

**URBAN/RURAL DIFFERENCES AND THE CULTURE WAR  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

Recent national elections in the United States and Canada reveal an urban/rural cleavage in vote choice. This cleavage has been overshadowed by the red state/blue state analysis in the United States and dismissed as an artifact of demographic and regional differences in Canada; however, this voting gap appears to have emerged with the increasing salience of “culture war” issues in North American politics. Sociological theory suggests that there may be an affinity between urban and rural place of residence and the progressivist and traditionalist poles of the culture war which may explain urban/rural differences in vote choice. In the present study, urban/rural voting differences are assessed using election surveys from the Canadian Federal and United States Presidential Elections of 2004 and using aggregate data from Canadian Federal and United States Presidential Elections since 1920. The results show that the urban/rural gap has grown to its widest point in recent elections in both countries, coinciding with the reorganization of the right wing of Canadian party politics and the domination of the Republican Party by social conservatives in the United States. After controlling for demographic and social characteristics, rural residents are found to be on average more socially and morally traditional than urban residents. Individual attitudes on gay marriage, abortion and gun control contributed to the urban/rural voting differences observed in both countries. It is concluded that the high profile of moral and social issues associated with the culture war has led to the manifestation of urban/rural cultural differences as a political cleavage in recent Canadian and American national elections.

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## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

America is said to be a nation divided. Especially after the 2000 American presidential election, commentators in the popular media began to focus on a so-called “red state/blue state divide.” As George W. Bush rode to the slimmest of all victories, mainstream analysis pointed to the groundswell of Republican support coming from the South and the Heartland. These areas are popularly thought to be the home of the “values voters” who unflinchingly supported Bush’s “compassionate conservatism.” The Democrats were relegated to the edges: to the Northeast, the heavily industrialized Great Lakes states, and the West Coast. When the 2004 election resulted in another slim victory for Bush, the red state/blue state analysis became even more dominant in the popular media. The source of this “values divide” separating red and blue states is widely portrayed as a “culture war.”

The idea that there is a culture war (Hunter 1991) has evolved from its first rumblings nearly forty years ago in response to the social and sexual revolution of the 1960s to become one of the most hotly contested ideas at the beginning of the twenty-first century (e.g., Fiorina 2006; Francia et al. 2005; Knuckey 2005; Abromowitz and Saunders 2005; Klinker and Hapanowicz 2005; Ansolabehere et al. 2005; Rosenthal 2005; Demerath 2005; Knuckey 2005; Thomas 2004; Kaufmann 2002; White 2002; Mouw and Sobel 2001; Williams 1999, and others). Whether the division in the United States is between red states and blue states or not, social issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and gun control seem to have matched or even surpassed economic issues in importance to voters. These are the issues that have been the focus of the “culture war” thesis.

The origin of the current concept of the “culture war” in the United States is generally traced to James Davison Hunter’s book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991). Hunter sees a battle between “progressivists” and “traditionalists.” He argues that the old fault lines among Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and others have been transcended by a greater cleavage between “the impulse toward orthodoxy” and “the impulse toward progressivism.” The formerly antagonistic branches of Judeo-Christian religions are now united in an unlikely alliance to defend traditional moral authority against the “progressive” social values that seek to undermine it. The orthodox view points to an “external, definable, and transcendent authority” while in the progressivist view moral authority “tends to be defined by the spirit of the modern age, a spirit of

rationalism and subjectivism" (p. 44). Conservative and progressive forces are locked in a struggle for cultural hegemony and the arena for this struggle is the public sphere, particularly as it is manifested in politics. Hunter believes the growing political polarization of the public on such issues as gun control, homosexuality, and abortion is evidence of the culture war.

The centrality of these issues in the red state/blue state analysis is important because scholars have traditionally used economic models in theorizing about vote choice, focusing especially on issues of wealth redistribution. In this view, the Democratic Party is the party of labour, social programs, regulation, and redistribution while the Republican Party is the party of lower taxes, less regulation, big business, and the wealthiest class. Voters are thought to vote for the party and candidate who best represents their economic interests. But according to the culture war thesis, the economic interests of voters take a backseat to "moral issues." In this schema, voters choose the candidate or party that best represents their "values." This cuts both ways: poor, uneducated but staunchly religious voters may vote for the Republicans while highly educated secular voters with upper middle class incomes may opt for the Democrats. In either case this goes against economic self interest but is in line with personal moral values. This view is forcefully laid out by Thomas Frank (2004) in his insightful book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?* Frank argues that working class, mainly rural Americans who are passionate about moral issues are being duped into voting against their economic interests through the use of powerful religious and moral symbolism. Republicans have used wedge issues such as opposition to abortion and gay marriage to mobilize mostly rural, mostly poor, overtly religious voters to vote along with the business class. The claim that they are being "duped" arises from the fact that after the elections are over, legislation related to the moral issues is rarely successful, while neo-liberal economic policy is successfully and widely implemented (Frank, 2004; Hopson & Smith, 1999).

