

**In Search of
Canadian Political Culture**

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..... Nelson Wiseman



UBCPress · Vancouver · Toronto

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16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on ancient-forest-free paper (100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free, with vegetable-based inks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Wiseman, Nelson, 1946-

In search of Canadian political culture / Nelson Wiseman.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7748-1388-4

1. Canada – Politics and government. 2. Political culture – Canada.

I. Title.

JL65.W586 2007

306.2'0971

C2007-903352-0

Canada

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

UBC Press

The University of British Columbia

2029 West Mall

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

604-822-5959 / Fax: 604-822-6083

www.ubcpress.ca

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..... Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Gad Horowitz for reading and commenting on the chapters as I produced them. Colette Malo typed the first half of the manuscript and taught me how to type the rest. Don Forbes and Graham White read and commented on Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Grace Skogstad helped me address the comments of the anonymous readers. Their attention and constructive suggestions are appreciated. Thanks to Emily Andrew for her advice and editorial skills and to Peter Milroy who prodded me for over a quarter century to produce such a book. Research grants were not solicited nor were research assistants employed in the book's preparation. Errors of fact and interpretation are mine alone.

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Introduction

Political culture is the broad encompassing term used in this book to serve as a platform for a rumination on Canadian politics. It is a reflective inquiry rather than a venture into the frontier of research. Political culture is a long-established pivot in the study of Canadian politics, drawing the attention of some of the country's best scholars and subjected to some of their most high-powered analytic techniques. Canadian political culture is also the stuff of more popular treatments, as conveyed by tantalizing titles such as *Sex in the Snow* and *Fire and Ice*.¹ The arguments I pursue build on and directly contest some of the major contributions in the study of Canadian political culture. My effort is not intended to demythify or remythify Canadians' conceptions of their political culture by using benchmarks such as equality, inclusiveness, tolerance, freedom, and other democratic touchstones. It is intended to cast light on how Canada, its people, and political institutions came to be what they are today rather than what they ought to or could be in the light of contemporary norms and values.

A tension runs through much of this book, for it is of an atypical breed. It incorporates elements of a conventional research monograph, but it is also intended to be accessible to a general audience. It strives to be scholarly without being impenetrable. It is directed at non-professional as well as specialist students of Canadian politics, particularly those who wish to understand and make sense of its regional variations. This study takes an eclectic approach to research, teaching, and thinking about Canadian political culture. It adopts a pluralistic orientation to the subject without being jerry-built or amorphous. It seeks both to provoke the academic and to enlighten the general reader about who and what Canadians have been and are in the political world. I have pursued the luxury of writing on points that interest me, instead of trying to cover the whole field in a systematic way. Written by an academic gadfly and generalist in the study of Canadian politics, this study

seeks to prompt discussion rather than agreement or conversion from other ways of seeing or dissecting the subject. It offers possibilities rather than prescriptions in ways of understanding Canadian politics. It is tendered as another tool for thinking about Canadian political culture.

The book is influenced by traditions in political theory, political economy, political sociology, and political institutional and historical studies. It is written by a social scientist dubious of the ascendancy of science, one who laments the deprecation of more traditional historical studies in the study of politics. It does not subscribe to the notion that the past is another country. The historian may frown on the lack of archival materials, and the behavioural political scientist may find it short on systematic analysis, quantification, and theory building. In bringing together the kinds of materials that historians and political scientists have separately used, it strives to help remedy a shortage in Canadian political studies, that of comparative provincial political cultures.

Political historians have not taken the trouble to compare Canada's regional political cultures: they have been busy telling the story of Canada at large or that of a specific province. They have a reasonable suspicion of generalizations that compare countries' or regions' political histories. They tend to dwell on the unique and specific, highlighting a particular case, place, or people. In contrast, comparative studies of political systems are a staple among political scientists, always in vogue and with a pedigree that runs back to the ancient Greeks. Canadians often, and sometimes smugly, contrast and compare themselves and their country to Americans and the United States. They spend less time comparing themselves regionally. Newspapers and broadcasts facilitate this; replete with political stories about the United States, they devote substantially less attention to what goes on politically in neighbouring provinces. Canadians may be more familiar with major political players in their neighbour to the south than in the Canadian jurisdictions to their west or east. Canadian political scientists have also expended more energy in studying how Canadians differ politically from Americans than in how, say, Nova Scotians differ from Albertans. Their findings and assertions reveal engaged debate: some argue that Canadians are becoming increasingly like Americans; others maintain that Canadians are becoming less like them.²

Regionalism is a predominant characteristic of Canadian politics, one of its axes or fault lines. The attention regionalism generates usually focuses on sectional grievances and the tug-of-war between regions and Ottawa rather than on comparing and contrasting what tugs politics *within* the regions. The

high-water mark among political scientists for the enterprise of comparative provincial politics was at the turn of the 1980s.³ Most of those studies were survey-driven.⁴ Survey researchers generally inform us that, with the exception of Quebecers, Canadians are more similar than different in their values. Such studies, however, tend to be ahistorical because the survey instrument is of relatively recent vintage and the questions that surveys put and the nuanced meaning of words they use are constantly changing in relevance. Canada's political traditions and institutions, however, are old and firmly implanted. Although they too have changed, they continue to shape and resonate in today's politics. Canadians who dislike the way in which parliament works or the bickering engendered by the federal system still prefer the parliamentary to the congressional system and the federal to the unitary state. In any case, they are more or less stuck with them because such institutions as the monarchy are inherited and ingrained irrespective of the opinions Canadians endorse in surveys about what they believe or value.

Surveys suggest that Canadians outside Quebec have remarkably similar tastes, values, opinions, and beliefs, but their political behaviour – as opposed to their popular culture – differs remarkably when we examine their political preferences regionally. Institutional walls – provincial boundaries, provincial administrations, and the configuration of party systems and social forces they contain – reinforce these differences. One could look beyond the conventionally accepted regional and provincial boundaries to cluster Canada's regions into unusual categories such as “cosmopolitan Quebec,” “rural and mid-northern,” “manufacturing belt,” “metropolitan Toronto,” and so on, and suggest that they help to explain the most politically salient cultural distinctions.⁵ This points to the ever-present challenge to political culture studies: how to relate sub-cultures to an overall societal culture.⁶ We may also think in terms of the political cultures of concentric and overlapping communities.

Many have noted, beginning with Alan Cairns, that the federal electoral system favours regionally concentrated parties and penalizes upstart national third parties – something obvious since the 1920s, although no other political scientist had written about it. In Cairns's judgment, this magnifies artificial regional differences and exacerbates them.⁷ His brilliant and much-cited single factor analysis, however, cannot account for the particularly blustery regional tensions that surrounded the rise and demise of the Meech Lake Accord in the late 1980s. It was precisely by that decade that the minor regional parties favoured by the electoral system, such as Social Credit and the

Ralliement des Créditistes, had disappeared from the scene, while the remaining three federal parties became more regionally representative than ever. The electoral system certainly handicaps erstwhile major parties that have been eclipsed, such as the provincial Social Credit and Conservative Parties in British Columbia and the Liberals in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The federal Progressive Conservatives suffered the same fate, spectacularly, after 1993. Cultural factors and the workings of institutions such as federalism and cabinet-parliamentary government, however, are more important in fuelling regional identities and tensions than are the distorted outputs of the electoral system.⁸

This book is the product of a long gestation period. It builds on some of my earlier suggestive forays in the field.⁹ In the social sciences, it is common – imitative as they are of the harder physical and natural sciences – to spell out at the outset the objectives, methods, and conclusions of one’s enterprise. Once upon a time, some frowned on this form as “showing the works,” telling the reader what to expect, think, and conclude before she had begun to study and evaluate the text. Social scientists generally opt to provide thesis statements, executive summaries, or synoptic conclusions. They tell the reader what he will encounter before his journey begins. This contrasts with the more literary styles of fiction, many histories, and writing in other humanities – ones that leave the reader to discover and encounter surprise along the way. Many of the constructions and connections made in this book will surprise.

The first chapter introduces some conceptions of political culture and its intimate connection to but distinction from ideology, which, in turn, is often misleadingly confused with policy prescriptions. Four generic paths – historical studies, survey research, institutional analysis, and socialization theories – are outlined as search engines for studying the multifaceted concept of political culture. Three historically complementary approaches proffered by others in pursuit of a panoramic understanding of Canada’s political culture are dissected. These approaches draw primarily and respectively on political theory or philosophy, formative societal events and social indicators, and economic forces and structures. My contribution is to push the combined implications of these pathways for understanding Canada’s political culture in the context of Canada’s regions. I use the prism of distinctive historical waves of immigration to synthesize them.

