Notes

An Examination of Class and Left-Right Party Images in Canadian Voting

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The systematic investigation of party-projected images is a relatively recent development in political science. Past studies into this subject have largely dealt with the perceptions of political parties held by various groups, and the perceived mobility of the parties over time with regard to selected dimensions.[1] For the determination of party images held by individuals, most previous works in the field have made use of the semantic differential technique pioneered by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum. This approach consists of respondents being asked to rank political parties along a number of seven-point scales, each demarcated by a pair of antonyms such as "good-bad" or "slow-fast." Tests confirming the reliability, validity and comparability of the measure have also been conducted by Osgood *et al.*, as found in *The Measurement of Meaning*.[2]

One common link shared by the previous works on images is that their foci have been basically oriented toward an evaluation of political institutions and personalities in light of the semantic differential scale. In contrast this note uses the device as another way of examining individual voting behaviour. Of particular interest are insights that it can provide on pre-existing theories of Canadian politics, such as the discussion surrounding the relationship of class and voting. The evaluation of social class, as a variable influencing Canadian political behaviour, has ranged broadly. Robert Alford assessed it to be insignificant,[3] while

1 See for example David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain* (New York, 1969), 200-14, 359-72. John Meisel, *Working Papers on Canadian Politics* (Montreal, 1972), 63-119. Comparable research in leadership images is discussed in Jean Laponce, *People vs. Politics* (Toronto, 1969), 116-28.

2 C. Osgood, G. Suci and P. Tannenbaum, *The Measurement of Meaning* (Urbana, 1957), 130-42. The comparability issue is also investigated in H. Kumata and K. Schramm, "A Pilot Study of Cross-Cultural Meaning," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (Spring 1956), 229-38.

3 Robert Alford, *Party and Society* (Evanston, 1963), 250-86.

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John Wilson has asserted that class is an emerging cleavage source of considerable importance.[4] Another area the technique addresses is the left-right continuum that has also been concluded to be a dimension structuring the Canadian political landscape.[5] A more recent review of the Canadian voting literature, however, suggests that class as well as other variables could fruitfully bear scrutinization from a more psychological perspective, and the semantic differential scale tapping individual voters' perceptions of political parties, seems uniquely suited for this purpose.[6]

Empirical Observations

The data base from which the findings are taken are the national post-election surveys of 1965 and 1968; the first undertaken jointly by professors Converse, Meisel, Pinard, Regenstrief and Schwartz, and the second co-ordinated by Professor Meisel. Most of the semantic differential scales appearing in the national election studies seem to have been perceived in a highly evaluative manner.[7] Of the sixteen different dimensions used in the two studies, no fewer than ten had polarized modes for the ideal party composing at least 80 per cent of the sample, and for only two scales did the ideal party modes rest in the neutral position.[8] These dimensions as depicted in Table 1 were "for the middle class-for the working class" and "left wing-right wing," categorizations whose specific class and ideological connotations are of an indeterminate nature. Accordingly it became a goal, not only to examine the electorate's behaviour toward Canadian parties in view of these dimensions, but also to examine the dimensions themselves.

The data that follow show the association between the perceived images of Canadian parties along these dimensions and support for the respective parties in the federal elections of 1965 and 1968. In consider-

4 John Wilson, "Politics and Social Class in Canada: The Case of Waterloo South," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1 (September 1968), 307-09.

5 David Elkins, "The Perceived Structure of the Canadian Party Systems," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7 (September 1974), 511.

6 David Elkins and Donald Blake, "Voting Research in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 8 (June 1975), 324.

7 This phenomenon echoes the findings of previous research with the semantic differential, that the most important dimension of connotative meaning for a semantic space is evaluation. See F. Frey, "Cross-Cultural Survey Research in Political Science," in R. Holt and J. Turner (eds.), *The Methodology of Comparative Research* (New York, 1970), 266-72.

8 Sample respondents were asked to rate each of Canada's political parties as well as the individual's hypothetically ideal party along the various semantic differential dimensions. The dimensions appeared in the surveys as seven-point scales ranging from one extreme to the other, with 4 as the neutral position. However, because of the miniscule n-size that this created in many categories, the scales were trichotomized into categories representing each dimensional side and the neutral position; thereby retaining direction of the scale-scores, but sacrificing intensity.

