

THE RELIGION ENIGMA: Theoretical riddle or classificational artifact?

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Abstract

The debate about religion's impact upon Canadian voting has long focused on the cleavage between Protestants and Catholics. Drawing upon data from a 35,000 sample online survey conducted during the 2006 federal election, as well as past Canadian Election Studies, analysis presented here, however, suggests that the disproportionate Protestant-Conservative association is largely an artifact of Evangelical voters, rather than members of such mainstream denominations as Anglican, United and Presbyterian. In fact, certain of these mainstream groupings are hardly distinctive from Roman Catholics, at least in voting patterns (outside of Quebec). This discussion is theoretically contextualized by the Evangelical experience in the United States, and the study also examines the distinctive behaviour of non-Christians and the non-religious in Canada.

Students of Canadian electoral behaviour are very familiar with the prominence denominational voting has played for over half a century. Since Meisel reported it more than 50 years ago (1956), not only has the tendency for Liberals to perform particularly well among Roman Catholics been one of the cornerstones of their success (Blais 2005), it has presented an ongoing mystery to social scientists in search of a model to explain it. Unlike the typical dilemma facing academic researchers of a theory in search of evidence, here we have some 50 years of evidence, the Catholic-Liberal connection, in search of an explanatory theory.

There have been numerous attempts to explain the phenomenon, including the religion of party leaders, ethnic loyalty to the party in power when one immigrated, intergenerational transmission of values, parochial school education, a unique Catholic ethos, contextual social influences, union membership, historical hostility to the Conservative party among non-Protestants, media access and the appeal of religious issues (Gidengil et al. 2006; Irvine 1974; Irvine and Gold 1980; Johnston 1985; Laponce 1972; Leduc 1984; Meisel 1956; Mendelsohn and Nadeau 1997; O'Neill 2001; Pammett 1991; Regenstreif 1965). Elements of each of these hypotheses have been consistent with the Catholic-Liberal association, but none have sus-

tained over time. There have been practical problems with each, and accordingly the explanation of this relationship has become a "holy grail" being pursued by academic researchers.

We take a somewhat different tack in pursuing this decades-long enigma. Rather than adding yet another plausible theory as to why Canadian Catholics tend to vote differently from Protestants, we suggest that an aspect of the dilemma is a result of methodology. More specifically, the way Protestants have been grouped and categorized may explain – or explain away – the apparent favourability of the Liberal party among Catholics.

The series of Canadian Election Studies tend to capture religion with a survey item that groups religious affiliation into few general categories, for example, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Other. While there have been variations over the years, typically, no attempt has been made to identify specific denominations within the very large Protestant category. There are practical reasons for this aggregation. There are in fact numerous different Protestant denominations, the vast majority of which have memberships sufficiently small that they do not reach critical mass even with a national sample of 4,000. The expedience of grouping Protestants into one common category is understandable, but might create a classificational artifact that masks significant differences among

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them. In other words, the character of Protestant versus Catholic political behaviour might be hidden in plain sight by the way the former is categorized.

We explore this possibility and suggest that at the very least much of what we know about the Protestant-Catholic divide in Canada is partly a function of how we study Protestants. More specifically, the difference between Catholics and some of the more “mainstream” groups within Protestantism is less than that between the latter group and its more “Evangelical” counterparts. The possibility for such a pattern is suggested by both the American and Canadian experience, and tested against a unique dataset, one which, with its substantial sample size and denominational specificity, permits a more nuanced look at religion and voting in Canada.

Partisanship and Protestant Bifurcation

Suggesting an amorphous Protestant classification camouflages substantial political distinctions within it is not mere idle speculation. The experience of the United States has been studied in some detail. There are different possible criteria for denominational differentiation, but a distinction one sees regularly in American literature is between Evangelical and Mainstream denominations.

The Evangelical camp is distinguished by Protestants described variously as conservative, traditional, old-time and fundamentalist. Their style of religious commitment stresses loyalty to traditional orthodoxy. Contemporary Evangelicals have retained the religious intensity and passionate emotional commitment to faith of the early Puritan settlers (Wald 1996). In theological terms the core items of faith include: the belief in a literal inerrant interpretation of the Bible as the word of God; having encouraged others to believe in the divinity of Christ; and belief in the efficacy of Christ’s life, death and resurrection for the salvation of the soul (Hunter 1983). They emphasize the primacy of personal religious experience, and being “born again” as leading to salvation, and see the church as an agent for guiding non-believers to God.