In the focus on charter immigrant groups, their ideological superstructures, and their settlement patterns, I pursue the social rather than the individual psychological dimension of political culture. Unlike many who study electoral behaviour, I do not deeply probe what citizens at a fixed point in time think of specific leaders, issues, and policies as they come and go. Rather, the overriding concern here is with the dominant ideological and partisan tendencies expressed collectively by the five immigrant waves I identify: their views on the nature of society, their relationship to the state, and their concepts of the regime's proper role. I connect these waves of immigration with and within their regional settings. The object of study is the cultural collective: groups with distinct origins, characteristics, statuses, and ideological and partisan inclinations, and their regional manifestations.

The drive for specious precision characterizes much of the literature on political culture. Chapter 2 takes a critical disposition toward the widespread reliance on the public opinion survey, the tool now most commonly associated with studying political culture. This tool is used to compare Canadian political culture from without and within – that is, to contrast Canadians' values as reported in surveys with those of others and to look at the variations in the values held by residents of different Canadian regions. Surveys offer a straightforward strategy and a simple regimen. Nevertheless, they may artfully distort – however unintentionally – our understanding of the subject. Survey questionnaires probably reflect the issues and values that preoccupy surveyors more than respondents. I question the utility and reliability of surveys as gauges of political values but do not dismiss them categorically. Indeed, when they prove instructive, these high lords of political culture research are respected at points in this book.

An examination of the relationship between political institutions and culture reveals an unmistakable shift from British to American imprints in the evolving constitutional consciousness of Canadians. To be sure, indigenous elements have always modified both legacies and fed competing constitutional visions within the polity. Chapter 3 examines political institutions for clues about national and regional political cultures. Canada's three constitutional pillars – Westminster-style parliamentary government, federalism, and the Charter of Rights – exhibit a distinctly Canadian hierarchy of constitutional values. If one includes political parties, elections, and interest groups as part of the institutional infrastructure, the deepening and broadening over time of Canadians' democratic and egalitarian impulses becomes patently

apparent. The operation of parallel institutional structures, such as legislatures with identical powers, gives voice to the regional political cultural differences played out within those institutions.

The issue of an overarching Canadian political culture is touched on in Chapter 4 and revisited in the Conclusion, which includes a collection of musings. Some attention is also given to prominent regionally crosscutting sub-cultural cleavages: the bilingual, multicultural, and Aboriginal dimensions of national political life. As Canada has become more culturally diverse and its visible and other minorities have grown and become less deferential, more of them have participated in and been incorporated into national and provincial political life. The relatively new and heightened significance of Aboriginal title and self-government has contributed to an emerging Aboriginal cultural self-redefinition. Aboriginals are too few to drive the broader political culture but their recently elevated societal, legal, and political status contributes to reshaping it. That is evident in the images Canada offers of itself to itself and to others – from Native symbols on coins to the Queen's visit to Nunavut, to the choice of an Inuit *inuksuk* as the emblem for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

This book is less bold about pronouncing on Canada's national political culture than on its regional ones. The very notion of a Canadian nation is a highly contested one. No region, with the possible exception of Quebec, could conceivably qualify as a nation. To assert the Canadian nation as one entity is to reject the plausible dualistic and multinational conceptions of the country that are held by many Canadians. To dispute regional definitions (what are the boundaries of "central Canada" or the "West"?) is to deal with geographical demarcations. To determine the nature of westerners' collective values is a more substantial issue. Defining Canadians' collective ethos is a profoundly more disputatious and intractable matter.

Many studies deal with the Canadian political culture. Some ponder the political culture of individual regions. Few think about those regional political cultures comparatively. This book does so audaciously. The regional focus in the latter half of the book deconstructs and marginalizes the pan-Canadian approach to Canadian political culture and politics. This study pursues a regionally specified composite portrait of Canada in which the country's political history is mined to stress difference rather than commonality among regions.

English Canada's political culture is not treated here as if it were cut from a single piece of territorial cloth. To be sure, no one seriously disputes

that regional cleavages are critical factors in Canadian politics; regional considerations are conspicuous criteria in the appointment of public servants, from cabinet ministers to judges, and in the dispersal of federal monies. The three long-standing national political parties, however – the Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP – have shied away from directly addressing regional cleavages for fear of dividing their parties along regional lines. This study devotes more attention to the particular inclinations of those in the provinces, regions, and immigrant groups than to the common values and beliefs that cut across and conceal them. It deals more with broad regional social forces and the ideological currents that drive politics than with national institutions or the foibles and fortunes of towering personalities that captivate journalists and popular audiences.

By selecting a regional frame, this study makes a case for bottom-up provincial and regional analyses of Canadian politics. In this respect, it ventures into the terrain of political cultural geography. The attention drawn to regional politics, rather than the tensions among regions or the tensions between regions and the federal government, oscillates in the study of Canadian politics. Consider and compare successive editions of the established reader *Canadian Politics*. The first and second editions featured chapters on the politics of each region. By the fourth edition, there were none.¹⁰ The politics of Quebec, the most distinctive region, were ignored. The framework in the latter half of this book should not imply that regionalism is a more fundamental cleavage in Canadian politics than language, ethnicity, or economic class and industrial structures. The objective is to illuminate such cleavages within the regions with a view to filling a lacuna in our thinking and writing about Canadian political culture.

The relationship between regions and political culture raises the issues of identifying and labelling the regions, as well as characterizing their values. Is every province to be deemed a discrete region, or are there sufficient cultural similarities that transcend some provincial boundaries and permit lumping some provinces together? Perhaps intraprovincial variations – the cultural contrasts between St. John's and Labrador, between Winnipeg and northern Manitoba – are more vital to a cultural analysis than interprovincial ones, for example, the differences between Newfoundland and Manitoba. These issues, and those of provincial identities and the popular imagery of politics in different regions, are addressed in Chapter 5. Voting results of the Charlottetown Referendum are deployed to demonstrate the powerful link between geography and political choice.

In traversing Canada's regions from east to west, this book makes one break with conventional regional categorizations. The West is partitioned in two, between the Midwest (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and the Far West (Alberta and British Columbia), displacing the older and more common distinction between the Prairies and BC. The socio-economic makeup and history of each region raise issues and questions distinctive to it. To illuminate the singularity of each region, metaphorical images are offered, images that inventively conjure up the political dynamics of other societies. Newfoundland is cast as the offshoot of Ireland and West Country England; the Maritimes, the oldest and most socially homogeneous part of English Canada, are presented as a Canadian branch and homologue of New England. Chapter 6 questions whether the mythology surrounding Atlantic Canada's alleged traditionalist political culture is still viable. Perhaps the very idea of an Atlantic Canadian political culture is a chimera. Quebec and its predecessor, New France, inherited and long wore the cultural apparel of Old France. The trajectory from subjugation to sovereignty, the redefinition of *la nation québécoise*, and the outlines of the New Quebec are traced in the context of a historiographical debate in Chapter 7.

In Chapter 8, English Canada's political and cultural hegemon, Ontario, is characterized as America's counter-revolution. In Ontario, the founding American Loyalist wave of the late eighteenth century came to be challenged by a British liberal reform wave of the early nineteenth century, and both were augmented and upset by a British labour-socialist ripple at the turn of the twentieth century. Since mid-century, all three legacies have accommodated each other and the kaleidoscope of peoples from non-traditional immigrant sources. The Midwest's support for social democracy is then probed in Chapter 9. The wave of continental European and British immigrants that flooded the prairies a century ago was a pivotal factor in social democracy's fortunes in this region. Manitoba comes across as the Ontario of the prairies; Saskatchewan provides the unlikely agrarian setting for a replication of British Labour's success in an ideologically polarized two-party system in what was considered the mother country. In Chapter 10, the Far West is noted for a lack of tradition and an upstart and recalcitrant political character. Alberta is depicted as a splinter of the United States, specifically the Great Plains. In both Canada and the US, populist liberalism had its greatest traction on the plains. Finally, BC resembles Australia – a sister British colonial offshoot on the Pacific.