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TABLE 1

PER CENT FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS OF IDEAL PARTY IMAGES

	"For working class"	Neutral	"For middle class"	No response	n-size
1965	34.2%	47.8%	13.3%	4.8%	(2,719)
1968	33.7	47.4	16.5	2.4	(2,767)
	"Right wing"	Neutral	"Left wing"	No response	n-size
1965	34.5	46.9	11.0	7.5	(2,719)
1968	28.6	51.4	9.4	10.5	(2,767)

ing the reported findings, the reader should be reminded that each of the tables presented in this regard is actually a composite of selections from different tables. For example, Table 2 which depicts the association between "class" perception of a party and vote for that party, consists of (a) the per cent Liberal vote among people perceiving the Liberals at each different point along the "class" dimension; (b) the per cent Conservative vote among people perceiving the Conservatives at each point along the dimension; (c) the per cent NDP vote among people perceiving the NDP at each point along the dimension; and (d) the per cent Social Credit vote among people perceiving Social Credit at each point along the dimension;[9] for each election. To illustrate the interpretation of this table, among the 405 respondents perceiving the Liberals as working class, 59.0 per cent supported them; whereas among the 855 individuals who thought them to be middle class, only 36.1 per cent voted Liberal. Of the 796 interviewed who saw the party as neutral on the dimension, 56.0 per cent voted Liberal.

Table 2 shows a consistent and almost universal relationship between a party's being perceived as favouring the "working class," and enhanced electoral support for that party.[10] In fact with regard to the Liberals and Conservatives, this relationship was linear for both the 1965 and 1968 elections. The unanticipated pervasiveness of this phenomenon does not offset the fact that voters were much more likely to perceive the longer established parties as favouring the "middle class," while the NDP was widely characterized as favouring the "working class." Nevertheless, each party was seen to garner more support proportionally among those voters who perceived them favour-

9 The figures for Social Credit are presented as an amalgam of its two factions which had split during the period being reported. Since the two wings did not run candidates against each other, they were classified as the same party with the exception that Quebec residents were questioned about Real Caouette's *Ralliement des Créditistes*, while the remainder of the nation evaluated the Social Credit Party led successively by Robert Thompson and Alex Patterson.

10 Kendall's tau B statistic was selected for the measurement of correlation coefficients, because it is less subject to wide fluctuations in tables based on small sample sizes, or in tables containing a small number of cells.

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ing the "working class," as witness the directional consistency of the correlation coefficients accompanying Table 2.[11]

TABLE 2

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY "CLASS" PERCEPTION OF PARTY

Perception of party	Liberal		Conservative		N.D.P.		Socred	
	% vote	n-size	%vote	n-size	%vote	n-size	%vote	n-size
				1965				
Working class	59.0	(405)	45.9	(418)	19.0	(1,228)	8.7	(831)
Neutral	56.0	(796)	33.8	(783)	11.4	(467)	7.3	(601)
Middle class	36.1	(855)	19.9	(833)	13.4	(157)	5.6	(269)
	Tau B = .19		Tau B = .20		Tau B = .08		Tau B = .04	
				1968				
Working class	65.1	(407)	38.8	(549)	15.8	(1,351)	9.9	(404)
Neutral	58.4	(900)	27.8	(907)	6.9	(563)	6.6	(290)
Middle class	50.8	(922)	20.7	(758)	7.3	(178)	10.9	(193)
	Tau B = .10		Tau B = .14		Tau B = .12		Tau B = .01	

NOTE: The total n-size differs from party to party because of people expressing no opinion. In 1968, Socred perceptions were ascertained only from residents of Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

In order to determine if the associations just reported could be accounted for by the intervention of other variables, a comprehensive series of controls were imposed upon the findings in Table 2 including such class-related matters as education, income, occupation, financial satisfaction and subjective class perceptions. Other than for Social Credit which is not considered in detail, the only control categories which provided exceptions to this relationship between a party's "working class" perception and support for it occurred in the case of the NDP in 1965, and most of those were only marginal exceptions.[12] For the Liberals and Conservatives in both elections, and for the NDP in 1968, this relationship was sustained throughout all control variables.

Space does not permit a reproduction of all the controls that were generated, but the variable which instinctively should provide the most stringent control upon the impact of a party's perceived class image is presented in Table 3, namely the individual's subjective social class perception. Subjective social class has been collapsed into a dichotom-

11 The figures pertaining to Social Credit are presented here for the sake of inclusiveness, but due to the complex nature of their tabulation as well as their limited sample in 1968, only the most general observations will be made concerning that party.

12 The specific control categories in which these exceptions took place include French-speaking voters, British Columbia residents, the university educated, and those perceiving themselves as middle class.

