>	24.1	0
<b>Alb.</b>	11.7	0
<b>B.C</b>	28.5	0
<b>Y.T.</b>	23.9	0
<b>N.W.T.</b>	42.2	0
<b>Nun.</b>	17.2	0
<b>National</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>

**Source:** Elections Canada. Thirty-ninth General Election 2006: Official Voting Results

Each Canadian is afforded only one vote, and ideally that vote is given to the candidate or party which best represents his or her principles, values, and ideal policies so that those views may be represented within Parliament. However, the current

electoral system *encourages* citizens to vote strategically in elections to the dismay of a third party. This happens as a result of the consequences of electoral rules. These rules are constraining devices that, by encouraging strategic behaviour among voters, “force the coordination of resources and ballots on a reduced set of candidates.”<sup>22</sup> Rational voters will avoid voting for candidates they expect will fare poorly, even if that means supporting a second-choice candidate. Over time, as a result of strategic behaviour, “weak” candidates get “weeded” out or seen as a “wasted vote”, resulting in only a certain number of seemingly “viable” candidates on the ballot. Essentially, in a first-past-the-post election, voters may vote for a candidate that they believe has a greater chance of winning over a candidate that they actually prefer. Third parties are most likely to suffer from this phenomenon, as they are viewed as less likely to “win” over a major party.

The process of strategic voting works in such a way that, for example, a left wing voter who may wish to vote for the NDP may instead vote for a popular moderate candidate, such as a Liberal, in an attempt to help defeat the right-wing candidate, the Conservative. This is exactly the phenomenon that Duverger’s Law suggests results in the first-past-the-post system leading to a two-party system. Cox, in 1997, however, provided empirical evidence that strategic voting diminishes substantially in large (3 or

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<sup>22</sup> Charles Boix, “Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies” *The American Political Science Review* (Vol. 93, No.3: Sept. 1993), 610

4 more seats) districts,<sup>23</sup> often found in proportional representation systems. Therefore, strategic voting declines as the proportionality of the electoral system increases.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the implementation of a proportional representation system which results in a more accurate vote-to-seat ratio will lead to fewer votes lost for the NDP as a consequence of strategic voting. Due to the fact that seats can be gained with only a fraction of the total vote (since votes across the country will be considered together, rather than just votes placed in concentrated areas) voters have fewer incentives to abandon their preferred candidate for one they perceive has a greater likelihood of winning under a FPTP system where only votes placed in concentrated areas are counted towards a single candidate. This is important because it shows that a system of proportional representation does not have the same debilitating effects on a third party as the FPTP system does, thereby further supporting the claim that the contribution of the electoral system on the third party curse will be less likely under a more proportionate electoral system.

In the first-past-the-post system, unless one has voted for the winning candidate in his or her riding, one's vote is essentially 'wasted' in that the vote is not sitting in Parliament. In other words, those votes do not directly determine seat distribution. Likewise, votes are also wasted when they are in excess of the number required to win the particular riding. The MMP system, a system of PR advocated by the Law

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<sup>23</sup> Gary W. Cox, "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties" *American Journal of Political Science*. (Vol. 14, No.1 January 1997)

<sup>24</sup> Boix, 610

Commission of Canada<sup>25</sup> would effectively reduce the quantity of wasted votes by the use of a party list system where parties do not have to win a particular riding in order to gain representation in Parliament. As Cox's study shows, this will decrease the likelihood of strategic voting, and as a result the vote percentage of the NDP will increase.

Table 2.2 shows the results of the three main parties for all federal elections since the CCF's first election in 1935 and the staggering disproportions that have existed as a direct result of the first-past-the-post system. These results show the negative affect the electoral system has on a third party. The CCF/NDP has consistently received a percentage of seats lower than its percentage of the popular vote. Of the twenty-three elections held between the years of 1935 and 2008, the Liberals have received a lower proportion of seats than votes on only five occasions – 1957, 1958, 1984, 1988 and 2008 – all periods of Tory rule. Likewise, the Conservatives have suffered from this phenomenon only nine times – 1935, 1940, 1945, 1949, 1953, 1968, 1993, 1997 and 2000 – all periods of Liberal rule. The CCF/NDP has suffered from this phenomenon each of the twenty three elections with the exception of 1962 when the party came within 0.4% of vote-to-seat parity with 11.7% of the vote and 11.3% of the seats. The most significant difference was in 2004 when the NDP received 15.7% of the popular vote, but only 6.2% of the seats, a total of 19. If the 15.7% of the vote the party received was converted into 15.7% of the seats in the House of Commons, then the NDP would have had roughly 48

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<sup>25</sup> The Law Commission of Canada. *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*, 2004

**Table 2.2:** Popular vote percentages and seat percentages during the general federal elections of 1935-2006

	<b>Conservative*</b> <b>Percentage of</b> <b>Popular Vote</b>	<b>Conservative*</b> <b>Percentage of</b> <b>Seats</b>	<b>Liberal</b> <b>Percentage</b> <b>of Popular</b> <b>Vote</b>	<b>Liberal</b> <b>Percentage</b> <b>of Seats</b>	<b>NDP**</b> <b>Percentage</b> <b>of Popular</b> <b>Vote</b>	<b>NDP**</b> <b>Percentage</b> <b>of Seats</b>
1935	29.80%	15.90%	44.40%	69.80%	8.90%	2.90%
1940	30.41%	15.91%	51.32%	73.06%	8.42%	3.27%
1945	27.70%	27.30%	41.40%	51.00%	15.70%	11.40%
1949	29.70%	15.60%	50.10%	72.50%	13.40%	5.00%
1953	31.00%	19.20%	50.00%	64.50%	11.30%	8.70%
1957	39.00%	42.30%	42.30%	39.60%	10.80%	9.40%
1958	53.70%	78.50%	33.80%	18.50%	9.50%	3.00%
1962	37.30%	43.80%	37.40%	37.40%	11.70%	11.30%
1963	32.90%	35.90%	41.70%	48.70%	13.10%	6.40%
1965	32.10%	36.60%	39.80%	49.40%	17.70%	7.90%
1968	31.40%	27.30%	45.50%	58.70%	17.00%	8.30%
1972	35.00%	40.50%	38.50%	41.30%	17.70%	11.70%
1974	35.40%	36.00%	43.20%	53.40%	15.40%	6.10%
1979	35.90%	48.20%	40.10%	40.40%	17.90%	9.20%
1980	44.30%	52.10%	32.50%	36.50%	19.80%	11.30%
1984	50.00%	74.80%	28.00%	14.20%	18.80%	10.60%
1988	43.00%	57.30%	31.90%	28.10%	20.40%	14.60%
1993	16.00%	0.70%	41.30%	60.00%	6.90%	3.10%
1997	18.80%	6.60%	38.50%	51.50%	11.00%	7.00%
2000	12.20%	4.00%	40.80%	57.10%	8.50%	4.30%
2004	29.60%	32.10%	36.70%	43.80%	15.70%	6.20%
2006	36.30%	40.30%	30.20%	33.40%	17.50%	9.40%
2008	37.63%	46.4%	26.22%	25.00%	18.13%	12.00%

\* This also includes the former Progressive Conservative Party (PC), as well as the National Government – the name the Conservatives ran under during the 1940 general federal election.

\*\*This also includes the former Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)

**Source:** Parliament of Canada

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E>, May 14, 2008

seats in a 308 seat House, resulting in a much different balance of power in the minority Parliament resulting from that election. Seat distribution would have been similar to that shown below in Table 2.3. The House would have had a smaller Liberal minority government, with a smaller Conservative Opposition and a larger NDP caucus resulting in the party having greater influence than they actually did. This data makes it clear that the first-past-the-post system electoral system consistently punishes a third party making it difficult to break through the dominance of the two major parties in Canada. The continual under-representation of the NDP also reinforces the idea that a vote for the party is a wasted vote as voters may view the party as having little influence in government, thereby creating a vicious cycle that contributes to the position of the party in third party curse.

**Table 2.3:** Canadian Federal Election of 2004

	<b>Liberal Party</b>	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>NDP</b>	<b>Bloc</b>
<b>Percentage of Popular Vote</b>	36.7%	29.6%	15.7%	12.4%
<b>Actual Seat Numbers</b>	135	99	19	54
<b>Proportionate Seat Numbers</b>	113	91	48	38

**Source:** Elections Canada. Thirty-eighth General Election 2004: Official Voting Results

It is important to look at the results a proportional representation system could produce to compare to the actual results produced in a first-past-the-post system. By doing so, the dramatic disproportions that have occurred under the FPTP system are not

only revealed but the much fairer, proportionate, and accurate results that could be achieved under a system of proportional representation are demonstrated. The results of what could occur under a system of proportional representation demonstrate that the disproportions under the current electoral system are not necessary consequences of any electoral system. This shows that the current electoral system plays a significant role in the third party curse as the negative consequences it results in for the NDP can be eliminated under a more proportional electoral system.

Table 2.3 shows that the 2004 election resulted in both the major parties being overrepresented as well as the regionally based Bloc; the NDP on the other hand was severely underrepresented. Under a system of proportional representation, the composition of the House would have been dramatically different. Table 2.4 below shows the dramatic disproportions that the regionally based Bloc has benefited from as a result of the first-past-the-post system. The electoral system overcompensating regional parties works negatively toward the NDP as a national third party. While the Bloc receives more and more seats than its actual votes would warrant, a third party, such as the NDP, due to the FPTP system, receives less than it is entitled to. By favouring major and concentrated parties the electoral system increases the likelihood of a third party remaining in the third party curse.

**Table 2.4:** Federal Election Results for the Bloc Quebecois 1993-2006

	<b>Percentage of Popular Vote</b>	<b>Percentage of Seats</b>
<b>1993</b>	13.5%	18.3%
<b>1997</b>	10.7%	14.6%
<b>2000</b>	10.7%	12.6%
<b>2004</b>	12.4%	17.5%
<b>2006</b>	10.5%	16.6%

**Source:** Elections Canada. Thirty-fifth – thirty-ninth General Election 1993-2006. Official Voting Results

This startling record of disproportions confirms that the electoral system plays a negative role in the electoral success of the NDP. A disproportionate legislative result in the House is not a one time phenomenon; these disproportions occur frequently and consistently, disadvantaging the NDP far more than the other parties, preventing the party from seeing greater levels of electoral success and ensuring it remains in third party status.