Mainstream or mainline denominations are more modernist and liberal theologically with different historical traditions. They are relatively unaffected by revivalism, preferring to trust reason

as central to their beliefs, and tend to view Christianity in symbolic rather than absolute terms (Wald 1996). These distinctions are not necessarily neatly coterminous with denominational boundaries, and can indeed overlap within the same congregation. One way some distinguish them is whether a church is affiliated with the mainstream National Council of Churches or the National Association of Evangelicals (Wald 1996: 64).

Early American history had been characterized by establishment churches in certain states which were generally linked with the Federalist Party, while members of lower status churches were more likely to be aligned with the Jeffersonian Democratic Republicans (Kleppner 1970: 71-72). The association of Mainstream church members passed on to the Republican Party and persisted while immigrant groups, particularly Catholics and Jews, gravitated to the Democratic Party, as did poorer Protestants during the great depression (Lubell 1965). The Mainline denominations were experiencing a relative membership decline by the 1960s when moral crusades such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and the Women’s Movement created tensions among liberal Protestant clergy and a declining attachment to Republicans (Quinley 1974; Baltzell 1964).

More detailed research by Manza and Brooks (1999) indicates that there has been a modest decline in religious cleavage between American Protestants and Catholics since 1960. That generalization itself masks distinct patterns among separate Protestant groupings. The more liberal mainstream Protestant congregations have become consistently more Democratic in character, while the conservative Evangelical groups have remained relatively stable, with the exception of 1976, when “born again” Democrat Jimmy Carter broke the general pattern and had greater Evangelical support than among mainstream Protestants. Likewise, Catholic political proclivities when controlled for economic circumstance have changed very gradually over time with the single exception of the breakthrough candidacy of John Kennedy in 1960 (Manza and Brooks 1999: 124-25).

Among the contemporary debates about religion and voting behaviour in the U.S. is whether the secularization model applies and America has experienced a decline in the salience of religious de-

nominalism in the electoral process (Yamane 1997: 119). A related discussion is whether inter-denominational rivalry has been replaced by a more ideological conflict between religious conservatism versus liberalism (Liebman et al. 1988). When categorized into the broad groupings of Protestant and Catholic, there appears to be a decline in voting distinctions over time (Carmines and Stanley 1992). Nevertheless, evidence of Christian Right mobilization is substantial (Manza and Brooks 1999: 97).

Over the same period there has been a gradual decline of the Catholic vote away from a Democratic predisposition to a more neutral posture, barely distinguishable from the overall electorate. This has been attributed to a rise in socioeconomic standing within the group (Kellstedt and Noll 1990). The modest if overall net decline in magnitude of inter-denominational voting then has seemed to be attributable to Catholics and mainstream Protestants, rather than Evangelicals.

In the United States, an interesting phenomenon has been the rise in political mobilization of evangelical Protestants over the last generation. At a time when many Americans, as with citizens of other industrialized nations, were becoming secularized in their outlook the previously politically dormant Evangelical movement became mobilized in the late 1970s. Chroniclers of this phenomenon suggest that a series of grassroots campaigns over local controversies concerning abortion, liberal school textbooks, homosexual rights, and the proposed Equal Rights Amendment provided the initial impetus and led to the mobilization of organizations with a more national perspective such as Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition movements among them (Wald 1996: 187-88).

The best attempt at a benchmark for Evangelical voting in presidential elections prior to this mobilization was an approximately even split between presidential candidates Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter in 1976 (Lopatto 1985: 55; Menendez 1977: 197). However, the *New York Times*' estimate for 2004 based on exit polls that year was a 78-21 split for Bush over Kerry. The importance of this split is apparent when it is recognized that Evangelicals comprise 23 percent of the overall population of US voters. There is also evidence that Evangelical political participation has increased in conjunction with the mobilization efforts of the

Christian Right (Wald 1996: 204). It has been observed that the most noticeable change in the impact of religion in the U.S. has been the increased Republican partisanship among religiously doctrinal conservative Protestants (Layman 1997: 306).