This book builds on and veers away from the established political culture literature in two respects. The first is in its primary emphasis on the ideological baggage and acculturation of immigrants and their impact in the regions at different stages of regional political development. The second and related theme is what has become known in the specialist academic literature as the ideological “fragment theory” or the “Hartz-Horowitz” interpretation of Canadian political culture. That framework, employing the ideological triad of conservatism, liberalism, and socialism, identifies the dynamic philosophical connections in their interaction in societies such as Canada’s that are “thrown off” from older European societies.¹¹ It accounts for the pattern of politics in a New World society such as Canada’s in terms of its colonial heritages and the ideological genetic codes implanted by founding pioneers. Although there is no single master narrative in this book, the connections between these two threads – the interplay and political expression of the distinctive ideological world views of immigrant groups – come nearest to providing a spine for this study. What is novel in this treatment is the pursuit and regional application of the fragment theory. Unlike that theory, however, it devotes less attention to ideological dialectics and more attention to political economy, social indicators, and electoral forces.

“Red tory” has become a term of wide and overvalued currency in both the academic and real worlds of Canadian politics. It first surfaced in the lexicon of Canadian politics in 1966¹² and since then has spawned the “blue tory” as a mirror image. Gad Horowitz argued that the strength of social democracy in Canada is a function of the strength of toryism, a traditional collectivist philosophical disposition whose communitarianism is shared by socialists. In this respect, both classical conservatives (or tories) and contemporary socialists (or social democrats) stand together and diametrically apart from classical liberals (such as those who dominate what is now the Conservative Party). However minoritarian a force it was in English Canada’s primarily liberal political culture, the tory streak formatively differentiated Canada from the American, universally liberal behemoth to its south. That “tory touch,” according to Horowitz, was the philosophic seed that permitted Canadian socialism to sprout. The United States, in contrast, rid itself at the end of the eighteenth century of whatever was left of its tory touch by symbolically and physically rejecting it and its vestiges in its revolutionary war and declaratory Constitution.¹³

In this book, I offer *an* interpretation of Canadian political culture. No claim is made that it is *the* only possible explanation or *the* definitive interpretation. I extend but also swerve from the Hartz-Horowitz approach by contextualizing some of its features regionally. I make no claim that social democratic strength in particular regional pockets is connected to the strength of Canadian toryism in those same regions. That there is a residue in Canadian political culture that marks it as more communitarian, tory, and social democratic than American political culture is neither contested by nor critical to my analysis. Horowitz's analysis draws particular attention to the toryism of the Loyalists. This cannot explain (nor does Horowitz try to do so) why Canadian social democracy has been most potent and viable in the West, the part of Canada where the tory Loyalist stamp was absent. Nor, conversely, can it account for why socialism has been weakest in those regions where the Loyalist tory imprint was formative and most profound, such areas as eastern Ontario and New Brunswick. It is in the treatment of Quebec's political culture that I play explicitly with the stimulating counterintuitive kernel at the centre of the Hartz-Horowitz hypothesis. It is there that I make an interpretive case for the dialectical dance between classical *ancien régime* conservatism and modern socialism and use it to account for Quebec's passage beyond its liberal Quiet Revolution and into the arms of a self-professed social democratic and *indépendantiste* regime. Like other fragment theorists, I treat Quebec as a national fragment, a separate European offshoot equal in dignity to the American and English Canadian fragments, making it no mere region within Canada.

The motive in this book is neither to identify a looming challenge in Canadian politics nor to proffer a cure for a perceived political malady. Neither Canada's recently alleged "democratic deficit" nor the perennial issues of Quebec's constitutional status and Western alienation are the subjects per se of this book. Nor are the more recent concerns regarding the place of Aboriginal peoples and multicultural communities and the workings of the first-past-the-post electoral system. This study treats Canada's "problems" and issues of identity and citizenship with a measure of intentional benign neglect. Of the Canadian political scientists who engaged with these issues, quite unlike the more circumspect and skeptical historians and lawyers, most were cheerleaders for the Meech Lake¹⁴ and Charlottetown Accords. Those misadventures in institutional redesign proved impolitic for the politicians carrying the brief and disintegrative for the polity. Both the political class

and those professional students of politics who abetted the dubious pursuit of constitutional “reform” were chastened in their ambitions to institutionally remake Canada. My view from the start was that the undertaking itself was folly, a quest for a false messiah.¹⁵

Unlike many, I am neither fearful nor welcoming of Canada’s seemingly always-imminent disintegration or reconfiguration. The language of “crisis,” so pervasive and long-standing in assessments of Canada’s political condition – the alarm bells are constantly ringing – has been cheapened and rendered meaningless. By comparative international measures, Canada is remarkably stable, tempered, and blessed with prosperity. Political implosion, uncontrollable rioting, and the perpetual paralysis of governing institutions are not associated with Canada. The Canadian political cultural tradition is one of evolutionary change: gradual, incrementalist, and iterative. Certainly, the past is no infallible guide to the future, but neither is it simply over and done with. Grievances will persist and fissures may widen in Canadian political life, but an acceptance of working with what is feasible or practical will probably prevail among leaders and followers.

The understanding of Canadian political culture offered in the following pages is not intended to present the conventional social scientist’s superficial patina of neutrality. In its dissection of Canadians’ political values and behaviour, it selectively presents facts and avoids trumpeting the virtues of particular values. Selecting “facts,” however, is always a matter of evaluation: deciding what is important and what is not. Consider Gerald Friesen’s highly regarded history of the Prairies.¹⁶ His book draws attention to the Métis on 70 of its 524 pages, yet it neglects to mention Tommy Douglas, North America’s first and most successful and popular social democrat. Facts presented are judgments made. Many facts are permanently lost. Inevitably, this study moulds its facts to fit the author’s interpretation of them. Modern physics, catching up with ancient Buddhism, has irrefutably demonstrated the interconnectedness of observer and observed; the student cannot be dissociated from what he observes.

Contemporary conditions and conundrums influence social scientists’ and historians’ views of the past. That is why studies of multicultural and Aboriginal issues have proliferated. Social scientists are products of their societies and their histories. I arrived in Canada as a six-year-old immigrant, born behind the Iron Curtain to Holocaust survivors. I immediately realized that my family was low on the Canadian ethno-political pecking order



described a decade later in John Porter's "vertical mosaic." Politically socialized in Winnipeg's North End, I pursued the study of Manitoba politics¹⁷ after witnessing the dramatic transformation of the province's political cultural and partisan landscape in the late 1960s and the 1970s. I came to reject Porter's assertion that it was "hallowed nonsense"¹⁸ to believe that Canada's provinces and regions (with the exception of Quebec) have distinct political cultures. When I was assigned to teach a course on comparative provincial politics at the University of Toronto, I looked for transformative links between ethnicity, ideology, and party politics similar to those I had noticed in Manitoba. In this respect, in the sense that political life, like personal experience, is constantly evolving, my discussion of Canadian political culture is an exercise in creative plausible storytelling. Yet the story woven here, though it is situated in my concerns and those of my society, endeavours not to be locked into or totally beholden to them.

Pathways to Canadian Political Culture

Culture, broadly speaking, is a society's way of life. It is the primary but not exclusive domain of anthropology. Political culture, then, is the way of life of a political community or polity. The term "political culture" is of relatively recent vintage,¹ but the concept and its application are ancient. Plato, Aristotle, and Herodotus, who offered insights into the differences among societies, cities, and leaders, sought to explain their causes. During the Renaissance, Machiavelli continued in this tradition; during the Enlightenment, Montesquieu followed suit. The latter thought that political culture was governed by laws that could be discovered. To Tocqueville, a student of American political culture in the first half of the nineteenth century, political culture meant the habits of the hearts and minds of Americans.² Later in that century, as modern nation-states emerged, the term "national character" was commonly used. A leading European political sociologist's famous and now century-old study of English and French Canadian political cultures was entitled *The Race Question in Canada*.³ In whatever way the term for political culture may mutate, the idea persists.

Culture is something like the air we breathe. It is all around and in us. We take it for granted. Culture changes slowly. Stable and enduring, it is more like climate than like the weather, whose buffeting storms are transient. Culture does not come and go, as does fashion. It is cross-generational: we inherit it from our forbears, teach it to our children, and transmit it to future generations. We are shaken into an awareness of our culture's nuances when we visit another culture. Never doing so renders us culture-bound. Culture enables us to see and make sense of our physical and social situations.

