

# Religious and Social Influences on Voting in Greater Victoria\*

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The detailed investigation of voting behaviour by social scientists has shown that the idea that voters are informed, rational and public spirited and that they carefully weigh the pros and cons of policy before casting their ballots is invalid and at best a means of legitimating the political theory underlying democratic elections. Not only has it been shown that large segments of the electorate are ignorant of such matters as party platforms, the party that particular candidates represent and even the identity of major party leaders, but that political behaviour is better explained as a product of social experience than as the exercise of rational choice.<sup>1</sup> Social experience in this context is usually seen in terms of such factors as age, sex, parents' party preferences and social class, the latter being measured either by such objective indices as occupation, income or level of educational achievement or by more subjective ones such as in which social class electors place themselves. In national elections held since World War II a considerable segment of the electorate in North America, the United Kingdom and a number of continental European and Commonwealth countries, appears to have voted consistently for the same party, regardless of the main issues involved. These consistent voting patterns have been directly related to various socio-economic factors and, particularly in Canada, to religion.

John Meisel, in one of the earliest Canadian analyses of electoral behaviour, reported finding a relationship between religious affiliation and voting preferences in the 1953 Federal and the 1955 Provincial

\* Thanks are due to David Coburn and Clyde Pope for helpful criticism of an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> M. Abrams, *et al. Must Labour Lose?* Harmondsworth, 1960. J. Blondel, *Voters, Parties and Leaders*, Harmondsworth, 1963. P. Lazarsfeld, *et al. The People's Choice*, New York, 1948. S. M. Lipset, *Political Man*, New York, 1960.

elections in Kingston.<sup>2</sup> While United Church adherents, Presbyterians and, to a lesser degree, Anglicans, all voted Progressive Conservative in greater numbers than the population generally, Roman Catholics showed an extraordinary tendency to vote Liberal. Robert Alford has examined evidence from opinion polls and concluded that this country is one of the few examples of an economically advanced nation in which religion is a more important determinant of the way people vote than social class.<sup>3</sup> His subsequent analysis of national opinion poll data obtained at the time of the 1962 Federal election tended to confirm this.<sup>4</sup> Since then several more localized investigations of Federal voting patterns have contributed more evidence on the relationship between religion and voting behaviour in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

The two purposes of this articles are (1) to offer further data on the relative influence of religion, social class and selected demographic factors on voting behaviour in Greater Victoria and (2) to suggest possible approaches to their explanation. The data presented were gathered in a survey conducted during the summer and fall of 1967. The questionnaire dealt mainly with the social participation and non-work activities of the local population, but included several questions on religion and aspects of social class, as well as on voting behaviour in the most recent federal and provincial elections of 1965 and 1966 respectively.<sup>6</sup> There are no systematic studies of provincial voting in British Columbia and reliable data on the relationship between political behaviour and such factors as religion and social class are notoriously lacking.

No claim is made here that the voting patterns of the population of Greater Victoria mirror those of Canada as a whole or of British Columbia. The unusually high proportion of older people and of those of British descent together with its low degree of economic and occupational heterogeneity compared to other metropolitan areas, make Victoria

<sup>2</sup> J. Meisel, "Religious Affiliation and Electoral Behaviour: A Case Study," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 22, 1956.

<sup>3</sup> R. R. Alford, *Party and Society*, Chicago, 1963, Chap. 9.

<sup>4</sup> J. Meisel (ed.) *Papers on the 1962 Election*, Toronto, 1964, p. 205 ff.

<sup>5</sup> G. M. Anderson, "Voting Behaviour and the ethnic-religious variable: a study of a federal election in Hamilton, Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 32, 1966, pp. 27-37. J. Havel, *Politics in Sudbury*, Sudbury, 1966. J. Wilson, "Politics and Social Class in Canada: the case of Waterloo South," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1968. J. Laponce, *People vs Politics*, Toronto, 1969. L. McDonald, "Religion and Voting: A Study of the 1968 Canadian Federal Election in Ontario," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 6 (3), 1969.

<sup>6</sup> T. R. Warburton, *A Survey of Social Participation in Greater Victoria*, unpublished, mimeo report. Social Sciences Research Centre, University of Victoria.

unique among Canadian cities. Most previous studies in the field of religion and voting in Canada have concentrated on Protestant/Catholic differences. But the remarkably low proportion of Roman Catholics and the unusually high proportion of Anglicans found in Victoria add to the difficulties of comparing our data with those found in other parts of the country. Victoria also differs from the rest of British Columbia in several of these respects.

### *The Survey\**

Our survey, unlike the works referred to above, was not designed as a study of electoral behaviour. It was conducted at a time when no federal or provincial election was about to take place, although there had been a provincial election one year previously. Knowledge about people's political outlooks during periods of low electoral activity can be very useful in establishing the nature and relative permanency of patterns of party preference. But the study reported here is no more than a preliminary investigation of these phenomena.

