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'Small Worlds' No More: Reconsidering Provincial Political Cultures in Canada

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ABSTRACT   The ability of sub-state polities to generate distinct political cultures is an important phenomenon in contemporary politics. For the last forty years, Canadian scholarship has been particularly engaged in discussions of sub-state political culture. This article presents new and original quantitative survey data to argue that, while there are subtle interprovincial variations in political culture that exist even after controlling for socio-demographic differences, region is a more important determinant of political culture in Canada than is province. Further, the findings contradict previous research on provincial political culture in Canada concerning the conservatism of Ontario, the left-wing nature of Quebec, disaffection in Atlantic Canada, and the differences between Alberta and the other two Prairie provinces.

KEY WORDS: Political culture, Canada, regions, sub-state

Introduction

The generation of distinct political cultures in federal polities, either within regions or sub-state jurisdictions, is an important phenomenon in contemporary politics. The co-existence of different political cultures within federal countries can cause internal variation in all parts of political life from public policy to democratic practices. For the last forty years, Canadian scholarship has been particularly engaged in discussions of political culture. Many studies have sought to prove or disprove the existence of provincial political cultures based upon the jurisdictional boundaries created by Canada's federal system. Some researchers, most notably Simeon and Elkins (1974, 1980), argue that political cultures should be analysed on a province-by-province basis and that each province is a 'small world' unto itself. On the other hand, researchers examining political culture in Canada have analysed North American political culture (Pierce *et al.*, 2000), Canadian national political culture (Lipset, 1990; Nevitte and Kanji, 2002; Adams, 2003), regional political cultures (Schwartz, 1974; Bell and

Tepperman, 1979; Gibbins, 1982; Kornberg and Clarke, 1994; Clarke *et al.*, 2002; Cooper 2002; Leuprecht 2003; O'Neill and Erickson 2003), French and English Canadian political culture (Sniderman *et al.*, 1989; Grabb and Curtis 2005), women's political culture (O'Neill, 2002), immigrant political culture (Bilodeau *et al.*, 2010) and clusters of political culture based on socio-economic commonality (Gidengil, 1990; MacDermid, 1990; Cutler and Jenkins, 2002; Henderson, 2004). The implication of these studies is that political culture in Canada cuts across provincial boundaries or that a single province can contain multiple political cultures.

Related to the debate about the appropriate scope of political culture is the discussion concerning the extent to which place of residence exerts an independent impact on political culture compared to the socio-demographic factors (Henderson, 2010a: 440–441; Simeon, 2010: 545). Perhaps the variation in Canadian provincial political culture is due to comparing one province with high populations of secular, non-white, urban and unionized residents to another province with high populations of rural, religious and older residents. Further, there is the suggestion that provincial boundaries matter less than they did in the past when it comes to political attitudes and that the political cultures of different provinces have converged over the latter part of the twentieth century as globalization has taken hold. While Elkins and Simeon (1974, 1980) found that provinces were their own 'small political worlds' using data from the late 1960s and early 1970s, Henderson (2004: 595) argues "interprovincial differences in political attitudes are either stable or declining, depending on the indicator" and other researchers argue that Canadian attitudes are becoming increasingly similar to those of Americans and citizens of other industrialized democracies (Nesbitt-Larking, 1998; Nevitte and Kanji, 2002).

The ability of political scientists to resolve questions concerning the existence of provincial political cultures in Canada has been hampered by the lack of appropriate data within national surveys. The small sample sizes for less populated provinces and the lack of questions pertaining to political culture has made it difficult to prove or disprove the existence of distinct provincial political cultures in Canada using such surveys. This article presents new and original quantitative survey data that overcome these shortcomings. It argues that, after controlling for various socio-demographic factors, there are subtle interprovincial variations in political culture. At the same time, more obvious regional patterns emerge, suggesting that region[1] is a more important determinant of political culture in Canada than province. After controlling for socio-demographic differences, it is clear that the differences in political culture among the provinces are outweighed by differences among the regions in this study. Interestingly, the inter-regional variations that are found contradict previous research concerning the conservatism and contented nature of Ontario, the left-wing nature of Quebec, the disaffection and traditionalism in Atlantic Canada, and the stark differences between Alberta and the other two Prairie provinces.