In 1993, the FPTP system handed the Bloc the title of Official Opposition, despite the fact it received only the fourth-highest share of the popular vote. However, had the seats been distributed proportionally, we would have seen a very different makeup of Parliament. The results of the 1993 election are shown below in Table 2.5. Under a system of proportional representation, assuming the same popular vote percentages, the Reform party would have formed the Official Opposition not the Bloc. The PCs,

receiving the second highest percentage of votes, were grossly underrepresented (right in tune with Duverger’s theory of the second party discussed earlier) and the NDP once again received fewer seats than was warranted by the number of votes received. If seats had been distributed proportionately according to vote, the Liberals would have received 55 seats less than they did, and the NDP would have received 11 seats more. There is no doubt that many parties have suffered at one point or another by the first-past-the-post system but it is also apparent that the NDP has suffered the greatest *consistent* under-representation. Therefore it seems the electoral system is a contributing factor to the third party curse as it negatively affects the electoral success of the NDP to a greater degree and more consistently than the major parties.

**Table 2.5:** 1993 Federal Election Results

	<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Reform</b>	<b>Progressive Conservatives</b>	<b>Bloc</b>	<b>NDP</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Percentage of Popular Vote</b>	41.3%	18.7%	16.0%	13.5%	6.9%	3.6%
<b>Percentage of Seats</b>	60.0%	17.6%	0.7%	18.3%	3.1%	0.3%
<b>Actual Number of Seats</b>	177	52	2	54	29	1

**Source:** Elections Canada. Thirty-fifth General Election 1993: Official Voting Results

By looking at what could occur under a system of proportional representation, it is clear that more proportionate electoral results are possible, and that the negative effects of the current electoral system on the NDP can be changed. The startling record of disproportions produced by the first-past-the-post system in relation to the popular

support of the NDP has made the electoral system a contributing factor to why the party is caught in a third party curse. The enormous disproportions in vote-to-seat ratio have negatively affected the NDP while at the same time awarded other parties more seats than warranted by their actual vote percentages.

In 1912, Joseph Barthélemy, a Belgian politician, predicted that the day would come where proportional representation would become as widespread and unchallenged as universal suffrage.<sup>26</sup> While many democracies around the world have realized PR is a more effective system, Canada has yet to adopt the system, and until it does, the NDP as Canada's third party, will remain trapped in the curse suffering inaccurate and disproportional electoral results. The implementation of a proportional representation system in Canada would mean that an existing third party whose electoral support is widely spread would no longer be disadvantaged compared with parties whose electoral support is equivalent in size, but concentrated in specific areas. Under the current system a third party must face enormous challenges while trying to convert its popular support into a proportionate number of seats. This hurdle is electorally unfair and biased towards third parties and plays a key role in the lack of electoral success achieved by the NDP. As long as elections continue to be run under the first-past-the-post system, the NDP will remain the third party in Canada, trapped indefinitely in the third party curse.

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<sup>26</sup> André Blais and Louise Massicotte "Electoral Systems" in *Comparing Democracies 2 – New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting*, eds. Lawrence LeDuc *et al.* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 14

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Canadian Party Finance System

Public financing is crucial for the ability of the NDP to compete in election campaigns without a significant financial disadvantage compared to the major parties. In 1974, the Canadian government made a significant effort to enact regulatory measures of the party finance system with the *Elections Expenses Act of 1974*, a series of amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* which focused primarily on party spending. The next major change was made in 2003, with Bill C-24, an act to amend the *Canada Elections Act* and *Income Tax Act*. If the Canadian party finance system plays a role in explaining the third party curse, one would expect to see the finance provisions in the finance system working in favour of the major parties. When the new amendments were introduced in 2003 one would expect to see that they further disadvantaged a third party or provided it the least benefit among the three main parties in Canada. The disparity in funds that exists between the political parties in Canada places a third party in a disadvantageous position. This happens because the public subsidies put in place with Bill C-24 will always favour the major parties, making it impossible for a third party to ever reach parity with the others.

Bill C-24 effectively banned donations to political parties from corporations and unions with few exceptions. Corporations and trade unions under this legislation are prohibited from making financial donations to both political parties and leadership

contests.<sup>27</sup> However, they may still contribute an annual maximum of one thousand dollars to candidates, electoral district associations and nomination contestants. Bill C-2, the *Federal Accountability Act*, which took effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, went one step further by eliminating *any* financial contributions from corporations and trade unions.<sup>28</sup> In order to make up for the shortfall in party revenues lost from the ban on corporate and union donations additional public funding provisions were instituted to create subsidies for the federal parties.

Bill C-24 provides parties with an annual allowance based on the number of votes they received in the last election. In order to qualify for this allowance, parties need to have received either 2% of the vote nationally or 5% of the votes in the ridings where the party ran candidates. Parties that qualify will receive \$1.75 for each vote they receive in a quarterly allowance.<sup>29</sup> This, however, heavily favours the governing party and major parties as they are certain to have received the most votes in the previous election. As a result, the Conservatives and Liberals will always receive more public funding than the NDP. This situation puts the two major parties in a more favourable position than a third party and also affects the ability of a third party to communicate their interests to the general public as a result of funding inequalities.

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<sup>27</sup> Bill C-24 An Act to Amend Canada's Election Act and Income Tax Act.

<sup>28</sup> Bill C-2 Federal Accountability Act.

<sup>29</sup> The \$1.75 allowance is subject to inflation

**Table 3.1:** Public Subsidies three years since Bill C-24, and corporate and union donations three years prior to Bill C-24

	<b>NDP</b>	<b>Liberals</b>	<b>Conservatives</b>
<b>Corporation and Union donations in the last three years before Bill C-24 (2001 - 2003)</b>	\$7.89 million	\$23.42 million	\$10.34 million
<b>Public Subsidies in the first three years since Bill C-24 (2004 - 2006)</b>	\$11.38 million	\$26.8 million	\$24.63 million

**Source:** Elections Canada

The introduction of public subsidies clearly improved the financial position of all three parties. However, the replacement of the reliance on corporate and union donations with public subsidies left the Conservatives with a significant financial advantage over both the NDP and the Liberals. As Table 3.1 shows the NDP received only \$11.38 million in public subsidies while both the Liberals and Conservatives received more than \$20 million. It created a scenario that offered more money to all three political parties than the funding received through corporate and union donations; however, the amount of funding received by the major parties is significantly greater than that received by the third party. The funding will always reward parties that receive the most electoral support thereby disadvantaging a third party by punishing it for the very thing that makes it a third party. This furthers the inequity between the parties placing the third party in unfavourable circumstances thereby contributing to the third party curse.

In the 2006 general election, the Conservative party received 5,374,071 votes awarding them approximately \$9,404,624.<sup>25</sup><sup>30</sup>, the Liberals received 4,479,415 votes awarding them approximately \$7,838,976.<sup>25</sup><sup>31</sup> while the NDP with 2,589,697 votes received only approximately \$4,531,794.<sup>75</sup><sup>32</sup> of this public funding, less than half of what the Conservatives received.<sup>33</sup> While the Conservatives received more votes and by the very nature of the public subsidies formula should receive more funding, it is the formula itself which creates the problem. Public subsidies are essential to any finance system however a formula based on rewarding past electoral performance is sure to function in favour of the major parties. While this funding reliably ensures that the parties will receive a sum of public funding, it continues to be unfavourable for the NDP as a third party. While the party receives predictable amounts of public dollars, both the Liberals and Conservatives will always receive more, therefore contributing to the third party curse as it makes it difficult for a third party to compete on the same level as the major parties.

The new system of public financing, because it is based largely on past electoral performance, could have an effect on the composition and character of the party. Young *et al* argue that expectations about the effects of public financing vary from those who

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<sup>30</sup>Figure derived at without consideration of the cost of inflation. Conservative financial records filed with Elections Canada show \$14, 734, 893 received in government transfers for the calendar year of 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Liberal financial records filed with Elections Canada show \$8, 572, 966 received in government allowance for the calendar year of 2006

<sup>32</sup> NDP financial records filed with Elections Canada show \$4, 661, 269 received in transfers and government allowances for the calendar year of 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Elections Canada. Official Voting Results – 39<sup>th</sup> General Election.

anticipate the system will entrench the governing parties' advantage to others who expect it will benefit smaller parties that are able to pass the threshold.<sup>34</sup> Neither of these observations results in benefits for the NDP. Rather, the benefits will be reaped by the major party whose past electoral performance will prove advantageous and smaller parties such as the Greens who received very little from corporate and union donations prior to the ban in Bill C-24, as can be seen in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2:** Business and Trade Union Donations received by Political Parties in 2000 and 2003

Parties	Business and Trade Union Donations in \$	
	2000	2003
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	6,615,589	1,319,144
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	2,601,337	1,155,746
Liberal Party of Canada	11,650,681	10,816,396
New Democratic Party of Canada	2,755,499	5,308,675
Green Party of Canada	0	63,300

**Source:** Elections Canada. Total Election Contributions by Registered Political Party – 2000, 2003

Young *et al.* also note that the NDP has not benefited as substantially as the other parties in non-election years and “may come to experience a competitive disadvantage in the long term”.<sup>35</sup>

The data from Table 3.3 show over the four fiscal years of 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007, the NDP received fewer contributions measured in dollars, than both the Liberals and Conservatives with the exception of 2004, where the party received more than the

<sup>34</sup>Lisa Young, Anthony Sayers, and Harold Jansen “Altering the Political Landscape: State Funding and Party Finance” in *Canadian Parties in Transition*, eds. Alain-G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 342

<sup>35</sup> Young, Sayers and Jansen, 342

Liberals. While this is no fault of the finance system, it shows that the NDP is already receiving fewer dollar amounts from individual contributions causing the addition of unequal public dollars to aggravate a pre-existing problem.

