

Canada Votes: A Quarter Century of Canadian National Election Studies

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We now have a series of national election studies spanning nearly a quarter of a century. No subfield within Canadian politics has been the object of such sustained and costly study, and those working in other subfields are justified in asking: "Are these studies repaying the effort and resources expended?"¹ This review essay seeks to respond to this concern by taking stock "of where we have been and where we should go."² More than 15 years have passed since the last comprehensive review of the state of voting research in Canada, and the growth of the literature is such that we cannot hope to cover as broad a range of topics as Elkins and Blake. Their stock-taking, however, provides us with an invaluable yardstick for judging how far voting research has progressed since the early 1970s. To keep this review within bounds, only studies that have used data from the national elections studies to try to explain vote choice will be discussed, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the Canadian national election studies allow us to go beyond the study of voting to examine a wide array of attitudes and reported behaviour.³

- 1 Nelson Wiseman, "The Use, Misuse, and Abuse of the National Election Studies," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21 (1986), 21. A tightly argued response to Wiseman's criticisms has been offered by Keith Archer, "The Meaning and Demeaning of the National Election Studies," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24 (1989), 122-40. For Wiseman's reply, see Nelson Wiseman, "The National Election Studies Revisited," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24 (1989), 141-47.
- 2 David J. Elkins and Donald E. Blake, "Voting Research in Canada: Problems and Prospects," this JOURNAL 8 (1975), 313.
- 3 The 1984 team, for example, have used their data to analyze the nature of ideological beliefs and beliefs about differences between social classes, feelings of political efficacy and trust, gender and political activity, and sources of political knowledge. Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown and Barry J. Kay, "Canadians' Beliefs about Differences between Social Classes," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 11 (1986), 379-99; Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown and Barry J. Kay, "In Search of Left/Right Beliefs in the Canadian Electorate," this

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Any attempt to assess the contribution of the Canadian National Election Studies (NES) must bear in mind that "secondary analysis is the primary use of surveys in a situation of scarcity."⁴ Academic surveys are a re-usable commodity: the cost per eventual user is much lower and declines as more students and researchers engage in secondary analyses.⁵ A review of some of the debates that secondary analyses have spawned should thus provide a useful vantage point for judging the contribution of the Canadian NES. At the same time, the liveliness of these debates should help to allay any concern that the easy familiarity that characterizes a small scholarly community necessarily dulls its critical edge. These debates show how far we have come since the early 1970s when Elkins and Blake complained of the lack of cumulative learning which characterized the field, with few studies either taking issue with previous findings or building upon them systematically.

While the healthy state of voting research may be evident in the lively debates that engage its practitioners, there are nonetheless aspects of the debates themselves and gaps in their coverage that remain cause for concern. Particularly troubling is the persistent tendency for the field to remain more or less bifurcated between explanations which emphasize societal cleavages and those which adopt a social-psychological approach. The perception that these are rival types of explanation reflects the influence of early American voting research in the formative years of voting research in Canada. Researchers at the University of Michigan pioneered the social-psychological approach largely in reaction to the perceived inadequacies of the sociological model developed by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbia University in the 1940s, and they stressed the differences "to the point of exaggeration: so that the differences received more attention than the similarities."⁶

JOURNAL 19 (1986), 541-63; Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown and Barry J. Kay, "Effects of Identification with Governing Parties on Feelings of Political Efficacy and Trust," this JOURNAL 19 (1986), 705-28; Barry J. Kay, Ronald D. Lambert, Steven D. Brown and James E. Curtis, "Gender and Political Activity in Canada, 1965-1984," this JOURNAL 20 (1987), 851-63; and Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Barry J. Kay and Steven D. Brown, "The Social Sources of Knowledge," this JOURNAL 21 (1988), 359-74.

- 4 Elkins and Blake, "Voting Research in Canada," 325. Ronald Lambert has recently compiled a lengthy list of publications, theses, dissertations and scholarly papers based on the national elections studies of 1965 to 1984 (Department of Sociology, University of Waterloo).
- 5 See William L. Miller, *The Survey Method in the Social and Political Sciences: Achievements, Failures, Prospects* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983), chap. 5. Secondary analyses of the NES datasets will be greatly facilitated by the recent appearance of Anna Brombak's *Index to the Canadian National Election Studies*, n.p., September 1990.
- 6 Miller, *The Survey Method*, 107. Probably the most influential of the pioneering Michigan studies was Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960). The major Columbia studies were Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The Peo-*

Abstract. This review essay examines the contribution of the Canadian National Election Studies to understanding vote choice in Canada. Analyses using both the sociological approach and the social-psychological approach are discussed. The essay starts with a review of the debates about the role of class, region and religion in Canadian voting and then goes on to discuss the applicability of the concept of party identification to Canada. An evaluation of both recursive and non-recursive models of vote choice follows. The review calls for social psychological approaches to take the social context of political choice more seriously and points to the need for sociological approaches to conceptualize social categories as live social forces.

Résumé. Cet article passe en revue les études portant sur les élections fédérales canadiennes et évalue leur contribution à la compréhension du choix électoral au Canada. L'auteure discute des analyses faisant usage des approches sociologiques et psychosociales. Après une revue des débats rattachés à l'incidence des classes, des régions et de la religion sur le vote canadien, l'article examine l'applicabilité du concept d'identification partisane au Canada. Cet examen est suivi d'une évaluation des modèles récurrents et non-récurrents du choix électoral. L'auteure incite les tenants des approches psychosociales à considérer plus sérieusement le contexte social du choix politique et montre l'avantage qu'auraient les approches sociologiques à conceptualiser les catégories sociales en termes de forces sociales dynamiques.

The first Canadian NES in 1965 and 1968 were very much offshoots of the Michigan school in design. The 1965 team included a prominent member of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, Philip Converse, and the survey itself was "basically patterned after" the Michigan surveys, with a view to seeing "how Canadians respond to questions identical with, or similar to, some which have been used in comparable surveys in the US, Britain and France."⁷ Elkins and Blake were moved to warn in their review article against believing too easily "that what one learns in England or the United States is automatically applicable in Canada."⁸ Meisel's conclusions regarding party identification in Canada, however, were about to spark a considerable rethinking of that most fundamental of concepts in the Michigan school's social-psychological model of vote choice. Indeed, subsequent Canadian

ple's Choice (3rd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), and Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

- 7 John Meisel and Richard Van Loon, "Canadian Attitudes to Election Expenses 1965-6," in Committee on Election Expenses, *Studies in Canadian Party Finance* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 143, 23. The 1968 NES was also organized "with SRC studies very much in mind" and with the assistance of several scholars associated with the SRC. See John Meisel, "Values, Language and Politics in Canada," in John Meisel, *Working Papers on Canadian Politics* (2nd enlarged ed.; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), 181, n. 30.
- 8 Elkins and Blake, "Voting Research in Canada," 317. Studies involving straightforward attempts to replicate, however, were not the norm and there was sufficient Canadian content in the 1965 questions, for example, to provide one of the principal investigators with material for a major study of regionalism in Canada. Mildred A. Schwartz, *Politics and Territory: The Sociology of Regional Persistence in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974).

research on partisanship helped prompt some rethinking of the traditional conception of partisanship on the part of US scholars.⁹

Research in the Sociological Tradition

In fact, although the design of the early Canadian NES owed much to the Michigan school, analyses of the data from these studies have reflected more the Columbia tradition in their emphasis on the role of societal cleavages in explaining vote choice. The influence of the Columbia studies was particularly apparent in the pre-NES era of survey-based voting research in Canada.¹⁰ Regenstreif, for example, used the "group process" as a conceptual framework for his study of the "Diefenbaker interlude" and he emphasized the role of social reference groups in making the world of politics meaningful for the individual. Other key figures in this initial period were Meisel and Alford, and together their studies drew attention to puzzles that continue to perplex students of Canadian voting behaviour. As Meisel has observed, Canada presents "a cornucopia of intriguing anomalies"¹¹ with respect to the role of societal cleavages, not the least being the enduring importance of regional and religious cleavages and the corresponding weakness of class cleavages.

Social Class: Is Canada a Case of "Pure Non-Class Voting"?

It was Alford who first demonstrated the low level of class voting in Canada. In a comparative study of Australia, Britain, Canada and the US, Canada consistently ranked lowest on his class voting index and he concluded that "regional and religious cleavages superseded class almost entirely as factors differentiating the support for national parties."¹² Alford's characterization of Canada as a case of "pure non-class politics" prompted two basic types of reaction among those who would nonetheless assert the relevance of class to electoral politics in Canada.

One reaction has been to attempt to refute Alford's findings, to argue that class voting only appears to be low because of faulty measure-

9 See Richard G. Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg, *Controversies in Voting Behavior* (2nd ed.; Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1984), chap. 21.