The idea that 'region' can matter in determining political culture is important to understanding the politics of federal countries. The existence of politically salient regional political cultures in a federation can create the foundations for regional alliances contesting the policy direction of the central government. Further, the central government may have to make policy decisions that recognize the regional nature of the political cultures of the citizenry that it governs.

Political Cultures within Sub-state Jurisdictions

There is considerable debate over the precise definition of political culture (Nevitte, 1995: 1–2). In his work, Wiseman (2007: 21) defines political culture as "deeply rooted, popularly held-beliefs, values, and attitudes about politics. Culture is pervasive, patterned, cross-generational, enduring, and relatively stable. It is more like the climate than like the weather of transitory political events". It is important to stress that political cultures are associated with groups and societies, rather than with individuals; as Henderson (2010a: 470) writes, "Political culture is a property of the aggregate … and so political attitudes and behaviours are merely indicators of a culture". Whereas ideology can be something intensely personal, political culture is held to be the property of a collective.

Taking these considerations into account, we define political culture as the basic sentiments of the citizenry within a polity concerning politics and its relationship to the functioning of society. As such, it contains both a 'civic' and a 'values' element. The civic element relates to the subjective orientation of citizens to their political system in terms of their feelings of efficacy and views on government's dishonesty and wastefulness. This element gauges the extent to which citizens are disaffected from the political process. The 'values' element examines the underlying beliefs of the citizenry about fundamental political questions, such as the role of the state in the free market, the status of minorities, social conservatism and protection of the natural environment. This element explores the relative strength of left–right ideologies within a citizenry related to traditional concerns over wealth redistribution and newer, post-materialist concerns about recognition, ecology and secularization.

Several early qualitative studies (Lipset, 1950; MacPherson, 1953; Hartz, 1964; McRae, 1964; Trudeau, 1968; Black, 1970; Wilson, 1974) suggested that there were province-level political cultures in Canada as opposed to a single, uniform national political culture. Simeon and Elkins (1974, 1980), the first to empirically test the concept of provincial political cultures, found that Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba had the highest levels of trust and efficacy, while Atlantic Canada and French-speakers inside and outside of Quebec were disaffected from the political process. However, it is important to note that the analyses in *Small Worlds*, the seminal work of Simeon and Elkins on provincial political cultures, were hampered by a lack of data. They note that "ideally we would like to report that X per cent of the variance is due to class, Y per cent is to party identification, and so on. This is impossible, mainly because of the small cell sizes in some cases and zero cells" (Simeon and Elkins 1980: 30).

During the thirty years since its publication, *Small Worlds*' suggestion that each Canadian province has a unique political culture has been heavily debated. Through the qualitative analysis of public policies, political history and campaign manifestos, Beck (1978), Wiseman (2007) and Wesley (2011) illustrate that there is significant variation in the ideological orientation of different provincial political cultures. However, quantitative research to date has been inconclusive in its assessment of Elkins and Simeon's original contention that every province has a unique political culture. For example, Ornstein *et al.* (1980) and Ornstein and Stevenson (1999) found socio-economic variables have a greater impact on ideological orientation,

level of political involvement and feelings of efficacy than does province of residence, and Clarke *et al.* (1980) find little interprovincial difference in Canadians' negativity towards politics.

More recently, Henderson shed doubt on the existence of provincial political cultures in a 2004 article by creating regional clusters based on similarities in ethnicity, language, education and social structure that disregard provincial boundaries (for example, clustering suburban Toronto and suburban Vancouver together). Commenting six years later, Henderson (2010c: 287) makes it clear that the article "does not intend to suggest that provincial political cultures do not exist or do not exert a powerful socializing force" but rather that regional clusters and provincial political cultures can exist alongside each other. Indeed, she followed up her 2004 article with book-length studies of political culture on Nunavut, Quebec and Scotland (Henderson, 2007a, 2007b). In these books, she uses both qualitative evidence and data from the Canadian Election Study (CES) and a special telephone survey in Nunavut to illustrate that Nunavut and Quebec have political cultures that are distinct from the rest of Canada. In subsequent research, Henderson (2010b) used pooled data from various CES to generally confirm Simeon and Elkins' finding of provincial variations in trust and efficacy.

