Non-voting in Canada: A cross-model analysis.

Jean J. R. Pignal

University of Windsor

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NON-VOTING IN CANADA:
A CROSS-MODEL ANALYSIS

by

Jean J.R. Pignal

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Political Science in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree
of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, 1990
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ISBN 0-315-60987-7
ABSTRACT

NON-VOTING IN CANADA: A CROSS MODEL ANALYSIS

by

Jean J. R. Pignal

This paper examines the phenomenon of non-voting in Canada as thoroughly as possible, and ascertains which of four divergent approaches can "best" explain it. The study of voter participation has attracted much attention among students of political life since the early 1920's. In Canada, writers including Scarro (1961), Laponce (1967), Mishler (1979) and Clark (1979), have, by and large, adopted analytical procedures developed in the United States, by authors such as Merriam and Gosnell (1924, 1928), Lazarsfeld, Berelson and McPhee (1944, 1954), and Campbell and Converse (1960). Unfortunately, like their American counterparts, they have tended to study the phenomenon of non-voting through the use of a single particular approach. In this paper four different approaches to the study of non-voting are examined. More particularly, this includes three traditional approaches: the Social/Economic approach, the Psychological/Motivational Approach and, the
Environmental/Ecological Approach; as well as a more novel approach with regards to the Canadian literature: the Rational Choice Approach. While this last model has been loosely applied in the U.S., its implementation within the Canadian participation literature is very sparse and, as such, its usefulness as a viable explanatory device of the phenomenon of non-voting is evaluated comparatively within this framework.

In Chapter 1, the scope of non-voting in Canada is examined and an operational definition is advanced which excluded those who "could not vote" in favour of an examination of those who "would not vote". The analysis then proceeds using the data found in the 1984 National Election Survey which looks at three general elections (1979, 1980 and 1984).

In Chapter 2, the traditional approaches are examined through a review of the literature as well as an operationalization of each approach. It should be clear that each approach posits its own discrete hypothesis regarding why people do not vote and who these non-voters are. As such, these often divergent assumptions have been
secluded from each other in order to maintain their integrity. The analysis of each approach is generally evaluated in terms of the product-moment correlation and its square, the coefficient of determination.

In Chapter 3 a more detailed examination is offered with regards to the Rational Choice approach in deference to its novelty regarding Canadian data.

In Chapter 4 the theoretical proclivities and causal inferences of the four approaches are compared and a conclusion is reached that the Rational Choice approach is a more robust paradigm at both the theoretical and the causal level.
To Kimberley for her patience and support
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Lloyd Brown-John for his valuable assistance in all stages of this thesis and for offering some constructive criticism in times of need. I would also like to thank Dr. Akira Kubota and Dr. Kai Hilderbrandt for sitting on my committee. Special thanks to Prof. Richard Price for making available several useful articles. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Department of Political Science and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for intellectual and financial support during my residency at the University of Windsor. Next, I would like to thank my colleagues whose help and inspiration will not be forgotten: Robert Burge, Anne Mander, Mary Anne Semanyshyn and Kimberley Boyuk. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their encouragement throughout this process.
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People relate to their political system in a variety of ways. Some people take the system for granted and are concerned only to adjust their behavior to its demands; others want to improve or transform it. Some have only a passive relationship to the system, while others are very actively involved.

--Lester Milbrath

Now some they do and some they don’t and some you just can’t tell. Some they will and some they won’t with some its just as well.

--Roger Hodgson
CHAPTER 1: 

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Topic

This analysis is concerned with non-voting in Canada. As such, the goals are twofold: 1. to identify who are the non-voters, and; 2. to explain why they abstain from exercising their right to vote. The thesis of this Paper is that the Rational Choice approach provides a better explanation of non-voting in Canada than at least three of the more traditional approaches.

Since the 1920’s, the study of voter participation has attracted much attention among students of political life. In the United States, the works of Merriam and Gosnell (1924, 1928), laid the foundations for future empirical researchers. Later, Lazarsfeld’s work with the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR), (1944, 1954) and Campbell and his colleagues’ studies at the Michigan Survey Research Center (1954, 1960, 1966) carried on the tradition of this extensive reliance on statistical instruments in order to explain the occurrence of non-voting. The study of this particular form of non-participation has also been
furthered by the democratic and participation theories of Downs (1957), Buchanan (1962), Riker (1962) and Milbrath (1965). More recently, new light has been shed on the topic by Kavanagh (1983) and Conway (1985) who have adopted some novel approaches to the problem. Students of Canadian political participation including Scarrow (1961), Lapocne (1967), Mishler (1979), and Clarke et al. (1979) have generally examined the question by replicating some of the analytical procedures developed by their American colleagues. In this manner they have greatly increased our knowledge on the subject of non-voting.

One might conclude from this list that a wealth of information exists on non-voting. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In fact, the majority of the studies alluded to above have contributed to the topic only in a peripheral manner since their primary focus has been on voter participation. Consequently, they have only indirectly or incidentally discussed non-voting. Even where an entire work has been devoted to non-voting, few of the individual researchers have been able to provide consistent and comprehensive support for each others' findings. There are essentially two reasons for this: First, at least three conventional approaches to voting research have been used: 1. the social/economic approach
employed, for example, by Berelson (1954), Mishler (1979) and Scarrow (1961); 2. the psychological/motivational approach suggested by Campbell and his colleagues (1960); and, finally, 3. the ecological/environmental approach employed by Kavanagh (1983) and Conway (1985). Each of these has developed a distinct character involving the individual definitions of the terms under investigation. That is to say:

...the approaches employ different models, as it were, of political man, make different assumptions about political behaviour, rely to some extent on different research methods and tools, and focus on different aspects of the voting decision.

Secondly, even when two works have adopted the same approach, the operationalization of the variables has often differed and, consequently, the findings have produced widely divergent speculations regarding the causes and effects of non-voting in both Canada and the United States.
1.2 The Purpose

The bulk of this study will be dedicated to a cross-model analysis of non-voting (i.e., comparing different approaches using similar data). Using the data found in the most recent and available National Election Study (NES84) which was conducted in 1984, section 1.5 of this first Chapter will begin by limiting the "experimental" sample group from the universe of those who did not vote to those individuals who would not vote. This will be done by purging the dataset of those who, for some structural, institutional or physical reason, could not vote in the 1979, 1980, or 1984 Canadian National Elections. Taking into account variables such as enumeration procedures, electoral laws, and the physical condition of the respondent at the time of the election in question, will remove these unwanted cases from the data in order to allow for a more accurate analysis.

Next, Chapter 2, will examine all three of the conventional approaches enumerated above. The status of each approach will be evaluated through a review of the existing literature; and, the concepts and theoretical precepts of each will be operationalized using the NES84 indicators most appropriate to the specific approaches
under investigation. The goal of this exercise is to ascertain the amount of variance in non-voting that each approach explains.

To these three aforementioned approaches, a fourth, less known explanation developed by Downs (1954), Riker (1968, 1973), Rogowski (1974, 1978), Tollison (1973, 1975), Goodin (1980), Barry (1970), and Pateman (1970), entitled the Rational Choice approach, will be added. While this final approach has been applied to American voting studies, its implementation within the Canadian participation literature is quite sparse and, hence, its utility remains largely unexplored.

Consequently, in Chapter 3, I will turn my attention exclusively to this Rational Choice model in order to gain a better understanding of its underlying assumptions and conceptual proclivities. Then, in Chapter 4, I will compare all four approaches in order to ascertain whether or not the Rational Choice model can be established as a better "research programme". According to Imre Lakatos this process should encompass three distinct steps:
...it is first necessary to show that the new programme can account for all the successes of the old... Secondly, it is necessary to show that on at least one 'crucial experiment' the new research programme proves superior to the old... [and] Thirdly, it is necessary to show that the new programme has broader implications than the old.

The application of these conditions with respect to the Rational Choice approach as an explanation of non-voting in Canada will encompass the main proof of the thesis.

1.3 Why Non-Voting?

Most of the research on the topic of non-voting has originated in the United States. There, voter turnout in presidential elections rarely exceeds 60 percent. Canadian voter turnout figures indicate a consistently higher turnout level. In fact, as a rule, federal elections in Canada garner well over 60 percent of the eligible voters. However, if one controls for non-enumerated Canadians over the age of 21 years, the two countries become much more comparable.
TABLE 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CANADA</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>%T Pop on List</td>
<td>%T Pop 21+</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>%T Pop 21+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

%T= total percentage

As demonstrated in Table 1.1, once the Canadian numbers have been adjusted to account for those individuals who did not make it onto the Voters List, comparative turnout figures between the US and Canada appear to stay within ten percentage points of each other.

Table 1.2, shows that this type of correction continues in Canada with the official turnout rate consistently
higher than the one adjusted for the entire population over 20 years of age.↑↑

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEC YEAR</th>
<th>CENS YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL VOTES CAST</th>
<th>TOT. ELECTORS ON LIST</th>
<th>% LT</th>
<th>TOT. POP. OVER 20yrs*</th>
<th>% PT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7,772,656</td>
<td>9,700,325</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10,613,766</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7,958,636</td>
<td>9,910,757</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10,613,766</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>7,796,728</td>
<td>10,274,904</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11,585,398</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>8,217,916</td>
<td>10,860,888</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>11,585,398</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>9,974,661</td>
<td>13,000,778</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13,073,085</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>9,671,002</td>
<td>13,620,353</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14,751,165</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>11,541,000</td>
<td>15,234,997</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16,985,500</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>12,638,424</td>
<td>16,775,011</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17,992,515</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures from The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, (Ottawa: 1962-1984), and Bureau of Statistics, Canada; Year Book, (1970-71, 1985, 1987). (Ottawa:1970-1971, 1985, 1987). The census year used in all calculations was the one closest to the election year in question. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest integer. LT= list total; PT= population total.

Translating this percentage into raw numbers we see that this under-representation accounts for over one million individuals.

If we base our figures on the official voters list compiled by the Chief Electoral Officer we find that the number of "missing voters" since 1962 has averaged around 3.1 million (Table 1.3). However, looking at only the
three last elections (corresponding with those which will be examined in the body of this thesis) the average number of missing voters rises to 4.2 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% L</th>
<th>TOT. POP. ON VOTER LIST</th>
<th>TOTAL VOTES</th>
<th>MISSING VOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9,700,325</td>
<td>7,772,656</td>
<td>1,927,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9,910,757</td>
<td>7,958,636</td>
<td>1,952,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10,274,904</td>
<td>7,796,728</td>
<td>2,478,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10,860,888</td>
<td>8,217,916</td>
<td>2,642,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13,000,778</td>
<td>9,974,661</td>
<td>3,026,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13,620,353</td>
<td>9,671,002</td>
<td>3,949,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>15,234,997</td>
<td>11,541,000</td>
<td>3,693,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15,890,416</td>
<td>11,015,514</td>
<td>4,874,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16,775,011</td>
<td>12,638,424</td>
<td>4,136,587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOT. | 677 | 115,268,429             | 86,586,536  | 28,681,892    |
| AVG. | 75  | 12,807,603              | 9,620,726   | 3,186,887     |

** Since we cannot ascertain why these individuals did not cast ballots nor whether they consistently fail to do so, it would be premature to label them as non-voters. All we can say is that their vote was missing.

L T = List Total

Furthermore, if we base our figures entirely on the population above the voting age limit (Table 1.4), we can see that since 1962, an average of 4 million people did not cast ballots in Canadian national elections. Looking at only the last three election (again, corresponding to those elections which we will be examining later), the average
rises to approximately 5.6 million people. While the average percentage above 20 years who voted remained around the low 70%, the actual number of missing votes has greatly increased along with the population of Canada. To put the matter in context, this is to say that there are presently more potential non-voters in Canada than residents of the entire Atlantic region.

![Table 1.4](image)

Number of Missing Voters Based on Population 20+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEC YEAR</th>
<th>CENS YEAR</th>
<th>% P T</th>
<th>TOT POP.20+ ACC CENSUS</th>
<th>TOTAL VOTES</th>
<th>MISSING VOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10,613,766</td>
<td>7,772,656</td>
<td>2,841,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10,613,766</td>
<td>7,958,636</td>
<td>2,655,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11,585,398</td>
<td>7,796,728</td>
<td>3,788,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11,585,398</td>
<td>8,217,916</td>
<td>3,367,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>13,073,085</td>
<td>9,274,661</td>
<td>3,098,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14,751,165</td>
<td>9,671,002</td>
<td>5,080,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16,985,500</td>
<td>11,541,000</td>
<td>5,444,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17,992,515</td>
<td>12,638,424</td>
<td>5,354,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>635</td>
<td>125,673,780</td>
<td>86,586,536</td>
<td>37,599,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13,963,753</td>
<td>9,620,726</td>
<td>4,177,728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures from Report... and Canada: Year Book.
P T = Population Total

As Arthur Hadley stated when looking at U.S. turnout figures "The effect this great mass of nonvoting people will have on our democracy depends on who they are and on why they don't vote." This same concern appears germane
to the Canadian case and as such, this analysis will attempt to answer Hadley's questions as well as ascertain which of the four approaches answers them best.

1.4 Limiting the Sample

When studying a "behaviour" such as non-voting, it is important to reasonably define the boundaries within which the concept manifests itself. For example, in their study of the 1923 Chicago Mayoral election, Merriam and Gosnell chose to define non-voting in a very broad manner. For their purposes, the non-voter was, quite simply, anyone who did not vote in the specific election under investigation. Within this parameter they were able to identify four general categories which outlined the reasons for not voting. These included: 1. physical difficulties; 2. legal and administrative obstacles; 3. disbelief in voting, and; 4. inertia.13

As the study of non-voting became more refined -- due in large part to the post-war proliferation of computer technology and the subsequent ease of empirical research -- the non-voters which could be classed into the first two classifications were
immediately ... eliminated from all calculations ... to obtain any basis for a reliable estimate about the number who deliberately sat out the election or were too apathetic to vote.\(^1\)\(^4\)

The logic inherent in the exclusion of these "forced non-voters"\(^1\)\(^5\) was that, once the specific physical, legal or administrative barriers were removed, the bulk of them might, in fact, cast a ballot.\(^1\)\(^6\) Consequently, to include such individuals in the experimental sample would likely distort the findings relative to the real object of this study -- the "voluntary non-voter."\(^7\)

Fortunately, the 1984 National Election Study used in this Paper lends itself particularly well to these types of refinements. As was mentioned earlier in this Chapter, the Study investigated three Federal elections in Canada.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Table 1.5 Raw Federal Vote Frequency}
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
 & 1979 & 1980 & 1984 & AGG.FREQ. \\
\hline
VOTED & 75.2\% & 77.2\% & 84.9\% & 88.8\% \\
DIDN'T VOTE & 11.4\% & 12.4\% & 15.1\% & 11.2\% \\
INELIGIBLE & 13.5\% & 10.4\% & N/A & N/A \\
\hline
N=2989 & N=3146 & N=3234 & N=2639 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

The raw data presented in Table 1.5, suggests a steady rise in voter turnout from 75.2 percent in 1979 to 84.9 percent
in 1984. However, it should be noted that this National survey was taken in order to provide a representative sample of the "Canadian population, aged 18 years old and over" in 1984. This means that in 1979, the 18 year old subset was only 13 years of age and, consequently, legally barred from casting a ballot. In fact, only those respondents who were over the age of 23 in 1984 could have voted in all three elections. Further, the 1979 and 1980 results are based on the recall of respondents about events 4 to 5 years in the past. This alone introduces a margin of error (see Appendix 1).

A second aberration occurs when it is noticed that the percentage of respondents who "didn't vote" also seems to rise with each progressive election -- 11.4% of the sample not voting in 1979 and over 15% abstaining in 1984. Once again, age provides the answer -- at least for the first two elections under scrutiny.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1.6</th>
<th>True Federal Voting Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTED</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIDN'T VOTE</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INELIGIBLE</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=2989  N=3146  N=3220  N=2639
When tested against the voters' age, it was found that 24.5% of the respondents in the 1979 election coded as "didn't vote" were, in fact, too young to cast a ballot and, therefore, they should have been entered in the "ineligible" category. This same "miscoding" occurred in the 1980 data where 17% of those identified as not voting were likewise ineligible to vote. The 1984 subset is somewhat different since all respondents in the survey were of legal voting age. However, those who did not vote in this particular election were given a follow-up question asking for the reason that the respondent did not vote.²⁰ Through this variable, I was able to exclude the "forced non-voter" discussed earlier from the "didn't vote" category. That is to say, respondents who indicated that they were sick, out of town, not registered, or who abstained for "religious reasons" were deleted from the experimental group, and declared "ineligible".