10 See, for example, Robert R. Alford, *Party and Society: The Anglo-American Democracies* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963); John Meisel, "Religious Affiliation and Electoral Behaviour: A Case Study," in John Courtney, ed., *Voting in Canada* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 144-61; John Meisel, ed., *Papers on the 1962 Election* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); and Peter Regenstreif, *The Diefenbaker Interlude* (Don Mills: Longman, 1965). Other key works from this period were Jean A. Laponce, *People vs. Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), and Mildred A. Schwartz, *Public Opinion and Canadian Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

11 Meisel, "Bizarre Aspects of a Vanishing Act," in Meisel, *Working Papers*, 253.

12 Alford, *Party and Society*, x-xi.

ment. Even the use of more theoretically rigorous Marxist class categories, however, has failed to reveal more than very modest class effects in Canada¹³ and varying the way that parties' class positions are measured has been only marginally more successful in strengthening the relationship. The most forceful proponent of the argument that the low level of class voting in Canada is more apparent than real, an artifact of the way party class position has been measured, has been Ogmundson.¹⁴ Ogmundson drew on a variety of evidence, including aggregate voter perceptions, to justify the reclassification of the Liberals as a party of the middle class and Social Credit as a party of the working class, only to find that the level of class voting remains "unusually low." Using data from the 1965 NES, Ogmundson went on to examine what he termed the subjective class vote, where voters' own perceptions of the class positions of the parties (using a 7-point scale running from "for the working class" to "for the middle class") serve to classify the parties instead. This increased the rate of class voting to a level which Ogmundson described as being almost "normal" by international standards. Having replicated Ogmundson's findings "in almost every detail" using data from the 1968 NES, however, Lambert and Hunter could only conclude that the small amount of class voting detected "was probably real enough, but relatively unimportant." Indeed, they argued that incorporating individual voter perceptions was "a research tradition that might best be discontinued as unpromising."¹⁵

- 13 See, for example, Alfred A. Hunter, "On Class, Status, and Voting in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 7 (1982), 19-39, and Michael D. Ornstein, H. Michael Stevenson and A. Paul Williams, "Region, Class and Political Culture in Canada," this JOURNAL 13 (1980), 227-71.
- 14 See, especially, Rick Ogmundson, "On the Measurement of Party Class Position: The Case of Canadian Federal Political Parties," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 12 (1975), 565-76; "On the Use of Party Image Variables to Measure the Political Distinctiveness of a Class Vote: The Canadian Case," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 1 (1975), 169-77; "Party Class Images and the Class Vote in Canada," *American Sociological Review* 40 (1975), 506-12; Rick Ogmundson and M. Ng, "On the Inference of Voter Motivation: A Comparison of the Subjective Class Vote in Canada and the United Kingdom," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 7 (1982), 141-60. See also John F. Myles, "Differences in the Canadian and American Class Vote: Fact or Pseudofact?" *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (1979), 1232-37. Alford classified the Liberals as a party of the left and Social Credit as a party of the right.
- 15 Ronald D. Lambert and Alfred A. Hunter, "Social Stratification, Voting Behaviour, and the Images of Canadian Federal Political Parties," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 16 (1979), 287-304. As part of the 1984 NES team, however, Lambert did, in fact, go on to revive this approach, but the scale measuring the parties' class positions was defined in terms of "for the lower classes"/"for the higher social classes" instead. Examining voting within provinces, he and his colleagues found more evidence of subjective class voting at the provincial level than the federal level. Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown and Barry J. Kay, "Social Class, Left/Right Political Orientations, and Subjective Class Voting in Provincial and Federal Elections," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 (1987), 526-49.

Kay raised further doubts about classifying parties by individual perceptions with the surprising finding that middle-class identifiers in both the 1965 and 1968 NES were actually more likely to vote for the major parties if they perceived those parties to be favouring the working class, rather than their own middle class.¹⁶ As members of the 1984 team, Kay and Lambert were able to use the 1984 NES to investigate Canadians' understanding of class categories. Fully 45 per cent of their respondents either said that the idea of social class had no meaning for them or that they were unsure of its meaning. Of those who did say that social class possessed some meaning for them, only half chose materialist (as opposed to individualistic or ascriptive) criteria to characterize the differences between people from different classes and fully 30 per cent said that they did not think of themselves as belonging to a social class.¹⁷

Recognizing that the class cleavage is at best modest at the voters' level, the other reaction to Alford's finding has been to accept the fact of low class voting, but to reject Alford's rationale for it in favour of an explanation emphasizing elite manipulation. Again, Ogmundson has been a key proponent of this argument: "the apparent classlessness of our politics can be best explained, not by public opinion but by the skill of the 'bourgeois' parties in manipulating the situation to their advantage."¹⁸ According to Schreiber, on the other hand, if the two dominant parties have failed to differentiate themselves in class terms, it is because they are responding to the preferences of the modal Canadian voter.¹⁹

As Pammett points out, it is impossible to resolve this debate with individual-level survey data because both arguments involve cross-level inference.²⁰ To the extent that empirical evidence can be brought to

- 16 Barry J. Kay, "An Examination of Class and Left-Right Party Images in Canadian Voting," this JOURNAL 19 (1977), 127-43. On the role of knowledge in class voting, see Bonnie Erickson, "Region, Knowledge, and Class Voting in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 6 (1981), 121-44.
- 17 Lambert et al., "Canadians' Beliefs About Differences between Social Classes."
- 18 Rick Ogmundson, "Liberal Ideology and the Study of Voting Behaviour," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17 (1980), 47. See also Rick Ogmundson, "Mass-Elite Linkages and Class Issues in Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 13 (1976), 1-11, and "Two Modes of Interpretation of Survey Data: A Comment on Schreiber," *Social Forces* 55 (March 1977), 809-11. Outside the voting literature, similar arguments have been offered by M. Janine Brodie and Jane Jensen, *Crisis, Challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada Revisited* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), and Gad Horowitz, "Towards a Democratic Class Struggle," in Trevor Lloyd and Jack Mcleod, eds., *Agenda 1970: Prospects for a Creative Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).
- 19 E. M. Schreiber, "Cultural Cleavages Between Occupational Categories: The Case of Canada," *Social Forces* 55 (1976), 16-29, and "Class Awareness and Class Voting in Canada: A Reconsideration of the Ogmundson, Thesis," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17 (1980), 37-44.
- 20 Jon H. Pammett, "Class Voting and Class Consciousness in Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 (1987), 269-89.

bear, he concludes, hypotheses resting on low levels of class consciousness, and its middle-class nature, have clear evidence in their support. Using data from the 1974-1979 NES panel, Pammett found, for example, that a mere 3 per cent of respondents spontaneously maintained a working-class identification across the five-year period. He also shows that it makes hardly any difference at all to New Democratic party voting whether a person has a working-class identification.

Ogmundson's "wasted vote" thesis—that a substantial proportion of working-class Canadians are foregoing their "real" preference in favour of a "realistic" alternative—does receive some support from Zipp and Smith's finding that class voting is higher in areas of NDP strength, but even in areas where the NDP was electorally viable, the effects were "not overwhelming."²¹ As Brym and his colleagues observe, there is in any case a disturbing circularity to this argument: class voting is weak because the left party is weak and the left party is weak because class voting is weak.²² What needs to be explained is why the left party is weak in the first place. Brym and his colleagues' answer is that left-party strength reflects the distribution of power resources among classes. Reasoning that union and co-operative growth are the outcome of the distribution of power resources, they incorporate the contextual effects of the proportion belonging to unions and the proportion belonging to co-operatives in the respondent's province into their analysis of class voting in the 1968 election. The merit of Brym and his colleagues' approach is their emphasis on the social processes required for objective class position to translate into subjective class action. Empirically, however, their analysis is challenged by Pammett's demonstration that the modest link between union membership and NDP voting does not emerge from any working-class consciousness on the part of union members.²³

Region Versus Class: False Dichotomies?

Certainly, attempts to study the role of social class in voting have evolved well beyond the "periodic attempts to monitor the class cleavage to see whether it has yet emerged" bemoaned by Elkins and Blake,²⁴ but the type of thinking behind those attempts has remained resistant to

21 John F. Zipp and Joel Smith, "A Structural Analysis of Class Voting," *Social Forces* 60 (1982), 738-59.

22 Robert J. Brym, Michael W. Gillespie and Rhonda L. Lenton, "Class Power, Class Mobilization, and Class Voting: The Canadian Case," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 14 (1989), 25-44.

23 Pammett, "Class Voting and Class Consciousness." On the link between NDP voting and union membership, especially membership in an NDP-affiliated union, see Keith Archer, "The Failure of the New Democratic Party: Unions, Unionists and Politics in Canada," this JOURNAL 18 (1985), 353-66.