Outside of Canada, there is debate over the existence of sub-state political cultures and the extent to which such cultures conform to the jurisdictional boundaries created by federalism. In the USA, Elazar's (1966, 1984) qualitative attempts to categorize each state's political culture as a reflection of one of three types of American subcultures (individualistic, moralistic and traditionalistic) spawned a number of quantitative studies. The results of these studies have ranged from qualified support for Elazar's schema (Sharkansky, 1969; Erikson *et al.*, 1987) to scepticism (Schiltz and Rainey, 1978). In particular, Lieske's work (1993, 2007, 2010, 2012) uses factor-cluster analysis to show that regional subcultures exist in the USA but they cut across state boundaries. Australian literature has found little evidence of the existence of political cultures that conform to state boundaries with the exception of some variation in terms of trust towards governments and feelings towards the federal government (Bean, 1993; Denemark and Sharman, 1994). Scholars have also considered sub-state political culture in Europe: using qualitative measures, Yoder (1998) has presented evidence for the revival of distinct political cultures among the five *Länder* that existed until 1952 and were re-created with re-unification of Germany; and Billiet *et al.* (2006) found that the Flemish/French linguistic divide in Belgium, as opposed to jurisdictional boundaries, creates two distinctive political culture. Scholars have also turned attention to the UK. While the UK is not officially a federal country, historical boundaries between England, Scotland and Wales do exist. Miller *et al.* (1996) used data from the British Rights Survey of 1992 to argue that few differences existed among the political cultures of England, Scotland and Wales. Other researchers have focused more on a general North–South divide (Curtis, 1988, 1992, 1996) in the UK and the creation of regional clusters (Henderson, 2005) that ignore the historical boundaries between England, Scotland and Wales.

Overall, there is considerable debate (and some scepticism) concerning the existence of sub-state political cultures that conform to jurisdictional boundaries created by federalism. Indeed, most of the evidence for the existence of such political cultures

appears to come from qualitative studies while quantitative evidence that has been produced is more qualified and circumstantial.

Data and Analysis

Previous studies of political culture in Canada have been hampered by data availability: most national surveys, including the CES, the Political Support in Canada (PSC) survey, Centre for Research and Information on Canada survey (CRIC) and the World Values Survey (WVS), include only small sample sizes for less populated provinces. These small samples render accurate provincial analyses difficult, if not impossible; indeed, a recent special edition of *Regional and Federal Studies* examining sub-state polities lamented the lack of data on smaller Canadian provinces and described how it creates imprecision in analysis and forces political scientists to alter their research design in the light of the shortcomings of available data (Cutler, 2010: 508; Henderson, 2010a: 444).

The Comparative Provincial Elections Project (CPEP) survey data do not suffer these shortcomings. The CPEP research team commissioned surveys in each of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Alberta following their 2011 and 2012 provincial elections (see Appendix for further details). The CPEP data allow for a more fulsome inquiry into Canadian provincial political culture than was previously possible. The CPEP survey sample sizes allow for meaningful analysis and consideration of the extent to which variation in political culture is based on socio-demographic factors as opposed to the provincial boundaries or other types of geographical considerations, such as region. Further, the CPEP survey includes measures of both the civic and values dimensions of political culture. The dataset has two chief limitations. First, the data analysed here do not yet include post-election surveys from British Columbia, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.[2] Second, like previous studies of political culture in Canada, the data are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, limiting our ability to speak to changes in political culture over time and our ability to assert causal arguments. To compensate for the lack of times-series data, we compare our findings to previous qualitative and quantitative studies in the field, while recognizing that such comparisons are imperfect, given differences in research design and data collection methods.

In our analysis of the CPEP data, we examine the question of whether or not Canadian provinces differ significantly with respect to political culture. As outlined in the Appendix, our dependent variables are five different indices: efficacy (civic culture), honesty (civic culture), wastefulness (civic culture), market liberalism (values) and post-materialism (values). All of these dependent variables are ordinal, and we examine provincial variations using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. All of the multivariate analyses include a number of standard control variables, consistent with the larger political culture literature.