A comparison of the "raw" data in Table 1.5 with the "cleaned" data in Table 1.6 demonstrates a more consistent level of non-voting in the latter. If the ineligible voters in Table 1.6 are added to those who voted, the "potential turnout percentage" seems more or less stable around the lower 90% area.²¹
The examination of three federal elections in the NES84 also allows a further refinement not regularly found in the studies of non-voting. In short, the data are very amenable to the implementation of a cross-historical test of non-voting (i.e., the results of all three elections can be aggregated into a single variable). Thus for the purposes of this thesis, the non-voter does not only "voluntarily" have to abstain, but must also do so "consistently". This number is depicted in the two prior tables under the heading of "aggregate frequency". The condition imposed upon a respondents' entrance into the "didn't vote" category of this aggregate calculation is that he or she must have refrained from voting in at least two out of the three elections under scrutiny. As such, it is possible to reasonably insure that the experimental group is not distorted by the "usual voter" who has failed to vote in only a single election. Since it is impossible to ascertain the exact reason for the absence of these specific individuals at the polling booth -- except in the case of those respondents not voting in the 1984 election -- it seems prudent to assume that they have more in common with the voter than with the non-voter.
Using all of these stricter conditions, the non-voter has been effectively whittled down from 11.2% of the sample to only 7.3%. Furthermore, in portions of the analysis to be outlined subsequently, this 7.3% will be broken down into two categories: The first, entitled "frequent non-voter" will identify those respondents who did not vote in any of the three elections (2.2% of the sample or 30% of the aggregate category); while the second labelled "casual non-voter" represents those who did not vote in 2 out of the 3 elections (5.1% of the sample or 70% of the 'didn't vote' category). Since entrance into the first category is more stringent than the last, the "frequent non-voter" can be viewed as a more "pure" experimental sample, encompassing, as much as the instrument allows, the most militant non-voting subset.
CHAPTER 2: THE TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

According to Kavanagh,

Elections are such frequent events and the literature on voting behaviour is so massive that it would be understandable, if mistaken, for the political behaviour field to be identified with the exclusive study of voting.¹

He explains that this proliferation of material on the subject of voting is "...partly because the voting decision has been so amenable to sample survey techniques and partly because it lends itself to qualifications."²

Yet, despite its common empirical thread, the fabric of the voting literature has been woven from several divergent materials. The adoption of one particular approach over another seems to depend as much on the individual researcher's personal theoretical proclivity as it does on the knowledge gained from past advancements, findings, and methods. Broadly defined, three such "traditional" approaches were identified in the previous Chapter. To reiterate, these include the social/economic, the psychological /motivational and, the environmental/ ecological approaches. It is the purpose of this Chapter to provide a brief critical analysis and suggest an empirical test for each of these approaches.
2.1 The Social/Economic Approach

The social/economic approach emphasizes several "demographic" controls in its analysis of non-voting. Yet, while there is agreement on the types of variables to be examined, these same are not homogeneously applied: "Several alternative explanations for the effect of social characteristics on political participation can be offered." Consequently, for purposes of clarity, there is a need to differentiate this particular approach into two general classifications: The first ascribes some causal (predictive) significance to the relationship between social/economic indicators and the act of voting or abstaining; the second restricts itself to a typological (descriptive) analysis of the nonvoter using these same indicators.

2.1.1 Social/Economic Characteristics as a Cause of Non-Voting

The use of social/economic indicators has enjoyed a relatively long history in the short life of voting research. However, the attribution of some causal significance to these indicators only gained notoriety with the groundbreaking 1940 Erie and 1948 Elmira county studies of the U.S. presidential elections conducted by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet and McPhee. Using three
sociological indicators: socio-economic status; place of residence; and, religion, investigators from the Columbia Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR) developed an "Index of Political Predispositions (IPP)." With the help of this index and a complex theoretical matrix, (Figure 2.1), the researchers were led to the conclusion that "voting is essentially a group experience" and that "...a person thinks, politically as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference." Furthermore, they maintained that a phenomenon dubbed "cross-pressures" occurred when an "unharmonious" combination of socio-economic indicators manifested themselves within a single individual. The weaker these cross-pressures, the stronger the partisan ties of the individual. The converse was also found to be true and, finally, the non-voter was described as an individual so strongly cross-pressured that the decision to vote could only be resolved through abstention.
FIGURE 2.1
Index of Political Predisposition:
Matrix Pattern and Causal Directions

* IPP = Index of Political Predisposition
** SES = Social Economic Status
The value of the IPP as a predictive device has often been contested. In fact, Lazarsfeld personally observed that "an index of political predisposition is less valid when applied to a nationwide sample than when applied to the residents of a county." This self-critique was later substantiated by Janowitz and Miller (1952) who attempted such an application with the 1948 U.S. national electorate. The results derived from this exercise proved to be "not remarkably better than chance."\(^9\)

From arguments that Lazarsfeld made the wrong choice of indicators (Janowitz and Miller: 1952), to the wrong choice of reference group (Campbell and Cooper: 1956), the literature seems to indicate that "...there were fundamental inconsistencies in Lazarsfeld’s theoretical system."\(^1\) Other criticisms concern Lazarsfeld’s methodology. These are best summarized by Rossi (1959) who argued that Lazarsfeld’s generalizations had gone too far beyond his data, that the limitations of the data were not recognized and that the speculations and findings were not distinguished clearly enough.\(^1\)
2.1.2 Social/Economic Characteristics as a Description of the Non-Voters

While Lazarsfeld et al. clearly intended the IPP to be a normative instrument, others have shied from the social determinism inherent in their model:

It is one thing to observe that social identifications account for a disproportionate share of voting (and non-voting) decisions. It is quite another matter to conclude that politics is determined by social relationships. The descriptive power of that observation can be quite valid without implying anything about causes.\textsuperscript{13}

This section will focus on this kind of typological applications of the social/economic variables.

There have been many descriptions of the non-voter since Merriam and Gosnell's seminal piece in 1924. In the United States, Miller (1960) and Connelly (1944) come most readily to mind, while in Canada the works of Mischler (1979), Scarrow (1961) and Laponce (1967) stand out. The findings of these authors, as set forth in Table 2.1, clearly demonstrate some consistency in the typologies. For instance, all studies agree that a greater percentage of non-voters are women; they agree that most are younger members of society and that most non-voters are those with

23
little education, income and, consequently, they tend to have a low socio-economic status score. Finally, most studies agree that a larger percentage of non-voters live in rural rather than urban surroundings.

| TABLE 2.1 |
| Typologies of the Non-Voter. |
| --- | --- |
| **INDICATORS** | **MILLER\*** | **CONNELLY\*** | **LAPONCE\*** | **W.M.**/H.A.S.\* |
| GENDER | Female | Female | Female | Female |
| AGE | under 34 | 21-39 | Young | 22-35 years |
| OCCUPATION | Service | Grade 8 | Manual | Farmer |
| EDUCATION | Grade 8 | Lower 4 | No Unive. | DN grad. H.S. |
| INCOME | Lower | Lower | Lower | - 10,000 |
| B.E.B. | Rural | Rural | Rural | |
| COMM. SIZE | Non-White | Non-White | Non-White | French |
| ETH/LANGUAGE | Protestant | Protestant | | French |


\* Laponce, op.cit., pp. 75-87.


None of the studies identified in Table 2.1 imply a causal link. For instance while most non-voters may be female, most female are certainly not non-voters. The subset of non-voters is simply too small and diversified to
encompass an entire social/economic attribute. It would also be erroneous to conclude from this data that most non-voters in Canada are young French women living in a rural area, without a High School diploma, making less than ten thousand dollars a year. The data presented here were typically generated from bivariate crosstabulations and, as a consequence, it would be a gross misrepresentation to combine these distinct categories into a homogeneous, all encompassing profile of the non-voter. Laponce stresses this by demonstrating the effect of introducing a control such as age into the equation. If, argues Laponce, one looks at only the "retired voters", it would be found that the majority are males rather than females. In fact, it should be recognized that, given the right intervening variable, each of the attributes offered in Table 2.1 could be changed -- often quite dramatically. Thus, since the individual variables are independently tested (i.e. they do not accounting for a host of other factors), they should be analyzed on a strictly individual level in order to maintain their typological integrity.
2.1.3 Some Tests of the Social/Economic Approach

Just as the preceding review needed to be dichotomized into causal and descriptive explanations of the social/economic approach, so must this analytical section proceed. In the first instance, while the "nationwide sample" used in this study excludes the credible application of Lazarsfeld's IPP, it nevertheless remains to be seen whether the socio-economic indicators are able to predict the incidence of non-voting. Secondly, the validity of the past typologies should be tested in order to ascertain the stability of the nonvoters' social characteristics over time, and to see if anything can be done to increase the accuracy of such studies.

2.1.3.1 Causal Tests

Using the Product-moment correlation (r) and the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), Table 2.2 illustrates a weak but significant correlation of non-voting with four of the ten indicators traditionally used in the social/economic approach. These include age, education, income and socio-economic status. Age accounts for about eight percent of the variation in the dependent variable labelled non-voting (a dummy "vote frequency" variable); education
explains 5 percent, income 2.2 percent and socio-economic status, only 2 percent of the variance.\(^{16}\)

**TABLE 2.2**  
Socio-Economic Indicators and Non-Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>Pearson’s R</th>
<th>Pearson’s R(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-0.2813</td>
<td>0.0791*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>0.2241</td>
<td>0.0502*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-0.1491</td>
<td>0.0222*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-0.1420</td>
<td>0.0201*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>0.0856</td>
<td>0.0073**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM.SIZE</td>
<td>-0.0801</td>
<td>0.0054+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCUPATION</td>
<td>-0.0708</td>
<td>0.0050**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td>-0.0456</td>
<td>0.0021**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P<.001, ** P<.01, + No sig.

In essence, such weak correlations mean that knowing an individuals’ age, education, income or SES, would not be very helpful in accurately predicting whether that individual will vote or abstain. The fact that these four variables are themselves interrelated precludes the possibility of simply adding their respective variance together.\(^{17}\) Consequently, the joint effect of these indicators must be approached in more subtle ways. Two options come most readily to mind. The first entails a synthesis of the four variables into a single comprehensive indicator; the second consists of a multiple-regression analysis of the variables in question.
By knowing the individual cell concentration of the non-voters within each variable (obtained through bivariate crosstabulations) it was possible to isolate those categories which included the bulk of the non-voters and, using these as a base, a "perfect" non-voter was created. This construct included all individuals who are between the ages of 18-30 years, making less than 24,999 dollars per year and who have no more than a high school diploma. After some experimentation, it was found that the inclusion of an individual's SES in this construct limited the sample size without enhancing its predictive strength. This may be due to the fact that the SES was initially constructed with the help of education, income and occupation (see appendix 3) and its inclusion in the construct simply restated conditions already stressed in income and education. On the other hand, the inclusion of certain occupations (the third component of the SES) with high non-voter frequencies, did raise the confidence of the construct. These occupations included sales, labourer (skilled and unskilled) and homemaker. Once the new variable was created, it was divided into a) all respondents who fulfilled the above criteria -- labelled "perfect type" -- and b) the remainder -- labelled "other". The results of the analysis of this construct showed a significantly higher percentage of non-voters within the "perfect type": 34 percent failed
to vote compared to only a 6 percent abstention rate in the "other" category. Unfortunately, since the "perfect type" accounted for only 7 percent of the entire sample population, the 6 percent non-voting rate for the "other" group described over two thirds of all the non-voters. Thus, in the final analysis, it was found that the amalgamation of socio-economic indicators into a single comprehensive variable did not increase their predictive ability since the majority of the non-voters fell outside the ideal type. This was due largely to the necessarily stringent conditions for admittance into the "perfect type" category. In fact, the construct produced an $R^2$ of only .0761 ($P<.001$) -- smaller than that of age alone.$^1$

Multiple regression, the second proposed option, is "...currently the preferred technique in political science for observing multivariate relationships."$^1$ It allows for a step by step insertion of independent variables into the regression equation and, through a calculation of the residual variance of each variable, individual as well as multiple correlation coefficients can be computed. The total variance in non-voting explained by the combined weights of age, income, education and SES is an $R^2$ of .1039 ($P<.001$).
While the results of this exercise seem better than any other, it still leaves over 89 percent of the variance in non-voting unexplained. Clearly, there is more to non-voters than their socio/economic situation.

2.1.3.? Typological Tests

On a more descriptive level, Table 2.3 illustrates the typology of the non-voter based on the traditional method of bivariate cross-tabulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS</th>
<th>CATEGORY WITH HIGHEST % OF NON-VOTERS</th>
<th>% OF NV IN CATEGORY</th>
<th>% CAT. COMPOSED OF NV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-30 Years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Skilled Labour</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>D.N. Grad. H.S.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>14,999 or less</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.E.B.</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm. Size</td>
<td>10,000 or less</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with table 2.1, the labels in column two signify the category within the independent variable which accounts for the largest percentage of non-voters. This percentage is reported in the third column of this table. It is very
likely that a drop in this particular number can be ascribed to an increase in the diversity of a variable. That is to say, a variable with only two categories, such as gender and language, display a more concentrated dispersal rate than those with over ten categories such as occupation or religion. The number presented in the fourth column refers to the percentage of the entire sample category which has been identified as non-voters. For instance, when gender is examined, it was found that 8 percent of the female sample accounts for 53 percent of the entire non-voting population. Consequently, while it is possible to say, with some degree of certainty, that most non-voters are female, it is emphatically clear that most women are not non-voters.

It is obvious from this table that some consistency exists with past studies. The two exceptions to the general trends observed earlier are occupation -- which has typically displayed sporadic results -- and language. In this study, the English sub-group abstained from voting more frequently than the French. This contradicts the studies by both Laponce and Mishler. Furthermore, an attempt to replicate a study by Curtis and Lambert which introduced gender as a control, produced still more surprising results. The English language group followed
the predicted patterns of non-voting (English females had the highest level of non-voting at 8.2 percent, followed by English males with 7.5 percent abstaining). The French sample was reversed with the males at 6.1 percent abstention and the females displaying the highest turnout of all four groups with only 5 percent failing to vote. Consequently, this study further contradicts traditional wisdom -- as outlined by Mishler (1981), Miller (1970), Connelly (1944), Scarrow (1951), Laponce (1967) -- by asserting that, for these data, French speaking females are the most active group in the voting booths.

Curtis and Lambert advocated the use of age as a control in the analysis of voter participation. They argued that such a "...multi-variate analysis of survey data from national sub-groups...should improve the probable accuracy..." of a study.21 Predictably, given the correlation of age with vote frequency, the results of this type of analysis show that the 18-30 year old age group has the highest levels of non-voting in almost every sub-group examined.22
While this multi-variate analysis does increase the detail with which the non-voter is described, it also has the distinct disadvantage of limiting the sample being examined. This means that, as each control variable is added to the equation, the subgroups under analysis become progressively smaller and, consequently, fewer and fewer non-voters are actually represented. For example, of the entire sample population the majority of non-voters were found to be women (53 percent). With the introduction of age as a control, it was further found that the younger women (aged 18-30) abstained most frequently: 18 percent failed to vote in this category compared to 6 percent for women 31-65 and 1 percent for those over 65 years. However, and more important to this typology, over 75 percent of the entire non-voting population are not young women. Consequently, the description, while more detailed, has not been rendered more accurate by the introduction of controls.23

In reviewing this section, two things seem to stand out. Firstly, it is clear that no true strong correlation exists between the socio-economic indicators and the incidence of non-voting. Perhaps, as Susan Welch suggests,
the stereotypes of strong associations between participation and a variety of demographic characteristics, particularly class-related variables, stems from early voting studies which used cross-tabulations to show the effects of demographic conditions on participation. Small relationships between variables, which might result in a very small correlation, usually seem more substantial when presented in cross-tabular form.24

Secondly, it has become apparent that the indicators used in a typological analysis of non-voting must be kept independent of other factors. Combining these indicators into a larger profile either through multi-variate analysis or the construction of ideal types does not provide an accurate picture of the "average" non-voter and should be avoided.