What the focus on the red state/blue state analysis may hide is an urban/rural cleavage. Frank's analysis highlights cultural issues mainly from a class perspective and only hints that the values divide could have an urban/rural dimension. Sociological theory suggests that urban and rural populations may have affinities with the progressivist and traditionalist poles of the culture war. Despite the possible connections between traditional/rural and progressive/urban suggested by books aimed at the general reader or in newspapers, the scholarly culture war literature itself (including Hunter 1991) does not explore this possibility. A closer examination of the county by county electoral maps for the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections shows that for much of the United States, Democratic victory was relegated to islands of urbanity in a sea of Republican red. This suggests that the real front in the culture war may not be along state lines, but along the line that divides country and city. The most recent Canadian federal elections also show an apparent urban/rural divide: Conservatives in the country and Liberals in the cities. This coincides with a significant restructuring

of Canadian political parties where voters are for the first time presented with a socially conservative party that has a realistic chance of winning. The history of the ascendancy of the Conservative Party of Canada suggests the culture war may not be a solely American phenomenon. The resulting increase in the importance of social issues in elections has led to an urban/rural voting cleavage in both Canada and the United States.

Classical sociology was implicitly concerned with urban and rural differences, emerging as it did at a time of great urbanization during the industrial revolution and rise of modern capitalist society. Early sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies analyzed the changing forms of social solidarity and social relations as a result of urbanization and modernization, while others like Marx and Weber saw the rise of modern societies with their characteristic urbanization, industrialization, and rationalization as having a secularizing effect and as detrimental to various social traditions and moralities rooted in earlier ways of life. To this day it is almost taken for granted that because urban life is the archetypically modern way of life, and because the modern, urban form of social structure and cohesion is qualitatively different from the traditional forms that may persist in rural populations, rural populations are more traditional and urban populations are more progressive in terms of social values.

What were once classified in sociology as “urban/rural differences” have come to be referred to as “modernization” (Lantz and Murphy, 1978). At one time there were stark differences between urban and rural areas in terms of modernization. Early sociologists were witnessing the transformation of rural societies to modern industrial societies; at the present time, practically all facets of technology and modern social organization have touched every corner of North America. The same national chain stores have pushed out independent shops in city and town alike. The same forms of corporate organization, bureaucracy, technological innovation, and industrialization are present across Canada and the United States. Residents living deep in the countryside are exposed to the same mass media as those living in Chicago, Toronto, or New York City. Even agriculture itself is highly modernized and industrialized, with the advent of “factory farms,” expensive machinery, pesticides, herbicides, genetically engineered crops, and chemical fertilizers. The examples are endless and obvious. It is currently difficult to argue that rural areas are any less “modernized” than urban areas. While early sociology correctly associates modernization and urbanization, technological advances have brought modernization to non-urban areas as well, at least at the material level. In the post World War Two period, the apparent triumph of modernization led the study of urban/rural differences that had figured so prominently in early sociology to fade; however, the apparent urban/rural cleavage in contemporary North American politics suggests that urban/rural differences still exist and are still important.

Ironically, the very modernization of rural areas may actually be the source of the current manifestation of urban/rural differences in politics. The

greatest modernization of rural areas has occurred during the lifetimes of individuals living today, but not only that, the transition to a postindustrial economy has had profound impacts on social values and has left many in rural and small town North America behind. Large segments of those population have been hit by a postindustrial “double-whammy”: not only have they lost their comfortable and secure jobs in “the new economy,” they are technologically obsolete as well. This has led many of a conservative political disposition to feel “dispossessed” (Bell 1963). The “memory” of the way things used to be is fresh in the minds of many and nostalgia is a powerful motivator. If there is little difference in the degree of material modernization in urban and rural areas, there may be differences in values and culture, something that speaks to the long memory of rural areas. Demographically, rural areas may show differences from urban areas, such as generally lower levels of education and less ethnic and racial diversity. Education is perhaps the greatest driver of progressivism and liberalism in modern society and the highly educated are disproportionately drawn to cities, which themselves are the driving force of new ideas and social change. Cutler and Jenkins (2002) note that

[mainstream] values are determined and promulgated in urban settings. Rural residents are described as “behind-the-times” in many aspects of culture, in part because novelty or progressiveness begins in the metropolis and “catches on” (p. 385).