Included in the area surveyed were the City of Victoria, the Municipalities of Oak Bay and Esquimalt and five of the southernmost census tracts (Numbers 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21) in the Municipality of Saanich. Using as a sampling frame those households in this area which were listed in the 1966 City Directory, a sample of three hundred households was chosen by means of random numbers. Interviews were completed with an adult in each of 244 households in the sample, including 101 men and 123 women. The number of outright refusals among the non-respondents was very small and it is difficult to tell how many of them were uncooperative rather than simply unavailable for interview, since pressure of time and shortage of both financial resources and manpower prevented us from making an all-out effort to push our response rate higher. It is as high, however, as that obtained by Pineo and Porter in their study of occupational prestige.<sup>7</sup>

Three methods were used to assess the validity of the sample. First, a comparison was made of respondents and non-respondents on certain characteristics, e.g. age, marital status, employment status and type of

\* The survey was supported financially by the Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Victoria, the Greater Victoria Council of Churches and First United Church, Victoria. We are grateful to these bodies and to those who assisted in the research.

<sup>7</sup> P. Pineo and J. Porter, "Occupational Prestige in Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 4 (1), 1967.

dwelling. The data for non-respondents were based on interviewers' observations, information obtained from neighbours, etc. Few differences emerged, the major ones being that the non-respondents appeared to include a high proportion of older and of widowed people.

The second method used was a comparison of respondents' aggregate characteristics with those contained in 1961 census reports on the area studies. Many similarities were found in the distribution of age, sex, dwelling type, birthplace and religion. There was, however, an unusually high proportion of respondents who claimed to have had some university education. This is probably a reflection of what is commonly found in research of this kind, i.e. the tendency for better educated people to be more willing than others to be interviewed.

Thirdly, a comparison was made of the percentage of respondents who said they had voted in the Federal Election of 1965 and in the Provincial Election of 1966 with the actual percentage voter turnouts for each of those elections.

	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Our Respondents</i>
Federal Election, 1965 (Ridings of Victoria and Esquimalt-Saanich)	80%	81%
Provincial Election, 1966 (Constituencies of Esquimalt, Victoria City, Oak Bay, and Saanich and the Islands)	74%	67%

In general, all three of the methods used indicate that there are good reasons for confidence in the validity of our sample since our respondents do not differ greatly from the general population with respect to several characteristics.

Before looking at the survey findings it is worth noting the kind of questions used in this study to measure religion, social class and Canadian generation. The following dealt with religious factors:

Do you have a religion? That is, do you consider yourself to be a Protestant, a Catholic or a Jew, or do you have some other religious preference?

The 76% who claimed to be Protestant were then asked:

What specific denomination was that, if any?

The questions relating to church attendance were:

Do you attend religious services or meetings?

and, where the reply was "Yes",

How often?

Respondents who hesitated in replying to the latter were offered a choice among the five categories of "More than once a week," "Weekly," "Two or three times a month," "Once a month" and "A few times a year."

The following questions were asked about religious beliefs:

Do you think people should be married in church?

Do you think there is a life after death?

Do you believe in God, or not?

Respondents whose replies were "Yes" or "Don't know" to the latter question were then asked:

Do you believe God answers prayers? and

Do you believe God can influence events on earth?

Respondents were also asked:

What do you believe about Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus was God's only son sent into the world by God to save mankind or that Jesus was simply a very good man and teacher or do you have some other belief?

The social class factors used were education, income, occupation and subjective class placement. Education was measured simply in terms of the highest school grade that respondents had completed. An effort was made to place those who had received their education abroad in equivalent Canadian categories.

Income was measured by giving respondents a card with a list of income categories and asking them to indicate which income category was nearest to their total household income before taxes for 1966.

Respondents who gave their occupation, including some retired people, were divided into five occupational classes according to the socio-economic index devised by Bernard Blischen from educational qualifications and income level reported for 320 occupations in the 1961 census of Canada.<sup>8</sup>

An approximate description of each class might be as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Class 1 — Higher Professional

Class 2 — Lower Professional, Owners and Managers

Class 3 — Clerical and Higher Skilled Manual

Class 4 — Semi-Skilled Manual

Class 5 — Unskilled Manual

<sup>8</sup> B. Blischen, "A Socio-Economic Index for Occupations in Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 4 (1) 1967.

<sup>9</sup> Class 1 — Blischen	70.14 or greater	Class 4 —	30.00-39.86
Class 2 —	50.93-68.80	Class 5 —	less than 30.00
Class 3 —	40.05-49.91		

Subjective class placement refers to responses to the following question:

Social scientists often use the following five classes. If you were forced to choose one, to which would you say you (and your household) belong? Upper Class, Upper Middle, Lower Middle, Working Class, Lower Class.

A considerable number of respondents insisted on calling themselves "Middle Class" and we have used this sixth category in reporting our findings.

Respondents were placed in Canadian generation groups along the following lines: If the respondent was born outside of Canada he was labelled "First Generation." If the respondent was born in Canada but his father was born outside of Canada, he was placed in the "Second Generation." All others were included in the category "Third Generation or more."