2.2 The Psychological/Motivational Approach

Motivations to participate are determined by a complex set of individual attitudes and beliefs about politics, society and self. At the core of these beliefs is a cluster of related attitudes called psychological political involvement, which refers to an individual's awareness of, interest in, and concern about politics and political affairs.25

Next to Lazarsfeld's work at the BSAR, the most notable advancement in the literature on non-voting came in the early 1960's from Campbell and his associates at the Michigan Survey Research Center (SRC). For these
researchers, the psychological attitudes of the individual became the central theme of their studies.

Three concepts of personal orientation towards political behavior have been developed, emphasizing parties, issues, and candidates respectively. These orientations have been treated as motivational factors. Those people who were motivated by all three of these factors, with no partisan conflict among them, nearly all participate in the election, at least to the extent of voting. The fewer of these factors present for an individual, the less likely he is to vote.  

This concept of "partisan conflict" is similar, at least in effect, to Lazarsfeld's "cross-pressures": its intense manifestation can only resolve itself through abstention. Thus, if an individual strongly identifies with party "A", but likes party "B's" leader best and party "C's" issue positions, the partisan conflict would be so strong that a vote decision cannot be made by the individual. Likewise, if the partisan ties are weak or non-existent in one, two or all three dimensions, the individual is again less likely to vote than one with strong and consistent partisan affiliations.
In addition to these partisan identifiers, several other psychological/motivational variables have been singled out as factors influencing the decision to vote or abstain. These include: 1. efficacy, which measures the respondents' self-perceived effectiveness in the political arena; 2. trust, which measures the respondents' trust in the honesty of political actors and the political system; 3. interest, which measures the respondents' interest in politics as a general subject as well as specific elections, and; 4. apathy, which measures the overall rate of political participation displayed by the respondent. While Campbell et al. only examined these indicators in a superficial manner, others such as Milbrath (1965), Welch (1975), Mishler (1979), Hadley (1978), and Conway (1985), have assigned them a more central role in their respective analyses. Briefly stated, their positions can be synthesized into the following statement: an individual with a low sense of efficacy, little interest in politics or in a specific election, and who does not trust government and politicians is less likely to vote than one who holds the opposite attitudes.
Furthermore, as interest, trust and efficacy ebb, apathy grows within the individual. This apathy is exhibited through several levels of participation. Accordingly, individuals with very low apathy are more likely to participate in "gladiatorial" types of activities such as "contributing time in a political campaign" or even "being a candidate for office." Conversely, individuals with very high apathy participate only passively in the political system, "shunning even those activities most basic to the normal process of a democracy" such as "exposing oneself to political stimuli, initiating a political discussion [or] voting." Unsurprisingly, these "apathetics" are also referred to by Milbrath as "non-voters". He asserts that "persons who engage in the topmost behaviors [gladiatorial activities] are very likely to perform those in lower rank also [i.e. transitional and spectator activities]," but "the obverse does not hold." In essence, this would mean that the higher a person’s apathy (based on levels of political participation), the less likely he or she will vote. In Milbrath’s terminology, gladiators (low apathy) are more likely to vote than observers (high apathy), who, in turn, are more likely to vote than apathetics (total apathy) who, by definition, do not vote at all.
2.2.1 Some Tests of the Psychological/Motivational Approach

In order to test Campbell et al.'s partisanship argument, the variables examining leadership preference, issue partisanship and party affiliation needed to be created. Several questions were found which explored each of these dimensions (see Appendix 3). The respondents were coded as having either "no partisanship", "a weak partisanship" (indicating some conflict within the category) or "a strong partisanship" (implying little or no conflict). Once this procedure was completed for the three "orientations", they were added together in order to form a composite Partisanship scale. These four variables were then analyzed in order to see if Campbell et al.'s assertion that "conflict" engendered non-voting could be substantiated.

Independently, leadership preference provided the best correlation with non-voting with a $R^2$ of .0153 ($P<.001$). This rather weak result was followed by party affiliation at .0136 ($P<.001$) and issue partisanship at .0105 ($P<.05$). The variance explained by the partisanship scale was even less impressive since it promised so much and only yielded an $R^2$ of .0391 ($P<.001$). Even the additive variance of the three root variables, as examined through multiple
regression only produced a coefficient of .0161 (P<.05). On the surface, Campbell's assertion a causal relationship exists between partisanship and vote seems to be self-evident, if not outrightly tautological. However, these numbers, along with the partial cross-tabular results reproduced in Table 2.4, suggest that in the Canadian federal arena -- where three parties vie for the individual's loyalties along all three dimensions -- some level of conflict tends to exist among both the voters as well as the non-voters. Whether this partisan conflict is an institutional reality of the Canadian multi-party system or simply an aberration caused by an electorate in a state of flux, (e.g. shifting partisan affiliations during the 1979 (Lib. to P.C.), the 1980 (P.C. to Lib.) and the 1984 (Lib. to P.C.) elections), is moot; the point is that it does not seem to have any direct causal linkage to the incidence of non-voting in Canada.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Non-Partisan</th>
<th>Weak Partisan</th>
<th>Strong Partisan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>4.5 12.2</td>
<td>18.4 24.3</td>
<td>77.1 63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>10.3 35.8</td>
<td>71.2 40.2</td>
<td>18.5 24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>6.3 5.0</td>
<td>11.8 22.5</td>
<td>81.9 72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Scale*</td>
<td>0.2 3.8</td>
<td>35.4 46.2</td>
<td>63.5 50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Voted in at least 2 out of 3 elections.
** Did not vote in at least 2 out of 3 elections.
* Refers to the Partisanship scale created from the three variables above (see Appendix 3).

As with the partisanship variables, the indicators examining interest, trust, efficacy and apathy were also created from batteries of questions detailed in Appendix 3. The first three scales (interest, trust and efficacy) were then combined into a "political proclivity scale". This scale scored those respondents with low interest, trust and efficacy as "0" and those with high interest, efficacy and trust as "6". The apathy scale was constructed from eight participation variables ranked in importance along Milbrath's "hierarchy of political involvement." With these five variables it is possible to test the three main tenets of the psychological/motivational approach: 1. People with low interest, trust and efficacy are less likely to vote than those with high interest, trust and efficacy; 2. people with low interest, trust and efficacy
are typically more apathetic about political events than those scoring high in these dimensions; and 3. people who display high levels of apathy are less likely to vote than those with low apathy.\textsuperscript{27}

The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) for these variables were only nominally more impressive than those obtained with the partisanship indicators. Efficacy displayed the highest association with non-voting, producing an $R^2$ of .0362 ($P < .001$). This was followed by interest at .0164 ($P < .001$) and trust at .0113 ($P < .01$). Similarly, the political proclivity scale (PPS) only yielded an $R^2$ of .0313 ($P < .001$) and the multiple regression analysis involving the three primary variables only explained 4% of the variance in the vote frequency variable. However, while the results were less clear than expected, the variables did produce the predicted trends as set forth in Table 2.5. For instance, efficacy and interest both have a large percentage of non-voters clustered within the lower levels while the reverse is true of the voter who is generally evenly dispersed or, as with interest, is concentrated in the higher levels of the scale. The same is also apparent with the trust scale; although the trend is considerably less
pronounced since it seems that both the voter and the non-voter tend to distrust politicians to some degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>LOW LEVELS</th>
<th>MEDIUM LEVELS</th>
<th>HIGH LEVELS</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>No-Vote</td>
<td>Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFICACY</td>
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<td>54.6</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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<td>TRUST</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTEREST</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APATHY</td>
<td>19.1</td>
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<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.P.S.*</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Voted in at least 2 out of 3 elections.
** Did not vote in at least 2 out of 3 elections.
* Refers to the Political Proclivity scale created from the three variables above (see Appendix 3).

For the apathy scale, the trend is understandably reversed as 72.1 percent of the non-voting respondents scored in the higher levels while most of the voters had lower scores.** This result means that the non-voter is unlikely to participate in even the most basic political activities such as reading about politics and discussing it with a friend, much less in the more costly activities such as political contributions and campaign work. Unfortunately, due largely to pronounced clustering of cases in the mid- to upper levels (82 percent of all
respondents), apathy produces a disappointingly $\eta^2$ of only .0116 (P<.001).

As for the relationship between apathy and political proclivity, the $R^2$ between the two was moderate at .1618 (P<.001). Thus there is a tendency for people with low interest, trust and efficacy to display higher levels of apathy (i.e. they tend to participate less in political activities especially those requiring a greater investment in time and money). Considering the relationship between the PPS and voting, -- a relatively low cost activity in Canada -- this is an admittedly logical observation.

While the five attitudinal variables do not display high correlations with non-voting, on a descriptive level they can be quite useful. For example, over 90 percent of the frequent non-voters, (i.e. failed to vote in three out of three federal elections), display a high apathy score, 70 percent have low interest in politics and elections, 65 percent do not trust government, 75 percent possess a low efficacy score and 85 percent have a low level of political proclivity. This typology is reinforced by the fact that the percentage of casual non-voters, (i.e. did not vote in 2 out of 3 federal elections) with these particularly extreme attributes is considerably smaller,
and smaller still among the voters. Thus, while these variables are not overly prescriptive with regards to non-voting, the non-voter can be described as an individual with a high sense of apathy and a low sense of interest, trust and efficacy.

In reviewing this section it can be said that the attitudinal variables performed slightly better than Campbell et al.'s partisanship indicators with regards to both a causal and a descriptive analysis of non-voting in Canada. In short, variables such as interest and efficacy say more about the non-voter than party affiliation and issue partisanship. More importantly, they do so without resorting to a complex, and sometimes confusing, matrix of pressures and cross-pressures not directly relevant to Canada's multi-party system but more in tune with the American political scene.
2.3 The Environmental/Ecological Approach

An inquiry into the totality of the social process must consider the structure of the social institutions as well as the different ways in which the economic and social organization is experienced by, and incorporated within, the individual.¹¹

According to Margaret Conway "...the political environment in which citizens live can stimulate or depress participation in elections and other political activities."¹² However, the terms "environmental" and "ecological" have grown to include an increasingly diverse array of variables. At first, aggregate data was used to examine "the components of the political context of an election" and their effects on vote turnout.¹³ These variables, more aptly termed structural/institutional, have been discussed at some length in Chapter one in an effort to weed out of the non-voting sample those individuals who could not vote due to some legal constraint. Included are variables such as "the electoral system, with its various requirements for eligibility...the election administration rules...voter registration procedures and the provisions governing the conduct of balloting."¹⁴

As the discipline matured, researchers such as Verba (1972, 1978), Kleppner (1982) and Conway (1980, 1983,
1985), turned to individual responses in order to ascertain the effects of the media, the candidates (their issues, personalities and their campaigns), the parties and their efforts to mobilize the voters, as well as "the historical [geographical] division of contending forces" and, the perceived closeness of a particular election. Recently, the focus of voting research has shifted towards an examination of the effects of the media and opinion polls on the vote; however, this more contemporary literature, has concentrated almost exclusively on the electoral outcome rather than turnout. One of the refreshing aspects of this particular approach is its rejection of a deterministic outlook. Unlike the socio-economic and psychological/motivational approaches, the environmental/ ecological school of research does not pretend to achieve a total explanation of non-voting. Rather, its main causal inferences seem to concentrate on the fluctuation of voter turnout between elections, regions and levels of government. As the label suggests, the central theme is the electoral environment as perceived by the prospective voter, not their individual characteristics. Consequently, while certain environmental variables may have "a significant impact on both electoral participation and vote choice...they may increase turnout by only 5 to 10 percent."
2.3.1 Some Tests of the Environmental/Ecological Approach

There are five general propositions forwarded by the environmental/ecological approach which should be tested within the context of this study: 1. Exposure to the media regarding the candidates, issues and their campaign increases the turnout level; 2. The region or province of residence affects the turnout; 3. Direct exposure to the political campaigns of the parties and candidates increases the turnout in an election; 4. The perceived "closeness" of an election affects the turnout, and; 5. The level of government involved in the election affects the turnout. While the data is not ideal for an analysis of these types of environmental constants, the perceptions of the prospective voter's along each dimension can be measured and the effects of these perceptions on turnout can be assessed.

The media are an integral part of any electoral campaign, they "determine in large part the information available to the electorate." Therefore, the effects of campaign advertisements as well as news coverage can become a crucial factor. In the 1984 election, the most specific mass media events were without doubt the three leadership debates (one in French, one in English and one specifically
on women's issues). These debates provided information on everything ranging from leadership style and ability to party positions on a variety of issues. Moreover, they also provided winners and losers. In examining the debates and their effect on voting, an $R^2$ of only .0204 (P<.001) was uncovered. In percentages this translates into the following: 63.9 percent of the non-voters saw none of the debates while only 30.4 of the voters missed all three. One interpretation of these results might be that the non-voters missed the debates because they lacked interest. However, the debates may have had another effect not represented by this particular analysis in that the prospective voter may have abstained as a direct result of a poor performance on the part of the candidate supported prior to the debate."

It is evident that the role of the media on political participation in Canada has yet to be comprehensively examined. Fletcher's assertion that "[media] coverage tends to be not discriminating but rather capriciously negative..." is worrisome to some extent. Could these negative images actually depress the vote by discouraging interest in political matters? It really becomes a "chicken and egg" question which most survey instruments (including the NES84 used in this analysis) are unable to answer with
any degree of accuracy. All that can be said at this time is that the non-voters appear to pay less attention to the media than do the voters.

The second assertion forwarded by the environmental/ecological approach regards the region of residence. It is interesting to note that, according to the NESB4, the two provinces with the highest percentages of non-voters lie at the two extremes of the nation: Newfoundland, with a non-voting rate of 14.4 percent and, British Columbia with a rate of 13.8 percent. Again moving inwards towards the centre, these are followed by Alberta at 9.7 percent and, P.E.I at 8.2 percent. The pattern is then shattered with Saskatchewan coming in fifth (7.8%) and Manitoba sixth (7.2%). Among those with a relatively low level of non-voting, Nova Scotia comes first with only 2.6 percent followed by New Brunswick (3.7%), Quebec (6.2%) and Ontario (6.7%). Despite some inconsistencies, is it still possible that geographic proximity to the center has some explanatory capacities? Or maybe the relationship is more historical in nature following patterns of colonization? Either way, the provincial origin of the respondent accounts for only 0.8 percent of the variance in the vote frequency (PK.01); not really a great incentive to delve much deeper. However, it is interesting to note that when
asked "which government comes to mind first: Canada or the province?" respondents from Newfoundland answered "the province" by a margin of 52.9 percent to 47.1 percent for Canada (the largest pro-province margin among the ten provinces). On the other hand Nova Scotia (the province with the lowest non-voting rate) overwhelmingly answered Canada by a margin of 76.5 percent to 23.5 for the province. Unfortunately, as demonstrated below, this disaffection with the federal government is not directly translated into increased votes at the provincial level, even in Newfoundland.

Contact by the political parties, either by phone, mail or through some personal campaigning by the candidate, yielded the weakest results of any other environmental factor included in this analysis. While there was a slight difference in the level of contact between the voter and the non-voter (with the voter getting the bulk of the contact), the R² was an insignificant .0002. While contact may affect the outcome of an election, it seems to have little effect on the participation rate.

The perceived closeness of the elections in question is a difficult variable to isolate. One can argue a case which claims each as a very contentious election. With hindsight
the 1979 national election was clearly the closest, producing a minority federal government. The 1980 election could also be said to be contentious, coming so close behind the heels of its predecessor. Finally the 1984 election pitted two unknown leader against each other -- potentially contentious in itself. According to the NES84, the turnout was indeed higher in the 1979 and 1980 elections, and it was lower in 1984. Perhaps this is an accurate portrayal, yet due to the error factor encountered through the process of "vote recall" (see Appendix 1), the number of non-voters can also be seen to decrease as the respondents were asked to recall further back. The interpretation of this data is therefore compromised: did more people vote in 1979 because it was perceived to be a close election or are the respondents experiencing faulty recall (i.e. forgetting their actual action or lying) ?