Our hypothesis is that Canadian provinces vary with respect to political culture. This hypothesis is supported only somewhat by the CPEP data. Table 1 illustrates that, without controlling for socio-demographic differences among the provinces, there are few instances of provinces varying greatly from the national mean on these indices. As such, there is some consistency across Canada when it comes to

Table 1.   Means of political culture indices in Canadian provinces

	Civic culture			Values culture	
	1 = Low feelings of efficacy, 4 = High feelings of efficacy	0 = Feels government very dishonest, 10 = Feels government very honest	1 = Feels government is very wasteful, 3 = Feels government is not very wasteful	1 = Low market liberalism, 4 = High market liberalism	1 = Low post-materialism, 4 = High post-materialism
NL	2.20	5.45	1.77	2.27	2.33
PEI	2.26	5.33	1.69	2.34	2.40
QC	2.21	5.09	1.70	2.36	2.48
ON	2.33	5.06	1.73	2.25	2.58
MB	2.33	5.36	1.71	2.43	2.32
SK	2.40	6.04	1.87	2.38	2.28
AB	2.36	5.27	1.75	2.43	2.34
All provinces	2.30	5.35	1.75	2.35	2.40

political culture and the differences between Canada's provinces seem to be differences of degree, not differences of kind. Further, while subtle interprovincial differences in political culture emerge, the patterns on many of the indices in Table 1 appear to be regional rather than provincial. Indeed, if we treat Ontario and Quebec as their own regions, as is traditionally done in Canadian political science, inter-provincial variation in Canadian political culture is outweighed by the inter-regional variation at times. On all of the indices, distinct groupings of Atlantic Canada (Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island), Quebec, Ontario, and the Prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta) can be discerned at different times: for example, the Atlantic Canadian provinces are quite close on efficacy, and the Prairie provinces show similarities with respect to efficacy and post-materialism.

Simeon and Elkins (1974: 398) claim that provincial political cultures could be deemed to exist only if "substantial interprovincial differences remain or are enhanced after plausible control variables are introduced". Indeed, socio-demographic differences between provinces or regions could help to explain differences in political cultures among provinces or regions. As can be seen in Table 2, socio-demographic factors relating to one's religion, income, education, union membership and the rural/urban nature of one's environment are found to affect 'values' culture, but socio-demographic factors are less important in explaining variance in 'civic' political culture, although education and income do seem to play a role. Yet while some socio-demographic variables are found to be significant, the regional and provincial variations in political culture in Canada persist even after controlling for socio-demographic factors. Stated more clearly, variation in Canada's regional and provincial political cultures does not simply reflect the differences in socio-demographic make-up among those regions and provinces. Rather, province in Canada exerts an independent impact on political culture, and we can again see a tendency for the provinces to group into regional blocs.

