

# Political Parties and Electoral Systems

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the engine of politics

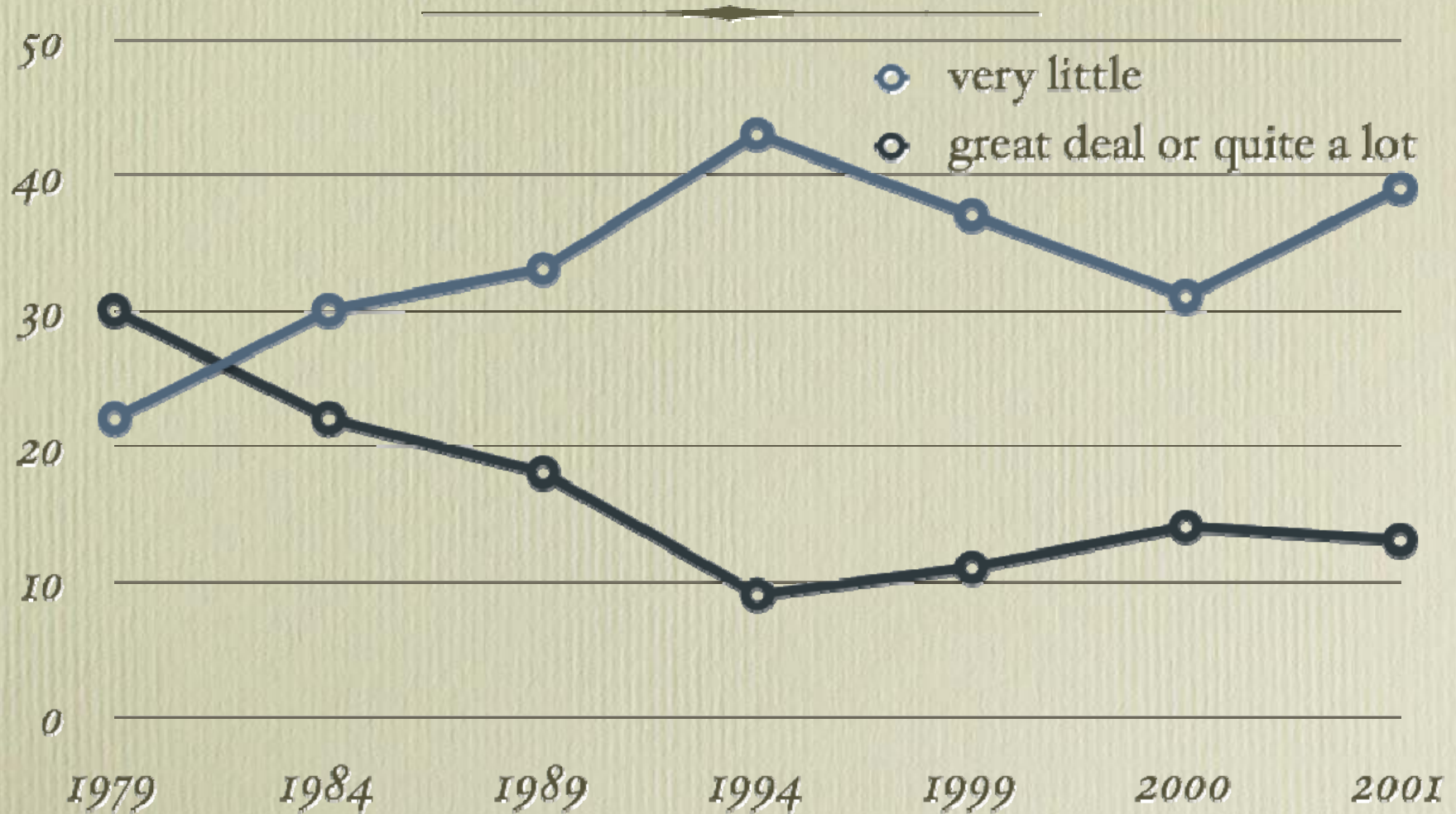


# Objectives

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- to examine what political parties do in Ontario
- to introduce different kinds of parties
- to examine how electoral systems produce different kinds of parties

# How much confidence do Canadians have in parties?



# And yet...

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- 69% of Canadians agree that
- “Without political parties there cannot be true democracy”