Finally, the environmental/ecological approach asserts that the level of government involved in the election may affect the turnout. The logic implied is that people are more likely to participate in the federal elections than in a provincial contest and they are more likely to participate in provincial elections than they are in municipal ones. This in itself can be disputed. It can be
argued that citizens should feel less intimidated and more efficacious in the lower levels of government which is most directly accessible to them. In fact, one can observe a larger amount of higher types of participation, such as presentations to council and personal petitions at the municipal level by average citizens. Such presentations are quite unlikely at the federal level. Nevertheless, provincial turnout patterns do seem to have some predictive capacities when translated to the federal sphere. In short, a person who abstains from the federal arena is very likely to abstain from the provincial one -- the \( R^2 \) for this relationship is \( .5615 \) (\( p < .001 \)). Yet, a person who voted in the federal arena is not necessarily going to vote in a provincial election (7% of the federal voters did in fact abstain from provincial elections).

It is unfortunate that the environmental / ecological model seems to produce more questions than it actually answers with this type of data. Yet, in fairness to the approach, it should be pointed out that its primary strengths lay in predicting outcome of specific elections and fluctuations between elections. Consequently, given its admitted limitations, the approach might best be left to more appropriate data such as individual electoral
surveys. Nevertheless, it has offered several prospective topics for further study.

2.4 Summary and Conclusions:

Generally speaking, the indicators tested in this examination of the traditional approaches in the study of non-voting have produced some worthwhile results.

Firstly, the variables have tended to perform as expected. Considering the literature review which accompanied each approach, it can be seen that the variables operationalized in the tests have generated results similar in kind, if not in degree, with those of the original studies. While the relationships have often been weak, they have also tended to be significant. The problem of degree might in part be attributed to the fact that the approaches have been tested on the basis of "measurement containing a relatively large amount of error." According to Katosh and Traugott, this error originates from a substantial (15 to 25 percent) overreporting of the participation rate. In short, when compared to validated results, it can be shown that some respondents in surveys say they have voted when, in fact, they have not. Fortunately, while they found some changes
in the strengths of the associations, they "did not find
any major changes in the fundamental nature of the basic
relationships that have been observed since the data were
first collected".31

Secondly, the variables which performed best on a causal
level (such as age, partisanship, efficacy, apathy, and
provincial vote), leave a multitude of unanswered
questions. Because of the mutual exclusivity of the
divergent approaches, the relationship between socio-
economic variables and certain psychological/ motivational
indicators remains largely unexplored; particularly with
regards to the Canadian literature. For example, what is
the relationship between age and efficacy? Does the latter
increase with age? Does this explain why young citizens
vote less than their older counterparts? Is it all a
matter of experience? And, if so, why does the vote drop
off among the senior citizens in society who should have
the most experience of all? Maybe the young fail to vote
more frequently because they have not yet had the chance to
formulate some stable partisan affiliations? Maybe they
are so overwhelmed by choice that they cannot make one (a
form of cohort cross-pressures)? What about the media? Is
it a source of needed information or simply an affirmation
of convictions already held? More to the point, what is

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the role of information in the whole equation. What about income? Is it also a factor in the voting decision?

The list of questions is clearly not exhaustive and, while many may remain unanswered at the close of this paper, the next two chapters will explore a few of them in an effort to better understand the phenomenon of non-voting in Canada. Commensurate with this goal, the following Chapter will examine and operationalize a rather novel approach to the study of non-voting in Canada: The Rational Choice Approach.
CHAPTER 3: THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

The rational choice approach is relatively new to the discipline of political research. It emerged in earnest from Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). Since then it has seen many alterations and variations by researchers such as Riker and Ordeshook (1968, 1973), Olson (1965), Rogowski (1978), Goodin and Dryzeck (1980), Tollison (1973, 1975), Ferejohn and Fiorina (1974) and Jean Uhlaner (1986). Some of these developments have been substantial and some rather superficial. However through it all the essence of the Downsian economic model of political participation has remained more or less intact: "at least in specific areas, individual conduct is wholly determined by the endeavor to relate means to ends as efficiently as possible"¹ Unlike the socio-economic approach, rational choice offers more than a simple description of the non-voter. It surpasses the environmental/ecological approach by choosing the individual as its reference base, thereby promising a more encompassing explanation. Finally, it surpasses the psychological/motivational approach by providing an explanation for the motivational forces experienced by the non-voter rather than a simple description of these forces. In short "rational [choice] theories can avoid the failures
of most explanations of political participation to provide predictive theory. Rational [choice] theories provide the missing element: an account of motivation." At the same time, it should be acknowledged that Rational Choice models usually include more or less stringent assumptions which are difficult to implement using actual data. In essence the models are heuristic devices rather than testable propositions.

In the first half of this Chapter the "classical" Downsian approach as well as more recent advances with regards to its application to the study of voting behaviour will be examined in some depth. In the second half the approach will be operationalized in order to assess its predictive capabilities.

3.1 The Genesis of the Rational Choice Approach

The rational choice approach to political behaviour owes much to the discipline of economics. In An Economic Theory of Democracy (1957), Anthony Downs first introduced "Homo Economicus" to politics. This economic person is always "reasonably directed towards the achievement of conscious goals"; this person consistently "moves towards his [sic] goals in a way which, to the best of his [sic]
knowledge, uses the least possible input of scarce resources per unit of valued output." Thus, economic analysis consists of discovering the ends being pursued and analyzing the means used to attain them. Accordingly, in this type of analysis "the term rational is never applied to an agent's ends, but only to his means."

Downs also offers a second formal definition of economic rationality better suited to systematic analysis:

A rational man [sic] is one who behaves as follows: (1) he [/she] can always make a decision when confronted with a range of alternatives; (2) he [/she] ranks all alternatives facing him [/her] in order of his [/her] preference in such a way that each is either preferred to, indifferent to, or inferior to each other; (3) his [/her] preference ranking is transitive; (4) he [/she] always chooses from among the possible alternatives that which ranks highest in his [/her] preference ordering; and (5) he [/she] always makes the same decision each time he [/she] is confronted with the same alternatives.

Furthermore, Downs asserts that: "rational behavior in connection with elections is behavior oriented towards... the selection of a government...and no other end...". While this admittedly limits the realism inherent in the approach, this "abstraction from the fullness of the human personality" is necessary in order to generalize from the complexity of individual motives.
In a costless world "each citizen casts his [/her] vote for the party he [/she] believes will provide him [/her] with more benefits than any other." Thus, the voter must assess the benefits ("utility incomes") which each party will provide if elected based upon the past performance of the parties ("trend factor" and "performance rating") as well as perfect information about their campaign platforms and ideological positions in the present election. Using these forecasts "a rational [person] always takes the [choice] which yields...the highest utility, ceteris paribus". Only when the calculated utilities between the parties are exactly equal -- when the potential voter is indifferent -- does the individual abstain:

...abstention is rational only if a citizen believes that either (1) the policy changes that will be made if the opposition is elected will have no net effect upon his [/her] utility income or (2) these changes may affect his [/her] income, but the probability that they will raise it is exactly equal to the probability that they will lower it; i.e., the expected change is zero.

In effect, the performance of each party (incumbent and opposition) is rated based on the optimal utility income which a potential voter could receive if the "perfect party" were in power. This hypothetical rating introduces uncertainty into the equation. The chief cause of this
uncertainty is, according to Downs, imperfect and erroneous information which leads to a lack of any "sure knowledge about the course of past, present, future, or hypothetical events." In short, a [person's] evaluation of each party depends ultimately upon (1) the information he [/she] has about its policies and (2) the relation between those of its policies he [/she] knows about and his [/her] conception of the good society.

In a multi-party system such as in the Canadian case, Downs argues that "a voter follows the same rules...[as outlined above]...but compares the incumbent party with whichever of the opposition parties has the highest present performance rating." However, with several parties vying for a single office, the voter must also consider how others will vote; he must consider the concept of "winability". If his most preferred party is unlikely to win (based on past performances), he may vote for the party which is next on his preference rating in order to keep the party which is least preferred from gaining office. The advent of opinion polls could be said to strengthen this tendency by providing authoritative information about what others will likely do on the day of the election. On the other hand, the potential voter may practice a "future-oriented voting" strategy by supporting a party in order to put it in a better position to win at a later date.
despite its low prospects in the current election. Or, a rational individual may vote for a party with the full knowledge that this party will lose the election in order to register dissatisfaction with the current regime (protest voting). Despite these elaborations introduced by a multi-party system, the decision to vote is still made through a calculation of the utility income which the voter will gain if his party is elected over its opponent. As Downs asserts, "Though rational voting is more important in multi-party systems than in two-party systems, it is more difficult and less effective."

Unfortunately, the discussion introduced above refers, in general terms to a world in which voting is costless. This, of course, is not the real world in which we live. In this world where there are costs to voting the rational individual will only vote if the benefits outweigh these costs; otherwise, abstention will occur. Unfortunately, while the benefits are often small, several costs do exist. For instance,

...time is the principal cost of voting: time to register [in Canada, to be enumerated], to discover what parties are running, to deliberate, to go to the polls, and to mark the ballot. Since time is a scarce resource, voting is inherently costly.
Another cost inherent in voting is the collection of information which is necessary to decrease the amount of uncertainty involved in the calculation of one's "party differential." While several tools are available to lower the costs of information such as ideology, partisanship or through an informed leader, some information is needed in order to "reinforce the confidence of a decision-maker." Thus even a minute amount of information is gained at some cost. Furthermore, other more direct costs may affect the decision to vote such as poll taxes, transportation costs to and from the polling station, and the utility income lost by taking time out from work in order to cast a ballot. In short,

when there are cost to voting, they may outweigh the returns thereof; hence rational abstention becomes possible even for citizens who want a particular party to win. In fact, since the returns from voting are often minuscule, even low voting costs may cause many partisan citizens to abstain.  

Downs uses these costs to offer an explanation as to why there is a larger proportion of low income abstainers. For the poor, the costs of voting and the costs of obtaining information are harder to bear than for the wealthier members of society. Thus, their accumulated cost and their uncertainty are higher lowering the return of
voting. However, considering the potential high costs of voting for all citizens and the admittedly low returns, the question is not why so many individuals abstain but, rather, why so many participate? Downs answers this query with a discussion on the inherent return of voting. For Downs, there are several factors which may influence the return from voting for any individual. These include, (1) "the strength of his desire to see one party win instead of the other, i.e., the size of his party differential;" \(^{20}\) (2) "the degree to which he discounts his party differential to allow for the influence of other voters;" \(^{21}\) and, (3) "the value of voting \textit{per se}." \(^{22}\) While the first two benefits appear self-explanatory, the third deserves some clarification before proceeding to the more contemporary proponents of the rational choice approach.

In order to account for the large number of voters, despite the high costs and low returns, Downs introduced a psychic reward inherent in the act of voting in a democratic system. In short, the knowledge that ones vote is contributing to the maintenance of the system constitutes a return from voting \textit{per se}: "Rational (individuals) in a democracy are motivated to some extent by a sense of social responsibility relatively independent of their own short-run gains and losses." \(^{23}\) Downs,
referring to this benefit as the "long-run participation value."\(^2\) maintained that "(1) [it] is never zero, (2) [it] varies directly with the benefits [the voter] gains from democracy, and (3) [it] varies inversely with the number of others [the voter] expects to vote."\(^2\)

3.2 Recent Advancements in the Rational Choice Approach:

The idea of a return from voting per se has not been universally accepted by rational choice theorists. For many this "desire to preserve democracy" is nothing more than a Deux Ex Machina\(^2\) which does not provide an adequate explanation of why so many people vote when the theory resolves that it is "irrational in that it usually costs more to vote than one can expect to get in return."\(^2\) Brian Barry (1970) maintains that while people may vote because they derive satisfaction from voting "for reasons entirely divorced from the hope that it will bring about desired results,"\(^2\) this assertion is "foreign to the kind of 'economic' rationality with which Downs is working."\(^2\)

Yet, a decade after Downs, Riker and Ordeshook (1968, 1973) began their own investigations into the rationality of voting which includes an economic presentation of the psychic rewards of voting. In their article "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting,"\(^2\) the authors attempted to

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"reinterpret the voting calculus" developed by Downs.\textsuperscript{34} They argued that "the function of theory is to explain behavior and it is certainly no explanation to assign a sizeable part of politics to the mysterious and inexplicable world of the irrational."\textsuperscript{32} In brief, they arrived at the conclusion that the expected utility derived from voting minus the expected utility of abstaining $R$, also known as the "differential expected utility of voting", was equal to $PB + D - C$,

\begin{align*}
\text{where, } & \quad P = \text{the citizen's subjectively estimated probability that his vote materially affects the outcome}, \\
& \quad B = \text{the absolute value of the citizen's subjective differential utility between the candidates}, \\
& \quad D = \text{the private utility a citizen derives from participating in the electoral process ($U^+$)}, \\
& \quad C = \text{the cost of voting ($U^-$).}\end{align*}

Thus, if $R$ is greater than zero than it is reasonable to vote, but, if $R$ is equal or less than zero, it is only reasonable to abstain.

It should be mentioned that this particular calculus is less efficient in multi-party systems such as Canada. The reason for this shortcoming lies in the difficulty of calculating $B$. In a two party system the differential is quite simply the Utility from party A minus the Utility
from party B. By adding only one other party to the equation, the differential becomes a comparison between the utility differentials of party A and B, A and C and, B and C. As the number of competing parties grow more numerous, the number of combinations become increasingly unmanageable and the equation more complex.

The concept of "minimax regret" introduced by Ferejohn and Fiorina (1974) attempted to reduce some of the difficulties inherent in a multi-party analysis. While they disagreed with the D term promoted by Riker and Ordeshook, they also took exception to Barry’s statement that this term negated the economic theory advanced by Downs. Rather they postulated that rational behaviour need not "follow the rule of maximizing expected utility" but that voters tended to "seek to minimize their maximum regret at what the outcome would be if they did not vote." Thus a three party contest was reduced to a "set of 19 mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive states." Unfortunately, the only support offered for their theory was that it showed that it would be rational for most people to vote and since most do, they must be correct. Furthermore, it is not clear how these "19 states" simplify the equation; considering the complexity of their calculus it seems to confuse matters considerably.
In a more recent article, Uhlaner (1986) offers yet another interpretation of the rational choice approach. She argues that if voters wish to maximize their expected utility "their utility function may include both investment and consumption terms;" thus she accepts the D term rejected by Barry, Ferejohn and Fiorina as a legitimate entity within the calculus of voting. However, taking a page from Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* she also advances the notion that group membership and group leaders play a crucial role in the equation.

Consequently, consumption benefits can take several forms.

Individually begin with some baseline level of consumption benefits; for example, a fixed level derived from citizen duty inculcated in early socialization. For some people these will be sufficiently high to produce voting; for others, they will be too low. However, total consumption benefits can vary from election to election. In particular, the strength of the normative sense that "it is important to vote this time" is open to manipulation - or enhancement - through groups with which a person identifies. As its strength increases, more people will find the benefits from voting exceeds the cost, and turnout will increase.

Instead of concentrating on the individual, Uhlaner attempts to incorporate a more complete picture of the political world by showing the interaction between the voter, the group leader and the candidates.
These three views, when combined, suggest that group elites provide their members or identifiers with incentives to vote [both economic and psychological] in order to capture a collective benefit for the group through shifts in candidate positions. Leaders jockey for position in turnout space as candidates move in policy space; the leaders' payoffs consist of policies, while the candidates' payoffs consists of votes. The individual voters' payoffs consist of a small policy term and a large consumption benefit.\textsuperscript{22}

Uhlaner goes on to note how the existence of opinion polls offers further incentive "to play this game:"

\[ \text{[f]or candidates, polls provide the opportunity to check on delivery of support before the irrevocable moment of election. For leaders, because polls provide verification, they make offers of support more valuable.}\textsuperscript{23} \]

The sense of "civic duty," formulated in these terms, transcends the boundaries of purely egoistic rewards and also offers some intangible non-pecuniary benefits such as inclusion and acceptance within a particular group, and the desire by individuals to cooperate -- as well as the more traditional economic behaviour (i.e., self-interest). In essence, her argument does not differ radically from other rational actor models. Rather it adds a group dimension by asserting that most people belong (either consciously or not) to a group and that "they often think in terms of 'other people like me' in assessing politics."\textsuperscript{24} However, most importantly, it reasserts the legitimacy of the rewards inherent in voting \textit{per se}.\textsuperscript{25}
3.3 Conclusion

While this discussion has outlined several alternative views of Downs' original economic approach, it seems that little has actually changed. The most notable exception occurred when Riker and others formally included the D term (citizen duty) into the equation. While several of the authors examined objected to this inclusion, the arguments against it have not been compelling or at least the arguments for its inclusion seem more irresistible. Whether this duty to vote is purely psychological or, as Uhlaner suggest, can sometimes include some tangible returns, is debatable. However, it is clear that any operational definition must include it within the calculus. Thus, the following section will attempt to operationalize \( R = PB + D - C \) with the assumption that non-voters will typically possess a value for \( R \) equal or smaller than zero while the opposite will be true for the voters.