24 Elkins and Blake, "Voting Research in Canada," 322.

change. The attempts were motivated by Alford's prediction that the level of class voting in Canada would rise as increasing urbanization and industrialization served to erode the bases for regional (and religious) voting. That prediction reflected a conceptualization of social class and region as mutually exclusive bases of political behaviour: one cleavage could necessarily predominate only at the expense of the other. This type of thinking has led scholars to overlook how class and region may combine to influence vote choice. Elkins and Blake's plea that we pay more attention to possible interactions among the several socio-demographic characteristics has not yet lost its force.

The so-called evolutionary model has in fact received scant empirical support. Jenson, for example, found that class voting was actually highest in Canada's least industrialized province, while Canada's most industrialized province was still divided by the "traditional" cleavages of language and religion.²⁵ Blake's analysis of aggregate data on the federal elections dating back to 1908 could find no evidence of any decline in the impact of region on major party support patterns.²⁶

The task thus became one of trying to understand why the regional cleavage had apparently defied the predictions of the evolutionary model. In a subsequent study, Blake attempted to dispel "some of the mystery associated with the perennial question of regionalism" by showing that "much of what lies behind apparent regional variation in party support consists of relatively more theoretically tractable environmental factors"—the differential distribution of individuals predisposed to support particular parties, the contextual effects which may reinforce (or override) those individual predispositions, the degree of competitiveness and the number and nature of the alternatives presented to the voter.²⁷ Blake's findings certainly provide a compelling case for the need to incorporate contextual effects into models of vote choice, but a claim to have "explained" regionalism would be harder to sustain. Blake himself seems to recognize the problem of circularity in his analysis of competitiveness: while the degree of competitiveness may influence individual voters in their voting choice, it is individual behaviour which is responsible for the degree of competitiveness. That behaviour remains to be explained. Moreover, the differential distribution of groups predisposed to support particular parties is only convincing as an explanation *if* we can demonstrate such predispositions in the first place.

25 Jane Jenson, "Party Systems," in David J. Bellamy, Jon H. Pammett and Donald C. Rowat, eds., *The Provincial Political Systems: Comparative Essays* (Toronto: Methuen, 1976).

26 Donald E. Blake, "The Measurement of Regionalism in Canadian Voting Patterns," this JOURNAL 5 (1972), 54-81.

27 Donald E. Blake, "Constituency Contexts and Canadian Elections: An Exploratory Study," this JOURNAL 11 (1978), 279-305.

The 1974 NES team had also hoped to discover an explanation for consistently observed patterns of regional and provincial variation, and indeed initially described their primary theoretical focus as the examination of regional and provincial differences in political behaviour.²⁸ A prime concern was to determine whether regions had meaning to their residents or whether they were simply analytical devices. While Clarke and his colleagues uncovered "a substantial degree of regional feeling," they concluded that the status of region as more than just a data "container" was left in doubt by the finding that in no province did a majority of the population agree on what the boundaries of their own region were.²⁹

A recent study has capitalized on Clarke and his colleagues' conclusion that "the phenomenon of regional consciousness is much more complex than the common analytical breakdown of the country . . . would suggest" to examine subprovincial variations in vote choice. This study attempts to link the weakness of a national class cleavage in voting to the socially disintegrative effects of regional dependency. It demonstrates that there are significant class effects, but they differ both in form and intensity depending upon the structural situation of the region.³⁰ While the study is vulnerable to the criticisms that Johnston has made of analyses that treat class voting as a sheer statistical association,³¹ it does suggest a way of understanding how region and social class may act in combination to influence vote choice.

Religion: The Unwelcome Guest?

No less a puzzle than the absence of a nation-wide class cleavage in voting has been the continuing presence of a religious cleavage. It is a puzzle that has become "curiouser and curiouser" with study. The facts of the religious cleavage are simple to state: between 1965 and 1979, the sharpest group difference in major party preference was between Catholics and Protestants. While Protestants divided their support more or less evenly between the two major parties, Catholics disproportionately favoured the Liberals. Even in 1984, a full 15 percentage points

28 Lawrence LeDuc, Harold Clarke, Jane Jenson and Jon Pammett, "A National Sample Design," this JOURNAL 7 (1974), 701-08.

29 Harold D. Clarke, Lawrence LeDuc, Jane Jenson and Jon H. Pammett, *Political Choice in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979), chap. 2. At least in the case of the Prairie provinces, their conclusion seems overstated: whether they chose to think of their region as "the West" or "the Prairies," more than half of Prairie residents did share a sense that their provinces formed a regional unit. The notion of regions as "containers" derives from Richard Simeon and David Elkins, "Regional Political Cultures in Canada," this JOURNAL 7 (1974), 397-437.

30 Elisabeth Gidengil, "Class and Region in Canadian Voting: A Dependency Interpretation," this JOURNAL 22 (1989), 563-87.

31 J. Paul Johnston, "Some Methodological Issues in the Study of 'Class Voting': A Critique of Erickson's Analysis," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 6 (1981), 145-56.

separated members of the two denominations in their vote for the Liberal party. Yet, the religious disputes—over schooling, over property—that once divided the major parties have long been settled, at least at the federal level. How could a socio-demographic characteristic with so little apparent relevance to contemporary policy choices have remained so long a predictor of party choice?

It was Meisel who first demonstrated the existence of this religious cleavage in his study of voters in Kingston in the early 1950s.³² What was particularly puzzling was the fact that Catholic respondents made no reference whatsoever to religion in explaining their vote, a finding confirmed by Regenstreif nation-wide.³³ Meisel used his 1968 NES to examine more closely the role that respondents' religious background and life might play in explaining this connection between religion and vote.³⁴ Of the six dimensions that he examined, only three—church attendance, exposure to sectarian schools and membership in a religious organization—had more than a minimal association with religious voting, and then only among Protestants. The religious cleavage in voting, he concluded, had very little to do with religion in the narrow sense.³⁵ While his analysis of the socio-demographic correlates of religious voting did at least seem to suggest that religious voting was being attenuated, it was a "vanishing act" with "bizarre aspects." If the gap between Protestants and Catholics was narrowing, it was not because Catholics were becoming any less likely to vote Liberal, but much more a matter of particular subgroups of Protestants (for example, those with higher incomes) coming to support the Liberals.

In 1974, however, it seemed that Irvine had finally been able to solve the puzzle.³⁶ Like "a moderately interesting, but strikingly peculiar, houseguest who has overstayed his welcome," the religious cleavage could now be shown the door. Using data from the 1965 NES, Irvine had tried three different strategies to make the unwanted guest depart. The relationship between religion and vote proved to be neither statistically spurious nor "conceptually spurious," but success had seemed to come on the third try with a family socialization explanation. Religious

32 Meisel, "Religious Affiliation."

33 Regenstreif, *The Diefenbaker Interlude*.

34 John Meisel, "Bizarre Aspects of a Vanishing Act: The Religious Cleavage and Voting in Canada," in Meisel, *Working Papers*, 253-84.

35 McDonald examined the influence of similar factors in her study of religion and the vote in Ontario in the same election. She also found that while measures of social involvement did have some effect, the differences between Catholics and Protestants in voting preferences were no greater among those who were the most committed to their respective group (Lynn McDonald, "Religion and Voting: A Study of the 1968 Canadian Federal Election in Ontario," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 6 [1969], 129-44).

36 William P. Irvine, "Explaining the Religious Basis of the Canadian Partisan Identity: Success on the Third Try," this JOURNAL 7 (1974), 560-63.

differences in voting, Irvine concluded, persisted mainly through the family perpetuating old cleavages. This explanation seemed to account for the puzzling finding in earlier studies that the overwhelming majority of respondents did not even covertly link religion with politics: respondents were inheriting both their religious and their partisan loyalties without any necessarily felt connection between the two.

The observed weakness of processes of inter-generational transmission in forming party loyalties in Canada and the flexibility of many Canadians' partisan ties pose an immediate problem for this interpretation.³⁷ Johnston, however, has gone on to show that the family socialization explanation is defective on logical grounds as well.³⁸ He concludes that, to persist, a religious cleavage (or any other cleavage), must be renewed by forces outside the family. Johnston identifies a number of ways in which live social forces might intervene. We may have overestimated, for example, the extent to which the great religious controversies of the past are indeed settled, the schools question in Ontario being a case in point. McDonald, however, found no evidence of attitudes toward separate schooling having any effect on religious voting in Ontario.³⁹ Similarly, Meisel's finding that exposure to sectarian schools only had an effect among Protestants, not Catholics, poses problems for Johnston's suggestion that separate school systems may provide the structural basis for the perpetuation of the religious cleavage.⁴⁰ The notion that religion may index variation in the ethnicity of individuals' social contexts has to confront the admitted lack of evidence at the individual level that religion is a surrogate for ethnicity.