How well the US experience translates to Canada is of course an open question. Comparativists have long cautioned about generalizing from the US experience, citing "American exceptionalism" as a confounding factor (Lipset 1996). Indeed, US citizens do tend to be more religious than those in other western countries by such measures as church membership, attendance at services, and belief in God and an afterlife (Fowler and Hertzke 1995; Greeley 1996; Lipset 1970). They are also more likely to hold fundamentalist beliefs. Another feature of the religious experience unique to the US is its degree of pluralism, just the opposite of Europe's pattern of official state sanctioned churches (Liebman, Sutton and Wuthnow 1970).

In the US, the emergence of a distinctive Evangelical voting pattern was coterminous with activism by Christian Right organizations such as the Moral Majority and by the candidacy of Ronald Reagan in 1980, but was particularly evident in the two victories by George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. In Canada there has been growing support for the Conservative party by non-mainstream Protestants. This dates at least since 2004 when that party renewed itself by uniting with the Canadian Alliance, formerly the Reform Party pioneered by Evangelicals Preston Manning and Stockwell Day. Among the policies espoused by Manning and Day were traditional positions on access to abortion and same sex marriage, both hot button issues in the conservative religious community. Subsequent positions taken by Stephen Harper's Conservative government have reconfirmed this linkage (Malloy 2010).

Unfortunately we do not have Canadian Election Study data from the Reform/Canadian Alliance periods to determine whether this western-based party development provided the catalyst for more distinctive Evangelical political participation. We do however have data from the Angus Reid survey, "God and Society in North America: A Study of Religion, Politics and Social Involvement in Canada and the United States," including 3,000 Canadian subjects, seven months before the 1997 federal election. This study indicates a strong Evan-

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gical correlation with Reform Party support at that time, as well as a strong Mainstream Protestant association with the Progressive Conservative Party of the time, and English Catholic support for the Liberals (Guth and Fraser 2001: 52). The research suggests that a bifurcation of the two Protestant categories was apparent at least by 1997, if not earlier, that became a precedent for the patterns quite evident in the subsequent decade. Others have noted the increased political assertiveness of Canadian Evangelicals during this period (Neuhaus 1999: 60). This leads us then to propose two hypotheses for the newly evolved Canadian party system of the early 21st century: Adherents of the established Protestant denominations in anglophone Canada, notably Anglican and United Church members, are not significantly distinct from Roman Catholics in their voting patterns; and members of less established Protestant denominations, typically Evangelical in character, are more likely to support the Conservative Party than are Mainstream Protestants. There is also research suggesting that moral traditionalism, particularly among Evangelicals, points to the rise of the Reform/Canadian Alliance movement at the expense of the Progressive Conservative party (Lusztig and Wilson 2005: 125). However, Canadian Evangelicals do seem to differ from their American counterparts on attitudes toward neo-conservatism (Patrick 2009: 501).

Methodology and Analysis

A serious challenge in trying to assess political diversity is an appropriate method of measurement. The most common means for categorizing Protestants in the U.S. is the denominational typology devised by Glock and Stark (1965). This was originally trichotomized into liberal, moderate and conservative streams. The liberal category included Episcopalian Congregational, Methodist and Unitarian denominations. The moderate category included Presbyterians and Lutherans (except Missouri synod), as well as other denominations less relevant to Canada, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The conservative category included most others, but specifically excluded Mormons, Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses.¹

There are denominational distinctions between the United States and Canada, but in general the

classification scheme translates quite well. The liberal Protestant category used in the U.S. would include the mainstream Canadian denominations of Anglican and United Church, as well as Unitarian (although the last is so small as to hardly affect the statistics). Presbyterians are also included in this "liberal" category because part of that church was a constituent of the United Church of Canada. The Evangelical category is largely a residual including most other Protestant denominations, some 30 in total, many of an evangelical character, but excluding a few that are seen as distinctly sectarian.² This category also includes Lutherans.³