3.4 Some Tests of the Rational Choice Approach

It is an unfortunate shortcoming of the literature regarding the rational choice approach that the calculus has been seldom operationalized to its fullest potential using existing data. Rather, it has been the practice
that the theoretical background has taken precedence over any empirical analysis. While it is true that Riker and Ordeshook provided some elucidation regarding the P, B and D terms of the equation, they tended to ignore the cost factor in their final analysis and failed to actually compute the sum of the equation (R) preferring instead a more round-about trivariate crosstabsular representation. Likewise, Ferejohn and Fiorina produced some elaborate calculations regarding the "minimax-regret decision makers" rules yet they never tested it with actual data. Finally, Uhlmaner provided some compelling arguments for the inclusion of groups into the equation yet nowhere did she indicate a procedure for adding these entities into the calculus. Whereas the variables used in the three traditional approaches explored in Chapter Two were implicitly recognized within the literature, this is clearly not the case for the Rational Choice approach.

This operational deficiency makes it necessary to offer some justification for the choice of variables used in this section. It should be noted at the outset that the operationalization of the concepts was in several instances hampered by the limitations of the instrument. Stated in blunt terms, the National Election Surveys were not constructed with the rational choice approach in mind;
consequently, several factors inherent to this approach -- such as cost of voting and citizen duty -- were omitted. This disclaimer should not serve to detract from the analysis to follow but, rather, it should underline the strength of the approach by demonstrating its potential despite inadequate measures.

3.4.1 Calculating the Party Utility Differential (B)

From the above discussion, it is clear that any calculation of the B term is less than simple in a three party system. Yet, as with the other approaches, the operationalization of the Rational Choice approach has been kept as basic as possible. Riker and Ordeshook operationalized this variable by looking at the answers to a pre-election interview which asked how much the respondent “cares about the outcome of the election.” Apart from not being a part of the NES84, it simply does not legitimately measure the utility differential which is clearly recognized as the difference between the utility of party A and that of party B. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the introduction of a third party can considerably complicate matters. However, these complications seem to only concern the ordering of the parties. In this analysis, we are not concerned with the ordering, our only
goal is to calculate the greatest party utility differential for each individual. Thus B becomes a product of the utility of the most preferred party minus that of the least preferred. The intermediate party does not enter the equation since we are not involved with a comparison of party differentials which would establish a preference ranking but rather with an equation which answers: Will the party differential induce voting or abstention?

Respondents of the NESB4 were asked which party would be the best in dealing with 12 distinct issues ranging from unemployment to women's issues and, conversely, which party would be the worst. For every positive response, the party got a +1 added to the Utility of party A score (UA). For every negative response the party got a -1 added to the Utility of party B score (UB). Each of these measures began at 0. Thus UA ranged from 0 to 12 and UB ranged from 0 to -12. Note that the identity of the most preferred and least preferred parties is not a factor, only the strength of these measures is important for this analysis. Finding B was therefore a simple matter of calculating UA-UB. This meant that B ranged from 0 to 24 with 0 indicating indifference and 24 indicating a very high party differential (i.e., the respondent really liked a specific party and really disliked another). The values
of B were recoded so that the utility differential could be more easily managed (i.e., more comparable to the following measures). Thus 0 indicated indifference, 1 to 12 indicated a low utility differential and 13 to 24 indicated a high differential.

3.4.2 Calculating the Probability of Affecting the Outcome of the Election (P)

The subjective probability of affecting the outcome of an election was slightly more problematic. Riker and Ordeshook used a pre-election question which measured the perceived closeness of the election. Once again, this indicator was not available in our sample -- it does, however, seem to measure the concept quite well since Downs indicated that the closeness of an election directly affected the probability of a single vote changing the outcome. Rather a question which asked the degree to which the respondent agreed with the statement "[i]t does not matter if I voted or not" was used. This is problematic in that it is, strictly speaking, an efficacy variable better suited to the measurement of the D term in the equation. Unfortunately, this was the only available variable which directly examined the subjective weight of the respondent's vote in an election. If they strongly agreed with the statement, their probability of affecting
the outcome of the election \((P)\) was awarded a value of 0; if they agreed somewhat, neither agreed nor disagreed or disagreed somewhat, they were awarded a \(P\) of .5; and if they strongly disagreed with the statement, then their \(P\) was 1 (i.e., 100% subjective probability of vote affecting outcome). This, albeit gross assignment of values, was thought to best portray the dispersal present in society, with the greater percentage residing in the middle of the scale (i.e., a bell curve was thought to be safer than skewing one side over another).

It should be mentioned that a decision was consciously made to allow both \(B\) and \(P\) to have a value of 0. This was done for several reasons: (1) a utility function must necessarily include indifference (whereby no product is preferred over another); (2) a probability must have a minimum of 0 and maximum of 100%; (3) if there is no preference between parties, then the probability that one's vote will affect the outcome becomes irrelevant and should therefore be discounted; and (4) if the probability of affecting the outcome is 0, then the utility differential is meaningless. Consequently, if either \(B\) or \(P\) equal 0, the decision to vote must rest solely on the resolution of one's sense of citizen duty \((D)\) minus the cost of voting \((C)\).
3.4.3 Calculating the Sense of Citizen Duty (D)

The concept of citizen duty as defined by Riker included "a so-called citizen duty scale which the SRC [Michigan Survey Research Center] constructed out of responses to four questions about the "duty to vote" asked in the pre-election interviews." These questions were later changed to a series of efficacy questions by the SRC. For our purposes, D was operationalized using similar efficacy variables. Respondents displaying a low sense of efficacy were awarded a "Duty value" of 1; those who had a medium sense of efficacy (the majority of respondents) were given a score of 2; and those with a high sense of efficacy were given a D score of 3. The logic behind this allocation is as follow: (1) most people will have a medium sense of duty; (2) some will display a greater sense and others, a lesser sense of duty; (3) everyone will have some sense of duty.

3.4.4 Calculating the Cost of Voting (C):

This concept was by far the most arbitrary measure in the entire equation. Riker et al. simply assumed that C and D were negatively correlated and, therefore if a respondent
displayed a high sense of duty, they were allocated a low cost to voting. However, in their final analysis, they ignored the cost term of the equation and did not take the calculus of voting to its logical conclusion.\textsuperscript{40} While it was hoped that a better solution could be found to the operationalization of the C term, there were no variables present in the NES84 which directly addressed the issue of cost.\textsuperscript{41} After much thought it was decided to make the cost of voting constant for all respondents. However, the relative cost was not kept constant. It was decided that the cost should vary depending on ones ability to pay them. For instance, young respondents who lack the voting experience gained through age; low income respondents who lack the resources to pay the cost, and; respondents who have a low education and must spend more time collecting and intergrating the wealth of information were coded as having a higher relative cost than older, richer or better educated respondents. Therefore, the cost of voting was given a value 3 for the former group and a cost 1 for the latter. The majority of the respondents were awarded a cost of voting equal to 2. This was done in order to fulfill the "intuitively persuasive supposition that PB-C<0."\textsuperscript{42}
3.4.5 Interpreting $R = PB + D - C$

The results obtained through a calculation of the formula $R = PB + D - C$ should be interpreted as an abstraction of reality. Clearly the prospective voter does not actually compute these numbers. Rather the decision to vote might follow the logic outlined in figure 3.1 (depicted on the following page). The numbers obtained for $R$ ranged from $-2$ to $+4$. These were recoded so that all respondents who had an $R$ score at or below zero would be rational abstainers while those above zero would be rational voters. A correlation analysis using the same dependent variable as in Chapter 2 produced an $R^2$ of .0974 ($p < .001$).\textsuperscript{63} It is clear that this was well below the expectations raised by the theory, yet the results were not altogether discouraging.

With the hopes of raising the correlation coefficient it was suggested that the dependent variable might best be represented as a "probability of non-voting" scale with 1 representing a 100 percent probability of non-voting
FIGURE 3.1
RATIONAL DECISION FLOWCHART:

Is Outcome Important? (B)

<YES>

Can I Affect Outcome? (P)

<LOW>

How Important is it for me to Vote? (D)

<HIGH>

How Costly is Voting? (C)

<LOW>

<HIGH>

V < NV

ABSTAIN

Compare Cost of Voting with the Cost of not Voting (D - C)

V > NV

< V

VOTE

(i.e., did not vote in three out of three elections), .67 representing a two third probability, .33, a one third probability and 0 representing a zero probability of non-voting (i.e., voted in all three elections). Unfortunately, this actually decreased the value of R² to .0835 (P<.001). Upon further reflection an analysis using the results of the calculus and the vote in 1984 was initiated. The reason for such an analysis is implicit in the rational choice theory which states that all of the variables (P,B,C and D) are subject to subtle changes from election to election (i.e., the theory is time specific) and, since the data for the NES84 was collected in 1984 it was clear that the calculus would be most applicable to this specific election. In fact, the results demonstrate that this is so; the R² for this analysis was .1059 (P<.001). While it is clear that for comparative purposes, only the first result can be used (otherwise any comparison between these results and those in Chapter 2 would be moot), it is interesting to note how the theory demands further refinements of the dependent variable.

On a more graphic level, Table 3.1 demonstrates the distribution of respondents in terms of percentages:
TABLE 3.1
Vote Frequency by Rational Calculus Variable (percentages).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOTING FREQUENCY</th>
<th>RATIONAL ABSTAINERS</th>
<th>RATIONAL VOTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREQUENT NON-VOTERS</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASUAL NON-VOTERS</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTERS</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=775</td>
<td>n=1864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3.1 it can be surmised that most individuals acted rationally (according to the criteria outlined by the theory). In fact, only 13.5 percent of the "frequent non-voters" acted counter to the predicted behaviour and less than 27 percent of the "voters" voted when the theory predicted that they would abstain. The results of the respondents in the "casual non-voters" category basically conforms to the expected trend. Since these individuals voted in at least one of the three elections, they should possess some of the characteristics of both the rational voter and the rational abstainer. In absolute terms, these results suggest that only 25 percent of the respondents acted irrationally. Considering the crudity of the operationalization, this seems an acceptable margin of error.
3.5 Summary and Conclusions

To summarize, the results obtained through the use of the rational choice approach have proven somewhat encouraging. While the correlations have been rather weak their relative strength (which will be examined in the following section) is quite impressive. Clearly, much work is required in this field; however, as a first assay, the fact that most of the respondents conformed to the expectations raised by this approach is encouraging.
CHAPTER 4: COMPARISON AND CONCLUSION

The last three Chapters have included a very broad examination of non-voting in Canada. In Chapter 1, the topic was introduced and the area under investigation was defined and refined. In Chapter 2, the three most popular approaches to the study of non-voting were discussed and their causal indicators tested. Chapter 3 included a more detailed look at the theoretical underpinnings of the Rational Choice approach and a test of this model using a Canadian dataset. In the following Chapter, I will compare these four approaches and, thus summarize the findings suggested earlier in the Paper. Furthermore, the question "can the Rational Choice model be established as a 'better research' programme? [sic]" -- posed in the opening Chapter -- will be answered using the criteria outlined there. It is therefore the nature of this comparative section that it should also make up a large part of the conclusion to the Paper.
4.1 Comparative Analysis

It is clear that any comparison between the four approaches examined thus far must entail at the very least, a brief overview of earlier findings. First, the results obtained in Chapter 2 demonstrated that the variable which had the strongest relationship with non-voting was the age of the respondent with an $R^2$ of .0791 ($P < .001$). In short, younger respondents tended to abstain more frequently than their elders. The social/economic approach also showed some relationships between non-voting and income, education and SES. While these were individually weaker than the variance explained by age alone, their combined weight—obtained through a regression analysis—produced a relatively high $R^2$ of .1039 ($P < .001$). On the psychological/motivational side, the combined partisanship scale created from issue, leader and party partisanship produced a disappointing $R^2$ of only .0391 ($P < .001$) while efficacy alone produced an $R^2$ of .0313 ($P < .001$). Finally, in the environmental/ecological approach, attention to the debates (i.e., the media and the campaign) produced the highest correlation with an $R^2$ of .0204 ($P < .001$).
On the whole, these results, while admittedly weak, tend to support the findings of past analyses. However, despite their strengths they are found lacking in both theoretical grounding and their explanatory strengths when compared to the rational choice approach. As a brief analogy, if one were to view non-voting as a disease, then the social/economic approach seems to describe the patient; the psychological/motivational approach describes the symptoms of the disease; and, the environmental/ecological approach examines the hospital in which the patient is residing. Of all the models reviewed only the rational choice approach directly investigates the disease itself and the reasons for its manifestation.

While each of the traditional approaches offer some degree of correlation with non-voting, only the rational choice model has the qualities necessary to explain these correlations. For instance, if the young vote less frequently than the old, the rational choice model is able to ascribe this in part to the cost of voting. As with all things, ease comes with experience, and, in exercising the right to vote, the young must exert more effort to gather information (e.g., they have not yet gained the experience needed to form lasting partisanship affiliations -- a great cost-cutting device). To these "new voters" everything
about the voting experience is new and must therefore be learned. Furthermore, the rational choice approach can ascribe some cause for this abstinence on the part of the young to a lack of citizen duty. In short, these individuals have not been active in the political arena long enough to have formed strong ties with the system (i.e., the system worked fine before they obtained the franchise, why should they bother now?). They simply do not have the investment in the system needed to increase their sense of duty to it. In the same vein, if income is also a predictor of non-voting, this may in part be due to the inability of the poor to bear the cost -- however small -- of voting, as well as their low level of investment in the system.²

On a different level, both the social/economic approach and the psychological/motivational approach explain the decision to abstain in terms of cross-pressures. To the rational choice approach, this is only one term in the equation. Whether groups are causing the cross-pressure or whether it is a function of competing partisan affiliations, at the rational choice level these are both part of the party differential equation. If the differential is equal to zero, (i.e., in strictly theoretical terms, if no party is preferred over another),
than there is no reason to vote -- the respondent is not torn between choices but, rather, sees no reason to make a choice.

In terms of the environmental/ecological approach, it is clear that the rational choice analysis offers the best insights when the environment is strictly defined. That is to say, when the 1984 election is examined with the data collected in 1984, the strength of the correlation increases significantly. In fact, as mentioned earlier, this effect is implicit in the rational choice approach.³

In comparing results obtained through tests of each approach, the rational choice approach once again prevails. The R² of .0974 (P<.001) for this approach is considerably greater than that of age its closest competitor. Further, the regression analysis using all of the terms in the equation produced an R² of .1179 (P<.001), quite simply the strongest result in a study plagued by unusually weak correlations. Nonetheless, on a comparative level, the rational choice approach can be seen to have outperformed all of the traditional approaches examined in this Paper.
4.2 Conclusion

As outlined in the opening Chapter, if the rational choice approach is to be established as a better research program it must first account for all the successes of the old approaches. This paper argues that it does this. The rational choice model might be described as an integrated approach: it takes into account most of the indicators discussed by the more myopic (i.e., one track) traditional approaches and goes beyond them to offer a more complete, yet elegant, explanation of the occurrence of non-voting. Second, a better research program must prove superior to the old in at least one crucial experiment. While the tests performed in this analysis do not pretend to constitute a "crucial experiment," it should be pointed out that if the rational choice approach were to fail to correlate with voting behaviour, it would be within a multi-party system such as ours. If the rational choice theorist agree on anything it is that multi-party systems are not as compatible with the calculus as are two-party systems. Yet, even with this handicap, the rational choice approach outperformed its more traditional counterparts. Third, a better research program must show that it has broader implications that the old ones. This is in my view the main
strength of the rational choice approach. While it explains why people fail to vote in this study it is also said to explains a host of other participatory activities as well as the choice of candidate. It encompasses the range of human interaction by offering a concrete foundation for political decision making. If people act rationally in their interaction with the political environment, this behaviour may be mirrored in the rest of the secular world.