TABLE 1  
Religion and Federal Voting, 1965

Except for those in brackets, which indicate the number of respondents (N), all figures in Tables 1-6 are percentages, each column totalling approximately 100%. In some cases, due to rounding, the total is 99 or 101.

a) *Religious Preference*

	<i>Angl.</i>	<i>Utd.</i>	<i>Other Prot.</i>	<i>R.C.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-<sup>*</sup> Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
P.C.	36	28	78	42	6	34			
Lib.	50	56	22	50	50	50	—	—	—
N.D.P.	14	16	—	8	44	17			
N	(50)	(32)	(9)	(12)	(16)	(119)			

b) *Church Attendance*

	<i>At least weekly</i>	<i>1-3 times a month</i>	<i>Few times a year</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	50	48	23	21	32			
Lib.	36	39	68	46	48	10.9	.005	.274
N.D.P.	14	13	10	33	20			
N	(28)	(23)	(31)	(52)	(134)			

c) *Do you think people should be married in Church?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	38	25	33	32			
Lib.	49	46	67	48	5.85	.10	.205
N.D.P.	13	30	—	20			
N	(71)	(61)	(3)	(135)			

d) *Do you think there is a life after death?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	47	16	19	32			
Lib.	36	58	61	48	13.3	.005	.300
N.D.P.	17	26	19	20			
N	(66)	(38)	(31)	(135)			

e) *Do you believe in God, or not?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	36	9	—	32			
Lib.	47	73	33	48	6.85	.05	.219
N.D.P.	18	18	67	20			
N	(118)	(11)	(6)	(135)			

f) *Do you believe God answers prayers?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	44	13	21	34			
Lib.	39	67	47	46	9.39	.01	.266
N.D.P.	18	21	32	20			
N	(80)	(24)	(19)	(123)			

g) *Do you believe God can influence events on earth?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	43	19	22	34			
Lib.	38	67	48	46	10.26	.01	.276
N.D.P.	19	15	30	20			
N	(74)	(27)	(23)	(124)			

h) *What do you believe about Jesus?*

	<i>God's Son and Saviour</i>	<i>Good Man and Teacher</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	48	18	17	20	31			
Lib.	41	53	58	53	49	15.3	.001	.319
N.D.P.	10	29	25	27	20			
N	(58)	(49)	(12)	(15)	(134)			

\* Chi-square is a measure of the extent to which the relationships in the tables are due to chance or randomness. All chi-square values in Tables 1-6 are calculated on the basis of 2 x 3 tables obtained by collapsing categories of all independent variables except education and sex for which there were only two categories anyway.

The P levels indicate the probability that the relationships are due to chance. A P level of .001 shows that a relationship could be due to chance in only 1 in every thousand times.

C, the contingency coefficient, is a measure of the strength of the relationship between the variables studied. The higher the value of C, the stronger the association between the variables. There is an upper limit on the value of C, but none of the values we obtained come close to it and therefore the higher the value of C the stronger is the relationship between the two variables.

## FEDERAL VOTING PATTERNS\*

*Religious Factors*

Although one would have expected on the basis of studies elsewhere, especially those of Alford, that the twelve Catholic respondents would have showed unusually strong support for the Liberal party, Table 1 shows that the proportion doing so was only equal to that found both among those reporting no religion and among Anglicans (i.e. 50%), and was less than that found among United Church of Canada supporters (56%). In view of the small number of Catholics in Victoria and among our respondents it is difficult to say whether Protestant/Catholic differences generally found in Canada are reflected here, but what evidence we have suggests that they are not, i.e. Catholics showed a greater tendency than Protestants to vote Conservative. The nine respondents in the category of "Other Protestants" included an unusually low proportion who said they had voted Liberal. But the numbers involved are too small to be taken seriously.

Conservative support was high among "Other Protestants," Catholics and Anglicans and very low among those reporting no religion. The latter group, though numerically small, produced a very high percentage of NDP voters, over twice as great as among respondents as a whole. 75% of the respondents reporting "no religion" voted Liberal or NDP.

The relationship between Anglican and voting Progressive Conservative has been discovered in several local investigations.<sup>10</sup> In the studies by Meisel, Anderson and Havel it was found that United Church supporters also favoured the Progressive Conservative party. In Waterloo South, however, Wilson found that United Church support was more likely to be for the Liberals than for the Conservatives and this was the case in our Victoria study.

That the category of "Other Protestants" showed a marked tendency to favour the Conservatives was not surprising, given the strong fundamentalist flavour among the groups represented. Our findings in this respect are supported by data sent to us by Professor Martin Meissner of the University of British Columbia from his study of an industrial community on Vancouver Island with a population of about 20,000. The

\* Respondents were asked "Did you vote in the Federal election of 1965?" and those replying affirmatively were asked "For which party did you vote?" Only those who reported having voted for one of the three major parties are included in the data used for this article.

<sup>10</sup> See the works by Meisel, Anderson, Havel, Laponce and Wilson cited in note 5 above.



findings of both Meisel and Anderson suggest similar voting patterns in other parts of the country. One is reminded of the strong association found in certain parts of the U.S.A. between fundamentalist Protestantism and high rates of church attendance on the one hand and support of the Republican party on the other.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding church attendance, those indicating a high level (at least one a month) showed a marked tendency to vote Progressive Conservative and below average tendency to vote for the NDP or the Liberals. The NDP had unusually strong support from those who said they never attend religious meetings or services while those reporting occasional attendance (a few times a year) included an unusually large percentage of Liberal voters.