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TABLE 3

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY "CLASS" PERCEPTION OF PARTY, CONTROLLING FOR SUBJECTIVE CLASS

Perception of party	Liberal % vote	Liberal n-size	Conservative % vote	Conservative n-size	N.D.P. % vote	N.D.P. n-size	Socred % vote	Socred n-size
Working class members 1965								
Working class	59.9	(210)	51.3	(241)	25.3	(530)	14.0	(387)
Neutral	52.7	(332)	33.0	(356)	7.4	(229)	9.7	(269)
Middle class	28.3	(431)	15.0	(366)	11.4	(90)	6.7	(119)
	Tau B = .26		Tau B = .29		Tau B = .19		Tau B = .08	
Middle class members 1965								
Working Class	58.9	(177)	38.7	(168)	14.2	(668)	4.2	(426)
Neutral	59.3	(439)	32.2	(339)	16.7	(218)	5.8	(311)
Middle class	43.5	(402)	24.2	(440)	15.6	(60)	5.1	(139)
	Tau B = .13		Tau B = .11		Tau B = -.03		Tau B = -.02	
Working Class Members 1968								
Working Class	66.5	(197)	41.1	(270)	23.8	(551)	12.9	(155)
Neutral	51.6	(351)	27.0	(348)	9.4	(235)	11.3	(97)
Middle class	41.3	(378)	17.8	(303)	8.4	(83)	11.4	(70)
	Tau B = .18		Tau B = .19		Tau B = .17		Tau B = .07	
Middle class members 1968								
Working class	64.9	(191)	34.0	(253)	9.9	(750)	8.2	(243)
Neutral	63.3	(502)	27.5	(516)	5.5	(290)	3.9	(178)
Middle class	58.0	(507)	23.5	(422)	7.0	(86)	11.3	(115)
	Tau B = .06		Tau B = .08		Tau B = .06		Tau B = -.01	

ous variable, such that the small upper class and upper-middle class categories have been combined with middle class, and self-perceived lower class members are combined with the working class. Being a self-defined measure, subjective social class need not be consonant with more objective criteria of social class such as income or occupational prestige, but it should identify an individual's perception of where his class interests lie. With this in mind, the findings among middle class members in Table 3 appear counter-intuitive. These middle class identifiers are seen to be more likely to support the Liberals and Conservatives in both elections, as well as the NDP in 1968, if they perceive those parties as favouring the "working class," rather than their own middle class. That working class members are much more decisive in their support of a party they perceive as "working class" hardly invalidates the surprising nature of middle class members' behaviour. However,

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taken together, these results do serve to cast doubt upon the assumption that the "middle class-working class" semantic dimension is a surrogate for strictly defined class interest. Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that working class identifiers might view the scale in terms of personal interest, while among a majority of self-perceived middle class members this factor became overshadowed by feelings of paternalistic concern for the less well off classes in society.

The other semantic differential dimension to be examined consists of the perception of a party on a "left wing-right wing" continuum. Perception of each party along this dimension is related to support for that party in Table 4 which represents a composite of various tables, similar to Table 2. The predominant observation to be discerned from Table 4 is that each party tends to fare better electorally among those voters who perceive its image as "right wing," rather than among those who perceive it as "left wing." As with the party's "class" image this finding varies in its strength from party to party, but the correlation coefficients are again directionally consistent for all parties in the elections concerned, although weak in certain instances. Again also, the introduction of control variables does not explain the displayed relationship, although the existence of exceptions to the relationship are somewhat more prevalent than was the case with a party's "class" image. The directional exceptions to the association between the "right wing" perception of a party and increased vote do not occur at all in the case of the Liberals, and show no pattern of repetition in the situations where they do occur with the other parties. The explanatory key to these phenomena must therefore be found elsewhere.

TABLE 4

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY "LEFT-RIGHT" PERCEPTION OF PARTY

Perception of party	Liberal		Conservative		N.D.P.		Socred	
	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size
				1965				
Right wing	54.3	(757)	32.4	(871)	17.4	(346)	10.9	(515)
Neutral	47.4	(870)	31.1	(804)	16.3	(714)	8.0	(691)
Left wing	38.0	(363)	18.1	(202)	16.3	(731)	3.4	(440)
	Tau B = .11		Tau B = .09		Tau B = .01		Tau B = .10	
				1968				
Right wing	66.5	(638)	28.3	(715)	22.1	(253)	9.4	(254)
Neutral	54.3	(1,063)	30.2	(1,062)	10.0	(978)	10.1	(427)
Left wing	45.5	(347)	18.2	(280)	12.9	(731)	4.5	(132)
	Tau B = .14		Tau B = .04		Tau B = .04		Tau B = .04	

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There are however some questions that should be raised with the evidence thus far displayed. It has been seen that Canadian voters seem somewhat predisposed to support a party if they perceive it to favour the "working class" or to be "right wing." However, what of those individuals who in Table 1 were seen to idealize parties favouring the "middle class" or being "left wing"? If ideal party preferences are salient and rational behaviour prevails, they should be expected to behave quite distinctly from the bulk of the population.