# When we talk about parties what are we talking about?

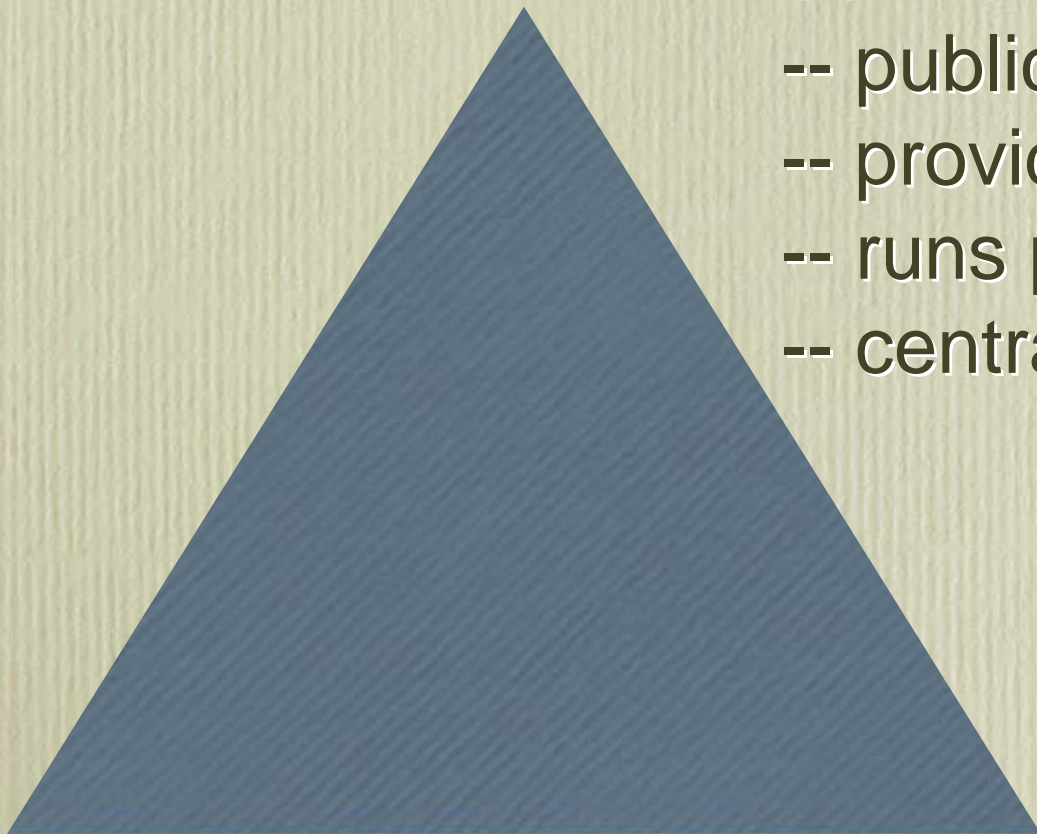
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## **central organization**

- public face of party
- provides leadership
- runs provincial election campaign
- centralized

## **local organizations**

- many members
- chooses candidate
- decentralized



# When we talk about parties what are we talking about?

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- electoral parties vs. parliamentary parties
- governing parties vs. opposition parties

# What do parties do?

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- structure the vote
- organize government
- recruit candidates
- recruit leaders
- make policies

# Universal functions but done differently ...

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- They are a product of
  - attitudes, beliefs and values of citizens (political culture)
  - history
  - diversity of population
  - what kind of representation we value
  - electoral system

# What kinds of parties exist in Canada?

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- **‘umbrella’ parties**

- designed to maximize votes
- bring together politicians with diverse interests
- most well known of parties