The most interesting of Johnston's suggestions is the idea of a distinctive Catholic ethos. What has been ignored in studies of the connection between religion and voting are the values that may mediate that relationship. Different religions are associated with very different ideas about questions of individual responsibility, submission to state authority, hierarchy, the organization of society and the extent of the temporal sphere—giving rise to values which can endure even when the religious beliefs themselves have become less salient.

Indeed, we need to pay more attention generally to the values and beliefs which mediate the relationship between social group membership and voting choice. When Lambert and his colleagues probed Canadians' beliefs about differences between social classes, for example,

37 See, for example, Jane Jenson, "Party Loyalty in Canada: The Question of Party Identification," this JOURNAL 8 (1975), 543-53. For some hypotheses regarding the adoption of parental partisanship, see Michael D. Martinez, "Intergenerational Transfer of Canadian Partisanship," this JOURNAL 17 (1984), 133-43.

38 Richard Johnston, "The Reproduction of the Religious Cleavage in Canadian Elections," this JOURNAL 18 (1985), 99-113.

39 McDonald, "Religion and Voting."

40 Meisel, "Bizarre Aspects of a Vanishing Act."

they did not go on to examine the role that such beliefs played in translating—or failing to translate—social class into vote choice.⁴¹ So, “one *still* does not know much about the way in which class position and class consciousness lead given individuals to cast their votes for particular parties.”⁴² It is striking, too, that Clarke and his colleagues failed to incorporate their findings on regional consciousness into their examination of the relationship between region and vote.

While there may be difficulties with some of Johnston’s specific suggestions, his emphasis on the need to understand social categories as live social forces is long overdue. This, in fact, was very much the way that the Columbia school had conceptualized the role of social categories. Social categories were seen not as being important in themselves, but as indicators of present and past primary contacts with family members, workmates, friends and neighbours. Incorporating the notions that “contact-breeds-consensus” and that cross-pressures can make for a “breakage effect,” the Columbia analysis was far from being a crude social analysis which simply showed different voting patterns in different social categories.⁴³ Voting was viewed as a group experience. Indeed, with social groups treated as systems of interaction, the approach was as much psychological as social and the major theoretical section in *Voting* was titled “The Social Psychology of Voting.” Certainly, there was no suggestion in the Columbia model that social group voting was invariant over time; rather, social group interactions could help explain the dynamics of voter choice.

Research in the Social-Psychological Tradition

Is Party Identification a Meaningful Concept in Canada?

If a social cleavages approach has come instead to be perceived as inherently static, this reflects very much the Michigan school’s critique of the Columbia model. The Michigan researchers developed what they termed a social-psychological model of voting choice. They did not deny the importance of social structure in explaining political choice, but they argued that the key to the dynamics of political behaviour lay in voters’ reactions to changes in the political landscape—the personalities and the salient issues. The distribution of social characteristics, they argued, changed too slowly to provide an explanation for the fluctuations in the national vote that can occur from election to election.

41 Lambert et al., “Canadians’ Beliefs about Differences between Social Classes.”

42 Elkins and Blake, “Voting Research in Canada,” 316, emphasis added.

43 The contact-breeds-consensus theory holds that the more people interact with their social group and/or the more closely they self-consciously identify with the group, the more likely they are to share the dominant partisanship of that group. The breakage effect refers to the notion that when the voter’s primary groups are not politically homogeneous, the partisan climate of opinion in the community at large will “break through.” Blake used both of these notions in “Constituency Contexts.”

The core variable in the original Michigan model was party identification. Party identification was conceptualized as a psychological identification, rooted in long-term processes of political socialization in which the family played a key role. Party identification involved a feeling of closeness, an attachment to a particular party; just as people identify with their religious group or their ethnic group, so they also identify with a political party. Since parties, like other groups, tend to be quite stable in terms of what they stand for, party identification could appropriately be viewed as a long-term stabilizing component in voting choice. In the original Michigan model, party identification was viewed as influencing the vote not just directly but also indirectly through its effects on candidate evaluations and issue orientations. Party identification, in other words, was conceptualized as an inertia component that determined voting choice *unless* the short-term forces of issue orientations and especially candidate evaluations were acting sufficiently strongly in the opposite direction to deflect the vote temporarily.

Prima facie, we should not expect the concept of party identification to travel well. Canada lacks the institutional arrangements—party primaries, multiple ballots—that encourage US voters to develop a sense of party identification that is distinct from their vote for a particular candidate. Canada's two quintessentially middle-of-the-road major parties are less likely to generate strong feelings of attachment and they lack the strong ties with particular social groups that might anchor individual party attachments. Finally, few provinces have the symmetry between federal and provincial party systems that would reinforce party attachments.

In fact, on the basis of the first two NES, Meisel was led to conclude that the concept of party identification was "almost inapplicable in Canada": party identification seemed to be "as volatile in Canada as the vote itself."⁴⁴ It was the very strength of the association between party identification and vote that cast doubt on the concept since, paradoxically, in the original Michigan model the significance of party identification as a concept rests on its *failure* to predict voting too well. In any given election, a sizeable portion of voters can be expected to be deflected from their normal partisan choice by an attractive candidate or a particularly salient issue, but if party identification is indeed a long-term psychological attachment, it should remain unshaken. If instead party identification travels too often with the vote, the entire theoretical edifice on which the concept rests will collapse.

Refusing to accept the notion that the concept of party identification was inapplicable in Canada, Jenson and Elkins⁴⁵ both attempted to

44 Meisel, "Party Images in Canada: A Report on Work in Progress," in Meisel, *Working Papers*, 67.

45 Jenson, "Party Loyalty in Canada," and David J. Elkins, "Party Identification: A Conceptual Analysis," this JOURNAL 11 (1978), 419-35.

show that party identification was distinguishable from current vote preference. Jenson's argument hinged on the conceptualization of party identification as a continuum: if the intensity of party identification could be taken as an indicator of the probability of voting for the party with which one identifies, then party identification must represent an attachment that is distinct from current vote preference. What distinguished party identification in Canada and the US, she concluded, was the lower likelihood of partisan stability at any given level of intensity in Canada. Although Elkins took issue with some of Jenson's statements, he actually made quite a similar argument, namely, that we must distinguish between the nature of party identification and its frequency. The pattern of relationships between infidelity—the failure to vote for one's party and/or maintain one's identification over time—and the intensity of party identification was similar to the US pattern. If absolute levels of fidelity were lower in Canada, this simply reflected the fact that the short-term forces of candidates and issues exerted a stronger pull.

Sniderman and his colleagues went farther by refusing to accept the "textbook theory" that Canadian voters lacked strong loyalties to the two major federal parties.⁴⁶ They concluded that Canadians did have relatively lasting attachments to parties and that these attachments tended to be passed on from generation to generation. Party identification, in short, was a useful concept in analyzing the vote in Canada.

Sniderman and his colleagues' attempt to rehabilitate the concept of party identification, however, could not withstand the test of panel data. With panel data, we no longer have to rely on respondents' notoriously unreliable reports of their past behaviour.⁴⁷ Using data from their 1974-1979-1980 NES panel, Leduc and his colleagues were able to show that Canadians do manifest relatively high levels of volatility in their voting choice and that this volatility is accompanied by a similar instability in their party identifications.⁴⁸ Across the three-wave panel, fully 41 per cent of respondents were found to have changed their party identification and their party identification typically travelled with their vote. Only 11 per cent of the respondents maintained their party identification intact when their vote changed. This finding of volatility, however, did not cause Leduc and his colleagues to reject party identification as a

46 Paul M. Sniderman, H. D. Forbes and Ian Melzer, "Party Loyalty and Electoral Volatility: A Study of the Canadian Party System," this JOURNAL 7 (1974), 268-88.

47 See R. H. MacDermid, "The Recall of Past Partisanship: Feeble Memories or Frail Concepts?" this JOURNAL 22 (1989), 363-75.

48 Lawrence LeDuc, Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson and Jon H. Pammett, "Partisan Instability in Canada: Evidence from a New Panel Study," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 470-84. The implications of these findings are developed in Lawrence LeDuc, "Canada: The Politics of Stable Dealignment," in Russell J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan and Paul Allen Beck, eds., *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

meaningful concept. Instead, the task became one of rethinking the concept.

The 1974 team undertook this task of reconceptualizing partisanship in *Political Choice in Canada*. Clarke and his colleagues concluded that "the keynote of partisanship in Canada was its flexibility."⁴⁹ Indeed, for more than one-third of their sample, the stated attachment to a particular party might be no more enduring than the respondent's current voting preference. Clarke and his colleagues went on to use three components—intensity, stability and consistency—to distinguish between "flexible" and "durable" partisans. "Flexible" partisans were either weak in the intensity of their partisanship, unstable in their partisanship over time, or inconsistent between the federal and provincial levels (or lacked a party identification altogether). These "flexible" partisans made up over 60 per cent of the sample. "Durable" partisans were those who reported a very strong or fairly strong, stable and consistent party tie. Unlike the "flexible" partisans, a large majority of these "durable" partisans reported always having voted for the same party in federal elections.