**Table 3.3:** Contributions from Individuals to Political Parties 2004-2007

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal Party of Canada	New Democratic Party
2004	\$10,910,320.00	\$4,719,387.52	\$5,194,170.37
2005	\$17,847,451.00	\$8,344,162.25	\$5,120,826.74
2006	\$18,641,305.92	\$9,063,126.36	\$3,972,762.57
2007	\$16,983,629.73	\$4,471,903.46	\$3,959,451.24

**Source:** Elections Canada. Registered Party Financial Transaction Returns

Another major problem with the public money provided in the finance system is that it does not become available to parties until after the election. This makes it difficult for the NDP, further contributing to the affects of the finance system on the third party curse. This happens because the party will have more trouble raising the funds to run the campaign initially than will their major party counterparts, as the party has consistently received a lesser total of contribution dollars than the two major parties. What this means is that with less money to begin the campaign with, a third party will be in a disadvantageous position because public funds are not provided to parties until after the election.

When the *Canada Elections Act* was amended in 2004, Parliament also changed the *Income Tax Act* to allow an increase in income tax credits for political contributions by an individual. The new rules were as follows:

- Contributions up to \$400 receive a credit of 75% (Example: a contribution of \$100 receives an income tax credit of \$75)
- Contributions between \$400.01 and \$750 receive a credit of \$300 plus 50% of the amount over 400. (Example: a contribution of \$750 receives an income tax credit of \$475)
- Contributions that are over \$750.01 receive the lesser of \$650 or \$475 plus 33.5% of the amount over \$750 (Example: a contribution of \$1275 receives an income tax credit of \$650)<sup>36</sup>

These new rules mean that the state is reimbursing a large portion of political contributions from citizens. However, a look at Table 3.4 reveals that of the electoral districts represented by the three main parties after the 39<sup>th</sup> general election, those represented by the NDP have the lowest average family income. Both NDP and Conservative ridings fall below the national average by \$4, 519.30 and \$655.65 respectively. It is clear from these results that the areas with the highest electoral support for the NDP, as based on a first-past-the-post system, are also on average lower income ridings than those represented by the other parties. Table 3.3 shows the NDP receives the smallest dollar amount of individual contributions of the three parties. A system that provides government reimbursement to citizens who make political donations, means that Canada's third party, which has support among low-income families, and receives the smallest dollar amount of contributions may still not benefit as much from the tax benefit as the other parties do. This is further confirmation of the third party curse because, while the tax credit is certainly significant for a low income

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<sup>36</sup> Income Tax Act. Department of Justice. <<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowFullDoc/cs/I-3.3//20080617/en>> at <<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/index.html>>

earner, if they are unable to part with the money upfront the reimbursement is meaningless.

**Table 3.4:** Average Family Income for Electoral Districts in the 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Electoral District Distribution	Average Family Income based on 2001 census (\$)
NDP Ridings	61,640.70
Liberal Ridings	69,554.85
Conservative Ridings	65,504.35
National Average	66,160.00

**Source:** Canadian Census 2006.<sup>37</sup> Statistics Canada.  
Detailed information available in Appendix I, II, and III

Prior to Bill C-24 many candidate and party expenses were not included in the definition of “election expenses” used by Elections Canada and thus were exempt from spending limits. While the reforms broadened the definition of expenses, they still failed to address the fact that the spending limits definition only includes party spending during the thirty-six day election period,<sup>38</sup> thereby allowing bigger, wealthier parties to spend more ahead of the election period than the 36 day limit allows. Young *et al.* also note that parties find “ways of circumventing the law, most notably by spending one election-type activities during the weeks leading up to the election campaign itself”.<sup>39</sup>

According to financial statements filed with Elections Canada, for the 2006 calendar

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<sup>37</sup> Census 2006. Statistics Canada. Federal Electoral District Profile.  
<<http://www.census2006.ca/english/census01/products/standard/fedprofile/SelectFED.cfm?R=FED03>> at  
<<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>>

<sup>38</sup> Bill C-24 An Act to Amend Canada’s Election Act and Income Tax Act.

<sup>39</sup> Young, Sayers and Jansen, 339

year, the NDP had a total expenditure of \$14,245,37, while the Liberals had one of \$31,338,866 and the Conservatives \$30,032,841.<sup>40</sup> The difference in monetary resources and expenditures revealed in these reports is staggering. The omission of an ongoing spending limit in finance provisions contributes to the affect of finance laws on the third party curse, and why it is expected to result in negative consequences for a third party.

A look at party spending over the two most recent general elections reveals that the Liberals and Conservatives came within \$989,397 and \$300,669 respectively from the election expenses limit set out in the *Canada Elections Act* during the 2006 general election and \$1,000,000 and \$300 000 respectively in the 2004 general election (Table 3.5). When election time is imminent parties begin campaigning, they need not wait until the official call of an election to do so. Since funds spent outside of an election period are not included in the election expenses limit, wealthy parties have a large incentive to spend prior to the drop of the writ. It is necessary for the spending limit to be specifically defined to include all election expenses incurred outside of the election period, in order to create a fairer playing field and prevent wealthy parties from outspending others. A third party does not have the funds the major parties do and would benefit from a ceiling on election spending. The current lack of regulation on when these funds are spent is unfavourable for a third party through a loophole which allows wealthy parties to spend considerably more on election outside of the 36 day time frame. This

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<sup>40</sup> Elections Canada. Registered Party Financial Transaction Returns.  
<<http://www.elections.ca/scripts/webpep/fin/welcome.aspx?entity=6&lang=e>> at <<http://www.elections.ca>>

contributes to the third party curse by exaggerating the financial disparities between the parties, and their ability to communicate their messages to the general public.

This evaluation of the finance system reveals considerable financial inequities between the parties. However the effect that they have on the third party curse is not as apparent as expected. While the finance system seems to work in favour of the

**Table 3.5:** Election Expenses for the General Elections of 2004 and 2006

	<b>Conservative Party of Canada</b>	<b>Liberal Party of Canada</b>	<b>New Democratic Party</b>	<b>Bloc Quebecois</b>
<b>2004 General Election</b>				
Number of Candidates	308	308	308	75
Total Election Expenses	17, 284, 256.91	16, 604, 528.00	12, 018, 931.25	4, 507, 531.12
Amount within Election Expenses Limit	309, 668.41	989, 397.32	5, 574, 994. 07	13, 086, 394. 20
<b>2006 General Election</b>				
Number of Candidates	308	308	308	75
Total Election Expenses	18. 019, 179.28	17. 439, 690.00	13, 470, 866.92	4, 523, 404.97
Amount within Election Expenses Limit	259, 099.36	838, 588.64	4, 807, 411.72	13, 748, 873.67

**Source:** Elections Canada. Total Election Expenses and Reimbursement, by Registered Political Party – 2004 General Election, and Total Election Expenses and Reimbursement, by Registered Political Party – 2006 General Election.

pre-established major parties which causes a financial imbalance for a third party, its effect is not quite as strong as the previously discussed factor of the electoral system.

Certain provisions create biased effects in favour of major parties such as the lack of regulation on the spending limit period and the fact that public funds are not provided

to parties until after the election help to create a situation whereby a third party benefits the least from the current public financing provisions. While provisions within the finance system are contributing to the disadvantage a third party faces in electoral politics in Canada, the link is not as strong as expected, nor is it as strong as the link described in the previous chapter between a third party and the electoral system.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Voter Behaviour and Voter Turnout in Canada

When universal male suffrage began to be adopted at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political analysts assumed that the better educated and wealthy would not bother to vote based on rational choice, and that the less educated would turn up in higher numbers to cast a ballot.<sup>41</sup> Essentially, it was thought that those with a higher education would decide it not worthwhile to cast a vote which rationally will not be worth much in the pool of votes generated by a great crowd. But empirical studies soon began to show that socioeconomic status and voting were positively not negatively linked.<sup>42</sup> As it turned out, research showed that those of low socioeconomic status vote in fewer numbers than those of high socioeconomic status. This chapter will evaluate the implications of low socioeconomic status on the rate of voter turnout in Canada, as well as the group of citizens that make up non-voters, and what these both suggest for the electoral success of the NDP and the third party curse. If these factors do in fact contribute to the third party curse one would expect that the groups of citizens who comprise non-voters negatively affect the electoral success of a third party. As turnout declines, one would also expect to see the rate of success for the party decrease as well.

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<sup>41</sup> Arend Lijphart. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma" *The American Political Science Review* (Vol. 91 No.1, 1997), 1

<sup>42</sup> Lijphart, 1

In countries where turnout is high the link between socioeconomic status and turnout tends to be less strong suggesting the demographics of the voting population are similar to those of the general population.<sup>43</sup> The original expectation of the link between socioeconomic status and voting, by some analysts in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was wrong, and the opposite has actually occurred. In Canada, low voter turnout means that the groups most likely to vote for the NDP make up a large proportion of the non-voters in the country. Indeed, as turnout increases, voter support for the NDP does as well. What this means is that without an increase in both voter turnout and political knowledge, it is likely that the NDP will continue to be trapped in the third party curse.

Indeed, Lijphart's extensive review concluded that low voter turnout is a serious democratic problem because it means a turnout that is systematically biased against less well-to-do citizens and unequal turnout (that is, those with higher socioeconomic status turn out to vote in higher numbers than those with a lower socioeconomic status) spells unequal political influence.<sup>44</sup> He stated "In countries with higher turnout, as expected, the link between socioeconomic status and turnout tends to be less strong, often not strong enough to be statistically significant, and sometimes negative."<sup>45</sup> This indicates that when turnout increases, the demographics of voters become more representative of the population as a whole. Thus, those with low socioeconomic status vote in higher

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<sup>43</sup> Benjamin Radcliff, "Turnout and the Democratic Vote" *American Politics Research* Vol.22. 1994 and, Harvey Tucker, Arnold Vedlitz and James DeNardo, "Does Heavy turnout Help Democrats in Presidential Elections?" *American Political Science Review*. Vol 80 No.4, 1986

<sup>44</sup> Lijphart 1997

<sup>45</sup> Lijphart, 3

numbers in a high turnout election, compared to a low turnout election. But why is this a problem for the NDP and how does it contribute to the third party curse?