Conversely, the more ethnically homogeneous populations of rural areas make it easier for cultural traditions to persist as social solidarity can continue to have a basis in “sameness.” The potential for conflict emerges as the mainstream has moved toward a civil society based on a type of association that in Ferdinand Tönnies's (1887) terms would be characterized as *gesellschaft* while characteristically *gemeinschaft* communities still exist. In modern individualized society, casual acquaintances and self interest usually take precedence over deep loyalties to any larger associations. The culturally homogeneous character of many small towns and rural areas promotes an environment where relationships characterized by *gemeinschaft* continue to flourish,<sup>1</sup> where there is more loyalty to the whole and therefore a basis for common mores. The civil society of the modern era is more of a neutral arena which manages diverse and conflicting interests. The law and other public institutions of a pluralist society must operate in a way that allows different conceptions of morality to coexist without favouring one in particular. In places where common mores are taken for granted, the edicts prescribing tolerance and plurality are seen as an imposition from the outside, as

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously tight knit “*gemeinschaft*” communities can exist in cities, and often do (see Wellman 1979); however, I would make the qualitative distinction that *gemeinschaft* is more characteristic, encompassing and predominant as a mode of association in small towns and rural areas than in large cities.

for example, in the case of banning the Lord's Prayer in schools. Acts such as this are often seen by citizens of small, predominantly Christian communities as encroaching on their way of life—a way of life that was dominant in the nineteenth century—thus, the feeling of being dispossessed. The rhetoric of the culture war places the blame squarely on “big city bureaucrats” or the “liberal elite.” Even where particular faiths differ, they are united on the side of the culture war that is bent on transferring to modern civil society a morality more appropriate to *gemeinschaft* communities. The threat posed by change, the progressivism of the cities, the loss of status and livelihood in the change to a postindustrial service economy, and the moral relativism of modern society can lead to a “backlash” among more traditional or nostalgic segments of the population.

The anger emanating from the backlash mentality has not gone unnoticed by those in the game of politics. Even before Richard Nixon made his appeal to the “silent majority” in response to the culture of protest that erupted in the late 1960s, conservative politics have capitalized on this form of social outrage. Frank (2004) describes the “backlash” as

a style of conservatism that first came snarling onto the national stage in response to the partying and protests of the late sixties. While earlier forms of conservatism emphasized fiscal sobriety, the backlash mobilizes voters with explosive social issues—summoning public outrage over everything from busing to un-Christian art—which it then marries to pro-business economic policies. Cultural anger is marshaled to achieve economic ends. And it is these economic achievements—not the forgettable skirmishes of the never-ending culture wars—that are the movement's greatest monuments (p. 5).

For many so-called “liberals” the culture war does not even exist: it is a war being fought only on one side by conservative talk radio hosts, tele-evangelists, and anti-abortion demonstrators, or perhaps designed from the top down by Machiavellian Republican schemers to mobilize voters. It is not really a war at all when the only side that is fighting is the “backlash” culture that has been percolating for the past half century or more. But for many social conservatives, the culture war is real, and they are well organized and fighting. Thus, Frank (2004) continues, “[i]n the backlash imagination, America is always in a state of quasi-civil war: on one side are the unpretentious millions of authentic Americans; on the other stand the bookish, all-powerful liberals who run the country but are contemptuous of the tastes and beliefs of the people who inhabit it” (p. 13).

Backlash anger has gradually coalesced into a full fledged political ideology in North America, marrying a pro-business, anti-statist, neo-liberal economic policy to traditional stances on a range of social issues motivated by a generally anti-intellectual, anti-elite attitude. This newspaper commentary expresses a current view on the political relationship between Middle America

and the intellectual and cultural elite:

Somewhere in the last century and a half, the whiskey-slamming, farm-working, back-slapping Democrats of old have been replaced by green-tea-sippin', modern-art-buying, NPR-listening, progressive liberals. Massachusetts millionaires, academic experts and Hollywood crazies have taken control of the "people's party." Urban snobbery has somehow replaced rural pragmatism as the dominant Democratic creed. At the same time, country club Republicans are a dying breed, or at the very least, what is left of them now play second-fiddle to NASCAR Republicans when conservative politicians go vying for support (Riches 2005).