In short,[the rational choice approach] is a more falsifiable (or powerful) theoretical construct than any collection of ad hoc hypotheses designed to "explain" a single dataset. Moreover, the Downsian model rests on explicit behavioral assumptions (e.g., rationality) which have testable implications in other contexts. Accordingly Down's model of individual voting behavior fits into a broader framework and permits cumulative progress.¹

Unlike the traditional approaches which do not provide a clear theoretical explanations for their specific operationalizations, the rational choice approach is a theory with a clearly defined procedure.

It is clear that there is still much to do in this field. The tests conducted in this paper were necessarily simplistic and consequently the total predictive capabilities of each have not been fully explored. Better instruments are needed which can test these divergent
approaches more accurately. This is true with regards to the rational choice model and its application to the Canadian case. While the National Election Surveys are the best instruments to date in Canada, they are nonetheless lacking in their ability to deal with the specific demands of each approach, and some effort should be made to further develop and refine them. However, in this Paper, the rational choice approach seems to hold a great deal more promise than any other and consequently it is the conclusion of this Paper that the bulk of future work on non-voting in Canada should be devoted to this more comprehensive approach in the hopes of furthering our understanding of this social and political reality.
Chapter II

1 Lester Milbrath, Political Participation. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), 2.


4 An "approach" is simply a way of looking at a phenomenon. Clearly, a researcher cannot observe everything; Thus, the approach limits the scope of enquiry in order to make research more manageable.


6 For example, both Dauud (1961) and Lazarsfeld (1944, 1962) used a "socio-economic" approach, yet, their theories are entirely different. The same can be said for Merriam (1924) and Campbell et al. (1960) who both employed the "psychological/motivational" mode of analysis.

7 For more information on the NES84 (its strengths and weaknesses), see APPENDIX 1. The main thing to keep in mind at this point is that it provides information on 3 general elections: 1979, 1980, 1984. The experimental group shall henceforth be referred to as the non-voter; the control group is the voter.

8 The basic assumption made here is that there are two transcendental reasons why a person does not perform an expected action (i.e., does not conform to the norm): 1. He/she will not, or; 2. He/she can not. As I shall later explain, the second category holds no analytical interest, and may in fact be detrimental to the accurate study of this particular phenomenon.

Canadian official turnout figures are based on the number of votes cast over the number of individuals on the voters list rather than the entire population at or over the national voting age (as in the U.S.). The result of this is an average over-representation of the Canadian turnout figures of about 5%.

It would have been more accurate to include all individuals over 18 years (the official national voting age in Canada). Unfortunately, the census material available to me was already broken down into a group which included those cases 18 and 19 years old in the category "15 to 19". Consequently, These data are cautious; they under-represent the non-voting population by dropping the 18 and 19 values instead of over-representing it by including those who are below the voting age.


Charles E. Merriam, Harold F. Gosnell, Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control. (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1924), 34.


These barriers can take many forms; e.g., in Canada, Laponce identifies five characteristics of forced non-voters found in the official registration list, including: 1. No such person exists; 2. U.S. citizens mistakenly put on list by third parties; 3. Dead; 4. Critically ill; and, 5. Moved far from district, away on holiday or business." (Laponce, 1967: 81). In his study of the 1956 Presidential election, Clinton Rossiter found 12.5 Million would-be voters forced to abstain for reasons ranging from "... discriminatory practices..." to "300,000... without residence in the United States". (Lang, 1968: 70).


All of the numbers giving represent "valid percentages which excludes those respondents who did not provide answers for the variables being examined. Valid percentages are therefore included for each year.

Lambert, et al., op. cit., 1986

Specific electoral turnout fluctuations will be examined towards the end of this Chapter -- most notably within the final section dealing with the ecological/environmental approach.

Researchers, such as Berelson (1962) and Milbrath (1965), have long recognized that, for a variety of reasons, people are lax to admit a failure to vote within a survey environment. Consequently, the relatively high turnout and low abstention rates (compared to official calculations presented earlier) are not only a product of the strict conditions imposed upon a respondents' entrance into the non-voter category, but also of this documented reluctance on the part of the individuals answering the survey.

Chapter 2:

1 Kavanagh, op.cit., 76.

2 Ibid.

3 For a complete and detailed list of the social/economic variables in question, refer to Appendix 2.


5 In fact, due to the hard nature of this type of datum, (i.e. indicators such as gender, race, age, and area of residence are all directly observable by the researcher), its use in the voting literature predates all others (most notably in the works of Merriam and Gosnell (1924)).


7 Ibid., 27.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, op.cit., 16.


Abrams, op.cit., 23.

Ibid., 24.


Laponde, op.cit., 85-86. — The findings offered by Lapone have been substantiated, in this particular instance, by results obtained for this study which showed that only 1 out of 134 females over 66 years of age failed to vote (in at least 2 out of 3 elections), while 7 out of 169 males abstained (roughly 6 times the rate for females).

The product-moment correlation varies between -1 and +1, and indicates "...the extent to which one variable is associated with another..." (Johnson & Joslyn:1988). The closer to unity, the better the correlation. The coefficient of determination measures the variance in the dependent variable explained by shift in the independent variable. Both are optimally efficient with variables of ordinal, interval and ratio level. Consequently, some of the variables in this study had to be transformed into dummy variables in order to compensate for their nominal nature.

This trend of age, education, income and SES as the highest correlates with voting frequency continues despite the measures used (i.e. TauC, Spearman's coefficient and Cramer's V were all calculated) In fact, Eta^2, a measure compatible with nominal dependent and ordinal level independent variables (such as in this case), assesses the variance explained for age at .0339, for education at .0111, for income at .0095 and for SES at .0049 -- by far the highest correlations among the ten indicators examined.
The relationship between these variables is as follows: the SES is created from income, education and occupation. The coefficient of determination between SES and its constituent variables is .24, .02, .24 respectively. Furthermore, age and education yield an \( r^2 \) of .12, then through the intermediary of occupation, the circle of correlations is closed with education and occupation at .12, and occupation and income at .15.

Several alternative constructs were analyzed. Some included additional indicators such as marital status, gender, and language. Others used fewer, such as a construct built out of only age and income. Yet none of these produced as good a balance between the sample size within the "perfect type" category and the amount of variance explained as the integration of age, education, and occupation.


Ibid., 297. (see also, Verba and Nie, Participation in America. (New York:Harper and Row, 1972) Chapter 9, for other examples of higher order controlled findings.

Some understandable exceptions do exist since, in certain sub-groups there are few and sometimes no individuals below the age of 30. Such is the case for individuals in the very highest income brackets, for those in the higher occupation fields (i.e. owners, managers and senior executives), divorcees and widowers and, due to recent educational laws, individuals with no formal education are uniformly over the age of 60.
The problem here is much the same as the one experienced earlier with the "perfect type" construct. The more refined the category under scrutiny, the fewer non-voters are described by it. Take the following hypothetical analysis: If only 10 non-voters existed and 6 were female, then most non-voters can be said to be female. Of those 6 females, if 3 were between the ages of 18-30, 2 between 31-65 and 1 over 65, then most could be said to be younger. Yet, only 3 out of 10 non-voters have been accurately portrayed by this more detailed typology.


Campbell, Gurin and Miller, (1954), op.cit, 182.

Ibid., 183, also see Kavanagh, op.cit., 89.


Once again, this statement is a synthesis of the arguments used by many authors who based their positions on similar psychological indicators. Each study is idiosyncratic in the particular variable emphasized.

Lester Milbrath, op.cit., 18.

Milbrath called these types of participation "spectator activities." Between the "spectator" and the "gladiator" is the "transitional type of activity". For more on the hierarchy of political involvement see Milbrath, (1965), op.cit., 18.

Ibid., 17-19.

This additive scale ranges from 1 to 7 with 1 representing a non partisan (very weak partisanship) and 7 representing a very strong partisan (see Appendix 3).

Kavanagh, op.cit., 87.
This "conflict" is especially apparent within the Leadership preference dimension where, in the 1979, 1980 and 1984 elections, Ed Broadbent of the N.D.P. was consistently found to be the most popular leader by the polls of the time (including this one). This did not deter people from voting for another party. In essence, the conflict was ignored by the voters.

Milbrath, op.cit., 18.

A person who scored high on the apathy index tended to abstain from most types of participation and, conversely, those who scored low were quite active in most types of participatory events. The act of voting was not included in the apathy index in order to avoid the tautology "non-voters don't vote".

Like efficacy, the observed trend for apathy is clearly progressive; and, while interest, trust and political proclivity also produce predicted results at the two extremes, inconsistencies in the middle values destroy their linearity.

This uneven distribution of cases does not invalidate the observed trend, but it does hamper its predictive capacities.

A more detailed examination of the cost of voting will be offered in Chapter three along with its impact on non-voting.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., 68. The specific variable referred to by this quote happens to be "electoral mobilization activity", however, most of the environmental/ ecological indicators are treated in a similarly conservative manner by the literature.
Strictly speaking, the fifth proposition is not entirely relevant to this paper which is primarily concerned with federal non-voting. However, it should be interesting to observe if the chronic federal non-voter carries this behaviour over to the provincial sphere.


The literature generally examines the effects of the media and debates on vote intention rather than frequency. For more on the 1979 debates see Price and Leduc, "Encounter '79: The Effects of Televised Leadership Debates on Voting and Political Participation," presented to the International Society of Political Psychology, June 24-27, 1984.


Ibid., 533-534.

Chapter 3:


Although, it should be mentioned that many of the conclusions reached by own "have been specifically stated by Walter Lippmann" (Downs, p.14) in Public Opinion (New York: MacMillan Co., 1922), The Phantom Public (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955) and, Essays in the Public Philosophy (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1955). Nevertheless, Downs was the first to offer a positive (predictive) model of government rather than a simple normative economic model.

"Ibid., 5.


26 Uhlaner, *op.cit.*, 556.


Ibid., 20. By this Barry meant that the voting decision had been altered by the introduction of the "civic duty" argument from an investment decision to a consumption decision outside the keen of an economic model. Yet, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1974) successfully argue that this shift can be addressed by the rational choice model through the theory of consumer choice which investigates "the structure of individual preferences: substitutes, complements, inferior goods, and the like". (1974:526).


It should be noted that by the time Riker and Ordeshook published their first explorations into the rational choice approach, it had engendered a relatively large following among authors and academics. A prominent example of this interest can be found in Gordon Tullock Towards a Mathematics of Politics. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967).


Conway, op.cit., 108.

Ferejohn and Fiorina, op.cit., 529.

Ibid., 535.

Jean Uhlmaner, op.cit., 560.


Uhlmaner, op.cit., 557.
Ibid., 561. Note how the logic of this argument is able to address the question of low levels turnout among the poor. Their groups are simply too impotent to motivate them to vote. As Uhlaner explains on p. 565, the individual must hold the group salient in his mind or the leader holds no sway over his opinion. For more on Rational Choice and income level see Yoram Barzel and Eugene Silverberg "Is the Act of Voting Rational?" Public Choice, 16, 1973: 51-58.

Ibid., 561-562.

Ibid., note 10, 562.

Ibid., 565.

It is easy to see how this particular theory can be simplified into an equation whereby the leaders and the candidates are the same. In this situation political parties would be the primary group units. The candidates, as leaders of this group constantly adjust their policies in order to accommodate the greatest number of potential voters. In this scenario opinion polls would play a further role: reinforcing the intentions of the voter. They would tell him exactly how his group was performing and where "people like stand.

Although Frohlich, Oppenheimer, Smith and Young did provide a complete test in "A Test of Downsian Voter Rationality: 1964 Presidential Voting" American Political Science Review, 72, 1978: 178-197; they were clearly concerned with the direction of the vote rather than its occurrence, (e.g., Is it rational for an individual to have voted Democrat rather than Republican).

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 34-42.

Ferejohn and Fiorina, op.cit., 528-534.

Uhlaner, op.cit., 560-565.

It would be unjust to compare the simple tests conducted in Chapter 2 with an elaborate test of the rational choice approach. For this reason the operationalization has been kept simple.

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 35.
For instance, in A>B>C<A the order is self evident and the decision to vote as well as the preferred party is obvious. However consider, A=B>C<A; here, while the decision to vote is apparent, the choice between parties A and B is quite ambiguous. It is clear that several such ambiguous combinations exist. (The only combination considered irrational would be A>B>C>A since the ranking is intransitive; a clear condition of a utility function as outlined by Downs (1957:6)).

For a complete list of the variables used in the calculation of UA and UB, see Appendix 3.

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 35.

Downs, op.cit., 266.

see Appendix 2 for the exact wording of this question.

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 36.

Ibid., see note 15, 36.

A complete list of variables used is included in Appendix 3.

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 38.

For instance, no variable measured the amount of time each respondent spent collecting and processing information about politics; no variable examined the distance of the respondent from the polling station or the time needed to vote.

Riker and Ordeshook, op.cit., (1968), 36.

This weak but significant result is reinforced by a regression analysis of the five terms used in the equation which yielded an adjusted R² of .1179 (P<.001).
The creation of this variable was suggested by Prof. Hilderbrandt (Dept. of Communications, University of Windsor) during a brief discussion; he is in no way responsible for its application in this paper. In effect, this variable is similar to the original non-voting measure outlined in Chapter 1 with the exception of the values assigned to the degrees of non-voting, (i.e., he frequent non-voter (3 out of 3 elections) was given a value of 1 while the casual non-voter (2 out of 3 elections) was awarded a value of 2. The voter (1 out of 3 or 0 out of 3 elections) was given a score of 3). It should be noted that all of the correlations reported in Chapter 2 were repeated with the use of this probability variable. The results of this alternative analysis did not substantially differ from those originally reported and were therefore, omitted from the study.

The regression analysis with the five terms and the probability of non-voting variable yielded an $R^2$ of .1234 and with the vote in 1984 indicator as the dependent variable, the $R^2$ was .1496.

Chapter 4

1. *Infra.*, 7.


4. *Frohlich et al., op.cit.*, 189.
APPENDIX 1

THE INSTRUMENT AND DATA

The study proposed in this thesis has been undertaken with the data collected for the 1984 National Election Study (NES84) conducted by Lambert, Brown, Curtis, Kay and Wilson and, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The choice of this particular dataset is based on several critical factors. The first such consideration is one of applicability -- That is to say, the data selected must be relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. The implications of this statement encompass two separate elements: 1. The sample universe; and, 2. The variables to be collated.

It is evident that a study of non-voting necessitates specific sampling criteria. Unlike an analysis of voting behavior, the intrinsic nature of the subject matter excludes the use of the voter registration list as a basis for the sample. While this technique may account for a small number of non-voters, a comparison of Canadian Census material, enumerating all of the individuals fulfilling the conditions of the franchise, with the electoral
registration list has been shown to uncover a considerable gap. It is this gap which our study should ultimately address itself. Unfortunately, the identity of the individuals within this area, is by definition, unknown. Consequently, it becomes necessary to forsake a random sample directed specifically at our experimental group in favor of a sample which is more representative of the entire Canadian population in the hopes that the object under scrutiny will be commensurable. Through a four-stage sample selection procedure, which takes into account the geographical distribution of the Canadian population, the clustering of eligible voters (obtained through a list of enumeration areas provided by the Chief Electoral Officer) and the stratified nature of the population (accounted for in part by the use of the Trodahl-Carter-Bryant matrix procedure in the selection of individuals to be interviewed within each randomly chosen household), the 3377 respondents to the NES84 can be said to provide a representative sample of the "Canadian population, aged 18 years and over. This is especially true if one takes into consideration the rather sophisticated use of weighting techniques applied to the instrument (Lambert, 1986:2-4).

