

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910780677803321
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Titolo	Grassroots politicians : party activists in British Columbia // Donald E. Blake, R.K. Carty, Lynda Erickson
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Vancouver : , : UBC Press, , 1991
ISBN	1-283-22495-X 9786613224958 0-7748-5321-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (x, 155 pages) : illustrations
Altri autori (Persone)	EricksonLynda CartyR. Kenneth
Disciplina	324.2711
Soggetti	Political activists - British Columbia Political parties - British Columbia British Columbia Politics and government
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [147]-150) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Contents -- Tables and Figures -- Preface -- The Polarization of BC Politics -- Party Activists in British Columbia -- Continuity and Change: Party Activists, 1973-87 -- Social Credit: Pragmatic Coalition or Ideological Right? -- The New Democrats What Kind of Left? -- The Liberals: Centre or Fringe? -- Leadership Selection in the BC Parties -- The Social Credit Grassroots Recapture Their Party -- Resisting Polarization: The Survival of the Liberals -- Towards the Centre?: The Dynamics of Two-Party Competition -- Appendix -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Grassroots Politicians is the first systematic account of party activists at the provincial level in Canada. To understand the pattern of political polarization in British Columbia, the authors examine the values and beliefs of those at the party cores -- the people behind the party images who elect leaders, nominate candidates, and work in electoral campaigns. In the New Democratic Party they play a crucial role in determining policy, in the Social Credit they help to shape party direction and governing style by their choice of leader, and, among the Liberals, they form the small band that keeps the party alive in the

province. The authors challenge the view that Social Credit is a homogeneously right-wing party and that the New Democrats have clearly opted for the political centre. They record how party profiles have changed over the years -- Social Credit activists becoming better educated, wealthier, and less diverse in terms of ties to national parties, while the NDP is now more middle-class, white collar, and professional. They explore such questions as why individuals stay in a weak party like the B.C. Liberals, how the New Democrats interpret successive Social Credit victories, and to what extent B.C. activists are similar to those in other provinces or in national parties. They offer an analysis of the leadership selection process in each party and a detailed account of the convention that chose Bill Vander Zalm. By examining the attitudes and ideologies of party activists, they are able to pinpoint their locations on the left/right spectrum, identify internal divisions, and assess the problems and opportunities they pose for party leaders and election strategies. As the British Columbia case illustrates, party militants carry distinctive subcultures which have a significant impact on the ongoing dynamics and immediate outcomes in competitive party systems. The study also shows that the partisan involvement of activists in national political parties is one of the major forces that links the otherwise separate provincial and federal political worlds inhabited by British Columbians.