In order to determine how low voter turnout contributes to the NDP's position in the third party curse, it is necessary to answer two questions: Is it a problem that a person does not vote? And is it a problem if many people do not vote? The answer to the first question is "no". Voting is a right, and it is well within one's right to exercise a decision not to vote. The problem occurs when many people choose to do the same. Thus, the answer to the second question is "yes". When many people do not vote, we risk having those who do not be an accurate representation of the citizenry as a whole. Non-voting is not a neutral phenomenon. The results of a high turnout election and low turnout election differ in terms of the electoral results for a third party such as the NDP. When voter turnout falls to 64%, how do we know that the 64% of the population that turns out to vote is representative of the population as a whole? The answer is that we do not know.

If voter turnout fell to 10%, how would the demographics of voters look? Unless the distribution of voters in that 10% is spread equally across social classes, then the voting population becomes less and less representative of the population as a whole; as Lijphart's study concluded, low turnout is biased against less well to do citizens. Voters thus become a poor representation of the citizenry and, as a result governments become an increasingly poorer reflection of the population. As previously stated the

conventional model predicts that the decline in turnout is unlikely to be uniform across all social categories. It is expected to be accompanied by a widening disparity in participation between the “haves” and “have nots”. Essentially, those who do not vote are largely members of a lower socioeconomic status. The result is that those who do not vote are not, figuratively speaking, represented in Parliament. As the lower income group is a large base of support for the NDP (which will be demonstrated below), the absence of those votes contributes to the argument that trends in voter behaviour help to explain the third party curse.

A study of the 2000 election by Nevitte *et al.* supports the claim that income is an important determinant of turnout. They found that the higher one’s income is, the greater the propensity to vote.<sup>46</sup> The resulting problem is that if the less affluent perceive the political system to be unresponsive to their needs, then the lack of voter turnout from this social group will reinforce the reasons why they are not voting to begin with. What this means is that voters who are among the lower socioeconomic class will perceive the system as inapplicable and unresponsive to the concerns in their daily lives which encourages them to continue to refrain from voting as they believe the government is uninterested in helping them. What follows from Lijphart and Nevitte *et al.*’s conclusions that low voter turnout is biased against those of a low socioeconomic status, is that, in Canada, low voter turnout is biased against a left wing third party,

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<sup>46</sup>Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Nadeau. *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the Vote in the 2000 Canadian Election* (Peterborough: Broadview Press 2002), 50

which in the Canadian context is the NDP. This is so because those not voting are also typically those who would vote for the NDP, as is demonstrated by Table 4.1 which shows that the ridings in which the NDP received the greatest proportions of electoral support are among the least wealthy in the country.

**Table 4.1:** Average Family Income based on Electoral District Distribution by Party

<b>Electoral District Distribution</b>	<b>Average Family Income based on 2001 census (\$)</b>
NDP Electoral Districts	61,640.70
Liberal Electoral Districts	69,554.85
Conservative Electoral Districts	65,504.35
National Average	66,160.00

**Source:** Canadian Census 2006.<sup>47</sup> Statistics Canada.  
Detailed information available in Appendix I, II, and III

The proportion of non-voters is expected to increase among groups such as young people, immigrants, tenants and the poor. These groups are ones that are already less socially and economically well off than those who are voting.<sup>48</sup> These groups of non-voters also tend to be the typical supporters of Canada's third party, as the NDP is most likely to attract lower class citizens who are less well off. In *Whatever happened to the NDP?* by Nevitte *et al.*, data from the 2000 Canadian Election Study is used to confirm support for the well-known social bases of the NDP. The study was conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University in Toronto, and Jolicoeur in Quebec.

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<sup>47</sup> Census 2006. Statistics Canada.  
<<http://www.census2006.ca/english/census01/products/standard/fedprofile/SelectFED.cfm?R=FED03>> at  
<<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>>

<sup>48</sup> CRIC, 29

Three thousand six hundred and thirty one 30-minute interviews were conducted and the response rate was 60%.<sup>49</sup> The study found that the conventional social groups where support for the NDP is more likely to be found are the unemployed, public sector workers, those in lower income groups, union members, and those with very high levels of formal education.<sup>50</sup> The party also attempts to appeal to the working class by promoting itself as the only party to put working class families first.<sup>51</sup> The NDP slogan for the federal election in October 2008 promoted the party as one that will “act on the priorities of the kitchen table, not just the boardroom table.”<sup>52</sup> Such statements reiterate which social groups the party seeks to represent and gain support from. When one or more of the conventional social groups of which the NDP typically receives support, participates at much lower levels than the general population, the party experiences a lower level of voter support than it otherwise may have received. The result of this phenomenon means a lower level of electoral representation for the NDP in Parliament, which further supports the claim that voter behaviour contributes to the third party curse.

An evaluation of the 2000, 2004, and 2006 elections reveal similar results. In the 2000 election, in the 301 electoral districts where the NDP ran a candidate, voter support for the party fluctuated in sync with increases and decreases in the rate of voter turnout

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<sup>49</sup> Neil Nevitte, Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau, *Whatever Happened to the NDP?*(2001), 1

<sup>50</sup> Nevitte *et al*, 2001

<sup>51</sup>New Democratic Party of Canada. A Prime Minister on your family's side, for a change. <http://www.ndp.ca/workingfamiliesfirst>. Accessed 09/29/2008

<sup>52</sup> New Democratic Party of Canada. It's time to choose change – forward <http://www.ndp.ca/page/6755> Accessed 09/29/008

an average of 71.43% of the time. The percentage of voter turnout was compared for each electoral district for the 1997 and 2000 federal elections. Then, the percentage of votes received for the NDP candidate in each electoral district was compared between the two elections. Findings show, that as voter turnout increased, so too did vote percentage for the NDP, and likewise, as voter turnout decreased, so too did the percentage of votes for the NDP. This was especially true of electoral ridings in Ontario where this pattern occurred 94.17% of the time in the 103 electoral districts. As well, a look at the 11 new electoral districts won by the NDP in 2006 (i.e. electoral districts they did not win in the 2004 election, but did in 2006) reveals that voter turnout increased in 9 of the 11 electoral districts. Similarly, of the 7 seats the Conservatives lost to another party in the 2006 election (i.e. electoral districts they had won in 2004, but did not win in 2006), 6 of those districts had an increase in voter turnout. Thus, in new NDP victory districts, voter turnout increased and in districts where the Conservatives suffered a loss, turnout had also increased.

This supports the conventional theory that higher turnout increases the propensity of lower socioeconomic status citizens to vote which increases the electoral success rate of the NDP. In fact, in nearly 79% of electoral districts where turnout increased from 2004 to 2006, so too did the vote percentage for the NDP. Similarly, in 80% of electoral districts where voter turnout decreased between 2004 and 2006, the vote percentage for the Conservative candidate increased. Lower voter turnout fosters

higher support for the Conservative party as a right wing party; as those of higher socioeconomic status go the polls in higher numbers than those of a lower socioeconomic status which would typically support the NDP. Thus, low voter turnout by imposing negative consequences on a third party provides further evidence that civic engagement affects the strength of the third party curse and the NDP's position as a third party, whereas an increase in voter turnout will lessen the effect that voter turnout rates have on the third party curse. Zipp and Smith also conducted an analysis that indicated that class is related to voting, and the viability of the NDP. They also found that non-voting increases among the working classes in constituencies that are not winnable for the NDP, and decreases in those where the NDP is viable.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, Lawrence LeDuc using data from the 2004 Canadian Election Study showed that although party identification and ideology in the Canadian electorate may be declining, the NDP is still viewed as a party on the left, with 50.8% of NDP supporters clearly identifying themselves as firmly on the political left. 31.2% identified with the centre, and only 10.6% per cent of NDP supporters identified themselves as right on the political spectrum.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> John F. Zipp and Joel Smith. "A structural Analysis of Class Voting" in *Social Forces*. Vol. 0, No .3 (March, 1992)

<sup>54</sup> Lawrence LeDuc. "Realignment and Dealignment in Canadian Federal Politics" in *Canadian Parties in Transition*, eds. Alain-G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 171

Alexander Pacek and Benjamin Radcliff find that lower-status citizens or 'peripheral' voters, who are the natural constituency of left parties, tend to vote at lower and more inconsistent rates than the higher status, 'core' voters, supporters of center of right parties.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, if voter turnout were to increase in Canada, the proportion of lower status individuals who vote is likely to become more comparable to the proportion of higher status individuals who vote. This would likely result in higher levels of electoral support for the NDP as the increase in turnout would bring a larger share of the socio-economically disadvantaged to the polls, which increases the prospects for parties of the left. This view is also supported by research conducted within the United States<sup>56</sup> and across several other countries.<sup>57</sup> Benjamin Radcliff concluded in 1994 that the Democratic vote in the United States will increase with the rate of turnout.<sup>58</sup> He confirms what the conventional model predicts: that Democratic identifiers tend to vote at lower rates than Republican identifiers. One reason for this situation is that the base demographic groups for Democratic supporters are blacks and the poor, who tend to vote less than middle-class whites, who form the Republican base. Any significant increases in turnout would almost certainly mean that these citizens would make up a greater share of voters and the Democrats could expect to profit from a higher turnout. The results of this trend in turnout is not simply limited to a specific

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<sup>55</sup> Alexander Pacek and Benjamin Radcliff, "Turnout and the Vote for Left of Centre Parties: A Cross National Analysis" *the British Journal of Political Science*. (Vol 25 No.1 1995), 138

<sup>56</sup> Radcliff (1994) , Tucker, Vedlitz and DeNardo (1986)

<sup>57</sup> Pacek and Radcliff (1995)

<sup>58</sup> Radcliff (1994)

instance but rather can be generalized to any left wing third party as the trend has also been shown to exist in other countries. Radcliff and Pacek's cross-national analysis found that the electoral fate of the left is determined by the rate of turnout.<sup>59</sup> They found that the magnitude of this relationship was dependent on the degree to which these parties do in fact depend on the votes of lower socioeconomic status citizens. These studies provide further strength to the claim that the patterns of civic engagement in Canada affect the success of a third party. The results of a study done by André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte in 2002 show that income is an important determinant of turnout, as the higher people's income, the greater their propensity to vote. They cite that this is an association that turns up regularly in cross national studies of turnout.<sup>60</sup>