Culture is an abstraction. So too is ideology. Both deal with fundamental values and are related, but they are also fundamentally different. Culture is an ordered system of symbols; ideology is an ordering of symbolic terms. "Left" and "right," conservatism and liberalism, are shorthand ideological

categorizations. Ideologies or political philosophies may be defined, dissected, and debated at a metaphysical level without reference to any specific group, society, or nation. Culture is no less a mental construct than is ideology. It, however, cannot be explored solely on a theoretical plane, for it refers to real and specific groups, societies, or nations. Culture is a group activity, a shared experience. No person alone constitutes a culture, but one is socialized by and absorbed into a culture. If we think of the culture of a corporation, union, government, or university, we think of its vision and ambitions. Its culture is how it defines and organizes itself on its mission.

To come to terms with Canada's political culture requires some grounding in Canadian history. Also necessary is an appreciation of the country's contemporary society, economy, and political institutions. To place Canadian political culture in perspective, we can look beyond our borders, comparing it to those of other states. We also gain from comparing it within, searching out regional political cultures and the politics of other sub-cultures. Comparing improves our sense of what makes Canada distinct and of how various groups of Canadians (Chinese Canadians, French Canadians, Maritimers, the rich, the poor, and so on) are different from each other politically.

In search of Canadian political culture, one must consider how to go about investigating it. Does the past or the present dictate it? Is it to be located in identifiable historical patterns and landmark events, or is it what Canadians think politically in the here and now? Is Canadian political culture typified and expressed by political and other elites, or is it to be found among the masses? These dichotomies are heuristically necessary and simultaneously limiting and false. The prudent answer to such queries is that each requires a both/and rather than an either/or approach.

Ideology, Policy, Practice

Culture is a big idea, one with many facets. It may be looked at in terms of three levels: fundamental abstract values or *ideology*, time-honoured *policies*, and ritualized *practices*. The first represents the ideational elements of political culture; the second represents its programmatic content; the third represents its operational elements. These three levels or categories constantly interact; the boundaries between them are blurred. The purpose of categorization is to diminish blur. Examples of ideological notions are freedom, equality, and patriotism. Examples of now time-honoured Canadian policies are medicare and equalization payments to "have-not" provinces. Examples

of rituals or common practices are the Speech from the Throne and political party conventions. Ideology, the first category, is deployed to legitimate established and new policies. Ideas may also be used to justify emerging practices such as referenda and the recall of elected politicians. For some long-established practices – such as electing a disproportionate number of MPs who are male lawyers – there may be no ideological legitimation, yet they stubbornly persist.

Debate and contentiousness run throughout this trinity of categories. Even among ideological kin, such as modern conservatives, there are philosophical disputes. Libertarians, for example, reject the legislation of morality, whereas social conservatives demand it. Business liberals see government as an obstacle to individual advancement; welfare liberals see government as an instrument to facilitate it. The ideological level informs much academic analysis. Policies provide context for jousting between political parties and leaders. Ritualized practices represent the heart of political reportage. Like the climate, rituals and common practices generally change gradually.

The three categories or levels of political culture outlined here are nothing more than focal points for analysis. From different perspectives, policies may appear as practices, and practices as policies. This typology – of ideology, policy, and practice – makes no causal claims or claims of relative importance. The now-established practice of multipartyism in Italy and Israel may be contrasted to the established practice of two-partyism in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. The roots of multipartyism in the first two were consequences of strong ideological divisions; the roots of two-partyism in the latter two were less so. Multipartyism as an *idea*, however, arguably took on a life of its own in the first two societies while, paradoxically, the ideological differences between their parties narrowed. Hence, ideology contributed to the emergence of a practice that now, in turn, encourages the parties to insist on their lingering ideological distinctiveness. This contrasts with Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, where ideological distinctions between the parties were less important to begin with and continue to be so. This does not mean that the end of ideology has arrived. That would mean the end of ideas. No shortage of them and their prescriptive implications is to be found in the financial press. All parties are ideological, even when the gaps among them are not starkly discernable. Pragmatism, when contrasted with ideology, is merely a euphemism for upholding the established ideological order.

Disputes may be intense at all three levels. The consequences, however, are greater if the ideological struggle is, for example, that of capitalism versus socialism. A long-established policy debate in Canada concerns free trade with the United States. It demonstrates that its ideological champions and adversaries may flip positions: in both the 1911 and 1988 federal elections, it was *the* issue; the Liberals backed it in 1911, but the Conservatives traded places with them in 1988. In both cases, the party in favour of free trade was in office and the party against it in opposition. Were their positions simply a matter of “ins” and “outs”? No doubt there is an inevitable element of that in an adversarial parliamentary system with a constitutionalized Loyal Opposition. Another way of looking at the partisan cleavage, however, is that Canadian conservatism and liberalism, as elsewhere, have evolved. Canada’s classical liberals, like Britain’s classical liberals, stressed negative liberty and business liberalism. They were fixated on market solutions for policy issues. Canada’s classical conservatives, like Britain’s conservatives, were more protective of established elites and more state-oriented than liberals. In recent decades, as in Britain, they became neo-conservatives, spouting what classical liberalism stood for. Modern liberals have tended toward positive liberty and the welfare state. These imply an expansive rather than constricted government orbit.⁴

Conflicting policy preferences may take root in a single region. In Saskatchewan, support for co-operative and compulsory grain pools is long established among farmers. They embraced them in the 1920s and again, in plebiscites, in the 1990s. In neighbouring Alberta, in contrast, farmers insisted on voluntary non-compulsory pools in both decades.⁵ This suggests that political cultural traditions vary by province as well as region. As further evidence, Saskatchewan in the 1988 federal election returned anti-free-trade candidates in most of its constituencies; by contrast, in all but one of its seats, Alberta returned candidates who favoured free trade. Residents in both provinces have repeatedly demonstrated alienation from central Canada but in obviously fundamentally different ways. Artificial political geographic demarcations, like provincial boundaries, contribute to and reinforce the taking hold of differing traditions. The institutions of provincehood influenced the mobilization, expression, and strength of competing political forces.

Do not confuse or mechanistically link the ideological and policy realms. Bismarck, the German conservative, pioneered the welfare state; W.A.C. Bennett, the fervent anti-socialist, nationalized BC Hydro. What is vital at the ideological level is not a specific policy or program but the *rationale* for it.

Philosophic liberals, conservatives, and socialists in Canada, for example, have all embraced medicare. So too have all the federal political parties. Does that make it a non-ideological policy or a non-partisan issue? No. Ideologues in all three philosophic traditions may endorse medicare on the basis of three quite different motivations. A classical or tory conservative underpinning for medicare might be *noblesse oblige*, a sense that society's privileged classes should help underwrite it, via the state. The idea is to maintain the fabric of the entire community, including its desperately needy classes. A liberal may support medicare due to the belief that all individuals require an equal opportunity to prove themselves and get ahead, something tragically impossible if one is stricken by illness. A socialist might embrace medicare because it manifests our care for one another as equal members of a community in solidarity – medicare as an important component of socialist equality of condition. When a policy is cited as an ideological inclination or as evidence of “the end of ideology,” be skeptical. Apply an ideological litmus test. Did the governing party nationalize an industry to redistribute wealth (socialism), to help other private industries prosper and profit (classical liberalism), or for the purpose of nation building (possible classical conservatism or toryism)?

Four Generic Approaches

Many paths may be taken in the search for Canadian political culture. There are as many interpretations as there are students. Many approaches, however, are related in their strategies. Four broad rubrics may be used to arbitrarily categorize them. They are not mutually exclusive. Social scientists generally use them in conjunction, even though individual scholars will have their own emphases. No single approach is inherently superior to the others. All offer insights and pose limitations.

The first is to *probe history*. Such an analysis entails reviewing the rise and fall of social forces and political movements. Which succeeded and why? Conversely, which withered and failed, and why? Historic milestones in political development are assessed. One then reads back from the present and explains what Canadians have valued, what Canada represented as a political culture. In brief, it is the study of the tribulations and triumphs of Canada. That some developments (such as repeated Liberal victories at the polls) prevailed over others (Communist, NDP, or Social Credit victories) suggests that certain values, mass beliefs, and sentiments have been more viable and sustainable than others. This is not to say that Canadians are trapped by their

pasts any more than they are by their parents, their jobs, or their present circumstances. It merely acknowledges that history – the cumulative experience of the Canadian people to date – conditions contemporary political values and behaviour. History contributes to reading Canadians' current temperaments. Tentatively perhaps, it helps us project what they hope to become as a people.