Anderson and Havel both obtained data on church attendance and voting preferences. Among Protestants in Anderson's study the relationship between these variables were similar to those found in Victoria, those reporting high attendance being overwhelmingly Conservative, those reporting low or non-attendance preferring the NDP or the Liberals. Havel found that the NDP obtained high support in Sudbury from those never or only rarely attending church while Conservative voters were over-represented among weekly attenders.

There seem to have been no studies of the relationship between Federal voting patterns and religious *beliefs* in Canada and our Victoria data on this aspect may be original. On every belief question there appears to be a distinct difference in voting patterns between upholders of traditional religious beliefs and those who question them or specifically deny them. The traditionalists show strong support, at least compared with respondents as a whole, for the Progressive Conservative Party while the doubters and unbelievers seem to favour the Liberal and New Democratic parties. All the chi-square values, which could be calculated for all variables except religious preference, were statistically significant (i.e. were not due to chance) at levels from .10 to .001.

In the case of all religious variables support for the NDP was unusually high among the non-religious and those who were uncertain in their religious beliefs. (By "non-religious" is meant those who said they have no religion, those who said they never go to church and those who did not think people should be married in church or that there is a life after death. Those who were uncertain of their religious beliefs are those who said they did not know in answer to the questions on beliefs about God

<sup>11</sup> G. Benton Johnson, "Ascetic Protestantism and Political Preference," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 26 (1), Spring, 1962, pp. 35-46.

and Jesus.) These relationships are not surprising when it is remembered that much of socialist political philosophy, especially the Marxist variety, has considerable anti-religious overtones and socialist movements have often been analysed as substitutes for religion.<sup>12</sup> But what is also pertinent here is evidence which suggests that the manual workers of several industrial countries may never have been very religious in any sense of the term.<sup>13</sup> Our data on occupation and voting patterns tend to show that this may well be part of an explanation of the link between irreligiosity and NDP voting.

TABLE 2  
Social Class and Federal Voting, 1965

a) <i>Education (Highest School Grade completed)</i>						Chi-Square	p	C	
	Grade 12 or Higher	Lower than Grade 12	All						
P.C.	35	28	32						
Lib.	54	41	48		8.66	.02	.245		
N.D.P.	11	31	20						
N	(74)	(61)	(135)						
b) <i>Income (Total Income before taxes for 1966)</i>							Chi-Square	p	C
	Over \$8,000	\$6,000-\$8,000	\$4,000-\$6,000	\$2,000-\$4,000	Up to \$2,000	All			
P.C.	23	27	17	56	57	31			
Lib.	69	42	53	26	14	47	10.3	.01	.272
N.D.P.	9	31	30	18	29	22			
N	(35)	(26)	(30)	(27)	(7)	(125)			
c) <i>Occupational Class (Blishen Scale)</i>							Chi-Square	p	C
	1	2	3	4	5	All			
P.C.	29	15	35	36	—	28			
Lib.	64	77	34	25	73	47	7.25	.05	.265
N.D.P.	7	8	22	39	27	25			
N	(14)	(13)	(23)	(36)	(11)	(97)			
d) <i>Subjective Class</i>						Chi-Square	p	C	
	Upper and Upper Middle	Middle and Lower Middle	Lower and Working	All					
P.C.	36	41	23	33					
Lib.	51	44	46	47		6.89	.05	.224	
N.D.P.	13	16	32	20					
N	(55)	(32)	(44)	(131)					

<sup>12</sup> D. G. MacRae, *Ideology and Society*, London, 1961. Ch. XVI.

<sup>13</sup> E. R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*, London, 1961. Ch. XVI. D. A. Martin, *A Sociology of English Religion*, London, 1967. Ch. 1 and 2. E. Pin, *Pratique Religieuse et Classes Sociales*, Paris, 1956.

*Social Class*

It has been concluded that class voting in Canada is very weak, mainly because people's behaviour is more strongly influenced by regionalism and religion.<sup>14</sup> Table 2 shows that on all four measures of social class used in our Victoria study chi-square values were significant at levels from .05 to .01 and that there was an unusually high proportion of respondents in the highest grouping who voted Liberal. There was also a remarkably high proportion of respondents in the lowest categories who claimed to have voted NDP. Conservative support showed no noticeable overall relationship to class factors. It ranged from being unusually large among the lowest income groups to being unusually small in the lowest subjective class groups. In the work of Alford on social class and voting, measures based on occupation alone have been used in almost every case. The fairly consistent relationships between all four measures of social class and Liberal and NDP voting patterns in Victoria indicate that the valuable work done by Alford might well be improved upon if other measures of social class were to be employed in national studies. The recent study by Wilson of a by-election in Waterloo South showed relationships between social class and Liberal and NDP voting which were remarkably similar to those which we found in Victoria.<sup>15</sup> Laponce's findings, too, in his work on the Vancouver-Burrard constituency and in his analysis of national opinion poll data, were close to ours regarding the association between Liberal and NDP voting and social class, especially when the latter was measured in terms of education.<sup>16</sup> Studies on the 1962 election by Alford and Perlin are supported by our data on strong tendencies among the higher occupational groups to vote for the Liberal party.<sup>17</sup> Alford's analysis of 1962 Federal voting by province also showed that the NDP obtained strong support from the less well educated and the manual worker groups in British Columbia. His study of the 1965 election indicated that the NDP in British Columbia had the highest class vote of all provinces.<sup>18</sup> Its strong labour union movement and the large working class NDP vote make this province an exceptional one<sup>19</sup> and our data

<sup>14</sup> See Alford, note 5, above.