This is not surprising. The more preoccupied people are with providing for their basic needs, the less time and energy they have to pay attention to politics... The more affluent, in contrast, have both the resources and the perceived stake to get involved politically.<sup>61</sup>

Martinez and Gill conducted an evaluation of the 1997 Canadian federal election based on the relationship between electoral turnout and partisan choice.<sup>62</sup> Their findings

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<sup>59</sup> Pacek and Radcliff (1995)

<sup>60</sup> André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau and Neil Nevitte, "Generational Change and the Decline of Political Participation : The case of Voter Turnout in Canada" a paper prepared for presentation at the workshop *Citizenship on Trial: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Political Socialization of Adolescents* (McGill University, Montreal, June 20-21, 2002)

<sup>61</sup> Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 2002

<sup>62</sup> Michael D. Martinez and Jeff Gill, "Does Turnout Decline Matter? Electoral Turnout and Partisan Choice in the 1997 Canadian Federal Election" *The Canadian Journal of Political Science*. (Vol. 39, No.2 June 2006)

were as the conventional model predicts: the right wing Reform party <sup>63</sup> suffered from a higher turnout, and the NDP, the leftist party, benefited from a higher turnout. Their analysis set out to discover whether higher turnout elections bring a larger share of the socio-economically disadvantaged to the polls, thereby increasing the prospects of parties of the left.<sup>64</sup> They state that the relationship between turnout and partisan outcomes can be understood through the lens of generational politics,<sup>65</sup> as the decline in turnout rates in Canada have been largely the result of especially low rates of participation among the young. The analysis conducted of the 1997 Canadian case provides evidence of what Martinez and Gill say is an emerging consensus, that the relationship between turnout and partisan outcomes is context dependent.<sup>66</sup> While previous research has shown that the parties of the left usually benefit from higher turnout when the party system is defined by class, the outcomes are less consistent when the class cleavage is overcome by other social cleavages,<sup>67</sup> such as was the case in Canada in 1997.

The results confirm much of what the conventional model predicts that support for the NDP increases as turnout increases however the correlation was not as strong as predicted. They found that if turnout was about half of the actual rate, the estimated support level for the NDP would have gone down about one percentage point. If

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<sup>63</sup> The Reform party was, at the time, the new dominant right wing party

<sup>64</sup> Martinez and Gill, 344

<sup>65</sup> Martinez and Gill, 358

<sup>66</sup> Martinez and Gill, 358

<sup>67</sup> Martinez and Gill, 358

turnout had been about 15 per cent higher, NDP support would have increased about a half of a percentage.<sup>68</sup> They found that low turnout elections disproportionately attract older voters who were the most sympathetic to the right-wing Reform and high turnout elections bring in younger voters who were the least sympathetic to the Reform party.

Given that the party system of the time was new, it offered unique circumstances to voters and created a new generational divide over the new party system. The 1997 election served to reinforce the new system that emerged in 1993, which witnessed the collapse of the national party system that had been established several decades prior. The Liberal-Conservative-NDP hegemony cracked in 1993, and the old party system had been destroyed. Voters found themselves with more parties and candidates to choose from. These new choices also produced a greater regionalization of party competition. However, more than a decade later, the Canadian party system appears to have settled back into a predictable pattern where the prospect of future elections repeating the patterns of the divisions of the previous is high. These circumstances make the atmosphere of the 1997 election unique in the Canadian perspective. Thus the results of Martinez and Gill's study may not be easily applicable to future elections, and therefore not the best indicator of how the rate of voter turnout usually effects the rate of electoral success for a third party. Despite the dominating social cleavages however, the conventional theory of trends in voter turnout, which is also supported by this thesis, is still present, however on a less significant level.

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<sup>68</sup> Martinez and Gill, 357

Echoing Lijphart's observations relating to class bias in turnout, in low turnout elections disproportionate numbers of the less educated, less wealthy, and those holding less prestigious occupations will abstain from voting. This leaves the election to be decided by a relatively better educated and wealthier electorate which is presumably more sympathetic to conservative parties. As the trend of the upper class voting in higher proportions than the lower class continues, the effects this creates will have a negative impact on the electoral success of the NDP and will continue to make up a significant branch of the third party curse.

There is plenty of research to show that the young are *not* turning out to vote. The young are a strong base of support for the NDP, and therefore this trend is very disconcerting to NDP supporters. Gidengil *et al.* in 2004 found that

when asked during the final ten days of the campaign how likely they were to vote in the upcoming election respondents in their twenties were much less likely to say that they were certain to vote. The likelihood of voting increased by about ten percentage points for those in their thirties, and another ten points for those in their forties, and a further ten points for those in their fifties, before levelling off for those in their sixties.<sup>69</sup>

As their analysis showed, the most important point to grasp about the decline in participation since 1988 is that turnout has not declined in the electorate at large, but mostly among those born after 1970.

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<sup>69</sup> Gidengil, Elisabeth, André Blais, Joanna Everitt, Patrick Fournier, and Neil Nevitte. 2004. "Why Johnny Won't Vote." *The Globe and Mail*, August 4.

The results of a survey done by Jon Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc show that the decline in voter turnout in Canada can be attributed mainly to the young.<sup>70</sup> Pammett hypothesizes that young people may not be participating in conventional political activities because meaningful participative opportunities are lacking. It may be that the young are not taught about politics in such a way to encourage participation. Recent research also points to very sizable gaps between the young and the old and their knowledge of basic facts relating to Canadian politics. This suggests a diminished understanding and capacity to participate on the part of younger Canadians. In 2002, André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte concluded in their study<sup>71</sup> that:

They [the young] are less interested in electoral politics than their elders are and they are less well informed. And it is not clear at this point that they are turning to other forms of political involvement instead.

They go on to say that

the problem seems to be one of disengagement rather than active discontent. The challenge, then, is to find ways of engaging young Canadians.<sup>72</sup>

Additionally the Canada Election Studies Team reported in 2004 that,

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<sup>70</sup> Jon H. Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc, "Confronting the Problem of Declining Voter Turnout Among Youth" *Electoral Insight* (July 2003)

<sup>71</sup> André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau and Neil Nevitte, "Generational Change and the Decline of Political Participation : The case of Voter Turnout in Canada" a paper prepared for presentation at the workshop *Citizenship on Trial: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Political Socialization of Adolescents* (McGill University, Montreal, June 20-21, 2002)

<sup>72</sup> Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 10

Seventy-five per cent of our respondents strongly agreed that 'It is every citizen's duty to vote in federal elections' and 32 per cent said that they'd feel very guilty if they didn't vote in a federal election. . . However, young Canadians are much less likely to share these sentiments: only 55 per cent strongly agreed with the statement about duty and only 18 per cent said that not voting would make them feel very guilty.<sup>73</sup>

As previously established, the young constitute a strong base of support for the NDP. Thus, the results of the research by Pammett and Blais *et al.* (both of which provide evidence to the claim that the young are not voting in high numbers) show how voting behaviour of the young contributes to the third party curse as a reason why the NDP has remained in third party status. Additionally, research conducted by Nicole Goodman at Carleton University on the 2004 Canadian federal election found a strong correlation between young people's feelings toward parties and their tendency to vote.<sup>74</sup> Youth who regard parties favourably are more likely to vote than those who perceive parties negatively. The findings showed that youth who perceive the NDP in a positive light are the same individuals with an above average sense of civic duty and political interest: "young Canadians who value participation and possess a better understanding of the political process have a greater likelihood of voting for the NDP".<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Gidengil, Elisabeth, André Blais, Joanna Everitt, Patrick Fournier, and Neil Nevitte. 2004. "Why Johnny Won't Vote." *The Globe and Mail*, August 4.

<sup>74</sup> Nicole Goodman. "An attitudinal explanation of low youth voter turnout in the 2004 Canadian federal election" Paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Toronto, Ontario, May 30 to June 1, 2007. <<http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2007/Goodman.pdf>>

<sup>75</sup> Goodman, 2007

Likewise, Paul Howe's comparison of Canadian and Dutch voting rates and patterns suggests that a reason for the heightened effects of knowledge on participation among the young is due to the lack of traditional stimuli for voting.<sup>76</sup> The lack of a sense of civic duty, attachments to political parties or religious involvement, makes young Canadians more sensitive than their elders to knowledge considerations in deciding whether or not to vote. His research found that while young people in the Netherlands were equally indifferent about these traditional stimuli, knowledge is not as important a determinant of electoral participation among the young Dutch.

So why are young Canadians affected by this? Consistent with Milner's<sup>77</sup> characterization of high and low civic literacy societies, the Dutch remain on the whole more knowledgeable about politics than Canadians, and continue to participate at much higher levels. What civic literacy defines is the knowledge of how to actively participate and initiate change in one's community. It also encompasses a knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of government and the functions necessary for a successful society. While both countries have seen a widening gap between the knowledge of the young and the old, and both also experienced broader cultural changes likely to lead the young to abstain from voting, it is only in Canada (the low-civic literacy country) that the political knowledge of the young has fallen to

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<sup>76</sup> Paul Howe. "Political Knowledge and Participation in the Netherlands: Comparisons with the Canadian Case" *International Political Science Review* (Vol. 26 No.2. 2006), 158

<sup>77</sup> Henry Milner, *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work*. (Tufts University: University Press of New England, 2002)

dangerously low levels. The connection to be drawn here is that a greater political knowledge among the young results in greater political participation. Howe suggests that more attention should be given to the relationship between knowledge and participation across generations.<sup>78</sup> This suggests that the trend can be reversed and with a greater focus on political knowledge and participation the negative effects of low voter turnout on the third party curse can be overcome. Thus, it would seem that the external factor of civic engagement that constitutes a branch of the third party curse is not a necessary condition of any democratic society and is susceptible to change.