Another problem that should be addressed concerns the fact that the respondents evaluated each of the four parties along the given semantic dimensions, while their opinions have been examined on only one party at a time. This raises the possibility of ignoring distinctions between respondents who may have disagreed on as many as three of the four party images, as well as their ideal perception. If these semantic dimensions are meaningful, those who perceive a party as "working class" should be increasingly likely to vote for it, if the alternate parties are perceived as "middle class." To test these matters adequately, however, necessitates the introduction of multiple controls upon tabular data, which itself creates a problem of diminishing sample sizes.

Tables 5A and 5B focus upon the first problem raised by depicting the associations of party vote and perceived image, with the introduction of controls as to how the respondents perceived their ideal party on the

TABLE 5A

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY "CLASS" PERCEPTION OF PARTY, CONTROLLING FOR IDEAL PERCEPTION

Perception of party	Liberal		Conservative		N.D.P.		Socred	
	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size
Ideal party-working class 1965								
Working class	64.5	(219)	51.7	(245)	25.8	(448)	10.9	(348)
Neutral	54.9	(170)	28.4	(182)	6.6	(126)	3.8	(159)
Middle class	30.1	(340)	12.4	(293)	3.0	(67)	3.6	(82)
	Tau B = .29		Tau B = .35		Tau B = .23		Tau B = .12	
Ideal party-middle class 1965								
Working class	39.4	(55)	24.0	(44)	12.0	(187)	4.5	(134)
Neutral	57.3	(84)	17.9	(82)	13.0	(62)	6.7	(74)
Middle class	60.6	(167)	31.3	(179)	20.3	(43)	5.0	(60)
	Tau B = -.13		Tau B = -.11		Tau B = -.07		Tau B = -.02	
Ideal party-working class 1968								
Working class	70.5	(258)	44.2	(267)	23.0	(427)	13.8	(160)
Neutral	49.7	(197)	23.0	(230)	2.2	(184)	5.1	(78)
Middle class	37.4	(287)	17.6	(238)	5.4	(74)	10.0	(60)
	Tau B = .27		Tau B = .23		Tau B = .25		Tau B = .08	

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TABLE 5A—*Continued*

Perception of party	Liberal % vote	Liberal n-size	Conservative % vote	Conservative n-size	N.D.P. % vote	N.D.P. n-size	Socred % vote	Socred n-size
Ideal party-working class 1968								
Working class	51.1	(47)	27.6	(105)	8.6	(245)	6.7	(105)
Neutral	51.3	(117)	21.5	(107)	2.6	(78)	2.5	(40)
Middle class	69.1	(233)	29.8	(178)	7.8	(51)	17.2	(58)
	Tau B = -.17		Tau B = -.03		Tau B = .06		Tau B = -.13	

TABLE 5B

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY "LEFT-RIGHT" PERCEPTION OF PARTY, CONTROLLING FOR IDEAL PERCEPTION

Perception of party	Liberal % vote	Liberal n-size	Conservative % vote	Conservative n-size	N.D.P. % vote	N.D.P. n-size	Socred % vote	Socred n-size
Ideal party-right wing 1965								
Right wing	59.1	(488)	43.0	(448)	18.9	(213)	9.9	(247)
Neutral	35.3	(135)	30.6	(165)	10.7	(169)	4.3	(162)
Left wing	30.1	(125)	16.4	(124)	5.7	(276)	1.5	(198)
	Tau B = .24		Tau B = .20		Tau B = .17		Tau B = .15	
Ideal party-left wing 1965								
Right wing	25.5	(73)	10.4	(144)	21.9	(32)	8.2	(110)
Neutral	46.9	(71)	27.0	(58)	2.2	(46)	3.7	(54)
Left wing	56.5	(107)	28.2	(50)	43.6	(159)	10.8	(56)
	Tau B = -.24		Tau B = -.21		Tau B = -.29		Tau B = -.01	
Ideal party-right wing 1968								
Right wing	81.9	(424)	34.5	(348)	22.5	(142)	12.3	(130)
Neutral	47.4	(135)	24.2	(178)	7.8	(217)	7.8	(103)
Left wing	33.6	(113)	13.6	(147)	2.8	(283)	1.7	(62)
	Tau B = .30		Tau B = .18		Tau B = .23		Tau B = .14	
Ideal party-left wing 1968								
Right wing	40.0	(65)	6.9	(130)	4.2	(24)	0.0	(35)
Neutral	45.0	(60)	21.4	(56)	19.4	(62)	10.0	(30)
Left wing	71.7	(99)	24.3	(37)	37.7	(130)	12.0	(25)
	Tau B = -.27		Tau B = -.22		Tau B = -.25		Tau B = -.19	