A second approach is to *survey values* by asking directly about fundamental political beliefs. This strategy permits precision and exactness, whereas wading through historical tomes leaves one with fragmentary evidence and conflicting interpretations. Although the scientific measurement of attitudes is not foreign terrain off limits to historians, most historiography is impressionistic. The writing of history – Canada's is no exception – is driven by the historian's own cultural milieu, agenda, and background.⁶ The interpretations, subject matter, and emphases of francophone historians will tend to differ from those of Aboriginal, feminist, or Atlantic Canadian historians. Survey research holds out the attractive prospect of dissociating the observer from the observed. It purports to offer scientific objectivity to counterbalance the historian's humanistic bias in style and subject matter. Of course, surveys and surveyors are also biased, but there is a conscious struggle with method. The survey researcher seeks through constant refinement of technique to overcome problems. Although historical studies have a long pedigree, the survey method is of relatively recent, but mesmerizing, vintage.

A third approach is to *examine constitutions and institutions*. Institutional structures reflect and contribute to moulding political culture. Formal political rules – how they are made, interpreted, and implemented – tell much of a society's values and norms. They are inherited but potentially changeable in the here and now. The language entrenched in fundamental laws generally does not change easily. This is quite unlike the coming and going of political generations, which must live with the laws and structures of their long-deceased predecessors. Some constitutional formulations resonate with the public, their platitudes universally popular (such as "life, liberty, and security" in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Other constitutional laws are fictional adornments neither particularly valued, significant, nor popularly known (such as the designation of the governor general as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces). Laws and formal rules are but one part of constitutions and institutions. In and of themselves, they may mislead (for example, does anyone really believe that it is the governor general, rather

than the prime minister, who selects the cabinet?). The operative and conventional, rather than theoretically legal, principles of the Constitution are more important (could the prime minister select a cabinet of wholly unelected politicians?). Institutions such as parliaments, political parties, and the federal system are playing fields in which organized politics and policy making unfold. They process inputs, such as public opinion and lobbying efforts, converting them into public policy. In constitutions and institutions, and the debates that swirl around them, we encounter consensual and competing images of Canada.

A fourth approach to understanding political culture is *political socialization*, the learning of politics. Socialization is a lifelong process with discernible agents: the family, church, school, peer groups, media, the Internet, and political actors such as leaders and parties. Personal and social values are inculcated, absorbed, and systematically learned. The venues for socialization are varied: the kitchen table, the pulpit, televised newscasts, classrooms, and so on. Socialization's effects also differ by social group: men, women, the young, the old, the immigrant, the native, and so on. Generally, youth are more receptive, resilient, and radical than the old, who tend to be more fixed, cynical, and cautious.⁷ These are tendencies, not absolutes. There are old political revolutionaries and young reactionaries in all societies. Women are generally more responsive than men to social issues and appeals (health care, education, social services); men are generally more receptive than women to military campaigns and radical economic prescriptions (troops and bombing, privatization/nationalization, taxation). Historically, men have been more encouraged to debate and engage in politics, women more encouraged to defer and follow.

The regionalized nature of the Canadian state, society, and economy also has implications from the perspective of socialization. Schooling in Quebec dwells on Quebec's history and underplays national Canadian themes, except where francophone issues are at stake. In Ontario, the curriculum downplays provincial history for broader Canadian history. Schools with large numbers of Aboriginals now give Aboriginal history a pride of place lacking elsewhere. Once, it was suppressed. Environment, geography, and demography contribute to socialization: local newscasts in Vancouver and Toronto are more likely than in St. John's to be anchored by a member of a visible minority and to convey an image of Canada as multicultural. Local newscasts in Newfoundland, almost certainly anchored by white Anglo-Celts,

will feature more stories on the fishery. Such regional tendencies are logical. Socialization therefore contributes to instilling and reinforcing regional differences in perceptions and values.

Political culture is multifaceted; its study is many-sided. No one theory explains or accounts for all its facets. The view from one eye or one theory of reality will be dissimilar to that from another eye or theory. Simply adding up what the two eyes or theories see produces a two-dimensional picture, not the three-dimensional depth that theories, working like eyes together, offer. The applications of one approach cast light on another. They are not mutually exclusive, do not add up to a single theory, and should not be reductionist, claiming to explain everything.

Students of political culture are imbued by and immersed in their own culture, although they may strive for neutral, value-free science. They also bring their own disciplinary orientations. Political science, sociology, and economics are prisms through which to see or help make sense of Canadian political culture. One orientation is the macro-ideological “fragment” theory associated with political scientists Louis Hartz and Gad Horowitz. Another is political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset’s focus on formative events and social indicators. Yet another points to the cultural consequences of economic structures. This last orientation is associated with Harold Innis and Marxist academics. All three applications have historical dimensions and are best seen as complementary.

Canada’s Fragment Cultures

Hartz argued that New World politics reflected that New World societies were the ideological offshoots of the Old World societies that had founded them. David Bell has likened Hartz’s method to a search for a “genetic code,” one seeking to identify the implanted ideological genes of a founding people.⁸ Although Hartz’s idea was not novel, he made it intriguing by inserting two twists. The first was that a narrow slice of the old society’s ideological spectrum is transplanted – in the case of his subject, the United States, this was the ascending Lockean liberalism of Britain.⁹ At the time, liberalism was eclipsing but still vying with conservatism, or what became labelled in Britain as toryism. From Hartz’s perspective, early British North America’s liberalism contrasted with New France’s conservatism, the cultural spin-off of pre-revolutionary, pre-Enlightenment, pre-liberal France. Similarly, Latin America was a quasi-feudal, conservative Iberian splinter and Australia a fragment of late nineteenth-century radical and increasingly labourist

Britain. South Africa, in this comparative ideological relief, was a dual-fragment culture somewhat like Canada, but its Dutch liberalism and transplanted British socialism were quite unlike British America's liberalism and New France's quasi-feudal conservatism.¹⁰ By "feudal," Hartz referred to an outlook rather than the literal institutions of feudalism. His frame of analysis rested on the chronologically Marxist-ordered triad of feudalism (or classical conservatism), liberalism, and socialism. These were heavily laden terms – Hartz was using "broad terms broadly"¹¹ – and he explained why he settled on them.

Hartz's three ideological constellations might be distilled into five principles, or elementary components, as plotted in Table 1.1. They refer to classical conservatism and classical liberalism, not their now popular and journalistic definitions. Classical liberalism is what modern-day neo-conservatives (sometimes termed neo-liberals) embrace. Classical conservatism is a fading echo of Europe's past, a view of society still vibrant in some Asian cultures but now quaint in the West. It harks back to the wisdom (or the curse, depending on one's ideology) of the ages. It warns and encourages people to think and behave as their ancestors did. Classical conservatism sees social institutions – family, church, corporation, university, military, government – as hierarchically structured and properly so. Its exponents treasure social order. They fear and loathe chaos, anarchy, and revolution. They see people as innately imperfect, limited, weak. Conservatism's elitism is melded, however, with a collectivist sensibility, so that conservatives will justify the restraint of the individual in the interests of the community as a whole.¹²

Hartz's second twist on ideological-cultural development was dialectical. It connected America's characterization of socialism as "un-American," before and during the Cold War, to the absence and rejection of classical conservatism. American culture had early on congealed a monolithic liberal

TABLE 1.1

Three ideological constellations

Conservatism/toryism	Classical liberalism	Socialism
Tradition	Reason	Reason
Authority (order)	Freedom to have	Freedom from want
Hierarchy	Equality of opportunity	Equality of condition
Priority of community	Priority of the individual	Priority of community
Cooperation	Competition	Co-operation

consensus. This, and only this, became the American way of life. It became America's cultural identity. In Europe, liberalism and then socialism arose in succession in reaction to the older established conservative or feudal ideology. The relationship of these ideologies in Europe was like that of parents and children. Liberalism emerged as the philosophic antithesis of conservatism. It offered reason, logic, and enlightenment. Science and technology could serve and improve man's lot. This countered conservatism's faith in tradition and the ways of old. For the liberal, the state is man's creation and servant, existing to protect the individual, not the reverse. The liberal sees human nature as creative and innovative; man is a good and original being who must be permitted to be master of his fate. His place in society is a function of his skills and wits, not, as stifling conservatism holds, the station in life into which he is born.

Socialism later appeared as a synthesis of and reaction to the two older ideologies. It shared some and rejected other of their principles. Equality and freedom, for example, mean different things to socialists and liberals, yet both claim these as principles. Unlike liberalism, however, socialism also shares some ideological space with classical conservatism. They both view society as an organic, holistic, and ideally a co-operative community. Both see society in terms of classes rather than as an agglomeration of atomistic individuals, as liberals do. However, though conservatives strive for class harmony, socialists agitate for class struggle and want to abolish class distinctions.