It is no secret that younger generations are generally more left leaning and research also shows that the young are voting in low numbers. This view that the young are generally left leaning is supported by a 2007 survey conducted by the New York Times/CBS News/MTV on the opinions of young Americans age 17 to 29 years old. The survey was conducted through telephone interviews with 659 people throughout the United States. The results were weighted to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, marital status, age and education. Given that American popular culture is so embedded in Canada, and that the social experiences of Canadians and Americans are largely similar as they experience North American culture in a western democracy, the results of this survey can be generalized to Canadians as well. The results show that young Americans appear to lean more to the left than the general population: 28 percent described themselves as liberal, compared

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<sup>78</sup> Howe (2006), 158

with 20 percent of the nation at large, and 27 percent called themselves conservative, compared with 32 percent of the general public.<sup>79</sup> The young are more socially progressive and interested in new ideas and policies – they are interested in issues that matter to them such as the environment, the welfare state, education, health care and less interested in matters relating to the economy and taxation. Sixty-two percent said they would support a universal, government-sponsored national health care insurance program, while only 47 percent of the general population holds that view. Thirty percent agreed “Americans should always welcome new immigrants” whereas 24 percent of the general public agreed. Forty-four percent said they believed that same-sex couples should be permitted to get married, compared with 28 percent of the general public. The survey also found that they are more likely than their elders to support the legalization of small amounts of marijuana.<sup>80</sup> These findings provide further support for the view that the young are a strong base of support for the NDP in Canada as the party is left leaning and more progressive than the others. This suggests that the lack of political participation by younger Canadians contributes to the third party curse.

As demonstrated earlier, the young are voting in a lower proportion than the rest of the population. What this means for the electoral success of the NDP and the third party curse, is that when voter turnout declines, the NDP loses a strong base of potential

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<sup>79</sup> The New York Times “Young Americans are Learning Left, New Poll Finds” June 27, 2007  
<[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/27/washington/27poll.html?\\_r=2&pagewanted=1&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/27/washington/27poll.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)>

<sup>80</sup> The New York Times “Young Americans are Leaning Left, New Poll Finds”

voter support in the young. When the young are politically knowledgeable, they are more likely to turn out to vote, which results in higher voter support for the NDP. If this trend of poor political knowledge in the young continues, it will also continue to play a key role in the third party curse and will ensure that the NDP is stuck in third party status, unable to reach higher levels of electoral success.

As described earlier, those with very high levels of formal education tend to be a base of support for the NDP. If this segment of the population is not politically aware, or enticed to go to the polls, the NDP could be losing a strong base of voter support. John Courtney, a political science professor at the University of Saskatchewan was quoted in a paper by CRIC as saying:

At one time, the education system helped to provide a sense of civic responsibility and civic duty that encouraged people to get out and vote. But in my own teaching experience at various universities, I've seen a change that has impacted negatively on this<sup>81</sup>

Even the young who are among the most educated in the country are very likely to know the least about politics in Canada compared to other age groups, an idea that is supported by Courtney as well as other scholars, including Paul Howe who has said

Young Canadians are the least politically knowledgeable group in the country, and by a wider margin today than ten years ago.

Furthermore,

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<sup>81</sup> CRIC, quoting John Courtney, 26

this relative decline in levels of political knowledge also holds true of young Canadians who have received a post secondary education<sup>82</sup>

It has been established that the young are generally left leaning, that they are not knowledgeable about the basic facts of Canadian politics, *and* that they are not turning out to vote. What does all of this mean for electoral support for the NDP? It is likely that the NDP is suffering from the consequences of the electorate's lack of political knowledge, and certainly from the effects of low voter turnout. Mike d'Abramo, a research director who studies the trends in youth culture with Youthography, a Toronto based market research firm, told CTV News during the 2006 federal campaign that the NDP is the party with the most to gain by encouraging young people to vote.<sup>83</sup> Who votes, and who does not, has important consequences for who will be elected and the policies they will pursue, thus, having an important impact on electoral results of the NDP and their position in party politics.

A survey conducted by Pammet and LeDuc in a 2003 Canada Elections publication found that when asked whether people believed that "schools should do more to educate children in the benefits of voting and political participation" an

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<sup>82</sup> Paul Howe. "The Sources of Campaign Intemperance" *Policy Options/Options Politiques* Vol. 22, No.1 (January-February 2001), 26

<sup>83</sup>CTV News. "Young voters seek issues that matter to them" December 5, 2005  
[http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20051201/young\\_voters\\_051129/20051205?s\\_name=election2006&no\\_ads=](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20051201/young_voters_051129/20051205?s_name=election2006&no_ads=)

overwhelming majority of 83% voted “strongly agree” or “agree”.<sup>84</sup> Without aid from political institutions, such as the government itself, to encourage citizens to vote, the cleavage between voters and non-voters is likely to reinforce rather than mitigate the patterns of power and wealth associated with policy outcomes, community participation and lobbying. This will further reinforce reasons why non-voters are not voting, as government will continue to become less representative of non-voters. Declining turnout sows the seeds of increasing inequality among social groups both in terms of political participation and in terms of political influence.

Sixty years ago, V.O. Key wrote that “The blunt truth is that politicians and officials are under no compulsion to pay much heed to classes and groups of citizens that do not vote.”<sup>85</sup> It is no surprise then that governments pursue policies that are in accordance with the values and interests of their supporters. Therefore, as the rate of non-voters increases, political parties will tailor their messages to an ever-narrowing segment of the population: those who vote. As a result, policies become even less relevant to non-voters than before, reinforcing the notion that there is little point in voting.

The groups involved in this cycle are strong support bases for the NDP. Thus, as long as the cycle continues, what will result is that the key supporters of the NDP will

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<sup>84</sup> Jon H. Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc. “Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters” *Electoral Law, Policy and Research*. March 2003

<<http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&document=index&dir=tur/tud&lang=e&textonly=false>>

<sup>85</sup> V.O Key. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), 527

not participate in the voting process. The perpetuation of the cycle is the foundation of the role civic engagement plays in the third party curse. What this means is that the NDP will continue to struggle to persuade their supporters to vote as the outcomes of government continue to be less and less relevant to the interests of those core supporters.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

In 1932, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was founded. Its founders wanted a party that promoted universal cooperation for the common good. They believed capitalism was a source of inequality and greed and they wanted to make governments responsible for levelling out the economic playing field. In 1935, five CCF members were elected to Parliament, including Baptist Minister Tommy Douglas who in 1944 went on to head the first nominally socialist government in North America as Premier of Saskatchewan. In 1961, the party aligned with the Canadian Labour Congress and formed the New Democratic Party of Canada, with Tommy Douglas elected leader. In the twenty three federal elections under the CCF/NDP banner, the party has never formed a federal government, or served as Official Opposition. The NDP is Canada's third party. The party has had six leaders, and holds the record for the largest percentage of women in a federal caucus in Canadian history. In 1988 the party formed its largest federal caucus with 43 members before quickly declining in subsequent years. In 2003, with the election of the current leader, Jack Layton, the party appeared to have renewed energy, and hopes for the party were, and still are, high. In the most recent federal election of October 2008, the party formed its second largest federal caucus with 37 elected representatives. However, the party still remains in third party status.

While electoral support for the party has never reached heights even comparable to those of the major parties, it is important to consider what factors may be inhibiting the ability of the party to achieve success. Caught in what this thesis has defined as a third party curse, a situation that arises when a party cannot move forward to become a major party because of the discriminatory impact of external factors, the NDP has been and still is in a stalemate. Such factors may be either internal or external. This thesis has outlined three external factors that appear to be susceptible to change, as they are shaped by contemporary political choices. These factors are the electoral system, the party finance provisions in the *Canada Elections Act* and the trend towards low voter turnout. The NDP was chosen as the party for evaluation in this paper because of its history as Canada's third party. Canada's two major parties, that is, those parties which have the electoral strength to form government with regularity and when defeated typically form the Official Opposition, are the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. The NDP is Canada's third party as it regularly ranks third in electoral support and does not have the electoral strength to form government. This is distinct from two other political parties in Canada, the Bloc Quebecois and the Green party, as regional and minor parties respectively. The goal of the thesis was to determine if the three outlined factors were responsible in some way, for the lack of electoral success of the NDP, and thus contributors to the NDP's position in the third party curse.

This research is significant in evaluating the future of the political party atmosphere in Canada. The Liberals and Conservatives have long dominated federal government in Canada, while the NDP has consistently followed in electoral support. Some important questions this research has provided a foundation for answering include whether the NDP is fated to third party status solely by reasons of internal party matters or whether there is something unique about the politics of Canada that maintain the party at this level. If the NDP were to dissolve as a party would any new third party face the same challenges? What does this all mean for the future of party politics?

The thesis approached the research question by considering three factors; the electoral system, the party finance system, and the trend towards lower voter turnout. By examining each of these factors separately, the goal was to determine if each independently of the others bore responsibility for the NDP's position in the third party curse. Each factor was described and evaluated using data from previous elections. As well, information was provided as to how these factors could be changed to determine if in fact the negative effects of these factors could be reversed through reforms of the system, or changes in civic engagement in respect to the trend toward lower voter turnout. This is to ensure that the negative circumstances created by each of these factors are not inevitable but rather susceptible to change. The electoral system was evaluated and contrasted with aspects of a proportional representation system to determine if under an alternate system a third party would suffer the same electoral

consequences. The party finance provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* were evaluated to see if the effects were destructive to a third party and if the negative consequences brought about by the current finance system could be lessened by reforms to the finance provisions. Finally, the trend in low voter turnout was examined as well as the presentation of previous scholarly research that revealed the negative consequences the NDP suffers from low turnout and how they can be reversed when turnout increases.

The first factor evaluated was the Single Member Plurality system. Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system has consistently produced disproportionate seat distributions in Parliament. While typically favouring the governing party or two major parties the system has heavily disadvantaged any third party or minor party by awarding it far fewer seats than its percentage of the vote would warrant. Chapter Two revealed the dramatic disproportions that have occurred under this system, and contrasted it to what could occur under a system of proportional representation. Of the twenty-three elections held since the CCF first ran federally in 1935, the NDP has received fewer seats than warranted by its popular support twenty-two times. At the same time, the governing party in each of those elections has been overcompensated in the House of Commons, than is warranted by actual percentage of popular support.