# What kinds of parties exist in Canada?

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- **'niche' parties**

- specialized policy interest

- created from social movements or interests

- labour, environment, regional grievances

- less well known parties

# What are the provincial parties in Ontario?

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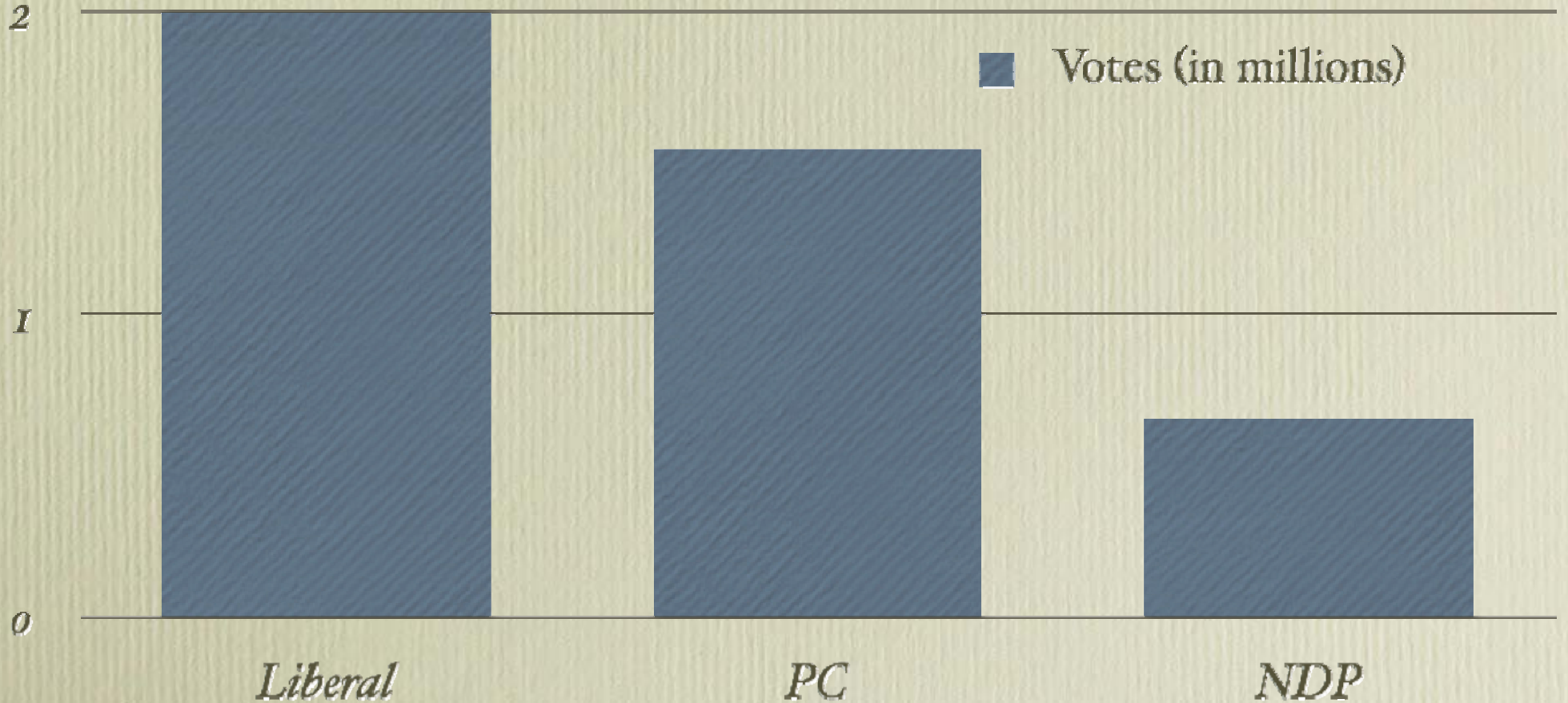
- Liberal
- Conservative
- New Democratic Party