...Although there are undoubtedly more non-voters in the electorate than are found in national surveys, a sufficient
subset of non-voters are found in all of the studies to permit analysis of their behaviour, and comparison with other groups in the electorate...There is no strong reason to suspect that their behaviour are not sufficiently representative of those of non-voters in the electorate more generally...

(Lawrence Leduc, "On Abusing the National Election Studies ", Unpublished paper from the Department of Political Science -- University of Toronto).

A further concern germane to the applicability of the dataset is the actual variables used in the study. The nature of this particular investigation into the constitution of the Canadian non-voter requires indicators capable of testing or taking into account each of the four approaches identified in this thesis. Moreover, the incidence of non-voting must be accurately ascertained -- specific reasons for non-voting given in VAR126 of the NES84 offers one avenue which can aid in weeding out the "casual non-voter" and the "involuntary non-voter" from the "Chronic non-voter". In fact, this specific concern is dealt with in greater detail in the first part of Chapter Two.

Closely associated with the concept of applicability in the choosing of this research instrument are those of reliability and validity. Reliability, according to Johnson and Joslyn "concerns the extent to which an experiment,"
test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials..." (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986:64). Concurrently, validity is defined as "...a measure that does, in fact, measure what it is supposed to measure." (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986:66) The NES84 is the fifth such National Election Study applied in Canada and, as such, its reliability has been extensively tested. Its' validity also seems secure in that the wording of most questions has been slightly altered throughout the years with the primary object of increasing the validity of individual variables. Thus, each successive instrument has benefited from the mistakes and problems of its predecessors.

Chronological sequence is also central to the choice of a research instrument for the topic under examination. To understand this is to understand that "chronic" non-voters not only refrain from utilizing their franchise in a specific election but do so consistently through time. Thus, the NES84 allows for the creation of an aggregate voting, (or more accurately, non-voting), index by including the participation rates of three National elections (1979, 1980 and 1984). It is also amenable to cross-level analysis through the inclusion of provincial turnout figures effectively addressing the environmental
approach which links voting to the relative importance of the level of government (among other factors).

This brings us to the final condition dictating the choice of instrument used -- The ease of data manipulation. The predominance of closed-ended questions to be used in this analysis may be viewed by some as a weakness in that they may force a respondent to choose an answer category that may not accurately represent his or her position" (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986:164). Furthermore, it may be argued that this type of question tends towards over simplification (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986:164). However, it must also be pointed out that closed-ended questions "aid in the quick statistical analysis of data ", answers are limited and thus, comparison between variables is simplified (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986:163). It is not enough for the variables to be relevant, reliable and valid; for the purposes of this study, they must also be pliable. That is to say, they must be easy to manipulate. The closed-ended format complies with this condition. In addition, since variables and indices will be created using this data, the values assigned within specific groupings must be consistent and/or compatible. For example, if one had need to create an Index of federal political participation, VAR038 to VAR045 of the NES84 would be
clearly applicable. Their standardized nature would probably insure (as much as possible) their reliability and validity in measuring participation. However, if one variable offered the categories "yes/no", while another within that same group listed the choices offered as "often/sometimes/almost never/never", there would be no way of legitimately amalgamating them into a credible and functional index. Fortunately, the NES84 does not fall into this trap and, in consequence, the data becomes relatively easy to manipulate (given the availability of the study and ones knowledge of statistical programming languages). Throughout this research project the data of the NES84 has been altered. Whether it be through the amalgamation of several variables into a single index, the creation of entirely new variables out of others, or the straightforward recoding of values to ease the task of analysis, each step is either explained within the body of the text or, where the explanations become more involved, in the subsequent Appendices to this thesis.
APPENDIX 2

QUESTION WORDING

Note: Wording taken from 1984 National Election Study Codebook. Values may vary from those actually listed in available instrument. Variables are listed in order of appearance.

CHAPTER 1

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

VAR124 - DID R VOTE IN 84 ELECTION
E-1-a Now, thinking about this year’s federal election, we find that a lot of people weren’t able to vote because they were sick, or didn’t have time, or had some other reasons for not voting. How about you? Did you vote this time, or did something happen to keep you away from voting?

1. Voted
2. Did Not Vote (GO TO E-1-c)
8. Don’t Know (GO TO E-3-a)

VAR126 - REASON THAT R DID NOT VOTE
E-1-c (IF "DID NOT VOTE" IN E-1-a) Was there any particular reason that you didn’t vote in the September federal election?

1. Sick
2. Busy
3. Couldn’t Decide
4. Not Interested
5. Forgot
6. No Particular Reason
7. Not Registered
8. Out of Town, Couldn’t Get There, Holidays
9. Religious Reasons
40. Don’t Know
50. Refused
80. NA
VAR156 - DID R VOTE IN 1980 ELECTION
E-6-a The last federal election before this one was in February, 1980. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?

1. Voted
2. Did Not Vote (GO TO E-7-a)
3. Not Eligible (GO TO E-7-a)
4. Forget (GO TO E-7-a)
5. Refused (GO TO E-7-a)

VAR160 - DID R VOTE IN 1979 ELECTION
E-7-a The federal election before that was in 1979. Do you remember for sure whether you voted in that election?

1. Voted
2. Did Not Vote (GO TO F-1)
3. Not Eligible (GO TO F-1)
4. Forget (GO TO F-1)
5. Refused (GO TO F-1)

VAR437 - R’S AGE -REPORTED
L-18 What was your exact age on your last birthday?

00. Refused
CHAPTER 2

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC APPROACH

VAR437 - R'S AGE -REPORTED (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR362 - R'S EDUCATION LEVEL
L-7-a What is the highest grade or level of school you reached? (If EDUCATION WAS OBTAINED OUTSIDE CANADA, GIVE A CANADIAN APPROXIMATION)

1. Some Elementary
2. Graduated Elementary
3. Some High School
4. High School Graduate
5. Some Technical
6. Graduated Technical
7. Some University
8. Graduated University
9. No Formal School
0. Refused/Don't Know

VAR439 - R'S INCOME IN 1983
L-19-a (SHOW CARD 18) In which of these letter groups did YOUR total PERSONAL income in 1983 fall, before taxes?

01. Nothing (GO TO L-19-c)
02. Under $5000
03. $5000 - $9999
04. $10000 - $14999
05. $15000 - $19999
06. $20000 - $24999
07. $25000 - $29999
08. $30000 - $39999
09. $40000 - $49999
10. $50000 - $99999
11. $100000 and Over
97. Don't Know
98. Refused
99. NA
VAR375 - LANGUAGE R SPEAKS AT HOME
L-10-b What language do you usually speak at home?

1. English Only
2. French Only
3. English and French
4. English and Other
5. French and Other
6. Other Only
7. Other Combination

VAR464 - INFO: CITY SIZE

1. Over 500M
2. 100M to 500M
3. 30M to 99.9M
4. 10M to 29.9M
5. 1M to 9.9M
6. Rural

VAR525 - R'S OCCUPATION CODE - SHORT LIST
L-1-b (IF OCCUPATION IS NOT CLEAR, PROBE) What exactly do you do?

1. Professional
2. Owner/Mgr./Exec.
3. Sales
4. Clerical
5. Skilled Labour
6. Unskilled Labour
7. Farmer
8. Homemaker/Widow
9. Student
10. Refused
11. Don't Know
VAR371 - R'S RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
L-9-a  What is your religious affiliation?  (IF PROTESTANT
MENTIONED, PROBE FOR SPECIFIC DENOMINATION)

01. Roman Catholic
02. United Church
03. Anglican
04. Presbyterian
05. Baptist
06. Lutheran
07. Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic
08. Greek Orthodox
09. Jewish
10. Pentecostal
11. Salvation Army
12. Jehovah Witness
13. Mennonite
14. Evangelical
15. Christian Reformed
16. Christian
17. Mormon/L.D.S.
18. Church of Christ
19. 7th Day Adventist
20. Christian Alliance
22. Christian Science
28. Protestant (unspecified)
29. Other Protestant
30. Muslim
31. Hindu
32. Sikh
33. Buddhist
34. No Regular Church
35. Misc. Vague Answer
88. Refused
00. None

VAR 456 - INFO: R'S SEX
A. Sex

1. Male
2. Female
VAR003 - SCREENER: REGION OF INTERVIEW

0. Newfoundland  
1. Prince Edward Island  
2. Nova Scotia  
3. New Brunswick  
4. Quebec  
5. Ontario  
6. Manitoba  
7. Saskatchewan  
8. Alberta  
9. British Columbia

VAR541 - R’S MARITAL STATUS
L-2 Are you married, widowed, separated, divorced, or are you single?

1. Married (GO TO L-3-a AND ASK FOR SPOUSE)  
2. Widowed (GO TO L-3-a AND ASK FOR FORMER SPOUSE)  
3. Separated (GO TO L-3-a & ASK FOR FORMER SPOUSE)  
4. Divorced (GO TO L-3-a & ASK FOR FORMER SPOUSE)  
5. Single (GO TO L-4)  
6. Common Law (VOLUNTEERED) (GO TO L-3-a AND ASK FOR R’S COMMON LAW SPOUSE)
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL / MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

VAR016 - INTEREST IN THE 1984 ELECTION
A-1 We have found that people sometimes don’t pay too much attention to elections. How about yourself? Were you very interested in the recent federal election, fairly interested, slightly interested, or not at all interested in it?

1. Very Interested
2. Fairly Interested
3. Slightly Interested
4. Not At All Interested
5. Don’t Know

VAR017 - ATTENTION TO POLITICS GENERALLY
A-2 Do you pay much attention to politics generally — that is, from day to day, when there isn’t a big election campaign going on? Would you say that you follow politics very closely, fairly closely, or not much at all?

1. Very Closely
2. Fairly Closely
3. Not Much At All
4. Don’t Know

VAR029 - ELECTED MP’S SOON LOSE TOUCH
A-9-a Generally, those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
5. Neither Agree nor Disagree
6. No Opinion

VAR030 - FED GOVT DOESN’T CARE WHAT R THINKS
A-9-b I don’t think the Federal Government cares much about what people like me think.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
5. Neither Agree nor Disagree
6. No Opinion
VAR031 - FED POLITICS/GOVT TOO COMPLICATED
A-9-c Sometimes, Federal politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
8. No Opinion

VAR032 - R HAS NO SAY IN OTTAWA
A-9-d People like me don't have any say about what the government in Ottawa does.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
8. No Opinion

VAR033 - R'S FED VOTE DOES NOT MATTER
A-9-e So many other people vote in Federal elections that it does not matter very much whether I vote or not.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
8. No Opinion

VAR034 - PEOPLE IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DISHONEST
A-9-f Many people in the Federal Government are dishonest.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Disagree Somewhat
4. Strongly Disagree
7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
8. No Opinion
VAR035 - FED. GOVERNMENT WASTES TAX MONEY
A-9-g People in the Federal government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Somewhat Agree
   3. Disagree Somewhat
   4. Strongly Disagree
   7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
   8. No Opinion

VAR036 - TRUST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO RIGHT
A-9-h Most of the time we can trust people in the Federal Government to do what is right.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Somewhat Agree
   3. Disagree Somewhat
   4. Strongly Disagree
   7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
   8. No Opinion

VAR037 - SMART PEOPLE RUN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
A-9-i Most of the people running the Federal Government are smart people who usually know what they are doing.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Somewhat Agree
   3. Disagree Somewhat
   4. Strongly Disagree
   7. Neither Agree nor Disagree
   8. No Opinion

VAR038 - READ ABOUT POLITICS IN PAPERS
A-10-a How often do you read about politics in the newspapers and magazines?
   1. Often
   2. Sometimes
   3. Seldom
   4. Never
   8. Don’t Know
VAR039 - WATCH POLITICAL PROGRAMS ON TV
A-10-b  Watch programs about politics on TV?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR040 - DISCUSS POLITICS WITH OTHERS
A-10-c  Discuss politics with other people?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR041 - CONVINCE FRIENDS TO VOTE THE SAME
A-10-d  Try to convince friends to vote the same as you?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR042 - ATTEND POLITICAL MEETING/RALLY
A-10-e  Attend a political meeting or rally?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR043 - CONTACT POLITICIANS
A-10-f  Contact public officials or politicians?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know
VAR044 - WORK FOR POLITICAL PARTY
A-10-g Spend time working for a political party?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR045 - GIVE MONEY TO POLITICAL PARTY
A-10-h Contribute money to a political party or candidate?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never
8. Don’t Know

VAR069 - PARTY BEST ABLE TO DEAL WITH 1ST ISSUE
B-1-d Which party do you think can best deal with this issue?

0. None of Them (GO TO B-1-f)
1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal and Progressive Conservative
5. Liberal and NDP
6. Progressive Conservative and NDP
7. Other
8. Don’t Know (GO TO B-1-f)
9. NA

VAR077 - PARTY BEST ABLE TO DEAL WITH 2ND ISSUE
B-2-d Which party do you think can best deal with this issue? (PROBE FOR SINGLE PARTY)

0. None of Them (GO TO B-2-f)
1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal and Progressive Conservative
5. Liberal and NDP
6. Progressive Conservative and NDP
7. Other
8. Don’t Know (GO TO B-2-f)
9. NA
VAR081 - R'S FED PARTY ID - PREFERENCE
C-1-a Thinking of federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Progressive Conservative, NDP or what?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Social Credit
5. Parti Nationaliste
6. Liberal and Progressive Conservative
7. Liberal and NDP
8. Progressive Conservative and NDP
9. Liberal and Social Credit
10. Progressive Conservative and Social Credit
11. NDP and Social Credit
12. Liberal and Parti Nationaliste
13. Progressive Conservative and Parti Nationaliste
14. NDP and Parti Nationaliste
15. Social Credit and Parti Nationaliste
16. Other Combination
17. Other Single Mention
18. Independent/None
19. Don't Know (GO TO C-2)
20. REFUSED (GO TO C-2)

VAR082 - R'S FED PARTY ID - INTENSITY
C-1-b How strongly (PARTY NAMED OR "INDEPENDENT" IN C-1-a) do you feel, very strongly, fairly strongly, or not very strongly?

0. Refused
1. Very Strongly
2. Fairly Strongly
3. Not Very Strongly
4. Don't Know
5. NA

VAR301 - THERMOMETER: JOHN TURNER
I-3-c-1 John Turner

000. Dislike
100. Like
997. Mixed Feelings/depends
998. No Feelings
999. Don't Know
VAR302 - THERMOMETER: BRIAN MULRONEY
I-3-c-2  Brian Mulroney

000. Dislike
100. Like
997. Mixed Feelings/depends
998. No Feelings
999. Don’t Know

VAR303 - THERMOMETER: ED BROADBENT
I-3-c-3  Ed Broadbent

000. Dislike
100. Like
997. Mixed Feelings/depends
998. No Feelings
999. Don’t Know
THE ECOLOGICAL /ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH

VAR003 - SCREENER: REGION OF INTERVIEW (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR124 - DID R VOTE IN 84 ELECTION (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR156 - DID R VOTE IN 1980 ELECTION (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR160 - DID R VOTE IN 1979 ELECTION (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR018 - ATTENTION TO FED/PROV/LOCAL POLITICS
A-3 Do you pay more attention to federal politics, provincial politics, or local politics?

1. Federal Only
2. Provincial Only
3. Local Only
4. All About Equally
5. Fed. and Prov. Equally
6. Fed. and Local Equally
7. Prov. and Local Equally
8. Don’t Know
0. None

VAR019 - LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AFFECTING R MOST
A-4 As far as you are concerned PERSONALLY, which government is more important in affecting how you and your family get on, the one in Ottawa, the provincial government here in (PROVINCE) or your local government?

1. One in Ottawa, Federal
2. Provincial
3. Local
4. All About Equally
5. Fed. and Prov. Equally
6. Fed. and Local Equally
7. Prov. and Local Equally
8. Don’t Know
0. None
VAR020 - GOVERNMENT THAT COMES TO MIND FIRST
A-6 When you think of YOUR government, which government comes to mind first, the government of Canada or the government of (NAME PROVINCE)?

1. Canada
2. Province
3. Neither
4. Both
5. Don't Know

VAR094 - WAS R CONTACTED DURING CAMPAIGN
D-1-a During the federal election campaign, were you personally contacted by any of the local candidates or party workers here in this riding?