In the United States, the current wave of the "backlash mentality" can be traced to McCarthyism in the 1950s. McCarthyism prompted many prominent American scholars accustomed to the comfortable liberalism of the postwar period to take seriously the emerging "radical right" and attempt to understand it (see Bell 1963). Hofstadter (1964) believes the general "form" of the backlash has roots that go back even further, emerging cyclicly with different "content." The current "culture war" might be seen as the latest—and perhaps last—incarnation of this general right wing backlash movement that has accompanied thirty years of Republican dominance in the United States. The movement in general can be considered reactionary, in the sense that it is a response to the "status anxiety" brought about by "the increasing incomprehensibility of a world—now overwhelmingly technical and complex—that has changed so drastically within a lifetime" (Bell 1963: 2). In this aspect of the backlash lies a "revolt against modernity" as the monument social and economic changes of the twentieth century gave birth to the new postindustrial society. Another aspect of the backlash is a reaction and response to the end of the New Deal era, which explains the common thread of "small government" in contemporary right wing ideology. It is upon the ashes of Democratic hegemony in the New Deal era and the Republican tide sweeping through the American South that Phillips (1969) correctly predicted a Republican majority would be built. The civil rights movement caused the South to go from Democratic to Republican, and combined with the migration of blacks to the cities, the subsequent "white flight" to the suburbs, a population shift toward the sun belt, and blacks voting Democrat, conditions were created that ushered in the current era of Republican dominance. Where McCarthy played the anti-intellectual/anti-elite chord to the tune of anti-communist fears during the 1950s, Goldwater and Wallace capitalized on the status anxiety among rural and working class whites amid changing race relations in the 1960s to set the stage for this realignment.

This "paranoid style of politics," as Hofstadter (1964) calls it, generally surfaces in times of economic prosperity when voters are not preoccupied with more basic and pressing issues. Perhaps this is why the backlash has so forcefully



arisen in its current “culture war” form on the heels of the great economic expansion of the Clinton years. Just as earlier phases of the backlash seized upon the fears of the times—the threat of the new Soviet superpower after the Second World War, race in the 1960s, drugs and crime in the 1980s—the moral anxiety of the culture war reflects, among other things, a loosening moral climate, particularly with regard to sexual and family values and fears of growing secularization. Although the association of the religious right with ultra-conservatism began as early as the 1960s (Hofstadter 1964), the religious and moral aspects of the backlash mentality leading to its current incarnation in the culture war did not fully emerge until closer to the time of Ronald Reagan, who was famous for his ability to “connect” with those nostalgic for simpler times and express the traditional values of “Middle Americans.” Socially conservative groups such as the Moral Majority and Focus on the Family seized upon the emerging moral aspects of the backlash mentality and its revolt against modernity and worked to mobilize evangelical Christians to vote Republican and lobby for socially conservative legislation. Talk radio and television news also capitalized on the phenomenon, with hosts such as Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly coming to prominence as de facto spokespersons for the backlash movement. Some even see themselves as “culture warriors.” In any event, the lingering effects of the social and sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s continues to be felt and provides the impetus for today's moral fears and moral outrage.

Thus, the “culture war” provides the contemporary “content” of the backlash associated with the conservative/Republican era—predicted by Phillips (1969) and thoroughly discussed and placed in theoretical context by Burnham (1970)—that followed the liberal/New Deal era of Democratic dominance. During this era of Republican dominance, in which the backlash mentality has played a pivotal role, “liberal” has become a derogatory term. Common elements of the backlash, such as the call for “small government” and anti-intellectualism, remain evident in the politics of the culture war and connect it to earlier phases. In political discourse of late, cultural and social issues have replaced economic issues as the primary marker of political differences not just in the United States but also in Canada. Especially under the presidency of Bill Clinton, the Democratic Party became virtually indistinguishable from the Republicans on economic issues (Kaufmann, 2002: 289). Both parties were now courting big business and their massive campaign donations. The Democratic party no longer seemed particularly friendly to its old union base; instead, it positioned itself as a champion of free trade and globalization.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Republicans politicians campaigned on “family values” throughout the 1990s and capitalized on the impeachment of Clinton on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice related to his sexual improprieties, in order to reinforce the distinction between Republicans and Democrats on these values. The two mainstream parties are now most

2 Despite the neo-liberal economic leanings of the Clinton-era Democratic Party, the Democrats continue to enjoy greater union support than the Republicans.

distinguishable along the lines of cultural and social policy: Republicans are socially conservative and Democrats are socially liberal.<sup>3</sup> By the time George W. Bush arrived on the Presidential scene, the distinction between the two parties on social issues was very clear in the minds of voters.