# What are the provincial parties in Ontario?

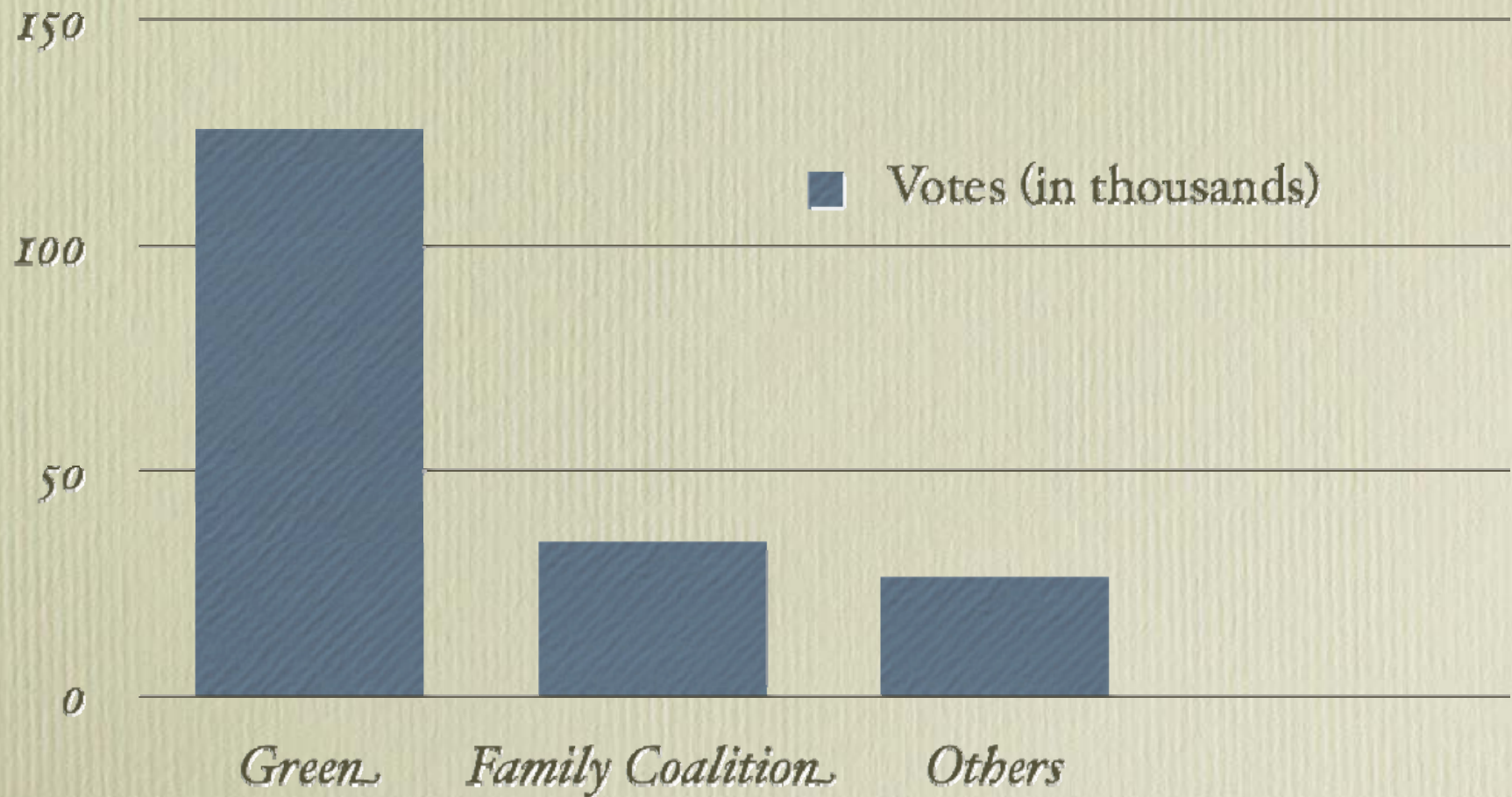
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- Green
- Family Coalition
- Confederation of Regions
- Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)
- Freedom Party
- Libertarian Party

# Which parties won votes in the last provincial election?



# Which parties won votes in the last provincial election?



# If we examine several elections in Ontario what do the results tell us?

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- elections are fought among a few very well known parties
- a few parties get a majority of votes
- few small parties elect representatives
- independent candidates do poorly

# Electoral systems have an impact on parties

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- Electoral systems help determine if
  - there are strong parties
  - there are ideological parties
  - there are few parties
  - there are many parties

# How many parties do we need?

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- quantity or quality?
  - how do parties affect the functioning of legislatures?
- how many parliamentary parties do we need?
  - depends on functions of legislature
- parties also reflect political culture

# Two party competition tendencies

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- elections fought between ‘umbrella’ parties
- legislature reflects which team wins
- more common in our electoral system
- create two strong parties

# Multi-party competition tendencies

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- elections are a fight over diverse views and opinions
- legislature reflects greater diversity of views
- less common in our system

# Conclusion

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- parties are diverse instruments
- parties are a product of electoral systems and other elements
- party systems are both shaped by and shape values and principles of representation

What kind of party system we  
want will help shape  
what electoral system we choose.