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO D-2-a)
3. Don't Know (GO TO D-2-a)

VAR099 - R CONTACTED BY CANDIDATE
D-1-b

1. Yes
2. NA

VAR104 - R CONTACTED BY PHONE/MAIL
D-2-a (ASK EVERYONE) Were you contacted in any other ways by the parties during the federal election campaign, for example, by telephone or by having a pamphlet left in your mailbox?

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO D-3-a)
3. Don't Know (GO TO D-3-a)

VAR116 - SAW FRENCH DEBATE
D-5-b (IF "YES") Did you see the general debate in French on Tuesday, July 24?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t Know
4. NA
VAR117 - SAW ENGLISH DEBATE
D-5-b (IF "YES") Did you see the general debate in English on Wednesday, July 25?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don’t Know
9. NA

VAR118 - SAW DEBATE ON WOMEN’S ISSUES
D-5-b (IF "YES") Did you see the debate on women’s issues on Wednesday, August 15th?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don’t Know
9. NA

VAR261 - DID R VOTE IN NEXT-TO-LAST PROV ELECT.

(BEFORE ASKING G-4-a WRITE IN THE MONTH AND YEAR OF THE LAST PROVINCIAL ELECTION FOR YOUR PROVINCE FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST IN THE SPACE PROVIDED)

Alberta................Nov., 1982
British Columbia......May, 1983
Manitoba..............Nov., 1983
New Brunswick.........Oct., 1982
Newfoundland.........Apr., 1982
Ontario.................Mar., 1981
Prince Edward Island..Sept., 1982
Quebec..................Apr., 1981
Saskatchewan..........Apr., 1982

G-4-a Now, thinking about the previous provincial election in (SPECIFY APPROPRIATE MONTH AND YEAR) Did you vote in that election or did something keep you away from voting?

1. Voted
2. Did Not Vote (GO TO G-5)
3. Not Eligible (GO TO G-5)
4. Not Resident (GO TO G-5)
8. Don’t Know (GO TO G-5)
0. Refused (GO TO G-5)
VAR263 - DID R VOTE IN 84 PROV. ELECTION
G-5-a  (DO NOT ASK G-5-a OR G-5-b UNLESS YOU RECEIVE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO.)

Did you vote in the 1984 (NAME PROVINCE) provincial election?

1. Voted
2. Did Not Vote (GO TO G-6-a)
3. Not Eligible (GO TO G-6-a)
4. Not Resident (GO TO G-6-a)
5. Don't Know (GO TO G-6-a)
6. Refused (GO TO G-6-a)
7. NA

VAR403 - AMOUNT OF R'S LIFE SPENT IN PROV
L-13-d How much of your life have you lived in (NAME PROVINCE)?

1. All Your Life
2. Most of It
3. Some of It
4. Only a Year or So
5. Don't Know
CHAPTER 3

THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

VAR162 - CONTROLLING INFLATION - BEST PARTY
F-7-a Now, I'm going to ask you about a number of tasks that the federal government has to deal with. Forget for a moment the likelihood of each party getting elected to government. I'd like you to tell me which of the three major federal parties would probably do the best job and which would probably do the worst job on each task if it were the government.

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR163 - CONTROLLING INFLATION - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-01 Controlling inflation - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR164 - DEALING WITH PROV GOVT - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-02 Dealing with the provincial governments - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused
VAR165 - DEALING WITH PROV GOVT - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-02 Dealing with the provincial governments - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR166 - DEALING WITH U.S. - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-03 Dealing with the U.S. - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR167 - DEALING WITH U.S. - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-03 Dealing with the U.S. - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused
VAR168 - QUEBEC RELATIONSHIP - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-04 Handling relations with Quebec - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR169 - QUEBEC RELATIONSHIP - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-04 Handling relations with Quebec - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused

VAR170 - RUN GOVT COMPETENTLY - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-05 Running the government competently - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused
VAR171 - RUN GOVT COMPETENTLY - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-05 Running the government competently - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR172 - DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-06 Dealing with unemployment - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused

VAR173 - DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-06 Dealing with unemployment - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused
VAR174 - SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURES - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-07  Providing social welfare measures - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused

VAR175 - SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURES - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-07  Providing social welfare measures - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused

VAR176 - PROTECT ENVIRONMENT - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-08  Protecting the environment - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don’t Know
9. Refused
VAR177 - PROTECT ENVIRONMENT - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-08 Protecting the environment - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR178 - LIMITING GOVT SIZE -BEST PARTY
F-7-a-09 Limiting the size of government - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR179 - LIMITING GOVT - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-09 Limiting the size of government - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused
VAR180 - DEALING WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-10  Dealing with women's issues - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR181 - DEALING WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-10  Dealing with women's issues - worst?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

VAR182 - WORKING FOR WORLD PEACE - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-11  Working for world peace - best?

1. Liberal
2. Progressive Conservative
3. NDP
4. Liberal/PC
5. Liberal/NDP
6. PC/NDP
7. No Difference
8. Don't Know
9. Refused
VAR183 - WORKING FOR WORLD PEACE - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-11 Working for world peace - worst?

1. Liberal  
2. Progressive Conservative  
3. NDP  
4. Liberal/PC  
5. Liberal/NDP  
6. PC/NDP  
7. No Difference  
8. Don't Know  
9. Refused

VAR184 - HANDLING DEFICIT - BEST PARTY
F-7-a-12 Handling the deficit - best?

1. Liberal  
2. Progressive Conservative  
3. NDP  
4. Liberal/PC  
5. Liberal/NDP  
6. PC/NDP  
7. No Difference  
8. Don't Know  
9. Refused

VAR185 - HANDLING DEFICIT - WORST PARTY
F-7-a-12 Handling the deficit - worst?

1. Liberal  
2. Progressive Conservative  
3. NDP  
4. Liberal/PC  
5. Liberal/NDP  
6. PC/NDP  
7. No Difference  
8. Don't Know  
9. Refused

VAR029 - ELECTED MP'S SOON LOSE TOUCH (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR030 - FED GOVT DOESN'T CARE WHAT R THINKS (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR031 - FED POLITICS/GOVT TOO COMPLICATED (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR032 - R HAS NO SAY IN OTTAWA (SAME AS ABOVE)
VAR033 - R’S FED VOTE DOES NOT MATTER (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR034 - PEOPLE IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DISHONEST (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR035 - FED. GOVERNMENT WASTES TAX MONEY (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR036 - TRUST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO RIGHT (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR362 - R’S EDUCATION LEVEL (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR437 - R’S AGE -REPORTED (SAME AS ABOVE)

VAR439 - R’S INCOME IN 1983 (SAME AS ABOVE)
APPENDIX 3

SCALES AND INDICES

Dependent Variables:

Non-Voting Frequency (NVF): The first step in the creation of this variable was to limit the non-voters to those who would not vote. This meant a separation of those who were physically or legally unable to vote from each of the three elections (found in VAR124, VAR156, and VAR160). For the 1979 and 1980 elections, age (VAR437) was the primary condition limiting entrance into the non-voting category. For the 1984 election, a specific variable (VAR126) asked the reason for abstention. Thus this variable was used to limit the sample. With these conditions, three new variables examining each election were created (NV124, NV156 and NV160).

The variable was divided into three categories. Firstly, the frequent non-voter was defined as one who had abstained from all three elections. Secondly, the casual non-voter was defined as one who had abstained form 2 out of 3 elections. Thirdly, the voter was defined as one who voted in at least 2 out 3 elections. The logic behind this
assignment was that the action, whether voting or non-voting, had to be repeated by the respondent in order for them to earn a label (i.e., voter or non-voter). Thus the failure to vote only once in the three elections does not make the respondent a non-voter and the act of voting only once in the three elections does not make the respondent a voter. Since the non-voter was of more interest to this study, it was logical to detail its occurrence in two distinct categories (the frequent and casual non-voter). The "frequent voter" and "casual voter", on the other hand were combined under the broader heading of voter.

Probability of Non-Voting (PNV): This variable was created in much the same manner as NVF. Using the three new variables examining the 1979, 1980 and 1984 elections (NVAR160, NVAR156 and NVAR124), four categories were created corresponding to the probability of non-voting. Respondents who abstained from all three elections were given a non-voting probability of 1.00 (100%); those who did not vote in two of the elections were assigned a value of .67 (67%); those who abstained from only one election were given a probability of .33 (33%) and those who voted in all elections were given a value of .00 (0%) meaning that they had a zero probability of non-voting.
Independent variables:

Social Economic Status (SES): The standard version of the Socio-economic index used in Canada is the Blishen scale. It is generally created out of variables measuring occupation, income and education (VAR525, VAR439, and VAR362 respectively). (In 1976, Bernard R. Blishen and Hugh A. McRoberts also advocated the use of the "Pineo-Porter (1965) prestige scores for BB occupation" (The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 13, 1976:71-80)). Unfortunately the occupation variable used in this study only supplied a short list and therefore precluded the full implementation of Blishen’s technique (The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 24, 1958:519-531). However, using the "class ranking" system used by Blishen, it was possible to classify each occupation listed and rank them according to their respective socio-economic status. The ranking was then repeated for education and income. The following procedure was followed:
VARS25 (occupation):
- score 1 for Unskilled labour, Homemaker, Student
- score 2 for Farmer, Skilled labour, Clerical, Sales
- score 3 for Professional, Owner/Mgr./Exec.

VAR362 (education):
- score 1 for Some elementary, Graduate Elementary, Some High School, Some Technical, No Formal Education
- score 2 for High School Graduate, Graduated Technical, Some University
- score 3 for Graduated University.

VAR439 (income):
- score 1 for income between 0 and 14999
- score 2 for income between 15000 and 49999
- score 3 for income greater than 50000

The variables were then summed. Thus, a low number indicated a low SES (3,4,5) and a higher number represented a high SES (7,8,9).

**Perfect Type Construct:** The creation of this construct has been sufficiently detailed in the text. However, it should be noted that the use of age, education, income and occupation for its creation is substantiated by a factor analysis which loaded these four variables (as well as SES) together in the following matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FACTOR 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VAR437</td>
<td>.53651</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAR362</td>
<td>.61873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAR439</td>
<td>.67189</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARS25</td>
<td>.53516</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.69494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Varimax Rotation)
Included in this analysis were other socio-economic variables such as community size, language, gender, religion and marital status. The loadings for these variables were confined to two separate factors.

**Partisanship Scale and Associated Indices:** The creation of the partisanship scale demanded the prior existence of three distinct indices: 1) the party partisanship index; 2) issue partisanship index, and; 3) the leader partisanship index. Procedures were as follows:

**Party Partisanship:** Using VAR081 to determine party affiliation and VAR082 to determine the strength of that affiliation, respondents were coded as follows:

1. non partisan
2. weak liberal
3. strong liberal
4. weak progressive conservative
5. strong progressive conservative
6. weak NDP
7. strong NDP

**Issue Partisanship:** Using VAR069 to determine which party was best able to deal with the issue most important to the respondent and VAR077 to determine which party was most able to deal with the second most important issue to the respondent. If the same party was mentioned in both variables that person had a "strong partisanship". If
different parties were mentioned, the respondent was coded as having a "split partisanship". If no party was said to be able to deal with either issue, the respondent had "no partisanship" and, if a single party could only deal with one issue (and no party could deal with the second), then the respondent had a "weak partisanship". Thus the values coded for this variable were as follows:

1. non partisan
2. weak liberal
3. strong liberal
4. weak progressive conservative
5. strong progressive conservative
6. weak NDP
7. strong NDP
8. split partisan

**Leader Partisanship:** Using thermometer scores for each party leader found in VAR301 (Turner), VAR302 (Mulroney), and VAR303 (Broadbent), respondents were coded as having no partisan preference if they disliked all three, a weak partisan preference if the like one leader slightly but the two others less and a strong partisan preference if they liked one leader intensely but the two others to a lesser extent. Thus this variable was coded as follows:

1. non partisan
2. weak liberal
3. strong liberal
4. weak progressive conservative
5. strong progressive conservative
6. weak NDP
7. strong NDP
Partisanship Scale: Using the three indices discussed above, a partisanship scale which addressed parties, issues and leaders was created. The three indices were first recoded into three categories: 1. non partisan (value 1 from the party and indices and values 1 and 4 from the issue index); 2. weak partisan (values 2, 4 and 6 from all indices), and; 3. strong partisan (values 3, 5 and 7 from all indices). Next, the sum of these three recoded variables was taken leaving a scale which ranged from 1 to 9. In practice these values were slightly misleading. For instance, a value of 1 represented a non partisan answer for one of the indices and no answer for the other two, therefore, values 1, 2, and 3 were recoded as having no partisanship affiliation. Consequently, the scale was reduced in size to a range from 1 to 7 (1 representing no partisanship and 7 representing a very strong partisanship).

Efficacy Scale: This scale was created using VAR029 to VAR033 (inclusive). The five variables were recoded so that respondent who agreed with the statements were coded as 0 and those who disagreed were coded as 1. They were then summed resulting in a scale ranging from 0 (low efficacy) to 5 (high efficacy).
**Trust Scale:** This scale was created using VAR034 to VAR037 (inclusive). VAR034 and VAR035 were recoded so that respondents who agreed with the statement were coded as 0 and those who disagreed were coded as 1. The reverse was true for VAR036 and VAR037 were those who agreed were given a code of 1 and those who disagreed with the statements were coded as 0. The four variables were then summed resulting in a scale ranging from 0 (low trust) to 4 (high trust).

**Interest Scale:** This scale was created using VAR016, VAR017, and VAR038 to VAR040 (inclusive). VAR016 was recoded so that those with great interest in the 1984 election had a score of 0 and those with little or no interest had a score of 1. VAR017 was recoded so that respondents who paid close attention to politics were awarded a score of 0 and those who paid no attention a score of 1. VAR038 to VAR040 were recoded so that those who often or sometimes performed these actions (read about politics, watch politics on TV and discuss politics) were given a score of 0 and those who seldom or never performed them were given a score of 1. The sum of these five variables was then obtained resulting in a scale ranging from 0 (high interest) to 5 (low interest). These results were later reversed in order to conform with the two
prior scales so that a value of 0 denoted low interest and
5 signified high interest (see IPP).

Apathy Scale: The Apathy scale was created using VAR038 to
VAR045 (inclusive) which measured the rate of
participation within several dimension conforming to
Milbrath’s (1965) "hierarchy of political involvement".
Each successive variable measured a more intense form of
participation (voting was exempted from the scale in order
to avoid the tautology "non-voters don’t vote"). For
instance VAR038 measured reading about politics and VAR045
measured giving money to a political party (see Appendix
2). These eight variables were recoded so that those who
often participated in these activities received a code of
0 and those who seldom participated were awarded a score of
1. The variables were then summed resulting in a scale
ranging from 0 (low apathy) to 8 (high apathy). The scale
was later reversed to conform with the three prior scales
so that 0 denoted high apathy and 8, low apathy.

Political Proclivity Scale (PPS): This scale was created
using recoded versions of the Efficacy Scale, the Trust
Scale, and the Interest Scale. These scales were recoded so
that those with low values were given a score of 0 and
those with medium scores were given a score of 1 and high
scores were given a score of 2. Actual recodes were as follows:

Efficacy: 0,1=0; 2,3=1; 4,5=2
Trust: 0,1=0; 2=1; 3,4=2
Interest: 3,4=0; 2,3=1; 0,1=2

Thus respondent scoring 0 in all three scales could be described as having a low sense of efficacy, low trust, and a low sense of interest in politics. These three variables were then summed resulting in a scale ranging from 0 (low PPS) to 6 (high PPS).

Rational Choice Calculus: The creation of these variables have been sufficiently detailed in the text. However, a list of the variables used for each term is offered:

* The B term of the equation was created using the difference of UA minus UB. UA was composed from VAR162, VAR164, VAR166, VAR168, VAR170, VAR172, VAR174, VAR176, VAR178, VAR180, VAR182, and, VAR184. UB was created using VAR163, VAR165, VAR167, VAR169, VAR171, VAR173, VAR175, VAR177, VAR179, VAR181, VAR183 and, VAR185.

* The P term was created using VAR033.

* The D term was created using VAR029, VAR030, VAR031, VAR032, VAR034, and VAR036.

* The C term was created using VAR362, VAR437, and VAR439.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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