Hartz's 1955 book, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, won some of the highest professional awards in its field. His provocative speculations led to his being asked to testify in front of the American Senate's Foreign Relations Committee. He attributed America's nationalistic and reflexively irrational and fierce reaction against socialism at home and abroad to its own unfamiliarity with the feudal or classical conservative outlook. America could not fathom why anyone or any state would turn to socialism, because America had no conservative or feudal heritage itself. Some Marxists dismissed Hartz's formulation as hopelessly idealistic, far removed from the material economic base of society. However, a century earlier, others had reached conclusions that were not inconsistent with the fragment theory. Friedrich Engels noted that the United States, compared to Europe, was "purely bourgeois, so entirely without a feudal past."¹³

In the 1960s, both Gad Horowitz and Kenneth McRae, Hartz's collaborator in his comparative study of fragment cultures, applied Hartz's theory to

Canada. Horowitz was studying at Harvard with Hartz and Samuel Beer, who authored *British Politics in the Collectivist Age*, a book to which Horowitz contributed.¹⁴ To McRae, English Canada was a smaller version of the hegemonic liberal pattern that Hartz identified as pervasive in the United States.¹⁵ Horowitz's formulation of Hartz's dialectic differed from McRae's. He saw English Canada's founding fragment – Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution – as liberals who brought with them significant traces of Britain's lingering conservatism and collectivism. Intellectually provocative, like Hartz, he asserted that the strength of Canadian socialism was attributable and proportional to that of Canadian conservatism.¹⁶ This conceptualization garnered both attention and skepticism. The portrayal of the Loyalists as tory-touched was assessed as imaginative but inaccurate. British toryism itself was dismissed as a spent force by the time of English Canada's founding.¹⁷ Some set out to measure and compare Canada's alleged tory streak with that of the United States and found it lacking.¹⁸ Others chafed at the idea that a political culture congeals, that its future is fatalistically determined at its point of departure from the Old World. A leading textbook in Canadian politics summarily dispensed with Horowitz's thesis as unverifiable.¹⁹ Nevertheless, and oddly, the Hartz-Horowitz formulation – powered by its intellectual verve and the insight of its comparative approach – became something of the conventional wisdom on Canadian political culture. Subsequent editions of the textbook gave it more prominence. In the 1980s, having been in circulation for two decades, the thesis was the subject of an anniversary assessment.²⁰ Once again, it was found hopelessly flawed and wanting. By the 1990s, a book of essays was constructed around the assumption that Horowitz had peddled "bad history, poor political science."²¹ Others concurred.²²

Yet, Horowitz's interpretation stubbornly persists. One of his fascinating ideas, that of the "red tory," has leapt to the columns of journalists and the lips of politicians themselves. He did not invent the term, but it is impossible to locate it anywhere in the literature on Canadian politics before he floated it in 1966. It appears in *The Language of Canadian Politics: A Guide to Important Terms and Concepts*.²³ It is commonly referred to by the media's political analysts and among partisan denizens. Horowitz's academic critics would tell them that they, like Horowitz, know naught of what they speak. That they speak it, however, is testimony to its resonance in the real world of politics. It reveals the infiltrative power of academic ideas in political discourse.

Horowitz came of age politically in the 1950s and was swept up by Diefenbaker toryism. George Grant's best-selling *Lament for a Nation* and the classical conservative credo in W.L. Morton's *The Canadian Identity* in the 1960s helped Horowitz see the Canadian links between toryism and socialism.²⁴ The links were confirmed by personalities like Eugene Forsey, the toryish socialist researcher for the Canadian labour movement, the subject of Horowitz's doctoral dissertation.²⁵ Grant depicted socialism as a variant of conservatism's collectivism. Horowitz's nationalism, and the national question in the 1960s, helped convert him from toryism to socialism, testimony to the symbiotic tory-socialist dynamic he felt was at work in Canadian politics.²⁶

A limitation of the fragment theory is its pan-nationalism. It treats national political cultures – in Canada's case, both the English and French varieties – as homogeneous. It stresses their monolithic character. Hartz and Horowitz, as well as their Canadian critics, write of English Canadian political culture as identifiable and coherent, a singular national one. They quarrel over its ideological characterization. The idea of a pan-English Canadian political culture, however, becomes problematic when one confronts the country's diverse regional legacies. If toryism feeds socialism with a complementary collectivist bond that contrasts with liberalism's individualism and competitive ethos, why has English Canadian socialism been strongest in the West, a region in which Loyalists and tories never settled? Conversely, why have the historical conservative regions – the Maritimes and eastern Ontario – been the least receptive to socialism? Where the Hartzian framework is most potent is in the case of Quebec: its once quasi-feudal order, exploded by the liberalism of the Quiet Revolution, quickly ushered in socialist voices by the late 1960s. They synthesized, as Hartz's dialectic required, conservatism's ideology of *la survivance* with liberalism's *rattrapage* to produce an *épanouissement* that promised *dépassage*, a step beyond the older two ideologies.

Canada's Formative Events

Seymour Martin Lipset's interest in Canada is related to his doctoral dissertation at Columbia University. *Agrarian Socialism* was his classic study of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). It commanded a status at home and abroad that few accounts of any aspect of Canadian politics had attained. Until the 1980s, excerpts from it were reproduced in successive editions of the long-established textbook reader *Party*

Politics in Canada.²⁷ Before going to Saskatchewan in the mid-1940s for his field research, Lipset, a socialist, “had literally not been more than a few miles west of the Hudson [River].”²⁸ His point of departure is revealed in the title of his first chapter, “The Background to Agrarian Radicalism.” A title such as “The Background to Canadian Socialism” would have revealed more of the phenomenon’s British immigrant and labour-union urban character. His reference points were American: that first chapter has exclusive American citations on American agrarian politics but no documentary sources from Canada or Britain, although Lipset was certainly not oblivious to the British labour and socialist influences on the CCF, as other parts of his book attest. Canadian agrarian radicalism was presented as a small-scale version of American agrarian radicalism. What Lipset overlooked were the contrasts between Saskatchewan’s brand of agrarian politics and those of the other provinces. Why, while Saskatchewan elected left-wing CCF governments, did Alberta simultaneously elect increasingly right-wing Social Credit regimes? Why was Manitoba governed for nearly four decades by an amorphous coalition of Liberals, Conservatives, Progressives, and others, while Saskatchewan opted for a polarized and competitive left-right party system?

Lipset, like Hartz and Horowitz, attached significance to cultural and ideological origins. He also perceived a connection between social democracy and statist conservatism. In many of his comparative studies of American and Canadian political cultures, Lipset pointed to their common defining founding moment, or formative event: the American Revolution. Like Horowitz, Lipset saw the Loyalists and Canada as representing the conservative counter-revolution to America’s revolutionary liberalism.²⁹ Lipset spread his net to reach well beyond the macro-ideological to the macro-sociological. Using dimensions of polarity taken from Talcott Parsons, Lipset employed an impressive assembly of statistical indicators and other qualitative measurements through which to compare the United States and Canada. He concluded, on the basis of broad surveys of history, literature, economic and religious traditions, and other data, that Canada’s value system was more elitist and less egalitarian than that of the US. Canada was more oriented to ascription and less to achievement than was America. Canada, by original design and the citizenry’s temperament, would be more deferential to state and ecclesiastical authority. It would be more hierarchical and more particularistic; that is, it would tend to treat people more as group members and in terms of the position they held than as individuals subject to common community-wide standards.

Expanding his comparative ken, Lipset ranked Canada and Australia as falling between the United States and Britain.³⁰ The Canadian political tradition or value system was deemed more liberal than Britain's but more conservative than that of the United States. Others echoed this assessment.³¹ Lipset reaffirmed his appraisal in the 1990s but noted the liberalizing, egalitarian implications of the Charter of Rights.³² He remarked that "Canadians are more elitist, law-abiding, statist, collectivity oriented and group oriented than Americans."³³ Canadian literature, relatively, has focused on community survival, American literature on personal independence and freedom. Canadians have been more likely to belong to hierarchical churches (Catholic, Anglican); Americans have been more likely to affiliate with egalitarian, fundamentalist ones. Canada has had lower crime rates, higher levels of unionization, more corporate concentration, and more public enterprise. Canadians have been less cynical about their governments, more likely to vote, less likely to participate in riots and protest demonstrations, more likely to trust their police forces, and less concerned with civil liberties. They have also been less likely to insist that new immigrants assimilate. Canada was defined more as a mosaic than a melting pot. Canada's Constitution enshrines group rights (language, religious, multicultural, Aboriginal), but that of the United States shuns them. Such differences suggest that tory and socialist influences are stronger in Canada than in the United States.