dimension. In all cases but one, the electorate was seen to be at least somewhat more likely to support a party if it was perceived consistently with the voters' ideals. However, the strength of the statistical associa-

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tions ranged broadly, particularly among those subtables based upon smaller samples; and the one deviation from the overall pattern, the 1968 NDP vote among those idealizing "middle class" oriented parties may be accounted for by the small number of respondents perceiving it as "middle class." One might assume that the statistical associations would be greater still, were it not for the occurrence of respondents rating more than one party as consistent with their ideal. Nevertheless, the overriding problem confronted in this table emanates from the overly small n-size appearing in given table cells, a circumstance that renders one incapable of pursuing other implications of the basic finding.

The existence of this limitation when only a single control variable is introduced, should make one wary of evidence resulting from the use of multiple controls. Particularly so, when the full examination of this matter should require the presentation of respondent perceptions for each party as well as the ideal, necessitating four control variables in all. In the face of this unattainable goal, the best that can be done is to examine the effect of adding information about the perception of a second party, once the respondent's ideal has been controlled for. Due to considerations of space and the lesser impact of the smaller parties, only the incremental effect of Conservative and Liberal perceptions upon each other's vote is presented in Table 6 among those idealizing "working class" and "right wing" parties.

A comparison of the subsections of Table 6 with previous tables indicates that in virtually every case, additional information concerning an alternate party's perceived inconsistency with an individual's ideal will increase the likelihood of his voting for a party consistent with the ideal. Conversely, information that an alternate party is also perceived consistently with an individual's ideal, lessens the probability that the individual will vote for the first party consistent with the ideal. For the sake of simplicity in negotiating the maze of tables thus far presented,

TABLE 6

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS OF PARTY, CONTROLLING FOR IDEAL AND 2ND PARTY PERCEPTIONS

	(A) Ideal-working class 1965			
Perception of party	Cons. mid class % Lib. vote	n	Cons. work class % Lib. vote	n
Working class	80.9	(68)	46.4	(103)
Neutral	64.1	(60)	45.0	(33)
Middle class	38.8	(161)	21.2	(109)
	Tau B = .34		Tau B = .24	

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TABLE 6—*Continued*

(B) Ideal-working class 1965

Perception of party	Lib. mid class % Cons. vote	n	Lib. work class % Cons. vote	n
Working class	59.8	(109)	44.5	(103)
Neutral	39.7	(70)	8.0	(37)
Middle class	16.2	(161)	7.8	(68)
	Tau B = .38		Tau B = .38	

(C) Ideal-working class 1968

Perception of party	Cons. mid class % Lib. vote	n	Cons. work class % Lib. vote	n
Working class	81.2	(85)	55.3	(103)
Neutral	55.0	(40)	36.2	(47)
Middle class	37.3	(110)	28.7	(115)
	Tau B = .38		Tau B = .23	

(D) Ideal-working class 1968

Perception of party	Lib. mid class % Cons. vote	n	Lib. work class % Cons. vote	n
Working class	51.3	(115)	31.1	(103)
Neutral	23.6	(55)	14.7	(68)
Middle class	22.7	(110)	8.2	(85)
	Tau B = .26		Tau B = .24	

(E) Ideal-right wing 1965

Perception of party	Cons. left wing % Lib. vote	n	Cons. right wing % Lib. vote	n
Right wing	86.6	(84)	47.2	(318)
Neutral	75.0	(16)	17.6	(55)
Left wing	21.1	(19)	28.5	(74)
	Tau B = .46		Tau B = .20	

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TABLE 6—*Continued*

(F) Ideal-right wing 1965

Perception of party	Lib. left wing % Cons. vote	n	Lib. right wing % Cons. vote	n
Right wing	57.5	(74)	34.4	(318)
Neutral	49.5	(32)	15.8	(72)
Left wing	57.9	(19)	5.9	(84)
	Tau B = .03		Tau B = .25	