Meanwhile, in Canada the political landscape was also changing. The Progressive Conservatives under Brian Mulroney had been the business party, and in recent decades, the champions of free trade and economic liberalization. Historically they were not particularly socially conservative (e.g., the “red tory” era) but merely cautious when it came to social change. The Mulroney government, which had enjoyed two consecutive large majorities in 1984 and 1988, ended as one of the most unpopular in Canadian history. Their unpopularity stemmed in large part from economic policies which seemed uncaring to ordinary Canadians struggling with a recession—particularly the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)—and paved the way to the utter destruction of the Progressive Conservative Party. The Liberals, who portrayed themselves as more caring about ordinary Canadians by promising to repeal the GST and renegotiate the free trade agreement, coasted to large majorities under the leadership of Jean Chrétien.

Much of the recent Liberal rule coincided with the presidency of Bill Clinton, and during this time the economic policies of the Liberals paralleled those of the American Democrats. Where in 1988 the Liberals were against free trade<sup>4</sup>, they were now wholeheartedly behind it as well as globalization, privatization and other economically liberal policies. Like the Clinton administration, the Liberal Government focused on eliminating the Federal budget deficit. In Canada, this was largely accomplished by slashing transfer payments to provincial governments, which further “downloaded” costs to municipal governments. The cuts to provincial transfer payments created fiscal crises especially in the “progressive” areas of health care and education. In many ways, the Liberals under Chrétien, and then finance Minister Paul Martin, were indistinguishable from the Progressive Conservatives under Mulroney. Both parties were fiscally conservative; however, the Liberals positioned themselves as quintessentially Canadian in the public imagination largely through massive advertising campaigns. It was not until the end of Chrétien's reign as Prime Minister, after he was set to retire, that the Liberal party moved on any “progressive” or “liberal” social issues such as the legalization of same-sex marriage and promoting tolerance for immigrants.

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3 As the Iraq war has unfolded, foreign policy differences have emerged between the Democrats and Republicans; however, it could be argued that foreign policy differences were minor as late as the 2004 Presidential Election, as the Iraq War and various security laws (e.g., The Patriot Act) enjoyed broad bipartisan support.

4 In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, true to the original meaning of the word “liberal,” the Liberals supported free trade or “reciprocity” and closer ties with the United States while the Conservatives opposed these policies.

Over the course of Liberal rule, opposition to its purportedly “liberal” social policies was coalescing under the Reform Party, which was modelled very much on the same “populist” basis as the socially conservative wing of the American Republican Party. As the Canadian embodiment of the backlash culture, the Reform Party of Canada at first grew in strength largely fuelled by “Western alienation” (or perhaps more correctly “Western resentment” of the Eastern establishment), especially based on the perception that Québec was given preferential treatment by successive federal governments. Reform's promises of tax cuts and smaller government came with unofficial undertones of social conservatism as part of their appeal to “true” or “ordinary” Canadians, the Canadian equivalent of the Republican Party's appeal to “Middle America.” But by 2000, it was clear that the Reform Party had limited appeal beyond the Canadian West, and with the utter destruction of the Progressive Conservative Party, the hopes of a conservative government in Canada were increasingly remote. The Reform Party essentially folded and reemerged as the “Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance” (or more simply “The Canadian Alliance” or just the “Alliance”) in an attempt to become the party of choice for conservatives across the country. The Alliance's first leader, Stockwell Day, was open with his Evangelical Christian beliefs. Canadian voters had no taste for Day's overt Christianity and the Canadian Alliance's electoral failure was met with calls to “unite the right,” since right wing votes were being split between the dying Progressive Conservatives and the Canadian Alliance. In 2003, the Progressive Conservative party was absorbed by the Alliance, and adopted the name “Conservative Party of Canada.” Although the new Conservatives officially attempted to downplay their social conservatism, in many ways the present Conservative Party is very much like the Reform Party and Canadian Alliance, retaining their Western base and many key personnel known to hold socially conservative views. Through the merger, the remnants of the Reform Party were able to partially adopt the identity of the former Progressive Conservatives, and assume the familiar nickname of the “Tories,” which has helped make them more palatable to Canadians.