<sup>15</sup> J. Wilson, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> J. Laponce, *op. cit.* pp. 63-65.

<sup>17</sup> Meisel, *op. cit.* 1964.

<sup>18</sup> R. R. Alford, "Class Voting in the Anglo-American Political Systems," Ch. 1. in S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, New York, 1967. p. 86.

<sup>19</sup> Meisel, *op. cit.* 1964. pp. 181 ff.

suggest that Alford's tendency to put Liberal and NDP voters together as representing the Left in Canadian federal politics is not justified and hides more than it reveals.

TABLE 3  
Selected Demographic Factors and Federal Voting, 1965

a) *Age*

	<i>Under 35</i>	<i>35-44</i>	<i>45-54</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>Over 65</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
P.C.	7	20	26	27	62	32			
Lib.	79	57	45	54	27	48	8.47	.02	.243
N.D.P.	14	23	29	19	12	20			
N	(14)	(30)	(31)	(26)	(34)	(135)			

b) *Sex*

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	22	41	32			
Lib.	52	45	48	6.37	.05	.214
N.D.P.	27	15	20			
N	(64)	(69)	(133)			

c) *Canadian Generation*

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third or more</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	42	29	19	31			
Lib.	33	50	72	49	8.74	.02	.249
N.D.P.	25	21	9	20			
N	(48)	(52)	(32)	(132)			

d) *Country of Birth*

	<i>British Isles</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>All</i>			
P.C.	45	26	30	32			
Lib.	29	56	50	48	7.99	.02	.237
N.D.P.	26	17	20	20			
N	(38)	(87)	(10)	(135)			

A comparison of data on each of the measures of social class suggests that only in terms of education and subjective class does the NDP, the party of the left, have a particularly strong lower class base. On the other two measures it has more support from groups above the lowest level.

*Demographic Factors*

Table 3 shows that the most remarkable aspect of the relation between age and federal voting was the extremely high proportion of younger respondents (those under 45) who supported the Liberal Party. Almost as remarkable was the very high percentage of the oldest age group (those over 65) who supported the Progressive Conservatives. The latter relationship has been found elsewhere by Jewett and by Alford in his study of the 1962 election results.<sup>20</sup>

The data relating to the generations clearly indicate that the Canadian-born respondents showed an unusual and marked tendency to vote Liberal while the first generation, mainly immigrants, favoured the other two parties. The correspondence of the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP with the two major British political parties may well account for this situation and this is strongly suggested by the data on country of birth. The majority of Canadian-born favoured the Liberals, while less than a third of the British-born did so.

That support for the Liberal Party may be related to strong identification with Canada as a national entity is a proposition worth investigating, ironic as it may seem to those who claim that Liberal governments have done less than they should to keep the nation independent of the U.S.A.<sup>21</sup> Opinion poll data have shown Liberal supporters in favour of Canada having a new national flag to a greater extent than supporters of other parties.<sup>22</sup>

In an attempt to measure the relative strength of the religious, social class and demographic factors in influencing Federal voting patterns, two methods were used. In the first of these the data were controlled for each of the demographic factors, for all the social class factors, except occupational class, and for church attendance i.e. these variables were each held constant separately so that their influence on each of the relationships studied could be minimized.<sup>23</sup> In the case of occupational class, the numbers in some cells were so small that useful controlled comparisons could not be made and in the case of the variable "Do you believe in

<sup>20</sup> John C. Courtney (ed.), *Voting in Canada*, Scarborough, 1967. p. 54. Meisel, op. cit. 1964. p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> I am indebted to Professor Roy Watson for discussion on this point.

<sup>22</sup> M. Schwarz, *Public Opinion and Canadian Identity*, Scarborough, 1967, p. 109.

<sup>23</sup> Because of small numbers of respondents control variables were reduced to two categories e.g. high and low income. It should be pointed out that this may hide relationships of a curvilinear nature i.e. where there are three or more categories and the extremes show stronger relationships than the centre, as was the case with our data on income and NDP voting at both levels (see Tables 2b and 5b).

God, or not?" so few respondents replied negatively that it could not be subjected to controls.

In general most of the relationships held up under controlled comparison but a few exceptions are worth mentioning. Thus, when data on religious preference were controlled for subjective class, among the higher subjective class groups there was an increase in the tendency for United Church supporters to vote Liberal. A similar tendency was found in the more highly educated group. These trends suggest that the relationship between religious preference and voting may become stronger the higher one goes up the social stratification hierarchy. It has been shown quite clearly in several investigations in modern industrial societies that the higher social strata, roughly speaking non-manual workers and their families, are more likely than the lower ones to be regular church goers and to maintain connections with religious organizations.