(G) Ideal-right wing 1968

Perception of party	Cons. left wing % Lib. vote	n	Cons. right wing % Lib. vote	n
Right wing	83.5	(109)	65.6	(226)
Neutral	55.6	(9)	44.2	(52)
Left wing	34.5	(29)	26.5	(68)
	Tau B = .43		Tau B = .30	

(H) Ideal-right wing 1968

Perception of party	Lib. left wing % Cons. vote	n	Lib. right wing % Cons. vote	n
Right wing	57.4	(68)	25.7	(226)
Neutral	18.8	(16)	15.7	(83)
Left wing	37.9	(29)	6.4	(109)
	Tau B = .21		Tau B = .20	

certain segments of the various tables are extracted to show the impact upon vote prediction of the incremental introduction of the sample's individual perceptions.

In Table 2 it was observed that among the 405 voters in 1965 who perceived the Liberals as favouring the "working class," 59.0 per cent voted Liberal. By introducing the control of those who also perceive their ideal party as favouring the "working class" in Table 5A, it is found that the sample has decreased to 219, of whom 64.6 per cent voted Liberal. The introduction of yet another control in Table 6A, the perception of the Conservatives along this "class" dimension, shows that among those 68 respondents who additionally perceive the Conservatives as "middle class," 80.9 per cent will vote Liberal. On the other hand, among the 103, who in addition to the above perceptions, view the Conservatives as also "working class," Liberal support dips to 46.4 per cent. Although each of the variations in this series of figures is consistent with the view that a party's "class" image is an important consideration, the sample sizes at certain points in the chain are not sufficient for this

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evidence to be accepted definitively. Only after following through the succession of figures for each of the control variable combinations, almost all of which represent an identical pattern, can it be suggested that the respondents behaved as if their perceptions of parties along "class" and "left-right" dimensions were directly associated with their voting predispositions.

The cumulative development of this evidence introducing ideal party perceptions and alternate party perceptions seems compatible with what one would expect, if the data on party image dimensions were integrated into a rational choice perspective. Such a perspective would assume that rational voters act consistently with their stated ideal positions, and that the similar perception of two or more parties on a particular dimension should negate the salience of that dimension in choosing between them. That there is not an even greater displayed relationship between the perceived party images and voting is attributable to the extent that other factors are held to be important by voters. The consistency of these findings is further suggestion that the demonstrated patterns are the result of conscious behaviour on the part of the voting sample.

An indication that the "class" and "left-right" perceptions of party were mutually independent, was found by combining the two dimensions into a new scale consisting of those perceiving a party as both "right wing" and "working class" at one extreme, and "left wing" and "middle class" at the other. In Table 7 it can be observed that the increased measure of statistical association produced by this combined scale, created indicators of voting tendency that exceeded virtually every demographic variable.[13] However, in order to avoid the methodological pitfall of equating the interval distinctions of the two dimensions, it was necessary to sacrifice those cases which did not fall into the three unadulterated categories of the combined scale.[14] Nevertheless, this evidence seems to confirm a regularized relationship between a party's perceived image along these dimensions and the likelihood of an individual voting for that party.

Theoretical Perspectives

To check the cultural uniqueness of these findings, the only foreign data available of sufficient similarity to permit a comparison was the British study of Butler and Stokes. Unfortunately, this goal was frustrated by the extreme unimodality of British parties on the perceived semantic dimensions, thereby reducing the variance for such image perceptions below an acceptable level.[15] The "class" and "left-right" scales have

13 The only demographic producing higher tau B vote associations with Liberal and Conservative support was a dichotomized religion variable.

14 Unfortunately, this meant the loss of much of the sample, as indicated by the smaller n-sizes in Table 7.

15 As expected, the British Conservatives were widely perceived as "middle class" and "right wing," while Labour was seen to be "working class" and "left wing." British

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been subject to little other empirical investigation that would help to clarify the above results. Detailed Canadian examination of the left-right dimension is largely limited to Laponce's cross-cultural study of university students in Canada, France, and the United States. Among his findings were that people who could identify themselves on a left to right continuum tended to Guttman scale in a manner consistent with that continuum, and furthermore tended to support parties that could objectively be placed in ideological positions comparable to their own self-perceptions. The Liberals, Conservatives and Social Credit were all perceived to the right of centre by his sample, a finding that is consistent with the data here.[16]