The result of the rearranging of the parties is that the political situation between the Liberals and Conservatives in Canada now closely parallels that of the Democrats and Republicans in the United States. Like the Democrats and the Republicans, there are few major differences between the Liberals and Conservatives on matters of economic policy. Both parties are largely in agreement in their support of free market and economic liberalism with only minor differences on matters of taxation and social spending. The real differences are in the politics of culture, at least in terms of public perception, with the Conservatives leaning toward social conservatism and the Liberals tending to be socially liberal. Echoing the American political situation, social issues such as gun control, child care, and same-sex marriage became the basis for distinctions between the Conservatives and Liberals during recent elections. Both parties are

essentially in agreement on free trade and fiscal policy. The two major political parties in each country now present voters with a clear choice between social conservatism and social progressivism (Gidengil et al. 2006). This choice has opened the gap between urban and rural voters.

These changes in politics, which reflect the traditional/progressive poles in the culture war, allow us to look at urban/rural differences as they manifest themselves in politics. The choices of voters in recent elections can serve as an empirical indicator of a larger cultural conflict: rural/traditional vs. urban/progressive. If the culture war is between “progressivists” and “traditionalists,” the urban/rural dichotomy would seem to have an affinity with the poles of the culture war. The urban/rural cleavage seen in recent elections coincides with the rise in importance of social and moral issues in these elections and in society in general, and may reflect differences in the general social views of urban and rural populations. Although the “culture war” has largely been seen as something affecting the United States, there are enough similarities between English Canadian and American culture that it is possible that this cultural rift affects Canada too. The purpose of this study is to examine empirically urban/rural differences and their associations with progressivism/traditionalism (culture war) and how these associations are manifested in the national politics of Canada and the United States.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Urban/Rural Differences, Politics, and the Culture War**

### **2.1 Urban/Rural Differences**

The urban/rural dichotomy has a long history in sociological theory. Urban areas are generally defined as having a large, heterogeneous population with a high population density, a high degree of social differentiation and stratification, and a highly developed market economy. Rural areas are generally thought of as small, homogeneous communities focused on agriculture or other primary industries. These defining characteristics trace their ancestry to classical sociological theories that frequently conceptualize modern, capitalist society in opposition to rural, traditional society.

Several of sociology's canonical theories and theorists deal with themes related to the urban/rural dichotomy. Durkheim (1893) examined the differences between traditional and modern societies, arguing that the complexity of the division of labour was a function of a society's moral or dynamic density. This encompasses the spatial concentration of population and the type and number of social ties among its members and essentially describes urbanization. As population density and the number of relationships among members of the population increase, there is an increase in the complexity of the division of labour which affects a change in the type of social solidarity found in the society. In other words, the basis of society's social solidarity—the “glue” that holds it together—moves from a collective conscience based on sameness to individual conscience based on differences. In the same vein, Tönnies (1887) saw fundamental changes in the way people associated with each other in modern urban societies. Older communities were relatively homogeneous and based on shared tradition and primary, mostly familial ties which he called *gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft*, on the other hand, arose with modernization and urbanization, and denotes a civil society characterized by the importance of secondary, exchange relationships and an increasingly complex division of labour. Marx also saw a tension between town and country, recognizing urbanization as a major component in the development of capitalism, as well as a force that would fundamentally transform the individual and society. On the one hand, the development of towns and cities rescued rural populations from a life of “idiocy” and thus represented progress in the realization of human freedom, but on the

other hand they contributed to the destruction of established patterns of life. As he and Engels wrote in a famous passage from the *Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie...has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other nexus between people than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned out the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation...The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation into a mere money relation... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned (Marx and Engels 1848: 5-6).

Weber (1905) too saw urbanization, modernization and the development of capitalism as interconnected and leading to increasing individualism, secularization, and the rationalization of every aspect of human life.