This analysis of partisanship has been criticized for basing the stability component of the partisan typology wholly on recall information.⁵⁰ Recall data are certainly subject to bias. Since the bias is typically toward current preferences, however, use of recall data will *understate* the extent of instability in party identification. In other words, acknowledging the undoubted distortions introduced by the use of recall data does nothing to undercut the validity of Clarke and his colleagues' conclusions regarding the flexibility of partisan ties in Canada.⁵¹

A more telling criticism came from Blake who questioned the relevance—indeed, the very meaning—of "inconsistency" as a criterion for durable partisanship. Blake objected to the term "inconsistent" because it seemed to suggest irrational behaviour when it may actually be quite rational for some voters to maintain dual loyalties.⁵² In fact, Clarke and his colleagues did recognize the structural potential that

49 Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett, *Absent Mandate: The Politics of Discontent in Canada* (1st ed.; Toronto: Gage, 1984), 56.

50 See Wiseman, "The Use, Misuse, and Abuse."

51 Johnston's experiments with question wording suggest that the number of unstable identifiers in Canada may have been inflated by measurement error because the standard form of the question is likely to push respondents to express an attachment that they do not really feel by not explicitly offering the response alternative of "none." See Richard Johnston, "The Equivalence of Party Identification Measures: A National Survey Experiment," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 1988. Since "flexible" partisans include those with no identification, however, the basic conclusions in *Political Choice* would be unaffected.

52 Donald E. Blake, "The Consistency of Inconsistency: Party Identification in Federal and Provincial Politics," this JOURNAL 15 (1982), 691-710.

exists within the context of Canadian federalism for voters to maintain two parallel reference groups.⁵³ Some provincial parties have only very weak federal counterparts—or no federal counterparts whatsoever—and even when parties of the same name compete at both levels, they do not always stand for the same things. The lack of symmetry in federal and provincial party systems is reinforced by institutional arrangements, with elections at the two levels typically taking place at quite different times and being fought on very different issues.

Where Blake really departed from Clarke and his colleagues was in his understanding of the implications of split identification. Using data from his own British Columbia survey (conducted following the 1979 provincial election and the 1979 and 1980 federal elections), Blake showed that inconsistent identification *between* levels does not necessarily make for unstable voting *within* levels. Once the intensity of party identification was taken into account, split identifiers were no more likely than consistent identifiers in BC to be unstable in their voting choice. Intensity of party identification within a level appeared to be the more important determinant of stable voting. A more recent study by Clarke and Stewart confirms the importance of intensity: while inconsistent partisanship *did* accentuate the probability of subsequent partisan change at both levels, there was a significant interaction between partisan inconsistency and strength of party identification, at least for the 1979-1980 panel.⁵⁴

The Political Choice Model

The distinction between flexible and durable partisans became the centrepiece of Clarke and his colleagues' model of political choice. Having found that, even in combination, the several societal cleavages (region, religion, ethnicity, subjective social class, community size, age and gender) could explain no more than 11 per cent of the variance in voting for either of the major parties (and a mere 5 per cent of the variation in the case of the NDP), Clarke and his colleagues concluded that any adequate explanation of electoral choice would have to focus on Canadians' psychological attachments to salient political objects—their beliefs, attitudes and perceptions regarding the parties, their leaders and their issue positions.⁵⁵

53 *Political Choice*, chap. 5. In the following chapter, Clarke and his colleagues show that many voters articulated quite independent and often very different images of federal and provincial parties bearing the same name. Uslander has recently affirmed the importance of Canadians' "two political worlds" for understanding split identification (Eric M. Uslander, "Splitting Image: Partisan Affiliations in Canada's 'Two Political Worlds,'" *American Journal of Political Science* 34 [1990], 961-81).

54 Harold D. Clarke and Marianne C. Stewart, "Partisan Inconsistency and Partisan Change in Federal States: The Case of Canada," *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (1987), 383-407.

55 Brym and his colleagues, however, have dismissed the criterion of proportion of

This was very much in the spirit of the original Michigan model, but Clarke and his colleagues argued that Canada's flexible partisans would use party as a cue very differently from the traditional party identifiers with their long-run, affective partisan ties. Indeed, the party attachments of flexible partisans might reflect little more than their attraction to a particular leader or concern about an important political issue. Flexible partisans, Clarke and his colleagues reasoned, would be much more susceptible to the short-term forces peculiar to a particular election. This susceptibility would depend, however, on their awareness of the issues, the party leaders and the local candidates, which would, in turn, reflect their level of political interest. Accordingly, the partisan typology was expanded to six categories to distinguish flexible and durable partisans at three different levels of political interest. The final step in explaining voting choice was to assess the relative importance of both long-term and short-term forces for each of the six partisan groups, using stepwise multiple regression. Since current party identification—the long-term factor in the original Michigan model—was too unstable for many voters, the 1972 vote was used instead to estimate the potential impact of long-term forces, on the grounds that it could capture the effects of forces acting on voters up until that time.

The impact of the short-term forces did indeed vary sharply across the six types of partisanship and political interest. In predicting Liberal voting, for example, the several short-term factors accounted for only an additional 7 per cent of the variance among durable low-interest partisans over and above that explained by 1972 vote, compared with fully 41 per cent among flexible high-interest partisans. The pattern was similar for Progressive Conservative and NDP voting. As predicted, the relative importance of leader effects and issue effects among flexible partisans depended on the level of political interest, but local candidate effects were consistently modest:

Clarke and his colleagues have since repeated this analysis for each of the subsequent elections. As predicted, they found that the relative impact of the various short-term components of the vote varied from one election to another, depending upon the nature of the particular contest. Regardless of election, however, the durable partisans proved resistant to the impact of those short-term forces, their vote being more or less a foregone conclusion. For the flexible partisans, on the other hand, their vote was very much a choice that reflected their level of political awareness and their perceptions of the party leaders, their issue positions, and, to a much lesser extent, the local candidates.⁵⁶

variance explained as a "methodological fetish." See "Class Power, Class Mobilization, and Class Voting," 31-32. It should be noted that Clarke et al. did not examine any interactive effects among the various social background characteristics.

56 Their analysis of voting in the 1979 and 1980 elections may be found in the first edition of *Absent Mandate*. Voting in the 1984 and 1988 elections is analyzed in Harold D.

Clarke and his colleagues ended their study with the statement that "For much of the Canadian electorate, the vote decision is a matter of political choice." Given the criticism that this concluding statement has attracted, it is important to emphasize that the conclusion of *Political Choice in Canada* ran quite counter to "what has come to be accepted as the explanation of electoral decision-making in political settings like that of Canada."⁵⁷ Leduc can claim with justifiable pride that, "For the most part, the portrait of a volatile and changing Canadian electorate found in *Political Choice* has stood up well when placed under the scrutiny of subsequent political events."⁵⁸ It is easy to forget, now that the individual volatility has been made manifest at the aggregate level, that *Political Choice* was contradicting the predominant image of one-party dominance and electoral stability. Leduc and his colleagues were able to show how countervailing trends in vote-switching produced the apparent paradox of aggregate stability and individual-level volatility.

There are, nonetheless, problems with the "political choice" model. We have already noted that the extent of flexible partisanship was probably exaggerated by the requirement that party identification be consistent across levels. Another problem—readily acknowledged by the authors themselves—was the use of vote in the previous election to represent the long-term forces. While some of the forces reflected in a person's previous vote would have been genuinely long-term, others would have been short-term forces peculiar to that election. If we look at the total amount of variance accounted for by the combination of long-term and short-term forces, we must also conclude that, at least in the case of flexible partisans, there was a good deal left unexplained. For flexible high-interest partisans in 1974, for example, the amount of variance explained ranged from only 63 per cent in the case of Liberal voting to a mere 41 per cent in NDP voting. For flexible partisans, there were clearly other factors at work which had yet to be identified.

In the "political choice" approach, the focus is very much on assessing the relative impact of short- versus long-term forces, as well as the relative impact of each of the various short-term forces, for the different partisan-interest categories. Multiple regression analysis, how-

Clarke, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett, *Absent Mandate: Interpreting Change in Canadian Elections* (2nd ed.; Toronto: Gage, 1991). For further discussion of candidate effects, see William P. Irvine, "Does the Candidate Make a Difference? The Macro-Politics and Micro-Politics of Getting Elected," this JOURNAL 15 (1982), 755-82.

57 John Meisel, "Values, Language and Politics in Canada," in Meisel, *Working Papers*, 174. Wiseman has been particularly critical of *Political Choice in Canada*, characterizing the concluding statement as a mere tautology. See "The Use, Misuse, and Abuse."