Table 2. Political culture in Canadian provinces

	Civic culture			Values culture	
	Efficacy B (SE)	Honesty B (SE)	Wastefulness B (SE)	Market liberalism B (SE)	Post-materialism B (SE)
NL*	0.001 (0.0501126)	0.04[a] (0.1448828)	0.03[c] (0.0386562)	−0.009 (0.0433078)	−0.01 (0.0329176)
PEI*	0.008 (0.0626447)	0.02[b] (0.1447904)	−0.001 (0.0410697)	0.004 (0.0434369)	−0.0001 (0.0365368)
QC*	−0.06 (0.0462595)	0.03 (0.1517011)	−0.03 (0.0352061)	0.14[a] (0.0433471)	−0.07[b] (0333221)
MB*	0.04[c] (0.0498278)	0.06[a] (0.1176297)	0.003 (0.0380017)	0.07[a] (0.0420596)	−0.06[a] (0.0356847)
SK*	0.06[b] (0.0548189)	0.14[a] (0.1426508)	0.06[a] (0.0401324)	0.03[c] (0.0489039)	−0.06[a] (0.0348304)
AB*	0.05[c] (0.0466418)	0.08[a] (0.1260408)	0.05 (0.040465)	0.07[b] (0.0444298)	−0.13[a] (0.0360785)
Female	−0.06[c] (0.0349714)	−0.03 (0.0976539)	−0.05 (0.028881)	−0.10[a] (0.0318444)	0.13[a] (0.0249525)
Age	−0.01 (0.0011702)	−0.13[a] (0.0032686)	−0.03 (0.000918)	0.06 (0.0010643)	−0.06[c] (0.0008247)
Education	0.24[a] (0.0079398)	0.07[b] (0.0234767)	0.16[a] (0.0064475)	−0.23[a] (0.0073094)	0.29[a] (0.0054963)
Income	0.06[c] (0.0057986)	0.05 (0.0170314)	0.03 (0.0047936)	0.20[a] (0.0058556)	−0.07[b] (0.0045618)
Catholic**	−0.01 (0.0450975)	0.11[b] (0.1393677)	−0.02 (0.0388372)	0.14[a] (0.0425704)	−0.28[a] (0.0332029)
Protestant**	−0.02 (0.0486528)	0.13[a] (0.1248693)	0.06 (0.038151)	0.12[a] (0.0436253)	−0.29[a] (0.0344211)
Other**	−0.01 (0.0526798)	0.11 (0.1448034)	−0.05 (0.0477399)	0.03 (0.0585531)	−0.17[a] (0.0431992)
Visible minority	−0.05 (0.0826458)	−0.02 (0.214577)	−0.05 (0.0922146)	0.04 (0.0811789)	0.08[b] (0.0591672)
Foreign born	0.02 (0.0649702)	0.03 (0.1514796)	−0.03 (0.0584057)	0.03 (0.0583404)	−0.03 (0.0422476)
Union	−0.02 (0.0400269)	−0.04 (0.1115697)	−0.03 (0.0312006)	−0.10[a] (0.0429665)	0.04[a] (0.0327277)
Rural	−0.02 (0.0394829)	0.01 (0.1172629)	0.02 (0.0328454)	0.07[b] (0.0337329)	−0.08[a] (0.0276217)
Constant	1.91[a] (0.0879569)	3.58[a] (0.2490837)	1.62[a] (0.0720218)	2.13[a] (0.0811087)	2.35[a] (0.0634462)
R^2	0.08	0.08	0.04	0.14	0.23
n	5029	4985	4964	5023	5030

[a]$p \leq 0.001$; [b]$p \leq 0.01$; [c]$p \leq 0.05$. Reference categories: *Ontario; **No religion.

A closer look at Table 2 confirms that subtle, but statistically significant, differences are found on all three of the 'civic' political culture indices that point to the provincial character of political culture in Canada. Indeed, there are some findings that do not conform to traditional regional blocs of analysis (Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and Prairies). Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan residents stand out as more likely than Ontario residents to feel that governments waste money. Inter-provincial variations are also seen with respect to the 'values' component of political culture. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, but not Prince Edward Island, join with Prairie residents as scoring lower than Ontario residents on the post-materialism index.

Of particular note are the data from Ontario; what comes out most clearly in the CPEP data is that Ontario is a 'region-province' with a distinct political culture. The Ontario findings are striking, as they help to dispel the common Canadian myth that Ontario is not distinctive within Canada. Previous studies of Canadian political culture have yet to single out Ontario as more left-wing or more disaffected than other Canadian provinces; if anything, there is a sentiment that Ontario is not distinctive at all and is actually "Canada writ small" (Krause, 1995). Indeed, Wiseman (2007) characterizes Ontario's political culture as "archetypal English Canadian" in that its politics encompass all of Canada's ideological traditions: a strong conservatism inherited from the United Empire Loyalists, an "Upper Canadian" reform liberalism, and a small social democratic minority. Both Simeon and Elkins (1980) and Henderson (2010b) find that Ontario has high levels of trust in government and greater feelings of efficacy compared to other provinces.