When the religious preference variables were controlled for generation there was a marked tendency for United Church supporters from the higher generations to support the Liberal party and the same was true of those with no religious preference. Also the relationship between having a fundamentalist belief about Jesus (i.e. that he was God's son and mankind's saviour) and voting Progressive Conservative was weakened among the higher Canadian generations. This evidence, together with the overall strong relationship between higher generations and Liberal voting suggests that the process of Canadianization works to the advantage of the Liberal party at the expense of the Progressive Conservatives.

The relationships between income levels and voting patterns were particularly strong among the lower education and subjective class groups, i.e. the highest income groups showed a high propensity to vote Liberal and the lowest to vote Progressive Conservative.

The second method used to try to measure the relative strength of the relationships was by calculating contingency coefficients<sup>24</sup> using the formula  $C = \frac{\text{Chi}^2}{N + \text{Chi}^2}$ . A ranking of the coefficients shows the four highest to be those calculated for religious variables — belief about Jesus, life after death and God's influence over events on earth, and church attendance. Income was the highest among social class factors and Canadian generation among demographic factors. But it is not possible to conclude from these comparisons that religious factors per se are at work, exerting a major independent influence on federal voting patterns. A comparison of the mean values of C for religious factors and for social

<sup>24</sup> See explanatory note on Table I.

class factors shows them to be .266 and .251 respectively, i.e. and not very far apart. The C value for income exceeds, and that for occupation is virtually similar to, the mean for religious beliefs. It is therefore possible that the factors of religion and social class are operating together.

TABLE 4  
Religion and Provincial Voting, 1966

a) *Religious Preference*

	<i>Angl.</i>	<i>Utd.</i>	<i>Other Prot.</i>	<i>R.C.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	22	40	11	44	13	27	—	—	—
N.D.P.	10	13	11	—	50	16	—	—	—
S.C.	68	47	78	56	38	57			
N	(41)	(30)	(9)	(9)	(16)	(105)			

b) *Church Attendance*

	<i>At least weekly</i>	<i>1-3 times a month</i>	<i>Few times a year</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	21	31	33	21	25			
N.D.P.	4	19	10	31	18	4.12	.20	.182
S.C.	75	50	57	48	57			
N	(28)	(16)	(30)	(48)	(122)			

c) *Do you think people should be married in Church?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	24	26	50	25			
N.D.P.	6	31	—	18	13.5	.005	.315
S.C.	70	43	50	57			
N	(63)	(58)	(2)	(123)			

d) *Do you think there is a life after death?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	17	31	35	25			
N.D.P.	12	29	17	18	9.45	.01	.266
S.C.	71	40	48	57			
N	(59)	(35)	(29)	(123)			

e) *Do you believe in God, or not?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	26	33	11	25			
N.D.P.	15	22	44	18	7.57	.025	.241
S.C.	59	44	44	57			
N	(105)	(9)	(9)	(123)			

f) *Do you believe God answers prayers?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	19	29	35	24			
N.D.P.	12	25	30	18	9.40	.01	.277
S.C.	70	46	35	58			
N	(69)	(24)	(20)	(113)			

g) *Do you believe God can influence events on earth?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	25	28	22	25			
N.D.P.	17	20	17	17	.077	NS*	.026
S.C.	59	52	61	58			
N	(65)	(25)	(23)	(113)			

h) *What do you believe about Jesus?*

	<i>God's Son and Saviour</i>	<i>Good Man and Teacher</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	24	27	40	17	27			
N.D.P.	4	31	30	25	18	15.8	.001	.339
S.C.	72	42	30	58	56			
N	(54)	(45)	(10)	(12)	(121)			

\* NS = Not significant at the .10 level or higher.

## PROVINCIAL VOTING PATTERNS\*

*Religious Factors*

Relationships between the denominational affiliation of our respondents and their reported voting patterns in the Provincial election of 1966, as shown in Table 4, suggest that in Victoria the governing Social Credit party attracted an unusually high proportion of Anglicans and those in the "Other Protestant" category, while the New Democratic opposition party attracted very strong support, almost three times as much, from those claiming to have no religion. These relationships between "Other Protestants" and Social Credit voting and between having no religion and voting NDP were also found in the study by Meissner cited above. Social Credit seems to have attracted as many votes from United Church respondents as from Catholic ones, although in the latter case it must again be noted that numbers were small.

If weekly church attendance is a mark of piety and religious devotion

\* Respondents were asked "Did you vote in the last provincial election in September 1966?" Those replying affirmatively were then asked "For which party did you vote?"



then our findings in Victoria go some way towards upholding the claim that supporters of the provincial Social Credit government are more religious in this sense than those of any other party. Those voting for the NDP included an unusually high proportion of those who said they never go to church, although the relationship was by no means so strong as that between voting NDP and having no religion. It is worth noting here that social class, especially as defined subjectively by respondents themselves, is an important factor influencing the NDP vote. As was pointed out earlier, studies have shown that lower and working class people have never been religiously active to any great extent. Churchgoing especially, except for smaller sectarian groups like Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals, has always been primarily a middle-class affair, even in predominantly Catholic countries.