58 Lawrence LeDuc, "On Abusing the National Election Studies," unpublished manuscript, University of Toronto, 12. LeDuc offers detailed responses to a number of Wiseman's criticisms in this paper.

ever, can only model the direct efforts of a given explanatory factor. If that factor also has indirect effects on voting choice via its impact on other explanatory factors, the regression coefficient will necessarily underestimate its total effect. Multiple regression analysis, moreover, assumes that the relationships are all unidirectional. Yet there are plausible reciprocal relationships among the various explanatory factors that need to be incorporated into a model of voting choice. Voters' issue preferences, for example, may influence their evaluation of the party leaders, but their preference for one leader over another may lead them to adjust their issue attitudes to correspond with the preferred party leader's own stand (a so-called persuasion effect).

Non-Recursive Models of the Vote

It was the desire to take account of indirect effects and to test for reciprocal causation that prompted both Archer and Brown and his colleagues to move beyond "recursive" or one-way causal models to more complex "non-recursive" or two-way models.⁵⁹ There are difficulties, however, with non-recursive models. For technical reasons, it is impossible to estimate the various reciprocal linkages unless additional variables are incorporated into the model. These exogenous variables are assumed to have their values determined by forces entirely outside the model. In other words, they function as strictly independent variables. Exogenous variables are included for technical reasons, but it is important that their selection be guided by theoretical and substantive considerations since the choice of exogenous variables can have a significant impact on the results obtained. Problems can arise, for example, if good exogenous variables are only available to identify one part of the model, and Brown and his colleagues did indeed experience difficulty in finding exogenous variables to predict issue proximity that could be assumed a priori not to be directly related to party attachment as well. More generally, they conceded that the selection of exogenous variables was hampered by the lack of a theoretical understanding of the causal structure of political perception and behaviour. The weakness of the effects for most of the exogenous variables in their model, as well as in Archer's, confirms that there was indeed cause for concern.

Archer's simultaneous equation model of the 1979 vote and Brown and his colleagues' model of the 1984 vote both have three endogenous

59 Keith Archer, "A Simultaneous Equation Model of Canadian Voting Behaviour," this JOURNAL 20 (1987), 553-72. Steven D. Brown, Ronald D. Lambert, Barry J. Kay and James E. Curtis, "The 1984 Election: Explaining the Vote," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Winnipeg, 1986. For a useful discussion of some of the problems with non-recursive models, see Herbert B. Asher, "Voting Behaviour Research in the 1980s: An Examination of Some Old and New Problem Areas," in Ada Finifter, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1983), 342-49.

variables: strength and direction of party identification, evaluations of party leaders⁶⁰ and perceptions of issue proximity. These endogenous variables may function as either dependent or independent variables, depending upon the relationship being examined. Both models hypothesized a two-way causal path between each of the endogenous attitudinal determinants of the vote, as well as a direct causal path from each of them to the vote. In both models, current party identification was conceptualized as a function of both long-term and short-term forces, with the short-term forces being channelled through the other two endogenous variables and the long-term forces reflecting a combination of political socialization and past political experiences, including vote in the previous election. Both models used age, socio-economic status and education to predict issue positions on the assumption that these variables are all related to the likelihood of being able to name issues and make issue/party linkages.⁶¹ Evaluations of party leaders were predicted in both models by whether the respondent liked the personal characteristics of the party leader.⁶² Each of the endogenous variables was also predicted by the other endogenous variables: party identification, for example, could shape leader evaluations, as in the original Michigan model, but those evaluations could also influence party identification.

Both models of vote choice were estimated separately for each of the three federal parties and both models included a number of additional variables that were also expected to have a direct effect on vote. Both models provide interesting insights into the particular elections being studied. Archer, for example, was able to demonstrate how the Conservatives benefited from their strong issue standing in 1979, but were unable to translate this into more favourable leader evaluations or higher rates of party identification. The results of both studies confirmed the pre-eminence of the "party" factor in Canadian voting, with party identification emerging in both studies as the best single predictor of support for each of the parties. At the same time, there was substantial variation in the relative effects of the endogenous variables among the parties and, we could add, between elections. We need to bear in mind, however, the intrinsic difficulty of trying to separate out the unique effects of each determinant. In both models, for example, evaluations of

60 The inclusion of "candidate" in Archer's Figure 1 is obviously an error. In Brown et al.'s model, the leader evaluations are explicitly comparative evaluations.

61 The Brown model also included gender, interest and the respondent's direct experience with unemployment in the previous five years.

62 Brown and his colleagues included variables for all three leaders in recognition of the fact that a respondent's evaluation of a leader is a comparative judgment that will be affected by the perceived attributes of the other leaders. The Brown model also included perceptions of the leaders' comparative ability to represent the respondent's own region and to embody the "time for a change" sentiment that figured in the 1984 election.

party leaders were predicted by whether the respondent liked the personal characteristics of the party leader, but those likes could well have an issue basis if the characteristics were viewed in terms, say, of the leader's ability to handle a salient issue.

Both studies identified significant reciprocal relationships among the endogenous variables, but it is not obvious what a reciprocal linkage between variables all measured at the same time actually means.⁶³ Of more concern than the use of cross-sectional data to model reciprocal processes is the use of attitudinal data collected *after* an election to model the vote in that election, especially given the sensitivity of reciprocal estimates to the particular time at which the data are collected. In Canada, especially, it is quite possible that there are reciprocal relationships between the vote and each of the attitudinal factors. When we say that party identification tends to "travel with the vote" in Canada, we are really saying that a person's vote choice may prompt a change in party identification.

The finding that party identification remained the best single predictor of voting for each of the parties certainly raises the possibility that voters' stated party identifications simply reflected their current vote preference, and in both models party identification could indeed be explained partly as a response to one or both of the short-term forces of issue proximity and leader evaluations. The strongest determinant of party identification in both studies, however, was previous vote. This ultimately renders both models unsatisfying as explanations of vote choice: they tell us that party identification was the strongest determinant of voting for each party in both elections, but the strongest determinant of party identification turns out to be—previous vote. That vote has, in turn, to be explained.

Whither Voting Research in Canada?

Clearly, our understanding of vote choice has advanced considerably since 1975 when Elkins and Blake could complain of the neglect of the individual level and the lack of concern with explanation. Concentrated work on party identification and its consequences, on multiple identifications between federal and provincial levels, and on questions of partisan change and stability has indeed produced the "major payoffs" which they predicted. So, too, has the use of more sophisticated multivariate tests to assess the relative importance of party images, leader images and the like.

If this advance is to continue, however, we may need to rethink what a social-psychological approach to understanding vote choice

63 On this point, see Asher, "Voting Research in the 1980s," 348. Adequate representation of the causal processes at work calls for dynamic equations (and therefore panel data) that incorporate time-lagged variables.

entails. As it stands, the social-psychological approach leaves us with few insights into how Canadians actually come to form their attitudes toward the salient political objects. At the very least, we need to ask what sorts of people are most likely to remain stable in their voting choice, what predisposes others to have more flexible attachments, what sorts of people have which issue concern and how people evaluate the party leaders.

To put the point bluntly, we have to ask ourselves what exactly is *social* about this social psychology. In principle, social psychology seeks to understand human behaviour in terms of the social context in which it takes place. In practice, however, a "stubbornly 'non-social' social psychology" has dominated the field.⁶⁴ We need to return to the earlier tradition of social psychology which emphasized the social origins of our perceptions. This requires, in turn, that we reconsider the way that we conceptualize the role of social group memberships. Rather than anchoring groups to particular parties, social group memberships may help us to explain the dynamics of partisan choice as individuals react to the changing issues and personalities of politics through the medium of shared group experiences.

More generally, we need to incorporate into our models of vote choice some understanding of the way Canadians structure their thinking about politics. In his classic treatment of political belief systems, Converse pointed to the role of "a few crowning postures" that "serve as a sort of glue to bind together many more specific attitudes and beliefs."⁶⁵ These "crowning postures" include such fundamental values as egalitarianism, collectivism, statism, individualism and minoritarianism. In Converse's conception, these values provide the ideational underpinnings for more proximate political judgments. Salient political objects will be viewed through the lens of voters' value commitments, and particular leaders or policy positions will be supported to the extent that they are perceived as likely to further those values. Sniderman and his colleagues' study of Canadians' attitudes toward language rights provides an example of how attitudes are rooted in core values and more especially egalitarianism.⁶⁶

64 Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 10. See also John C. Turner, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

65 Philip E. Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: John Wiley, 1964), 211.

66 Paul M. Sniderman, Joseph F. Fletcher, Peter H. Russell and Philip E. Tetlock, "Political Culture and the Problem of Double Standards: Mass and Elite Attitudes Toward Language Rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," this JOURNAL 22 (1989), 259-84. The 1988 NES mailback questionnaire does tap a number of values.