In Canadian Election Studies from 1968 through 1984 the religion question was coded such that specific Protestant denominations could be identified. As shown in Table 1a, the more Evangelical Protestant category was regularly more supportive of the Conservatives than were Mainstream Protestants. However the differences throughout this period pale by comparison to the strong Liberal support of Roman Catholics. Unfortunately, the CES surveys from 1988 through 2000 did not ask about specific Protestant denomination, and this information was only restored with the 2004 and 2006 studies. By this time the pattern had changed substantially, and as indicated in Table 1a, by 2006 the distinction in party preferences among Protestants outside of Quebec far exceeded those between Mainstream Protestants and Roman Catholics by a proportion of four to one. Table 1a reflects changing proportions of the various denominational categories. Primarily, it reflects a dramatically declining proportion of the electorate is Mainstream Protestant, while the Catholic proportion has been stable, and Evangelicals show a slight increase. Excluded are increases in the non-Christian and non-Religious proportions of the electorate.

We apply the same typology to a unique data resource, the 2006 Ipsos-Reid election day survey. This online poll includes more than 36,000 participants. A sample size this large, although not a probability sample,⁴ allows us to examine groups too small to study with a conventionally sized survey. More specifically, it permits us to take a much closer look at distinctions among different religious groupings. Towards this objective, we categorized respondents' stated religious affiliation into five general categories: Catholic, Mainstream Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Non-Christian,

Table 1a:
Party support level (percentage) by denomination, outside Quebec

| | | 1968 | 1974 | 1979 | 1984 | 2004 | 2006 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Catholic | Liberal | 73.4 | 63.6 | 47.9 | 37.1 | 50.1 | 37.9 |
| | Conservative | 14.8 | 26.8 | 32.6 | 46.1 | 31.9 | 45.4 |
| | NDP | 11.7 | 9.6 | 19.4 | 16.8 | 18.0 | 16.8 |
| | N | 418 | 228 | 463 | 588 | 451 | 734 |
| Mainstream Protestant | Liberal | 45.2 | 42.3 | 28.0 | 17.6 | 33.5 | 29.9 |
| | Conservative | 39.3 | 46.1 | 56.0 | 64.8 | 49.2 | 49.1 |
| | NDP | 15.5 | 11.6 | 16.0 | 17.6 | 17.3 | 21.0 |
| | N | 935 | 423 | 814 | 766 | 594 | 662 |
| Evangelical | Liberal | 38.1 | 38.2 | 27.5 | 17.6 | 24.0 | 20.9 |
| | Conservative | 54.0 | 50.0 | 60.1 | 73.1 | 59.7 | 67.2 |
| | NDP | 7.9 | 11.8 | 12.4 | 9.3 | 16.3 | 11.9 |
| | N | 139 | 68 | 153 | 193 | 196 | 235 |

Source: Canadian Election Studies, 1968-1994, 2004-2006

and Non-Religious.

Analysis is restricted to respondents outside of Quebec, primarily because the province is religiously homogeneous, with relatively few non-Catholics. Another consideration relates to the unique party system there dominated by the Bloc Québécois, which doesn't compete outside the province. In the Rest of Canada, the Ipsos sample includes over 6,600 Roman Catholics, over 7,400 mainstream Protestants and over 4,000 Evangelical Protestants. Such data allow us to note, for example, that Anglican support for the Liberals was identical to that among Roman Catholics, and for United Church members the difference was less than three percentage points, whereas among Evangelicals the difference approached 20 per-

Table 1b:
Denominations Outside Quebec

| | 1968 | 1974 | 1979 | 1984 | 2004 | 2006 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Catholic | 26.6% | 32.5% | 32.9% | 39.1% | 53.9% | 37.6% |
| Mainstream Protestant | 62.5% | 57.8% | 56.8% | 47.7% | 33.8% | 46.0% |
| Evangelical | 10.9% | 9.7% | 10.3% | 13.3% | 12.2% | 16.3% |
| N | 1789 | 877 | 1727 | 1987 | 3005 | 2068 |

Source: Canadian Election Studies, 1968-1994, 2004-2006

centage points. The distinctions in Conservative party support among the various Protestant denominations were even greater.