A limitation of Lipset's macro-sociological comparisons is that they are national. His early pan-Canadian comparisons lumped English and French Canada together. He later adjusted for this bi-national cleavage (Hartz's dual fragments), but this begs other cross-provincial comparisons in values and behaviour. If founding moments are pivotal determinants of political culture, what was the relevance of the American Revolution to the Canadian prairies, settled more than a century afterward, or to Quebec, settled nearly a century before? An enlightening use of the formative event idea is to apply it within Canada. The founding moments of the provinces differ radically in their prevailing ideological currents. Although Ontario's formative event was the American Revolution, the province is not synonymous with Canada as a whole. In Quebec, the Conquest was the momentous event. In Alberta and Newfoundland – two provinces that Loyalists did not settle – it was something else again.

Formative events may act as casts for political cultures, but casts are subject to stress, assault, and modification. Sometimes they crack. Quebec's Quiet Revolution in the 1960s amply demonstrated that. Thus, the idea of

TABLE 1.2

Formative events and quakes

Province(s)	Formative events/ founding moments	Quakes
Newfoundland	Confederation debates 1860s, 1940s	Commission government 1934-49
Maritime	Acadians expelled 1755	American Revolution 1780s Responsible government 1848
Quebec	The Conquest 1760	1837 rebellion Quiet Revolution 1960
Ontario	American Revolution 1780s	War of 1812 1837 + resp. govt. 1848
Manitoba	Riel and CPR 1870s	Winnipeg General Strike 1919
Saskatchewan	Riel and CPR 1880s	Depression 1930s
Alberta	"Last best West" 1896	Oil 1947
British Columbia	CPR and Panama Canal 1885 and 1914	Social Credit 1952

the formative event might be augmented with that of "quakes." America's "quake" is its Civil War, a monumental tremor, and a landmark throwing a shadow on the future. Quakes in provincial and regional histories vary too. Table 1.2 suggests such formative events and quakes. Pursuing them requires analyzing Canada's political culture upward, from inside its regions or components. Perhaps the assumption of a national or English Canadian culture is unwarranted. Each province might be seen as a separate and small political world in its own right.³⁴

Staples and Class

Throughout most of the twentieth century, the study of politics, economics, and sociology fell under the unifying disciplinary rubric of political economy. Many Canadian universities had such departments; the University of Toronto's was the most prominent. The centrifugal impact of disciplinary specialization led first to the spin-off of sociology and then the parting of

political science and economics. The political economy tradition in the United States is different, consistent with the country's own ideological underpinnings. It came to mean rational choice or public choice theory.³⁵ Imported from micro-economic theory, its key assumption is ahistorical and ideological. It takes a spare, unvarying, and individualistic view of human nature. In its cosmology, values or choices are driven by people's unflinching desire to maximize personal goals.³⁶ There is little room here for cultural origins and collective pasts.

The Canadian political economy tradition was best expressed in the 1930s in a nine-volume series, *Frontiers of Settlement*. In this tradition, Harold Innis – chairperson of the University of Toronto political economy department – and others became associated with the “staples” approach. Like Hartz's fragment and Lipset's formative events theories, the staples approach is historical, hinged to Canada's colonial legacy and status. It highlights Canada's development as the successive exploitation of raw natural resources, or staples, extracted from sea or land. The pattern and pace of Canada's growth was dictated by external demand and control. From this perspective, Canada has been a resource hinterland and cultural backwater to the metropolitan economies and cultures in Europe and the United States. Canada's businesses and labouring classes are at the colonial frontier, the margin or periphery of imperial economies. One line of analysis among the theorists who followed Innis is that not only do the metropolitan centres abroad retard Canadian economic development but also, in turn, core regions within Canada (Ontario, Quebec) underdevelop the outer Canadian regions (Atlantic Canada, the West).³⁷ A staple theory of economic growth was also developed, which pointed to the backward and forward linkages of staples and their spread effects.³⁸ Today, by historic standards, relatively few people work as fishers in Newfoundland or on the farms of Saskatchewan. Ontario's cash farm receipts exceeded those of any other province in the 1990s, yet only 3 percent of Ontarians laboured in the primary sector.³⁹ Nevertheless, if the demand for Canada's staples shrivels, the fallout goes far beyond those working in the sector. There is a multiplier effect: the secondary and tertiary industries that supply and service staples development – transportation networks, financial institutions, construction, manufacturing, refining, and so on – are affected too. Innis' focus was economic, but he noted cultural origins and their implications for staples development.⁴⁰ The underlying theme of his *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* was the spread of Western culture and civilization.

Innis was not a radical, and certainly no socialist or political activist. Frank Underhill described him as one of the “garage mechanics” of Canadian capitalism.⁴¹ For Marxists, political culture reflects the interplay of economic forces that envelop them. From this vantage point, the inputs of production – capital and labour – and the staples to which they are applied shape power relations and political consciousness or culture. Marxist scholars developed an interest in Innis’ ideas, for he cast light on the mode of ideological production and reproduction, on the classes that sustained it, and on the character of media and communications. He is seen as a precursor of communications guru Marshall McLuhan.

From a Marxist perspective, the challenge is to account for the embrace by subordinate labouring classes of values and beliefs that serve not their interests but those of the dominant capitalist classes. To do so, Marxists use the notion of false consciousness. This is traced by some to socialization – media and propaganda, for example – that helps to perpetuate the economic elite’s self-serving ideology. Marx saw workers as living the ideology of the capitalist wage labour market in their day-to-day lives. Many reasonably perceive a connection between their personal experiences and the principles upholding the dominant ideology. Thus, Atlantic fishers may subscribe to an individualistic ideology that is based in their individual ownership of boat and gear. Alternatively, they may have a historical memory of such, even though they are employees or deeply in debt and not real or effective entrepreneurs. Fishers and farmers differ greatly from each other. There are also stark regional variations in the types of fishing and farming. Maritime farmers have tended to be subsistence farmers, whereas those in the Western grain trade have been commercial farmers. The former have been less dependent on bankers, transport firms, merchants, and others who were identified as large common exploiters. Whereas Western farmers looked to co-operatives as alternative economic structures, Maritime farmers had less need for co-operatives, tended to spurn them, and were less affected by the volatile cycles in international commodity markets.⁴² Political consciousness and values, and the political behaviour they engender, are also influenced by the type and conditions of subordinated labour. Diverse fractions – from small independent commodity producers to merchants, to large commercial, financial, and established landed interests – exist within the broad capitalist class. Such differences occur within the labouring classes as well – as much between well-paid union members and unorganized, less secure labourers as between wage labourers, commissioned employees, and piecemeal workers.

TABLE 1.3

Staples development by approximate period and region

Staples	Period	Province/region
1. Fish	18th-19th centuries	Atlantic Canada
2. Fur	18th-19th centuries	Quebec
3. Forests	19th century 20th century	Central + Atlantic Canada British Columbia
4. Farms	Early 20th century	Prairies
5. Fuels/minerals	Late 19th and 20th centuries Late 20th century	Northern Ontario + Quebec Alberta + British Columbia

From a fused Innisian-Marxist angle, differences in regional economic structures are the driving differences in regional political cultures. Staples and class development vary chronologically and regionally. Different eras had different reigning ideologies, and the regionally concentrated staples economies have had differential cultural consequences for class-consciousness. Table 1.3 broadly approximates the formative exploitation of staples and the regions and provinces most affected.

Synthesizing Applications: The Prism of Immigration

A way of melding fragment, formative events, and staples-class applications is through the prism of immigration. Successive and relatively discrete waves of immigration have occurred throughout Canadian history. Their backdrop is the Canadian culture that received them and the older societies that socialized them. "Canada," goes the adage, "is a country of immigrants." If so, it is a country of immigrants' ideas and experiences. There have always been regional variations in immigrant settlement. If formative events are critical to political culture, the varied concentrations of immigrants must be assessed and compared. Cross-national comparative cultural analyses fudge regional variations; their primary interest is to characterize a dominant cultural ethos or national outlook. Immigrants were once imported expressly to work in the staples industries, but they represented more than mere raw labour: they carried ideological-cultural baggage from their homelands. They were *pushed* out of their older societies by economic hardship and social turmoil. They were *pulled* into a newer Canadian society by the liberal promise of opportunity and relative freedom. Ideology and class migrated together. Immigrants helped to throw up differing political cultural traditions in various provinces.