Along with group identifications and values, Kinder has identified political events and self-interest as possible criteria that voters may employ in making political evaluations.⁶⁷ There is reason to believe, however, that values play a particularly important role in structuring political attitudes. We have already suggested that values may mediate the relationship between social group membership and political choice. They can be expected to mediate, too, the impact of self-interest. The failure to take account of individualism, for example, may help to explain why research on the importance of economic issues in determining the outcome of Canadian federal elections has been "decidedly inconclusive."⁶⁸ If a belief in economic individualism leads people to accept personal responsibility for their economic circumstances, the otherwise plausible connection between personal well-being and political evaluation will evaporate.⁶⁹ Similarly, the unfolding of political events will likely be interpreted through the filter of fundamental values. The latter point bears emphasis. The fact that values tend to be deeply rooted does not mean that they are therefore somehow irrelevant to explaining the dynamics of political choice. Indeed, they may provide one important avenue for bringing the sociological and social-psychological approaches back together.

The fact that a sociological approach has come to be seen as somehow necessarily static seems to be a legacy of the early controversies in American voting behaviour. Where Canadian voting research still pits social-psychological approaches against more sociological ones, however, American voting research now divides much more between social-psychological and rational choice theories of electoral behaviour. This debate has been muted in Canada. Clarke and Stewart have drawn on Fiorina's conceptualization of party identification as "a running tally

67 Donald R. Kinder, "Diversity and Complexity in American Public Opinion," in Ada Finifter, ed., *Political Science*.

68 See Keith Archer and Marquis Johnston, "Inflation, Unemployment and Canadian Federal Voting Behaviour," this JOURNAL 21 (1988), 569-84, and Harold D. Clarke and Allan Kornberg, "Support for the Canadian Federal Progressive Conservative Party since 1988: The Impact of Economic Evaluations and Economic Issues," this JOURNAL 25 (1992), 29-53. While these studies use individual-level data, much of the research has employed aggregate data. See, for example, J. R. Happy, "Voter Sensitivity to Economic Conditions: A Canadian-American Comparison," *Comparative Politics* 19 (1986), 45-56, and "Economic Performance and Retrospective Voting in Canadian Federal Elections," this JOURNAL 22 (1989), 377-87; Kristen Monroe and Lynda Erickson, "The Economy and Political Support: The Case of Canada," *Journal of Politics* 48 (1986), 629-40; Lynda Erickson, "CCF-NDP Popularity and the Economy," this JOURNAL 21 (1988), 96-116; Harold D. Clarke and Gary Zuk, "The Politics of Party Popularity: Canada 1974-79," *Comparative Politics* 19 (1987), 229-316; and Calum M. Carmichael, "Economic Conditions and the Popularity of the Incumbent Party in Canada," this JOURNAL 23 (1990), 713-26.

69 See Stanley Feldman, "Economic Self-Interest and Political Behaviour," *American Journal of Political Science* 26 (1982), 446-66.

of retrospective evaluations'' of the parties' past performance to explain the relationship between partisan inconsistency and partisan change, while Stevenson has emphasized a ''more inclusive rationality based on ideologically defined interests that endure.''70 Yet, there has been little concerted effort to follow Jenson in elaborating a rational choice conception of party identification.71 Jenson conceptualized party identification as a cost-saving mechanism in the voter's rational calculations. As an instrumental as opposed to an affective tie, she argued, party identification would be maintained only as long as it remained a meaningful and correct cue to which party the voter should support. As parties changed their relative policy positions, the value of the cue would decline, but how would the voter know that without incurring information costs? Although Jenson traced her conceptualization to the work of Goldberg, in Goldberg's model it was not party identification per se that provided the cue, but group norms.72 Central to his model was the assumption that there was a rational component to sociological norms of party identification. Goldberg emphasized, however, that his was a dynamic understanding: rational group norms would change as policy outputs over time entailed shifts in the distribution of costs and benefits to the different groups.

Price has recently developed a social identification model which points to the importance of the social cues provided through the mass media in this process of opinion formation.73 Public opinion, he emphasizes, is a social and communicative process. The mass media contextualize issues by representing them in social terms as matters pitting defined social groups against one another. By providing voters with a depiction of the ''sides'' they may adopt in responding to issues, news reports emphasizing group conflict cue voters to think about issues through their particular group perspective.

Until the 1988 NES, the dynamics of opinion formation during the campaign received scant attention in studies of Canadian voting behav-

70 Clarke and Stewart, ''Partisan Inconsistency and Partisan Change''; Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and H. Michael Stevenson, ''Ideology and Unstable Party Identification in Canada: Limited Rationality in a Brokerage Party System,'' this JOURNAL 20 (1987), 813-50.

71 Jane Jenson, ''Party Strategy and Party Identification: Some Patterns of Partisan Allegiance,'' this JOURNAL 9 (1976), 27-48. See also Jenson, ''Party Loyalty in Canada.''

72 Arthur S. Goldberg, ''Social Determinism and Rationality as Bases of Party Identification,'' *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969), 5-25.

73 Vincent Price, ''Social Identification and Public Opinion: Effects of Communicating Group Conflict,'' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53 (1989), 197-224. On the role of group affect in structuring voters' thinking about issues, see Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brady and Philip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

jour.⁷⁴ There were essentially two reasons for that neglect. It was the legacy, first of all, of the disappointing experience of the Columbia team in their first study which had used a seven-wave panel to study the dynamics of public opinion formation during the campaign and the effects of the mass media. The problem was that in 1940 most people knew how they would vote—either for Roosevelt or against him—even before the national nominating conventions were held, and the team found very little change occurring during the campaign. The second reason for neglecting the campaign has been the difficulty of studying the dynamics of opinion formation in a post-election survey. Until the recent advances in computer-assisted telephone surveying techniques, the fact that the timing of elections in Canada lacks the predictability of those south of the border meant that the NES *had to be* post-election surveys.

Whither the National Election Studies?

While the 1980 NES was the first to use telephone interviews instead of personal interviews, the 1988 NES was the first really to exploit the potential of this technique. Indeed, the 1988 NES may well mark a watershed in the development of the Canadian NES. Given the prohibitive cost of conducting face-to-face interviews, any future Canadian NES will almost of necessity involve telephone interviewing.

In allowing a pre-election study to be mounted, the new computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technologies enabled the 1988 NES to avoid one of the most important criticisms that has been made of the earlier NES: their reliance on recall data. Questioned weeks—even months—after the election, respondents' recall of their vote, their stands on the issues and their evaluations of the party leaders could be coloured by the events of the post-election period. Faulty memories and social desirability biases combined to create discrepancies between

74 A study that did take the campaign seriously was Jerome H. Black, "Revisiting the Effects of Canvassing on Voting Behaviour," this JOURNAL 17 (1984), 351-74. Findings from the 1988 NES will be reported extensively in Richard Johnston, André Blais, Henry Brady and Jean Crête, *Letting the People Decide* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, forthcoming). See also their chapter "Free Trade and the Dynamics of the 1988 Election," in Joseph Wearing, ed., *The Ballot and Its Message: Voting in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991); Richard Johnston, André Blais, Henry E. Brady and Jean Crête, "Free Trade in Canadian Elections: Issue Evolution in the Long and the Short Run," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 1990; and André Blais, Richard Johnston, Henry E. Brady and Jean Crête, "The Dynamics of Horse Race Expectations in the 1988 Canadian Election," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Victoria, 1990. For an earlier study of strategic voting, see Jerome H. Black, "The Multicandidate Calculus of Voting: Application to Canadian Federal Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 22 (1978), 609-38.

respondents' reported behaviour and the actual behaviour of the electorate at large.⁷⁵

The new CATI technology used in the 1988 NES not only allowed for a pre-election survey, but also avoided the problems associated with face-to-face interviews, namely, the "differential efficiencies in the field interviewer force, the differences of accessibility of certain areas and finally the whims of the Canadian winter."⁷⁶ Telephone interviews also helped to ensure that the NES really is a *national* election study. Wiseman has rightly criticized the customary exclusion of residents of the northern portions of Quebec, Ontario, the Prairie provinces and British Columbia, as well as the Territories from the pre-1988 NES. Those responsible for the design of those studies were certainly aware of the possible bias resulting from the exclusion of the more remote regions of Canada, but correctly pointed out that "the bias is unavoidable within any reasonable cost range."⁷⁷ Unavoidable, that is, until the advent of sophisticated computer-assisted telephone surveying technologies which use an almost pure form of random sampling.