The data in Table 2 provide a baseline for the subsequent analyses of denominational party support in the Ipsos study. While overall there is a clear relationship between religious denomination and the vote, what is interesting in Table 2 is the similarities among Catholics and Mainstream Protestants, but stark contrasts

among the latter group and Evangelicals.⁵

Further analysis that takes into account positions on abortion and same-sex marriage reveal an even greater effect of denominational voting.⁶ As suggested above, one might assume the trend of increased Conservative voting among non-mainstream Protestants began with Preston Manning's Reform Party, but a possible parallel phenomenon suggested by Lopatto (1985) is that these social issues are leading mainstream Protestants away from the political right. We test this possibility using the two items in the 2006 Ipsos Reid survey, one on legalization of same-sex marriage, the other on abortion rights. Results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Those holding traditional positions on these two issues were substantially more likely to vote Conservative (by margins of 20 to 30 percentage points). However, Evangelicals were much more inclined to hold these traditional positions than were mainstream Protestants, which goes a long way in accounting for the

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Table 2:
Party support level (percentage) by denomination, outside Quebec

| | Catholic | Mainstream Protestant | Evangelical | Non-Christian | Non-Religious |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Liberal | 35.0 | 34.2 | 20.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 |
| Conservative | 40.5 | 40.6 | 59.5 | 40.5 | 40.5 |
| NDP | 24.5 | 25.2 | 20.4 | 24.5 | 24.5 |
| N | 8769 | 7228 | 4992 | 8769 | 8769 |

$\chi^2=1382$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .155$, $p<.001$

Source: Ipsos Election Day Survey, 2006

differences in party support between the two groups. There was also a tendency for Catholics opposed to same-sex marriage to vote Conservative, but not to the same degree as Protestants, and the abortion issue did not make much difference in Catholic voting. New Democrats received twice the level of support among Protestants of all

denominations who were sympathetic to same-sex marriage. Table 3 presents a remarkable set of figures, which might lead one to think that gay marriage was a dominant concern in the 2006 election, particularly for Evangelicals. In every religious denominational category, the issue is strongly associated with direction of vote. For Catholics and Mainstream Protestants, there is a 30 percentage-point increase in tendency to vote Conservative among those opposed to same-sex marriage, but the difference in party support between these two religious groups

Table 3:
Party support level by denomination & same-sex marriage position, Outside Quebec

| | | Catholic | Mainstream Protestant | Evangelical | Non-Christian | Non-Religious |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Support same-sex marriage | Liberal | 41.2% | 43.5% | 36.6% | 41.1% | 34.9% |
| | Conservative | 26.1% | 24.0% | 25.6% | 14.9% | 20.1% |
| | NDP | 32.6% | 32.4% | 37.8% | 44.0% | 44.9% |
| | N | 3851 | 3573 | 1143 | 1466 | 3887 |

$\chi^2=242.5$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .093$, $p<.001$

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Support civil unions | Liberal | 30.9% | 25.2% | 17.2% | 29.0% | 21.3% |
| | Conservative | 50.9% | 56.7% | 65.9% | 50.1% | 58.3% |
| | NDP | 18.2% | 18.0% | 16.8% | 20.9% | 20.4% |
| | N | 3565 | 2816 | 1953 | 545 | 1133 |

$\chi^2=166.2$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .091$, $p<.001$

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Oppose same-sex marriage | Liberal | 26.7% | 22.7% | 9.7% | 28.8% | 19.7% |
| | Conservative | 58.4% | 59.2% | 78.9% | 46.6% | 58.4% |
| | NDP | 14.9% | 18.1% | 11.4% | 24.7% | 21.9% |
| | N | 1058 | 620 | 1590 | 292 | 269 |

$\chi^2=242.2$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .178$, $p<.001$

Source: Ipsos Election Day Survey, 2006

Table 4:
Party support level by denomination & abortion position, Outside Quebec

| | | Catholic | Mainstream Protestant | Evangelical | Non-Christian | Non-Religious |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Legal in all cases | Liberal | 39.1% | 39.0% | 33.6% | 42.9% | 33.4% |
| | Conservative | 32.3% | 32.3% | 32.7% | 17.0% | 26.2% |
| | NDP | 28.6% | 28.6% | 33.8% | 40.1% | 40.4% |
| | N | 2931 | 3096 | 1025 | 1084 | 3178 |

$\chi^2=222.4$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .099$, $p<.001$