TABLE 7

PER CENT PARTY VOTE BY COMBINED IMAGE PERCEPTION OF PARTY

Perception of party	Liberal		Conservative		N.D.P.		Socred	
	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size	% vote	n-size
				1965				
Work Class & Right Wing	65.6	(184)	55.3	(204)	16.7	(247)	14.2	(235)
Neutral	55.0	(411)	35.1	(397)	7.2	(289)	6.7	(346)
Mid class & Left wing	33.0	(188)	16.8	(155)	9.4	(57)	2.7	(74)
	Tau B = .21		Tau B = .26		Tau B = .12		Tau B = .14	
				1968				
Work class & Right wing	76.1	(142)	43.6	(165)	25.8	(190)	9.3	(108)
Neutral	57.4	(526)	28.8	(535)	3.5	(429)	7.2	(180)
Mid class & Left wing	41.9	(172)	13.0	(115)	12.3	(57)	10.3	(29)
	Tau B = .20		Tau B = .19		Tau B = .25		Tau B = .01	

In a further article based upon the same research project, Laponce attempted to identify stable characteristics of the left-right continuum with regard to social hierarchical, religious, and temporal dimensions. He found that the dimension most closely associated with "left-right" was "weak-influential," and that such establishment-related concepts as "banker," "religion," and "whites" were highly related to the "right," while "atheism" was strongly associated with the "left." Among Laponce's conclusions was that the notion of "right" as op-

Liberal Party supporters were too few in number to allow a proper examination of their variance.

16 Jean Laponce, "Note on the Use of the Left-Right Dimension," *Comparative Political Studies* 2 (January 1970), 481-502.

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posed to "left" had lost much of its traditional connotation with good vs. bad.[17] In another article of pertinence to the topic, Samuel Barnes dealt with an Italian sample. Among other things, he demonstrated that those who identify with a political party will tend to classify it closer to the centre of a left-right continuum than will non-supporters regardless of where the party is objectively defined on the spectrum.[18]

The temptation to attribute the pervasiveness of the "class" and "left-right" party images to a cultural strain of working class conservatism in Canada, should be resisted, however.[19] It should be remembered that the occurrence of the reported relationships between party image perceptions and voting was in no way limited to working class members. Moreover, there is no solid evidence on which to base the judgement that "right wing" can be equated to conservative. However, apart from these considerations, a cultural predisposition toward working class conservatism does not explain the relative popularity of the Liberals and Conservatives, both of which parties are generally perceived as favouring the "middle class." Furthermore, there is no particular relationship between the idealization of a party as "right wing" and also of its favouring the "working class." Rather, the perceived ideals of respondents along the two dimensions appear to be totally independent of one another, as indicated by tau B correlation coefficients of .04 and .03 respectively in the two elections.

Another possible explanation for the association between the party image variables and voting, is that the perceived party dimensions are a good deal more evaluative than would have been intuitively gathered. If so, the perceptions of "working class" rather than "middle class," and "right wing" rather than "left wing," are merely surrogates for favourable rather than unfavourable views toward a party. In order to test this notion, use was made of the semantic differential dimension which seemed to be most highly evaluative. This was determined to be the "honest-dishonest" continuum which in both 1965 and 1968 was found to have the highest ideal mode, with some 96 per cent of those respondents expressing an opinion, revering "honesty" as being characteristic of the ideal party.[20] "Class" and "left-right" party images were then crosstabulated with party vote, but controls were applied for the perception of each party's "honesty." If the "class" and "left-right" scales were only substitutes for an evaluative dimension such as "honesty," it

17 Jean Laponce, "In Search of the Stable Elements of the Left-Right Landscape," *Comparative Politics* 4 (July 1972), 470.

18 Samuel Barnes, "Left, Right, and the Italian Voter," *Comparative Political Studies* 4 (July 1971), 164.

19 This suggestion was put forward by Henry Jacek to account for the underdeveloped nature of NDP support among workers and is derived in part from S. M. Lipset, *Political Man* (New York, 1963), 87-126.

20 Moreover, the perception of a party's "honesty" was found to be much more highly associated with vote for that party, than any of the other variables that have been discussed.

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would be expected that they should not be regularly related to party vote, once the perception of a party's "honesty" was controlled. However, in fact a direct relationship did exist between both of the image dimensions and party vote, through every control category of the evaluative "honesty" scale. This seemed to indicate the independence of the "class" and "left-right" dimensions from the "honesty" scale, and hence free them from the value-laden tag.