A discussion of the process of strategic voting revealed that a third party is most likely to suffer the consequences of strategic voting as voters will want to place a vote for a party that stands a chance of winning over the party they wish to see defeated. This

is important in terms of electoral systems as Chapter Two provided a discussion of the work done by Gary W. Cox, which showed that strategic voting declines as the proportionality of the electoral system increases. Thus, the current first-past-the-post electoral system has debilitating affects on a third party that would not be inevitable under any electoral system. Likewise, a third party is punished for having widely distributed support across the country as it will not have enough concentrated support to reap the benefits of the first-past-the-post system, unlike a regional party which has the potential to be grossly over-represented.

In Chapter Two, data from previous elections revealed what could have been for the NDP under a system of proportional representation. It showed that the presence of a third party would have been significantly greater if not for the first-past-the-post election system, with the potential to alter the very foundation of party politics in Canada.

As Duverger noted in 1972, the first-past-the-post electoral system tends to “pulverize third parties”.<sup>86</sup> Third parties are essentially permanent doormats in any plurality system. A system of proportional representation can rectify this problem by providing a proportionate vote-to-seat ratio in Parliament, awarding each party the representation they have earned based on number of votes cast. It would prevent the governing party from being overrepresented and remaining parties from being

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<sup>86</sup> Duverger (1972), 23

underrepresented. It is clear that the first-past-the-post system does contribute to and help explain the effects of the third party curse. Reform of the current system to a more proportional system would relieve the negative consequences currently suffered by a third party and would eliminate the electoral system as a branch of the third party curse, as it is indeed susceptible to change. The research presented has shown that as long as Canada continues to run elections based on this system, it is unlikely that a third party will ever see the success its popular support entitles it to. The NDP has suffered consistent disproportions under the first-past-the-post system and will remain caught in a third party curse for as long as the FPTP system is in place.

The second factor evaluated was Canada's party finance laws. Finance provisions were evaluated which create a financial imbalance for a third party. While Chapter Three set out to determine whether party finance provisions negatively impact a third party, the results were not as expected. Certain provisions create biased effects in favour of major parties thereby creating unfavourable circumstances for a third party. Chapter Three shows that the ridings currently represented by the NDP have the lowest average income in the country, and that the party also consistently receives the smallest amount of individual contributions, making this scenario less likely to occur for the NDP than for the other two parties.

Other provisions evaluated in Chapter Three such as the spending limit only within election periods, and the tax credit reimbursement do heavily favour the major

parties over a third party, however not to the extent expected. The fact that public funds are not provided to parties until after the election creates a situation whereby a third party suffers by not having large amounts of money available to them during the campaign.

There are however alternative systems of party financing such as one that is 100% publicly funded which may serve to level the playing field much better for all parties involved. Equal funds for all parties would create a monetary parity and would allow the parties to compete on an equal basis. Chapter Three concluded that the NDP faces a disadvantage as a third party as a result of Canada's finance laws at the federal level.

The final factor evaluated concentrated on civic engagement and the trend toward lower voter turnout in Canada. The last general election held in 2008 inspired only 59% of eligible voters to go to the polls. With such a low voter turnout, it is almost certain that those who are voting are not an accurate representation of the demographics of the country. Chapter Four showed how the drop in turnout is likely to be accompanied by a disparity between the participation of the "have" and the "have nots". This means there is an increasing degree of inequality in representation as those who do not vote, do not get representation. Canada's third party has the least wealthy supporters of the three main parties, encompassing a large portion of low-socioeconomic status citizens. Lijphart's review of the consequences of unequal political

participation in 1997 concluded that low voter turnout is biased against less well to do citizens. Nevitte *et al*'s study in 2000 demonstrated that those of a low socioeconomic status are a strong social base of support for the NDP.

Chapter Four clearly demonstrated that income is an important determinate of electoral turnout. Essentially, the higher one's income is, the greater the propensity to vote, this was supported by a study done for this research of the 2000, 2004, and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections. The study found that as voter turnout increased in individual ridings, so too did vote percentage for the NDP.

Many studies have also demonstrated that the left end of the political spectrum has the most to lose from a decline in turnout. The NDP is both a left wing party and is supported by low socioeconomic status voters; as a result, the party suffers from low voter turnout.

Another key component of voter behaviour that was analyzed was the proportion of the young who are not turning up to vote. Studies by Milner and Howe demonstrate that the lack of civic engagement by the young is damaging to the electoral support of the NDP. By suggesting that a diminished understanding of the political process diminishes the capacity of younger Canadians to participate in politics, Chapter Four has shown that a greater emphasis on civic literacy and the understanding of how the political process works would encourage more citizens to go to the polls. This would increase the electoral prospects of the NDP.

Without a greater understanding of how important each vote is, and how it translates to governmental representation the vicious cycle that affects those of lower socioeconomic status will continue to impact negatively on the electoral success of the NDP, as will the trend in the lack of civic engagement from the young. Proactive efforts are necessary to reverse the trend of turnout we have been experiencing over the last several decades so that election results will translate to a more accurate representation of the general population in Parliament. Voter behaviour and specifically the trend towards low voter turnout comprise a significant component of the third party curse. Only when the demographics of the country are accurately represented in Parliament, will the NDP have a chance to enjoy electoral success.

Based on the findings of this research, the most important recommendation to be made is in support for reform of the current Single Member Plurality electoral system used in Canada. Under a system of proportional representation, support is better translated into electoral results, providing a more accurate representation of the desires of Canadians. Under a PR system, the NDP would receive the electoral recognition it has earned. The benefits of the system would be immediately apparent in the composition of the House of Commons. Without the constraints of the electoral rules under the FPTP system, a significant contributing factor to the third party curse would be removed. The factor of the electoral system and the benefits of its reform are considered the most important because an electoral system is the groundwork for which

all elections, electoral results, electoral provisions, and voter behaviour are based and determined. Reform of this system would have an unprecedented impact on the way in which elections are run and regulated in this country, and thus provides the basic framework for creating a political atmosphere more accepting of a third party, and less susceptible to the third party curse.

The implications of this research are clear. The NDP is caught in a third party curse at least partially due to the negative consequences of the three factors evaluated in this thesis; the electoral system, the party finance provisions in the *Canada Elections Act* and the lack of civic engagement on behalf of the electorate. As long as these factors continue to exist, the NDP will remain trapped in the third party curse. Canada will remain a multi-party system where major, minor, third and regional parties all play a role, but will remain dominated by the two party politics of the Liberals and Conservatives.

It has not been the intention of this thesis to argue that the barriers presented here are the sole reasons why the NDP has never formed government at the federal level in Canada. Rather, its purpose has been to analyze factors that prevent a third party in Canada from seeing electoral success. While it is possible that the reformation of these barriers alone will not lead to the NDP forming government, it is necessary for them to be addressed and reformed if a third party is ever to see electoral success in Canada.

### Appendix I: NDP Riding-Demographics

Riding	Province	Average Family Income based on the 2001 census (\$)
Toronto Danforth	ON	67, 551
Timmins James Bay	ON	57, 284
British Columbia Southern Interior	BC	53, 725
Vancouver Island North	BC	57, 983
Western Arctic	NT	75, 102
New Westminster Coquitlam	BC	68, 407
Elmwood Transcona	MB	54, 615
Hamilton Mountain	ON	63, 010
Trinity Spadina	ON	81, 415
Hamilton Centre	ON	52, 769
Windsor Tecumseh	ON	73, 341
Nanaimo-Cowichan	BC	54, 877
Skeena-Bulkley Valley	BC	60, 366
Vancouver East	BC	48, 184
Ottawa Centre	ON	84, 956
Acadie-Banthurst	NB	46, 400
Burnaby-New Westminster	BC	58, 734
Hamilton East Stoney Creek	ON	59, 120
Winnipeg Centre	MB	43, 152
Sault Ste. Marie	ON	58, 007
Windsor West	ON	66, 432
London Fanshawe	ON	58, 351
Halifax	NS	68, 901
Outremont	QC	68, 739
Parkdale-High Park	ON	76, 648
Surrey North	BC	50, 445
Victoria	BC	66, 327
Burnaby-Douglas	BC	63, 749
Sackville-Eastern Shore	NS	61, 584
Winnipeg North	MB	49, 047
<b>Total</b>		1, 849, 221
<b>Average Income</b>		61, 640.70

## Appendix II: Conservative-Riding Demographics

Riding	Province	Average Family Income based on the 2001 census (\$)
Avalon	NL	45, 589
St. John's East <sup>87</sup>	NL	66, 037
St. John's South – Mount Pearl	NL	56, 999
Central Nova	NS	52, 911
South Shore – St. Margaret's	NS	52, 215
Fundy Royal	NB	55, 657
New Brunswick Southwest <sup>88</sup>	NB	53, 276
Tobique – Mactaquac	NB	48, 650
Beauce	QC	52, 611
Beauport – Limoilou <sup>89</sup>	QC	50, 722
Charlesbourg – Haute Saint Charles	QC	58, 957
Jonquiere – Alma	QC	55, 640
Levis – Bellechasse	QC	54, 933
Lotbiniere – Chutes de la Chaudiere	QC	60, 827
Louis Hebert	QC	78, 541
Louis Saint Laurent	QC	60, 719
Megantic L'Erable	QC	48, 425
Pontiac	QC	58, 377
Roberval – Lac Saint Jean <sup>90</sup>	QC	50, 249
Ancaster – Dundas – Flamborough Westdale	ON	89, 428
Barrie	ON	67, 380
Bruce – Grey – Owen Sound	ON	58, 270
Burlington	ON	89, 539
Cambridge	ON	72, 055
Carleton – Mississippi Mills <sup>91</sup>	ON	102, 118
Chatham – Kent – Essex	ON	65, 288
Dufferin – Caledon	ON	87, 197
Durham <sup>92</sup>	ON	78, 234
Elgin – Middlesex – London	ON	67, 124
Essex	ON	84, 788