Five distinct immigrant waves and broad periods of immigration have occurred in Canada. They require sub-national or provincial attention. For example, Loyalism's hierarchical, elitist, and ascriptive preferences for social order, stability, and continuity have been used to contrast Canada's political culture to that of the United States. These conservative hallmarks once rang true in Ontario and still resonate in Atlantic Canada, but they never have in the West. Moreover, the new polyethnic and multiracial social order of metropolitan Ontario seems far from exhibiting the characteristics of tory orderliness and deference to authority associated with the Loyalists. A remarkably diverse non-immigrant ethnic group has also arisen to political prominence in recent decades: Aboriginals. Their ideas once counted for naught in politics; they were disenfranchised from the legal and political systems until the 1950s and 1960s. Similarly, the Chinese in Western Canada, imported to build a staples conveyor belt – the CPR – had, like Aboriginals, low political status. Irish immigrants had fulfilled a similar infrastructure function earlier in the nineteenth century, building central Canada's canals and railways.⁴³

The five immigrant waves identified in Table 1.4 shaped Canadian political culture generally and provincial political cultures more specifically. The first and oldest, from pre-revolutionary France, was transplanted to New France and Acadia. Those in this fragment represented, as Hartz suggested, quasi-feudal conservatism. Yet, they were also the pioneers, as Innis documented, in the more entrepreneurial fur staple. The Conquest, Quebec's formative event, reinforced French Canada's classical conservatism: a pre-Enlightenment Catholic clergy filled the vacuum of a decapitated middle-class lay leadership. Fewer than ten thousand French immigrants settled before 1759, but they had multiplied to over seven million French Canadians by the end of the twentieth century. Many others migrated in turn, becoming Franco-Americans. French Canada's reigning conservative ideology cracked only in the quake of the Quiet Revolution, two centuries after the Conquest. The contradiction between the subsistence agriculturalism of the nineteenth-century *habitant* and the industrial modernization led on its irrepressible march by anglophone Canadian and American corporations was not sustainable.

The second immigrant wave, the Loyalists, was expelled by America's liberal revolution.⁴⁴ They swelled Nova Scotia with nearly thirty thousand new settlers, and established New Brunswick. About ten thousand other Loyalists anchored what is now Ontario. Although these were fewer in number than in the Maritimes, their impact was greater because Ontario had no existing settlers as did Nova Scotia. Loyalists became English Canada's economic

TABLE 1.4

Immigrant waves by period, region, and orientation

Immigrant waves	Period	Primary region	Dominant orientations
France	To 1760	Quebec/Acadia	Quasi-feudal conservative
Loyalist	1780s	Maritimes/ Ontario	Tory-touched liberal
Britain	1815-51	Ontario/ Maritimes	Reform liberal
Britain/US/ Continental Europe	1890s-1920s	West/ Ontario	a) Labour-socialist b) Populist-liberal c) Deferential
Asia/Southern Europe Caribbean Latin America	1945-	Metro Canada	Individual/equality rights

and political elite. Politically tory, and Tory, they were relatively liberal compared to French Quebec's ideological leadership.

A half century after the Loyalist influx, coinciding with the growth of British reform liberalism, an even larger, third immigrant wave appeared. Between the end of the Napoleonic wars and 1851, the population of what became Ontario increased tenfold, from fewer than a hundred thousand residents to nearly a million.⁴⁵ Composed largely of labourers and artisans – few of them were middle class – this wave, more liberal than the Loyalists, reflected Whig and Reform ascendancy in Britain. These immigrants demanded and secured responsible government in the Maritimes and the Province of Canada in 1848. Their liberalism modified the authoritarianism of the Family Compact's political order. This wave had a greater impact in Ontario than in the Maritimes because embryonic Ontario was, relatively, a frontier society. Thus, Upper Canada's liberal reform rebellion of 1837 was led by a Scottish immigrant who arrived in 1820 to seek his fortune in the New World: William Lyon Mackenzie. That same year, future Tory leader John A. Macdonald emigrated too.

The fourth immigrant wave, at the turn of the twentieth century, was more diverse than the other three. It was composed of three overlapping ripples. The largest, from the mother country, reflected Britain's emerging labour-socialist politics. Many of these immigrants were British liberals, some more tory than others. Most were city-bred labouring folk; many of them were receptive to the new egalitarian and distributional promises of socialism.

Their greatest impact was in the sparsely settled West, where the wheat economy was burgeoning. Some settled in urban Ontario, fewer still in the Maritimes. Some British miners went directly into Cape Breton's mines, established a labour party, and launched labour wars there in the 1920s. By far, however, the new British impact was greatest on the new shifting frontier: the West. The radical British outlook was reflected in the leadership and personnel of numerous nascent Labour Parties and the CCF. These parties proved strongest and most resilient where institutions were rudimentary. The prairie population grew from about 100,000 in 1881 to 2 million in 1921, and that of British Columbia tripled in half that time.

A second, relatively small but regionally influential ripple in this fourth wave was a populist-liberal American one, flowing northwest from the American Great Plains. In 1911, nearly a quarter of all Albertans were Americans. Their dominance in rural areas dictated the shape of provincial politics. Their American plebiscitarian-democratic instincts were devoid of toryism, and though this outlook attracted some socialists, it rejected socialism itself. This populist strain, moving steadily to the right over the years, came to be expressed in a long string of unorthodox (by Eastern Canadian standards) parties: the Non-Partisan League, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), the Progressives, Social Credit, and the Reform Party.

The third and last ripple in this fourth wave was a diverse lot of continental Europeans: Ukrainians, Germans, Poles, Jews, Scandinavians, and others. They were not ideologically influential because their origins and outlooks were mixed and their languages foreign. In social status, Scandinavians were below those of British ethnic origins but above the others. In order to avoid suspicion and gain acceptance, the Europeans deferred ideologically. By the time the first generation learned English, it had bred a second generation that assimilated some of the prevailing Canadian values. As they acculturated, they came to the fore politically. In the early 1990s, for example, for the first time, none of the four Western premiers was of exclusively British ethnic origin.

The fifth immigrant wave comes from Southern Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, as well as from the more traditional sources. It is the most socially and ideologically variegated. Coming since the Second World War, it has been overwhelmingly urban and metropolitan, drawn especially to the largest centres and labouring in the post-staples economy. Many of the visible minorities in the fifth wave already speak English or French before they arrive in Canada, unlike the continental Europeans of the fourth and

fifth waves. Those from Hong Kong and most from the Caribbean (the former British West Indies) tend to settle in metropolitan English Canada; many from Haiti, the former French Middle East, and Vietnam gravitate to Montreal. We may differentiate between two broad ripples within this broadest of waves. The Southern Europeans – Italians, Greeks, and Portuguese – arrived somewhat before and became better established than the Asians and those from the Caribbean and Latin America. More visible, multicultural, and multiracial than the other waves, this wave is loosely tied together in its stake in a recent ideological emblem: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although this wave's numbers are large, its ideological and political impact is weak. The national and provincial political cultures are now too established to be overwhelmed by a new wave but are nonetheless influenced by it, as they in turn influence it. This wave has not created new political parties, preferring to attain status within the established ones; right wing and left wing, liberal, socialist, and conservative, this wave is the most motley.

Political culture has many facets. Cultural preferences exist. By themselves, however, they do not cause anything. Values generate preferences for certain types of political institutions. Institutions, in turn, help to shape values. The social sciences offer a variety of strategies to study political culture. Four broad approaches that overlap and have been used by political scientists are historical analysis, opinion survey research, constitutional and institutional studies, and political socialization.

Three specific applications that have garnered attention in placing Canadian political values in historical focus are the fragmentation and interaction of ideological currents, the formative events, or founding moments, in the country's regions, and the cultural implications of economic structures such as staples and class. Synthesizing these approaches is methodologically challenging and messy. But the approaches are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory because each one, though emphasizing its own orientation, incorporates and does not preclude elements of the other two. The resulting synthetic interpretation of Canadian political culture is exploratory and, like much political history, impressionistic. It is suggestive rather than compelling or methodologically clear and precise.