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Legal in most cases | Liberal | 34.9% | 33.0% | 27.2% | 34.3% | 28.8% |
| | Conservative | 41.3% | 43.6% | 46.9% | 32.0% | 35.2% |
| | NDP | 23.7% | 23.4% | 25.8% | 33.7% | 36.0% |
| | N | 3297 | 3126 | 1358 | 837 | 1844 |

$\chi^2=173.2$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .091$, $p<.001$

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Illegal in most cases | Liberal | 28.4% | 21.6% | 10.5% | 20.2% | 18.3% |
| | Conservative | 50.2% | 58.9% | 77.9% | 51.5% | 53.2% |
| | NDP | 21.5% | 19.5% | 11.5% | 28.2% | 28.4% |
| | N | 1407 | 538 | 1622 | 262 | 218 |

$\chi^2=307.1$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .195$, $p<.001$

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Illegal in all cases | Liberal | 31.4% | 31.6% | 6.5% | 28.1% | 22.2% |
| | Conservative | 51.5% | 50.9% | 85.8% | 45.3% | 16.7% |
| | NDP | 17.0% | 17.5% | 7.7% | 26.6% | 61.1% |
| | N | 458 | 57 | 649 | 64 | 18 |

$\chi^2=225.2$, $df=8$, $p<.001$; Cramér's $V = .301$, $p<.001$

Source: Ipsos Election Day Survey, 2006

fails to attain significance, except among those who support civil unions, where Catholic and Protestants show a less than six-point difference in proportions of support for the Catholic and Protestant parties.⁷ But a more marked separation is seen between Mainstream Protestants and Evangelicals. Among this latter group, there is a greater than 50 percentage-point jump in support for the Conservatives as one moves from supporting to opposing same-sex marriage. In almost all cases, Mainstream Protestants and Evangelicals show statistically significant differences in propor-

tions of voters for the different parties, with differences often in the double digits.⁸ For instance, among those who oppose same-sex marriage, under 60 percent of Mainstream Protestants voted Conservative compared to almost 80 percent of Evangelicals.

We see similar increases in Conservative support among non-Christians and the non-religious. What does differ substantially among the various denominations, of course, is their predisposition to favour one side of the issue rather than the other. About one quarter of Evangelicals support

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same-sex marriage whereas 50 percent of both Roman Catholics and Mainstream Protestants do. Support for same-sex marriage among the non-religious is 75 percent.

The other morally connected question was abortion, and as displayed in Table 4, it also shows a strong relationship with party support, but not to the degree demonstrated by same-sex marriage. While there is a fairly consistent pattern of those with more traditional positions at each level being more likely to vote Conservative, only among the Evangelical category do these differences reach the proportions noted for the same-sex marriage issue. Again there were meaningful distinctions by abortion position with denomination, but not to the same degree as with gay marriage except for Evangelicals. Less than 20 percent of that category had a preference for legalized abortion in all cases, whereas, approximately 40 percent of the other categories held that view, a bit less so for Catholics.

Difference in proportions of Liberal or Conservatives voters between Catholic and Mainstream Protestants both yield z scores in excess of 2.575, rendering these differences significant at $p < .001$. Tests of difference of proportions between Mainstream Protestants and Evangelicals show significance levels of $p < .01$ for all parties, with few exceptions. Evangelicals and Mainstream Protestants show no difference in their level of support for the Conservatives in cases where respondents support same-sex marriage, or in their level of support for the NDP in other cases.

Discussion and Conclusion

It should be remembered that the intent of this research note was not to place particular focus upon the behaviour of Evangelicals or any other specific denomination, so much as it was to suggest that divisions among Protestants should be given greater attention, as an alternative to the traditional Catholic vs. Protestant cleavage. The classification of Protestants used here is itself expedient and arbitrary. The use of only a dichotomous distinction among Protestants was made because the CES data utilized in Table 1 had insufficient samples to be usefully divided into more than two categories. Had we made use of the Glock and Stark (1965) trichotomous typology, the middle category would have been predominantly

composed of Presbyterians and Lutherans. In such a case, the level of partisan support of this middle category would have stood clearly between the remainder of the Mainstream and Evangelical classifications.⁹

The reconsideration of classificational divisions among Protestants does not lead us to challenge or explain the historical findings about religion through the mid-1980s. Nothing presented here can be interpreted as raising doubts about the relevance of the Catholic-Protestant divide through 1984. It does however place into question the wisdom of ignoring Protestant interdenominational distinctions over the four federal elections spanning 1988 through 2000.