While Marx, Durkheim, and Tönnies were essentially analyzing the transition from feudal to capitalist society in Europe, Weber (although sharing the same basic premises) more explicitly addressed the situation in the United States, where there was no previously established feudal society.<sup>5</sup> Bonner (1997) uses Weber's (1946) comparison of German and American agriculture to argue that there is no "rural" in America in the traditional sense of the word, because the American farmer was an entrepreneur from the start and thus never bound by the traditional ways of the European agriculturalists (p. 32). Rural society in the United States had no "traditional" basis since a feudal social order never existed there. Bonner goes as far as to argue that urban/rural differences in North America are an idealization and sociologically irrelevant (p. 33). But historical evidence and idealizations alike show that rural culture flourished in both Canada and the United States. Baer et al. (2000) suggest that common stereotypes

imagine the early United States as a thriving and vibrant society that grew rapidly and steadily into a highly urbanized modern nation. The Canadian colonies, in contrast, are typically perceived as far more backward, rural and undeveloped during this period of history.

But they continue,

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5 It could be argued, however, that the plantation system of the U.S. South and perhaps the seigneurial system of New France were feudal in nature.

During most of the 1800s, then, the United States was, like Canada, a society composed largely of rural homesteads or small towns, and was far from being the metropolitan nation that it became in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (p. 401).

In the ensuing years, both countries have grown into highly urbanized, modern societies. The rate of urbanization in each country has been almost exactly the same. According to data from the United States Census, 39.6 percent of the population lived in urban areas in 1900, increasing to 64 percent in 1950 and 79 percent in 2000. The Census of Canada reports urbanization increasing from 37 percent in 1901 to 62 percent in 1951 and 80 percent in 2006. As both countries have shared roughly the same history of urbanization, it is not surprising that "the lives of [early] Canadians were influenced by many of the same forces of rural and small-town 'local communalism' that some American historians have attributed to the population of the United States in that era" (Baer et al. 2000: 403). Despite being predominantly urban nations today, this rural tradition continues as over fifty million Americans and six million Canadians currently live in non-urban areas. Considering that many of today's urbanites have small-town and rural backgrounds, the influence of rural ways of life should still be considerable in contemporary society.

Even if it were true that there never was a truly rural/traditional society in North America, the very structure of rural communities in North America lend themselves to more traditional ways of life. Although Becker (1968) did not intend his sacred/secular dichotomy to be synonymous with "rural" and "urban," the characteristics of sacred and secular societies in his schema may shed light on the nature of urban and rural differences in North America. In sacred societies, there is an "unwillingness and/or inability to respond to the culturally new...a high degree of resistance to change, particularly in their social order" (p. 252). In contrast, secular societies exhibit "a high degree of readiness and capacity to change, particularly in the social order" (p. 252). The sacred and secular terminology is derived from the importance Becker places on values, namely the "permeability" of values in a society. The unchanging or "impermeable" character of values in a sacred society depends on the relative isolation of such a community. Like the classical sociologists, Becker depicts secular society as an adaptation to the greater complexity and wider variety of sociation found in modern society:

Vicinal isolation and accessibility respectively denote the absence and presence of communication, at the level of sheer physical opportunity for culture contact, with persons from other societies. They cannot come into contact, or they can. The social variety denotes the absence or presence of effective communication, at the level of social relations, with members of other societies when they can be physically present. They

do not transcend the mere commensalism or symbiosis, or they do. The mental variety denotes the absence or presence of effective communication, at the level of a 'common universe of discourse,' with representatives of other value-systems who are 'physically and socially present' (p.253).

The permeability of a society's values is a function of the diversity of communication and contact with other ways of life, which all increase in modern societies. This harkens back to Marx's "all that is solid melts into air"<sup>6</sup> quotation: the very structure of modern societies makes their value systems "permeable" and ever-changing.

The absence of a prior feudal way of life along with the fact that modernity is and always has been the dominant way of life in North America does not necessarily mean no traditional way of life in the rural, sacred sense exists, or has existed. To some extent North American culture imbues both the rural and urban ways of life with certain idealistic representations (both positive and negative) in excess of any empirical differences. Think of the Romantic frontier idealizations of the pioneer days or the Wild West, or the mythical stature of cities like New York or Chicago. Like most representations, idealizations about urban and rural ways of life and the qualities of urban and rural residents are based on real qualitative and sometimes measurable differences in urban and rural ways of life. Given the preponderance of theoretical dichotomies proposed to describe urban/rural differences in sociology, the lack of empirical substantiation of urban/rural differences is surprising (Lantz and Murphy, 1978).