<sup>87</sup> Formerly known as St. John's North

<sup>88</sup> Formerly known as St. Croix-Belleisle

<sup>89</sup> Formerly known as Beauport

<sup>90</sup> Formerly known as Roberval

<sup>91</sup> Formerly known as Carleton-Lanark

<sup>92</sup> Formerly known as Clarington-Scugog-Uxbridge

Glengarry – Prescott – Russell	ON	66, 774
Haldimand – Norfolk	ON	64, 026
Haliburton – Kawartha Lakes – Brock	ON	58, 691
Kitchener – Conestoga	ON	72, 893
Lambton – Kent – Middlesex	ON	66, 332
Lanark – Frontenac – Lennox and Addington	ON	60, 033
Leeds – Grenville	ON	63, 473
Mississauga – Streetsville <sup>93</sup>	ON	n/a
Nepean – Carleton	ON	94, 830
Niagara Falls	ON	62, 620
Niagara West – Glanbrook	ON	75, 830
Northumberland – Quinte West	ON	60, 840
Oshawa	ON	63, 855
Ottawa – Orleans	ON	91, 698
Ottawa West – Nepean	ON	76, 580
Oxford	ON	66, 649
Parry Sound – Muskoka	ON	55, 458
Perth – Wellington	ON	67, 911
Peterborough	ON	60, 921
Prince Edward – Hastings	ON	56, 433
Renfrew – Nipissing – Pembroke	ON	57, 429
Sarnia – Lambton	ON	68, 829
Simcoe – Grey	ON	70, 172
Simcoe North	ON	61, 163
St. Catharines	ON	62, 972
Stormont – Dundas – South Glengarry	ON	58, 053
Thunder Bay – Superior North	ON	68, 031
Wellington – Halton Hills	ON	87, 580
Whitby – Oshawa	ON	85, 439
York – Simcoe	ON	72, 956
Brandon – Souris	MB	53, 298
Charleswood – St James – Assiniboia	MB	73, 222
Dauphin – Swan River – Marquette <sup>94</sup>	MB	44, 261

<sup>93</sup> This riding was not created until 2003 from parts of Brampton West-Mississauga and Mississauga West, therefore there is no information available from the 2001 census. For the purposes of this research, this riding will be left out of the analysis.

<sup>94</sup> Formerly known as Dauphin Swan River

Kildonan – St. Paul	MB	68, 349
Portage – Lisgar	MB	53, 269
Provencher	MB	55, 592
Selkirk – Interlake	MB	56, 036
Winnipeg South	MB	78, 012
Battlefords – Lloydminster	SK	51, 938
Blackstrap	SK	66, 892
Cypress Hills – Grasslands	SK	54, 181
Desnethe – Missinippi – Churchill River <sup>95</sup>	SK	41, 513
Palliser	SK	64, 416
Prince Albert	SK	54, 554
Regina – Lumsden – Lake Centre	SK	63, 925
Regina – Qu’Appelle	SK	49, 385
Saskatoon – Humboldt	SK	65, 502
Saskatoon – Rosetown – Biggar	SK	47, 323
Saskatoon – Wanuskewin	SK	61, 568
Souris – Moose Mountain	SK	55, 884
Yorkton – Melville	SK	48, 485
Calgary – Nose Hill	AB	91, 212
Calgary Centre <sup>96</sup>	AB	85, 530
Calgary Centre-North <sup>97</sup>	AB	70, 223
Calgary East	AB	56, 761
Calgary Northeast	AB	59, 014
Calgary Southeast	AB	95, 013
Calgary Southwest	AB	91, 529
Calgary West	AB	98, 680
Crowfoot	AB	62, 247
Edmonton – Leduc	AB	89, 762
Edmonton – Mill Woods – Beaumont <sup>98</sup>	AB	64, 497
Edmonton – Sherwood Park	AB	75, 488
Edmonton – Spruce Grove	AB	73, 878
Edmonton – St. Albert	AB	74, 620
Edmonton – Strathcona	AB	69, 415
Edmonton Centre	AB	60, 581
Edmonton East	AB	54, 450
Fort McMurray – Athabasca <sup>99</sup>	AB	73, 831

<sup>95</sup> Formerly known as Churchill River

<sup>96</sup> Formerly known as Calgary South Centre

<sup>97</sup> Formerly known as Calgary North Centre

<sup>98</sup> Formerly known as Edmonton Beaumont

Lethbridge	AB	60, 146
Macleod	AB	76, 007
Medicine Hat	AB	61, 428
Peace River	AB	64, 194
Red Deer	AB	67, 345
Vegreville – Wainwright	AB	65, 787
Westlock – St. Paul	AB	62, 082
Westaskiwin	AB	58, 770
Wild Rose	AB	75, 868
Yellowhead	AB	63, 043
Abbotsford	BC	58, 719
Cariboo – Prince George	BC	61, 816
Chilliwack – Fraser Canyon	BC	55, 059
Delta – Richmond East	BC	73, 861
Fleetwood – Port Kells	BC	66, 830
Kamloops – Thompson – Cariboo <sup>100</sup>	BC	59, 050
Kelowna – Lake Country <sup>101</sup>	BC	60, 535
Kootenay – Columbia	BC	57, 985
Langley	BC	71, 383
Nanaimo – Alberni	BC	58, 654
Okanagan – Coquihalla	BC	55, 985
Okanagan – Shuswap <sup>102</sup>	BC	53, 932
Pitt Meadows – Maple Ridge – Mission <sup>103</sup>	BC	64, 397
Port Moody – Westwood – Port Coquitlam	BC	71, 128
Prince George – Peace River	BC	65, 527
Saanich Gulf Islands	BC	70, 814
South Surrey – White Rock – Cloverdale	BC	82, 915
Vancouver Kingsway	BC	54, 724
	<b>Total</b>	8, 253, 547
	<b>Average Family Income</b>	65, 504.35

<sup>99</sup> Formerly known as Athabasca

<sup>100</sup> Formerly known as Kamloops Thompson

<sup>101</sup> Formerly known as Kelowna

<sup>102</sup> Formerly known as Okanagan Shuswap

<sup>103</sup> Formerly known as Dewdney – Alouette

### Appendix III: Liberal-Riding Demographics

Riding	Province	Average Family Income based on the 2001 census (\$)
Mississauga-Erindale	ON	89, 129
Yukon	YT	69, 564
Mississauga-Brampton South	ON	76, 153
London West	ON	75, 501
Brampton West	ON	70, 837
Ottawa-Vanier	ON	73, 095
North Vancouver	BC	84, 750
St. Paul's	ON	130, 384
Vaughn	ON	89, 188
Nickel Belt	ON	60, 237
Thunder Bay-Rainy River	ON	64, 415
Kings-Hants	NS	50, 374
Oakville	ON	116, 565
Humber-St.Barbe-Bair Verte	NL	44, 805
Scarborough Centre	ON	56, 775
Richmond	BC	61, 489
Bourassa	QC	44, 494
Mount Royal	QC	83, 855
Etobicoke North	ON	53, 625
Cape Breton-Canso	NS	46, 599
Medawaska-Restigouche	NB	47, 326
Newton-North Delta	BC	63, 156
Brampton-Springdale	ON	79, 952
Saint Laurent-Cartierville	QC	61, 355
Vancouver South	BC	56, 540
York Centre	ON	64, 010
Malpeque	PE	55, 506
Sydney-Victoria	NS	44, 031
Laval-Les Iles	QC	68, 692
Vancouver Centre	BC	75, 756
Don Valley West	ON	136, 032
Wascana	SK	71, 382
Mississauga East-Cooksville	ON	63, 877
Willowdale	ON	81, 664
Ajax-Pickering	ON	83, 370
Miramichi	NB	46, 085
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	ON	82, 309
Notre-Dame-de-Grace Lachine	QC	62, 810
Thornhill	ON	102, 459

Nunavut	NU	52, 624
Scarborough-Agincourt	ON	60, 742
Churchill	MB	48, 465
Beausejour	NB	49, 594
Scarborough Rouge River	ON	58, 426
Cardigan	PE	53, 056
Bramalea Gore Malton	ON	64, 831
Welland	ON	61, 498
Sudbury	ON	63, 886
Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca	BC	61, 140
La Salle-Emard	QC	52, 786
Random-Burin-St. Georges	NL	40, 863
Markham-Unionville	ON	81, 226
Ottawa South	ON	76, 013
Egmont	PE	49, 333
Scarborough-Guildwood	ON	57, 272
Pickering-Scarborough East	ON	91, 184
Kingston and the Islands	ON	68, 494
Beaches-East York	ON	73, 372
Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe	NB	59, 095
Charlottetown	PE	58, 741
Vancouver Quadra	BC	112, 155
Winnipeg South Centre	MB	80, 512
Saint Leonard-Saint Michel	QC	47, 994
Pierrefonds-Dollar	QC	75, 497
London North Centre	ON	71, 995
Hull-Aylmer	QC	67, 728
Toronto Centre	ON	124, 082
Don Valley East	ON	64, 085
Kitchener Centre	ON	64, 306
Halifax West	NS	71, 046
Honore-Mercier	QC	59, 788
Nipissing-Timiskaming	ON	59, 077
Labrador	NL	57, 227
Dartmouth-Cole Harbour	NS	60, 919
Lac-Saint-Louis	QC	94, 291
Fredericton	NB	61, 324
York West	ON	45, 924
Davenport	ON	53, 687
Saint Boniface	MB	64, 615
Bonavista-Gander-Grand Falls-Windsor	NL	42, 924
Brant	ON	64, 286
Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing	ON	55, 347

Huron Bruce	ON	64, 499
Newmarket Aurora	ON	97, 216
Mississauga South	ON	95, 918
Kitchener Waterloo	ON	84, 077
Oak Ridges Markham	ON	100, 369
West Nova	NS	46, 316
York South-Weston	ON	49, 873
Halton	ON	103, 617
Kenora	ON	60, 457
Eglinton-Lawrence	ON	116, 715
Scarborough Southwest	ON	58, 866
Richmond Hill	ON	89, 329
Etobicoke Centre	ON	93, 277
Saint John	NB	57, 140
	<b>Total</b>	6, 677, 265
	<b>Average Family Income</b>	69, 554.85

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