The CPEP data, which allow for a more fulsome consideration of the smaller provinces, present a different picture. In terms of 'civic' political culture, residents of Ontario feel more disaffected from the political process than residents of provinces to their east or west: Ontarians have lower efficacy than do Prairie residents and rate government honesty lower than do residents of most other provinces. When it comes to the 'values' element of political culture, residents of Ontario are less supportive of market liberalism and more post-materialist than residents of Quebec and the Prairie provinces. Rather than being centrist and efficacious, Ontario is found to be disaffected and somewhat left of centre. This finding challenges pre-existing assumptions about Ontario and raises important questions. Is Ontario political culture changing over time, or were previous measurements of Ontario political culture incorrect due to data limitations? If Ontario political culture is changing, what is the cause of this change? Future research should continue to track Ontario political culture over time to allow for longitudinal analysis.

A second contrarian finding concerns Quebec. Congruent with previous research (Simeon and Elkins, 1974, 1980; Henderson, 2010b), the CPEP data find that Quebecers have particularly low feelings of efficacy compared to other Canadians. However, until now, research on political culture in Canada has argued that Quebec is the most left-wing and collectivist of Canadian provinces (Ornstein and Stevenson, 1980, 1999; Brooks, 2004; Wiseman, 2007). Surprisingly, our analysis of the CPEP data finds the Quebec residents are more accepting of market liberalism than are residents of Ontario, which is generally considered to have strong conservative ideological tradition embedded in its political culture. Further, CPEP data indicate that Quebec has lower

levels of post-materialism than Ontario, which would seem to contradict Henderson's (2007a: 154) finding that Quebec residents display less traditional attitudes than the rest of Canada.

The third finding of note from the CPEP data is the regional pattern seen among the three Prairie provinces. A general pattern emerges in the three Prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) as they are less post-materialist, more supportive of market liberalism and generally seem less disaffected from the political process than Ontario residents. Interestingly, the grouping of the Prairie provinces into a regional bloc is even more evident after socio-demographic variables are controlled. These findings are at odds with the work of Wiseman (2007) and Wesley (2011), who argue for the social democratic nature of political culture in Saskatchewan and Manitoba compared to the conservatism of Albertan political culture. Further, no prior research has shown residents of the Prairie provinces to be less post-materialist than other Canadians. Additionally, due to the legacy of western alienation, residents of the three Prairie provinces have generally been thought to be more disaffected with politics than other provinces, such as Ontario, whose electoral weight allows it to dominate federal policy making. At the same time, both Simeon and Elkins (1980), as well as Henderson (2010b), use empirical data to illustrate the three Prairie provinces are similar to provinces outside of Atlantic Canada when it comes to measures of trust and efficacy. Conversely, the CPEP data suggest that residents of the Prairie provinces are the most trusting and feel the most effective when compared to Ontario.

Finally, on most of the indices, the two Atlantic provinces included in the study stand together in their similarities to Ontario. Previous research suggested that residents of the Atlantic provinces are more disaffected than other provinces (Simeon and Elkins, 1980; Henderson, 2010b) and that Atlantic Canadian political culture has an enduring traditionalism and conservatism (Beck, 1978; Wiseman, 2007). The analysis of the CPEP data suggests that these differences may reflect socio-demographic factors. Before controlling for socio-demographic differences, the two Atlantic provinces stand apart from Ontario as having lower efficacy, higher perceptions of government honesty and lower levels of post-materialism (see Table 1). After controlling for socio-demographic factors, most of these differences disappear (see Table 2): residents of the two Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island) are less sceptical about the honesty of governments than Ontarians but otherwise hold civic culture values similar to those found in Ontario. Further, there is no evidence from the CPEP survey that residents of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador are either significantly more or less supportive of market liberalism than Ontarians, and the CPEP data illustrate that the two Atlantic Canadian provinces are not substantially more traditionalist in their attitudes than Ontarians. This latter finding is congruent with Stewart (1994) and O'Neill and Erikson (2003), who have shed doubt on the traditionalism of Atlantic political culture.

Overall, the data suggest that Canadian political culture has stronger *inter-regional* variations than *inter-provincial* variations. On nearly all of the indices, there does seem to be distinct groupings of Ontario, Quebec, the Prairies and, to a lesser degree, the Atlantic provinces. The regional patterns suggest that provincial boundaries in and of themselves are not a significant determinant of sub-state political cultures. As argued above, adequate data have never existed to empirically test the 'small world

hypothesis' that Canadian provinces each have their own unique political culture. As such, the initial evidence from CPEP pointing towards subtle inter-provincial variations in political culture coupled with more robust inter-regional variations among these seven provinces examined is an important step forward in the study of political culture in Canada. That such variation persists and, in some cases, intensifies after controlling for socio-demographic variables, supports the argument that region and province (to a lesser extent) help to shape political culture in Canada.