Another notion, that was referred to previously, addresses the surprising occurrence of support for parties perceived as favouring the working class, among respondents who seem to be contravening their own subjectively defined interests. This behaviour suggests the existence of a paternalistic benevolence on the part of self-identified middle class members toward what they may picture to be an element of society which has been less successful. Such a viewpoint would represent the theoretical complement of working class deference, since it allows for better off citizens to act as political patrons on behalf of what they consider to be the relatively deprived. This hypothesized paternalism need not have economic connotations, however, since the "working class-middle class" dimension may be construed simply as a surrogate for a more generalized impression such as that of the little man vs. the establishment. Any development of the above considerations should be tempered, nevertheless, by the reminder that the respondents' perceived judgements need not have an objective basis, since subjective class perception is a purely psychological dimension, and that many "deprived" working class identifiers may have superior material resources to self-acknowledged middle class members. Unfortunately, this idea of paternalism cannot be fully explored due to the absence of data with which to test it.

In trying to attain a better understanding of what the "class" and "left-right" dimensions actually mean, attention was focussed upon the comparative behaviour of those respondents who idealize parties in different ways. The voting inclinations of respondents were examined by their ideal position on each of the two dimensions, and where variance existed, it seemed to occur in a direction consistent with ideological sophistication. The NDP did much better, and the Conservatives much worse among that minority of the sample that exalted the "left wing"; while the Liberals did moderately better among those favouring the "middle class," and the NDP gets a little more support among those favouring the "working class." However, these latter two tendencies do not appear to occur with great strength and, in any case, the most significant result appeared to be the relative similarity in party support among those idealizing different positions along the image dimensions.

Hence, just what the "left-right" continuum means to most voters remains in some doubt. If it was widely viewed as representing a liberal-conservative dimension, presumably the perception of Messrs. Trudeau and Stanfield as "conservative" should have some reasonable

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statistical association with the "left-right" image perceptions of their respective parties. Yet, this did not occur, and in fact respondents who thought Stanfield to be "conservative" were less inclined to see his party as "right wing," than were others. Moreover, the perception of a party leader as "conservative," seems to have no particular association with the enhancement of support for his party, unlike the "left-right" party image perception.

In a further attempt to cast some light upon the semantic dimensions, the respondents' ideal image perceptions were crosstabulated with a series of issue positions that had been asked in the 1968 survey. Those favouring the "right wing" could be distinguished from those favouring the "left" by tending to adhere to the more traditional positions on such issues as maintenance of the monarchy, the imprisonment of homosexuals, the outlawing of Communists, and the retention of capital punishment. Significant issue differences among those perceiving diverging ideals on the "class" image dimension were much less common. However, where disparities did exist upon the above issues, in most cases those leaning toward the "working class" ideal tended to be somewhat more prone to adopt the traditional view. Unfortunately, the lack of significance occurring in most of these relationships prohibits any but the most tentative of inferences toward an understanding of the two semantic differential dimensions.

Summary and Implications

To review briefly, the principal finding was the surprisingly high level of association between voting support for a party, and perception of that party's image as being "right wing" or favouring the "working class." These relationships applied to each party to a greater or lesser extent, and were sustained through the introduction of various control variables, both demographic and other party images. Unhappily, these phenomena could not be attributed to any theoretically consistent structure, despite the examination of various suggestions concerning the exact nature of the semantic dimensions.

However, closed-ended measures such as semantic differential scales should not be assumed to exhaust the party-based determinants that can influence a voter's behaviour. Semantic dimensions, particularly because of their level of abstraction, are not necessarily salient to an individual respondent; accordingly, his dimension responses need bear little relationship to his other demonstrated political actions. It might well be the case that what is captured by the scale is really a substitute for other underlying views held by the respondent, such as the previously mentioned suggestion of the "working class-middle class" scale possibly being a stand-in for the concept of the little man vs. the establishment. Similarly the "left-right" continuum could have been widely interpreted as representing some other hidden perspective such

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as instability vs. stability or non-traditional vs. traditional. This problem could be dealt with in future studies with the introduction of semantic differential scales tapping the alternate concepts just suggested or, better yet, the use of open-ended party image type questions that do not constrain respondents.

Unfortunately, the foregoing data presentation appears to raise more questions than it is able to answer concerning the relationship of class and voting in Canada. However, despite the theoretical problems limiting the ability to draw many hard conclusions from the material, it must be acknowledged that the selected image dimensions are unexpectedly good indicators of the vote in federal elections. As such, the notions of "class support" and "left-right" among Canadian parties are deserving of a good deal more investigation. Some possible avenues for study have been proposed herein, and it is hoped that future collectors of Canadian voting data will tailor their research designs so as to address some of these matters.

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