The division between a governing party which strongly identifies itself with traditional religious outlooks and an opposition which has been relatively indifferent to religious matters is also clearly apparent in the data on provincial voting in 1966 as related to religious beliefs. Supporters of Social Credit were especially likely to claim a belief in "Jesus as God's only son sent into the world by God to save mankind," while those supporting the New Democratic party tended to express other kinds of belief about him or to express uncertainty. A similar difference emerged in replies to the question "Do you think people should be married in Church?" Social Credit voters being especially likely to affirm it and NDP supporters to deny it. The same was true in answers to the question concerning belief in life after death and belief in God. Even among those not denying belief in God, Social Credit supporters showed a high tendency to report believing that God answers prayers while NDP voters tended to deny it or to express uncertainty.

TABLE 5  
Social Class and Provincial Voting, 1966

a) *Education (Highest School Grade completed)*

	<i>Grade 12 or Higher</i>	<i>Less than Grade 12</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>G</i>
Lib.	27	23	25	2.15	NS	.130
N.D.P.	13	23	18			
S.C.	60	54	57			
N	(62)	(61)	(123)			

b) *Income (Total income before taxes for 1966)*

	<i>Over \$8,000</i>	<i>\$6,000- \$8,000</i>	<i>\$4,000- \$6,000</i>	<i>\$2,000- \$4,000</i>	<i>Up to \$2,000</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	41	42	12	12	—	24			
N.D.P.	7	21	24	24	17	19	10.6	.005	.293
S.C.	52	37	65	64	83	58			
N	(29)	(19)	(34)	(25)	(6)	(113)			

c) *Occupational Class*

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	47	64	5	10	24	26			
N.D.P.	7	—	32	38	12	21	6.01	.05	.245
S.C.	47	36	63	52	65	53			
N	(15)	(14)	(19)	(29)	(17)	(94)			

d) *Subjective Class*

	<i>Upper and Upper Middle</i>	<i>Middle and Lower Middle</i>	<i>Lower and Working</i>	<i>All</i>			
Lib.	41	14	18	25			
N.D.P.	10	21	24	18	3.18	.25	.164
S.C.	50	66	58	57			
N	(42)	(29)	(45)	(116)			

*Social Class*

There was no overall consistent relationship between measures of social class and provincial voting, as seen in Table 5. In terms of educational level both Social Credit and the Liberals secured slightly above average support from the better educated respondents while the NDP was more strongly supported by the less well educated. The highest income groups were very strongly Liberal while the lowest income group was strongest in its support of Social Credit, although it was numerically small. The governing party received most of its support from the three lowest income groups, whereas the opposition NDP vote was strongest among the three middle income categories. Relationships similar to those among income groups were found among occupational classes i.e. the highest ones were strongly Liberal, the lowest Social Credit and the middle ones NDP. In the case of subjective class positions the highest group (upper and upper middle) was strongly liberal as was the case with Federal voting and the class identification of the NDP was more evident than it was among the other social class measures. That party derived its greatest support from those claiming to be in the lower or working class. Social

Credit supporters placed themselves more towards the lower end of the scale than the higher but were most in evidence in the middle and lower middle class groups. These data on social class shed further light on the extent to which class cleavage in British Columbia provides an explanation of provincial voting patterns.<sup>25</sup> Of special interest is the tendency for the lowest income and occupational groups to be more likely to support Social Credit than the NDP.

TABLE 6  
Selected Demographic Factors and Provincial Voting, 1966

a) Age

	<i>Under 35</i>	<i>35-44</i>	<i>45-54</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>Over 65</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	25	30	26	27	19	25	1.74	NS	.118
N.D.P.	18	26	26	8	13	18			
S.C.	58	44	48	65	68	57			
N	(12)	(27)	(27)	(26)	(31)	(123)			

b) Sex

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	28	23	25	1.92	NS*	.122
N.D.P.	21	15	18			
S.C.	51	63	57			
N	(61)	(62)	(123)			

c) Canadian Generation

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third or More</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	7	31	41	25	5.16	.10	.205
N.D.P.	17	41	14	18			
S.C.	76	48	45	57			
N	(41)	(48)	(29)	(118)			

d) Country of Birth

	<i>British Isles</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Chi- Square</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>C</i>
Lib.	7	34	10	25	8.99	.02	.261
N.D.P.	23	18	—	18			
SC	71	48	90	57			
N	(31)	(82)	(10)	(123)			

\* Not significant at the .10 level or higher.

<sup>25</sup> M. Robin, "The Social Basis of Party Politics in British Columbia," *Queen's Quarterly*, LXII, 1965. W. D. Young, *Democracy and Discontent*, Toronto, 1969.

*Demographic Factors*

The clearest trend observable in Table 6 among age categories was the high proportion of older people (those over 55) who favoured Social Credit and the low proportion who supported the NDP. Opposition support seemed to come mainly from the 35-54 group, while the Liberal supporters were in evidence in the 35-64 group, especially towards its younger end. Social credit was the party favoured by women respondents while support for the other two parties was greater in the case of men. Among the generations, new Canadians were strongest in their support of Social Credit and weakest in their support of the Liberals while the older generations were highest above the average in voting for the Liberal Party and below average in voting Social Credit. The NDP received its greatest support from the second generation. From the standpoint of country of birth Social Credit was especially favoured by those born in the British Isles while the Liberals benefitted to a degree considerably above average from respondents born within Canada.