We might not be able to fully understand when and why the inter-Protestant distinction first manifested itself. A suggestion was raised that it could possibly have been mobilized in conjunction with the emergence of the Reform Party, and then later transferred to the reunited Conservative Party. However there were also a series of alternative hypotheses generated in the U.S. They include: the suggestion that American Catholics have become less distinctive from non-Catholics in their voting behaviour; that mainstream Protestants have gradually moved away from the more conservative Republican Party because of the impact of various social issues; and 3) that the Christian Right mobilized in the 1980s has had the effect of becoming a catalyst to increase polarization and turnout among the Evangelical community. The scope of this research does not fully address these questions, although it might be noted that Table 1 indicates that the proportion of Mainstream Protestants has declined substantially between 1968 and 2004 while Evangelicals have increased during this period. The CES proportion of Catholics outside of Quebec has changed little during this period.

It has become a cliché to conclude reports of empirical inquiry with an exhortation for more research on the topic. This plea applies no less to the findings here, but the most important recommendation to emanate from this work pertains to flexibility in how religious denomination is categorized in Canada. This study does not intend to suggest that the classification scheme used here is optimal. It might not be. However, if this arbitrarily defined typology provides an analysis that leads to a reconsideration of the role of religion in Canadian

voting, one can only assume that there are other new paradigms to be found.

Endnotes

1. The original typology with seven categories was discussed in Glock and Stark, although it is more conveniently summarized in Manza and Brooks (1999: 126-27). It included three Protestant categories, Liberal, Moderate and Conservative. Applied to Canada, we were obliged to eliminate the Moderate category for several reasons, but most prominently because there was no analogue in Canada to the African Methodist Episcopal church, which comprised a substantial portion of the category.
2. The Liberal category is referred to as Mainstream Protestants here, and the Moderate and Conservative categories are merged into Evangelicals, in order to maintain a dichotomous typology of two comparably sized groupings. Certain small distinctive sects Mormons, Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses were excluded from both categories. Also excluded were Greek and Eastern Orthodox.
3. Lutherans are divided into Evangelical (Missouri Synod) and more moderate groupings. However, the Canadian Election Studies do not distinguish between them, making division impractical. Moreover, the voting performance of the two categories is virtually indistinguishable.
4. Potential for selection was tested by pooling together the 2006 Ipsos Reid online poll with the 2006 post-election Canadian Election Study, a technique followed by Malhorta and Krosnick (2007); see also Stephenson and Crête (2011). In essence, vote-choice models were generated with mainly demographic items as independent variables. In addition, these variables were used to generate interactive terms with a "mode" dummy variable (1=Ipsos survey; 0=CES). The interactive terms show no serious bias due to "mode effect." Results of these mode tests are available upon request.
5. Tests of differences in proportions were conducted separately for the three parties. No case produces a statistically significant relationship

between Catholics and Mainstream Protestants. Among the two Protestant groups, significance tests produce results at $p < .001$ for all three parties.

6. The question related to same-sex marriage is as follows: "Which comes closest to your views about gay and lesbian couples, do you think: They should be allowed to legally marry?; they should be allowed to legally form civil unions, but not marry?; there should be no legal recognition of their relationships?" The question on abortion is as follows: Which is the closest to your position. Abortion should be... Legal in all cases; Legal in most cases; Illegal in most cases; Illegal in all cases." These two questions were not repeated in the 2008 Ipsos Reid survey, although the more recent data shows a similar relationship between religion and vote choice.
7. Difference in proportions of Liberal or Conservative voters between Catholic and Mainstream Protestants both yield z scores in excess of 2.575, rendering these differences significant at $p < .001$.
8. Tests of difference of proportions between Mainstream Protestants and Evangelicals show significance levels of $p < .01$ for all parties, with few exceptions. Evangelicals and Mainstream Protestants show no difference in their level of support for the Conservatives in cases where respondents support same-sex marriage, or in their level of support for the NDP in other cases.
9. In that eventuality, there would have been even greater distance between the other two categories.

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