Considering the various findings of this paper that appear to run counter to some of the established narratives in Canadian political culture literature, two possibilities for interpretation present themselves. First, what the CPEP data are picking up could be recent shifts in sub-state political cultures in Canada that are changing the way in which these cultures are structured. Ontario may be becoming more leftist and disaffected, Quebec may be becoming less left-wing, the Prairies may be becoming more conservative and happier with politics, and Atlantic provinces may be becoming less traditional, less disaffected and more centrist. While there are reasons to suspect that political culture may be shifting with population change and/or political change over time, due to important changes in measurement we cannot use the data presented here to definitively argue that sub-state political cultures are, in fact, shifting in Canada.

Second, the contrarian CPEP findings could be the result of better measurement of provincial political culture due to superior sample sizes than were available in the past. Larger sample sizes for the small Canadian provinces could be allowing us to discern variation and differences that Canadian political scientists have missed to date. Similarly, we must note that our measures of political culture, while consistent with the larger literature, do not identically match those of previous studies.

Conclusion

The existence of provincial political cultures in Canada has been a subject of debate since the publication of *Small Worlds: Provinces and Parties in Canadian Political Life* by Elkins and Simeon (1980) over thirty years ago. Some researchers have held that Canadian political culture is best analysed on a province-by-province basis while others have insisted that political culture in Canada supersedes and cuts across provincial boundaries. Until now, the ability of political scientists to resolve questions concerning provincial political culture in Canada was hampered by the lack of appropriate data within national surveys. The CPEP data allow for a more fulsome inquiry into Canadian provincial political culture than was previously possible.

This paper argues that province of residence *is* a significant determinant of political culture, and that subtle provincial variations in political culture remain even after controlling for socio-demographic differences amongst the provinces. Further, regional patterns in political culture are evident, and these patterns are increasingly apparent after controlling for socio-demographic factors. This finding suggests that region may be a more important determinant of sub-state political cultures in Canada than is province.

The inter-regional variations discovered were surprising in the context of existing research on Canadian political culture. Traditionally thought to be staid and dull,

Ontario emerges as the province/region that is the most disaffected from politics, the least supportive of market liberalism and the most post-materialist in its outlook. Quebec is often thought to have the most left-wing and collectivist political culture in Canada but it actually displayed higher support for market liberalism than Ontario. At the same time, residents of the Prairies, the birthplace of both the socialist Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party and western alienation, are the happiest with politics and the most in favour of market liberalism. Alberta, traditionally thought to be more conservative and disaffected than its neighbouring Prairie provinces, is found to have a political culture quite similar to Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island, long thought to be among Canada's most traditional but disaffected provinces, are quite similar to Ontario and are not outliers in terms of being disaffected or traditional.

Given the scepticism in literature from Canada and elsewhere that political cultures conform to sub-state jurisdictions, the findings of this article are quite interesting. The political saliency of region over province in Canada may contain lessons for other federal countries. As Canadians have experienced, the presence of multiple internal political cultures divided along regional lines can be both a blessing and a curse. It can lead to experimentation, innovation and better accommodation of diversity but it can also strain national unity and create political tension. In either scenario, the extent to which the regions of a federal country have varying political attitudes and political expectations has important effects on the politics of a federation.