As in the analysis of Federal voting patterns two methods were used to try to discover the relative influence of such of the independent variables on Provincial voting. When the data were controlled for the same factors as were used in the analysis of Federal voting, in almost every case there was no change in the direction of the relationships between Provincial voting and the religious, social class and demographic variables. The first of the two exceptions was that among the higher Subjective Class group an unusually large number of those believing in "Jesus as God's Son and Saviour" said they voted Liberal. The other was that among those respondents born in the British Isles those placing themselves in the lower or working class showed an unusual high propensity to vote Social Credit.

The calculation of contingency coefficients for each of the tables showed that among the variables studied religious beliefs seem to have the highest influence over respondents' voting patterns at the Provincial level. Again the highest value of C was found for the relationship between beliefs about Jesus and voting. Four of the top five C values dealt with religious variables and, as in the case of Federal voting, income level showed the highest C value among non-religious variables. But the mean C value for the religious items was .234, not much higher than that for social class items which was .208.

It is remarkable, however, how strong the relationships are between the religious behaviour and belief items used in our study and voting at both

Federal and Provincial levels. Whether they suggest that religion operates independently from other influences on the political outlook and behaviour of the people of Greater Victoria is doubtful. Religious beliefs and practices themselves are related to factors such as age, sex and social class and it is conceivable that religious and political behaviour may be the outcome of similar processes. Such processes have not yet been closely investigated in Canada and it is the purpose of this final part of the paper to suggest how they might be discovered.

Several leading political scientists have centred their interests on the concepts of "political cultures" and "political socialization" as means of shedding light on the factors in the life-experience of people in modern societies which mould their political attitudes and develop their political behaviour.<sup>26</sup> The major assumption behind this theoretical approach is that it is through the social groups and subcultures in which people move during their life-time that they acquire political attitudes and engage in distinctive patterns of political behaviour.

When the data presented above are reviewed in the light of this theoretical framework a number of possible subcultural patterns can be discerned. Our findings, for example, indicate that the oldest, the British-born, the Anglican respondents and the most active churchgoers show an unusual tendency to vote Progressive Conservative federally and Social Credit provincially. At the same time the 35-54 year old group, the British-born, those with no religion and the least active churchgoers tend to an unusual degree to vote NDP at both levels. It seems likely that the British-born respondents acquired many of their basic religious and political allegiances in Britain and had little difficulty in transferring the latter to the two Canadian parties at the Federal level which are counterparts of the major British parties.<sup>27</sup> Their support for Social Credit at the provincial level is perhaps an indication that they perceive the government as having provided them with opportunities for economic success in British Columbia which they could never have had in their homeland, although this depends on when they came here. Another possibility is that many older British-born people have moved to Victoria, as have many other retired persons, from the Prairie provinces and in the case of those from Alberta, have retained allegiances to Social

<sup>26</sup> H. Hyman, *Political Socialization*, Glencoe, 1959. K. P. Langton, *Political Socialization*, New York, 1969. Richard E. Dawson, "Political Socialization", in J. A. Robinson (ed.) *Political Science Annual*, Vol. 1. 1966, esp. pp. 64 ff.

<sup>27</sup> On the NDP with regard to this possibility, see Leo Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed*, Toronto, 1964.

Credit which they acquired there. Period and place of immigration may therefore be a decisive factor.

A look at Canadian-born respondents' strong preferences for the Liberal party federally and provincially shows their political socialization has been different from that of the English-born. United Church supporters and respondents in the highest social class categories also reported to an unusual degree that they voted Liberal which suggests that among the processes making for close identification with the ruling Federal party are those which lead people to affiliate with or to retain their childhood affiliations with the most distinctively Canadian denomination or to attain high social and economic status. That Liberal voting at both levels was also high among the young, the better educated and those who were least religious suggests that another political subculture which favours the Liberal party includes younger voters with secular outlooks, many educated to the post-secondary level.

Support for a class-interest type of interpretation of NDP voting has been referred to above and the comparative irreligiosity of the lower socio-economic groups may account for much of the relationship between voting NDP and having no religion, not attending church or not upholding certain traditional religious beliefs. On the other hand not being religious and voting for a party of the left may both be a product of common experiences e.g. socially immobile at the lower manual occupational levels and having only acquired a minimal amount of formal education.

Much more research is required, however, before the survey results presented here can be used to support broader generalizations. Studies of voting patterns which ask the following kinds of question are necessary before any firmly based conclusions can be reached about voting in Victoria, British Columbia or on a nation-wide basis:— Do Canadians take their political party preferences with them when they move from one province or region of the country to another? To what extent do Canadian-born voters who are children of British immigrants support the same party as their parents? How do immigrants from continental Europe, the United States and other non-British countries vote in Canadian elections? Do Canadian voters change their party preferences at different stages in their life-cycle? What happens when they are socially mobile from one socio-economic level to another? All these questions can also be raised with reference to religious behaviour.

But they are questions which require larger and more sophisticated

studies than the one reported here. Victoria is not the ideal place to conduct research into Canadian political behaviour generally, but local studies as well as nation-wide ones can contribute much to the construction of a composite picture and an adequate explanation of Canadian voting patterns.