Telephone surveys, however, risk excluding other segments of the population, namely those who do not have telephones. Telephone coverage has increased dramatically since 1936 when the Literary Digest poll debacle discredited the use of telephone listings as sampling frames. There now appear to be only small differences between telephone and face-to-face interviews when it comes to the accuracy (or not) of their data and those differences are diminishing.⁷⁸ This may be especially true of Canada since we rank second only to Sweden with a telephone coverage rate of 97 per cent.⁷⁹ To the extent that non-coverage is a problem, those living in rented houses, single-person households, low-income households and households with unemployed persons will tend

75 The discrepancies between reported and actual behaviour form the centrepiece of Wiseman's critique of the NES in "The Use, Misuse, and Abuse." LeDuc maintains that Wiseman has exaggerated the extent of the discrepancies. See LeDuc, "On Abusing the National Election Studies." While the problems of faulty recall were certainly no cause for complacency, experience with the 1974-1979-1980 NES panel suggests that we should not exaggerate the problem of possible unreliability. With panel data, we no longer have to rely on fallible memories to compare reported vote at successive elections. The NES panel confirmed the portrait of an electorate with flexible attachments to parties and considerable potential for volatility that emerged from the 1974 cross-section.

76 Meisel and Van Loon, "Canadian Attitudes to Election Expenses 1965-6," 40.

77 Ibid., 143.

78 See Edith D. de Leeuw and Johannes van der Zouwen, "Data Quality in Telephone and Face to Face Surveys: A Comparative Meta-Analysis," in Robert M. Groves, Paul P. Blomes, Lars E. Lyndberg, James T. Massey, William L. Nicholls II and Joseph Waksberg, *Telephone Survey Methodology* (New York: John Wiley, 1988), 283-300.

79 Dennis Trewin and Geoff Lee, "International Comparisons of Telephone Coverage," in *ibid.*, 9-24. Noncoverage at the province level ranges from 2 to 6 per cent.

to be underrepresented. Non-response, however, remains the most important source of bias in telephone and face-to-face surveys alike. Indeed, this is an often overlooked reason for the discrepancy between the rate of voting reported in surveys and the actual turnout. It occurs "for the very simple reason that those who are not interested enough in politics to vote are usually . . . no more interested in talking for an hour to our interviewer."⁸⁰

The 1988 NES did more than substitute pre-election telephone interviews for post-election face-to-face ones. CATI allowed the use of a sophisticated rolling cross-sectional design. While each of the NES has been shaped by particular theoretical concerns, the 1988 study is the most dramatic example of the impact of a clear theoretical interest—in the dynamics of the campaign—on the choice of design. A rolling cross-section, or "rolling thunder" design, provides a particularly powerful design for studying campaign dynamics because it introduces over-time variance in political context. It embodies the principle that politics matter, enabling researchers to examine how voters' perceptions, beliefs and preferences evolve in response to the unfolding events of the campaign.

The simultaneous monitoring of media coverage and political advertising that was part of the 1988 NES affords the opportunity to study these dynamics of opinion formation as a communicative process. The role of the mass media has been a relatively neglected area in the study of Canadian voting, largely because of the inadequacies of post-elections surveys for analyzing media effects. Incorporating data from the monitoring study will enable researchers to use the rolling cross-section to analyze the impact of shifting patterns of electoral communication on voter opinion.

The advantage of the rolling cross-section design is undoubtedly its analytical power, but it also poses some pitfalls for the unwary secondary user.⁸¹ Rosenstone and Feldman point in particular to temporal and contextual variation in coefficients, changing measurement models and estimation problems in specifying intervention effects. With a good theory and a simple model, they suggest, the analysis is relatively straightforward, but if the analyst wants to move on to, say, contextual interactions that vary over time or across people, "things start to get really messy." The real problem, however, lies in the very complexity of the processes that we are attempting to model. With the pre-election rolling cross-section, we are finally in a position to start addressing those

80 Meisel and Van Loon, "Canadian Attitudes to Election Expenses," 37.

81 For a discussion of some of the pitfalls in the analysis of rolling cross-section data, see Steven Rosenstone and Stanley Feldman, "Design, Implementation, and Analysis of the Rolling Cross-Section and Event Monitoring Components of the 1984 National Election Study," Memo to the Board of Overseers and 1984 National Election Study Planning Committee, October 19, 1983.

complexities. In particular, combining the rolling cross-section with the more traditional post-election wave of the 1988 NES provides a panel component which allows researchers to draw more valid conclusions about individual-level processes of projection, persuasion and inference. While the problems of panel morality must not be overlooked, the post-election wave also offers secondary users pursuing other research questions access to a more familiar type of dataset.

Concluding Remarks

Reviewing the field in 1975, Elkins and Blake were "struck by major gaps in its coverage and by certain conceptual and technical shortcomings."⁸² The sheer number and variety of the studies referred to in this brief review of attempts to explain vote choice suggest how far we have come since the mid-1970s. More telling than the quantity of work, however, are the qualitative advances that have been made in voting research. Many of the shortcomings which Elkins and Blake identified have become things of the past—lack of attention to explanation-generalization as opposed to description of particular elections or explanations of particular outcomes; neglect of the individual level in favour of the system level; the failure to address issues of partisan change or to model individual vote choice; "shotgun" approaches to analyzing survey data; routinization of control procedures and the neglect of more sophisticated multivariate analytic methods; lack of cumulative learning; inadequate and infrequent revision of research instruments.

Important gaps in coverage remain, however. With respect to personality, for example, little has changed in the 15 years since Elkins and Blake first called for greater attention to the role of psychological variables and particularly personality traits in explaining political behaviour. Certainly, we could look to psychological theory for a better understanding of the cognitive and emotional processes underlying political perceptions. More generally, if we want to explain political behaviour, we need to know much more about how our subjects think about politics.

Turning from psychological to sociological factors, two bases of social differentiation were conspicuously absent from the earlier discussion of sociological approaches to vote choice: ethnicity and gender. Black's early work on immigrant political adaptation remains one of the few extensive NES-based studies of the political behaviour of minority ethnic groups.⁸³ Studies of gender, for their part, have tended to limit themselves to the question of the gender gap in political participation and

82 Elkins and Blake, "Voting Research in Canada," 313.

83 Jerome H. Black, "Immigrant Political Adaptation in Canada: Some Tentative Findings," this JOURNAL 15 (1982), 3-27.

whether or not that gap is narrowing.⁸⁴ The electoral and partisan gender gaps that have been the subject of considerable research in the US and elsewhere have yet to spark extensive study in Canada. Conover's research into the gender gaps in basic values that may underlie the gap in public opinion offers a particularly promising line of inquiry.⁸⁵

In pointing to gaps in coverage, of course, we are adding to the competing demands that beset principal investigators—their own theoretical concerns, the needs of secondary users of their data, and the obligation to maintain some continuity with earlier studies. The task of reconciling these demands is complicated still further by the uncertainty regarding the continued funding of national election studies in Canada. The lack of institutionalization is one of the factors that most clearly differentiates voting research in Canada from that in the US. A key aspect of the Michigan tradition of voting research has been the collection of data on a core set of items over an extended period that students of Canadian voting behaviour are wont to envy. The over-time comparability of these items in the US NES, however, may in fact have been overstated.⁸⁶ One way that Canadian investigators can try to balance the conflicting needs for continuity and innovation would be to make greater use of split-half question designs which have become much simpler to implement with the advent of computer-assisted telephone interviewing.

Turning to questions of technique, the discussion of non-recursive models illustrates how far we have come since Elkins and Blake complained of the fixation with "pure" first-order relationships and the use of simple cross-tabulations. Their call for validity studies of measuring instruments, however, has not received sufficient attention. Researchers need to address questions of measurement quality more explicitly in their work and to make greater use of such methodological advances as covariance structure analysis which take imperfect measurement into account in modelling complex causational structures and allow an assessment of how well specific indicators tap underlying concepts.

The emphasis in this review on how far a quarter-century of national election studies has brought Canadian voting research has been tempered by a recognition of the shortcomings that remain. Attention has been drawn to aspects of political choice that have been neglected. It

84 Jerome H. Black and Nancy E. McGlen, "Male-Female Political Involvement Differentials in Canada, 1965-1974," this *JOURNAL* 12 (1979), 471-97, and Kay et al., "Gender and Political Activity." An exception is Peter Wearing and Joseph Wearing, "Does Gender Make a Difference in Voting Behaviour?" in Wearing, ed., *The Ballot and Its Message*.

85 Pamela Johnston Conover, "Feminists and the Gender Gap," *Journal of Politics* 50 (1988), 985-1010. Conover cites an extensive list of works on the gender gap.

86 Paul R. Abramson, "The Decline of Over-Time Comparability in the National Election Studies," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54 (1990), 177-90.

is not simply a matter, however, of filling the gaps in coverage. If our understanding of Canadian voting behaviour is to continue to advance, we need to start thinking of the two competing traditions of voting research not as rivals but as complementary. Those who favour a social psychological approach need to start taking the "social" aspect more seriously, while those with a more sociological bent need to treat their social categories as live social forces.