Appendix: Methodology

Abacus Data collected the Comparative Provincial Election Project (CPEP) data on behalf of the research team in the weeks immediately after each province's provincial election. Fieldwork for the various provincial modules was conducted as follows: Newfoundland and Labrador 12–30 October 2011 ($n = 851$); Prince Edward Island 4–25 October 2011 ($n = 509$); Ontario 7–31 October 2011 ($n = 1044$); Manitoba 5–31 October 2011 ($n = 775$); Saskatchewan 8–21 November 2011 ($n = 821$); Alberta 25 April–15 May 2012 ($n = 897$), and Quebec 5–29 September 2012 ($n = 1009$). The survey was conducted in two steps. Respondents were selected randomly from a randomly recruited hybrid internet-phone panel that supports confidence intervals and error testing. In smaller provinces where the panel was unable to complete the required interviews, Interactive Voice Response (IVR)-to-Web methodology was used to complete the required numbers of interviews. The IVR-to-Web methodology is based on a random digit dial sample (RDD) that is drawn from a dual land–mobile frame. The sample is dialed by an IVR system where an announcement is made to the responding household indicating that an online survey is available for this randomly selected household. In addition to these standards the message indicates the survey site URL and a unique password to access the survey website. The respondent then goes online at their convenience, inputs their password and fills out the survey. All of the geo-encoded information from the RDD sample is merged back to the unique passwords during analysis allowing for greater depth of analysis. The data for each province were weighted by gender, age, education and region according to census data.

To preserve cases, all indices were constructed using mean scores, with missing values excluded. The market liberalism index is based on responses to four Likert questions: "Government should leave it ENTIRELY to the private sector to create jobs" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); "Government regulation stifles personal drive" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); "People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); and "Government should see that everyone has a decent standard of living" (4 = strongly disagree, 1 = strongly agree). The index ranges from 1 (low) to 4 (high) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.6813).

The post-materialism index is based on responses to six Likert questions: "It is more difficult for non-whites to be successful in Canadian society than it is for whites" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); "The world is always changing and we should adapt our view of moral behaviour to these changes" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Aboriginals would only try harder they could be just as well off as everyone else" (4 = strongly disagree, 1 = strongly agree); "This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family values" (4 = strongly disagree, 1 = strongly agree); "Protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree); and "Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement" (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). The index ranges from 1 (low) to 4 (high) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.6427).

The efficacy index is based on responses to four Likert questions: "I don't think they care much what people like me think" (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree); "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on" (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree); "People like me don't have any say about what government does" (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree); and "Generally, those elected to office soon lose touch with the people" (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree). The index ranges from 1 (low) to 4 (high) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7382).

The honesty index is based on responses to three questions: "On a scale of 0 to 10, where zero is completely dishonest and unethical and 10 is completely honest and ethical, how would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of the FEDERAL government these days"; "On a scale of 0 to 10, where zero is completely dishonest and unethical and 10 is completely honest and ethical, how would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of the PROVINCIAL government these days"; and "On a scale of 0 to 10, where zero is completely dishonest and unethical and 10 is completely honest and ethical, how would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of the MUNICIPAL government these days?". The index ranges from 0 (low) to 10 (high) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.5882).

The wastefulness index is based on responses to three questions: "Do you think that the FEDERAL government: Wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes, wastes some of it, doesn't waste very much of it?"; "Do you think that the PROVINCIAL government: Wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes, wastes some of it, doesn't waste very much of it?"; and "Do you think that the MUNICIPAL government: Wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes, wastes some of it, doesn't waste very much of it?". The index ranges from 1 (low) to 3 (high) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.5652).

Socio-demographic variables include province (dummy variables for Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island, with Ontario as the reference category; sex (female = 1, male = 0), age in years, years of education (0 = less than high school diploma, 8 = professional degree/doctorate), income (0 = less than \$20,000 CDN, 10 = over \$100,000 CDN); religious affiliation (Catholic, Protestant, other, with no affiliation/atheist as the reference category); visible minority (1 = visible minority, 0 = not visible minority); foreign-born (1 = foreign-born, 0 = Canada-born); union membership (1 = union member, 0 = non-union member); rural (1 = rural resident; 0 = urban/suburban resident).

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1]In Canadian political science, both qualitative and quantitative analyses break Canada into either four regions (Ontario, Quebec, Western Canada, and Atlantic Canada) or five regions (Ontario, Quebec, Prairies, British Columbia, and Atlantic Canada). Ontario and Quebec are generally considered to be 'province-regions' because of their comparably high populations and vast geographical size. Since British Columbia is yet to be included in our dataset, our definition of Canada's regions will be Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and the Prairies.

[2]Due to remoteness and very small populations, surveys of Canada's three territories are not feasible at this time.

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