Part of the reason that sociology's early fascination with urban/rural differences was not directly pursued in an empirical sense is that, by the end of the Second World War, the process of modernization was thought to be complete in North America. Knoke & Henry (1977) predicted that as urbanization and modernization continue, urban/rural differences would disappear:

The key trend for the non-farm rural sector would seem to be toward greater homogenization with the urban political culture. As it has over the post-World War II period, the hinterland will continue to be exposed through mass media and interpersonal contacts to the dominant social, cultural, and political styles emanating from the metropole....the end result of this trend will be to make the rural population as heterogeneous and politically diverse as the urban environment, so that all meaningful distinctions between the two will have disappeared (p. 61).

In contrast, although somewhat earlier, Schnore (1966) suggested that "[t]he disappearance of substantial differences between rural and urban areas and between rural and urban people is often grossly exaggerated...rural-urban differences in the United States, while clearly diminishing, are still crucial"

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6 A more detailed consideration of this aspect of modernity can be found in Berman (1982).



(p.131). The belief that urban/rural differences would disappear with modernization seems to parallel the Enlightenment belief that religion would disappear with the advance of modernity and its rationality. Just as religion continues to be an important part of many lives, much of the existing research confirms that there are significant differences between urban and rural populations on a number of characteristics today.

Research in the United States describes rural residents as, on average, more religious, white, elderly, and socially traditional, and less educated and less affluent than urban residents (Gimpel & Karnes, 2006). Likewise, McKee (2007) finds rural voters in the United States more likely to be white, married, Christian, against abortion and to have lower education and incomes than non-rural voters. Francia and Baumgartner (2005) find rural residents are more likely than urban residents to attend church services every week and pray more regularly; however, they note these differences are small, continuing “[t]he more substantive differences involve the importance of religion in everyday living and biblical interpretation” (p.356). Greenburg, Walker and Greener (2005) also find greater religiosity and social conservatism among rural residents:

Nearly half (48 percent) of voters in rural areas describe themselves as conservatives, compared to 39 percent among voters in the nation as a whole. Rural areas boast appreciably larger numbers of evangelicals (28 percent and 21 percent, respectively) and represent the only areas in the country where a majority of households own guns (57 percent, compared to 40 percent nationally) (p. 10).

Canadian research has also found significant differences in the social composition of urban and rural places. Adams (2008) claims that urban populations “register greater comfort with change and complexity,” which they see as an opportunity rather than a threat. They are comfortable with new technology and believe that ethnic diversity “enriches society.” Rural populations in Canada are uncomfortable with change and do not embrace new technologies to the same extent as urban Canadians. They are especially wary of changes related to immigration or “growing sexual permissiveness,” and religion and family values are important parts of their lives. Rural Canadians are also more likely to be “heavily involved in their local communities.” All of these findings suggest that rural populations are more traditional and urban populations more progressive on average throughout North America.

In terms of values and attitudes, Cutler and Jenkins (2002) found rural residents more likely to oppose gay marriage than urban residents and more likely to agree that “women should stay home.” Andersen and Fetner (2008) find larger communities more tolerant of homosexuality. These findings correspond to Thomas's (2001) finding that “[p]olicy debates surrounding issues such as gun control or immigration reveal that rural Canadians are generally more socially

conservative than urban Canadians” (p. 433). Cutler and Jenkins conclude that the social conservatism of rural Canadians can be attributed to less education, rural political culture and residential mobility. Cutler and Jenkins found a large difference in education levels in urban and rural areas in Canada. Rural populations have more high school dropouts while the proportion of the population that is university educated is considerably higher in urban areas. They also found urban areas to be much more ethnically diverse.

With respect to mobility, Cutler and Jenkins suggest there is a “self-selection mechanism” at work, as “[s]ome of what we observe will reflect where people choose to live, which may invite us to wrongly attribute [cultural and attitudinal] differences to the places themselves” (p. 370). Are the differences between urban and rural populations due to “sorting” through residential mobility or to the place itself? This issue is difficult to resolve. As McKee (2007) notes: “[i]n the political geography literature scholars disagree on whether there is something inherent in a place that can affect political behavior above and beyond the fact that the characteristics of individuals may vary considerably depending on location” (p. 2). McKee likens this to the “classic chicken and egg problem: does the setting mold the behavior or do individuals with certain characteristics shape the behavior exhibited in the place?” There is no reason why this should be framed as an either/or scenario: it could be a little of both. There are likely many cases where city people move to the country, bringing with them romantic notions of country life and possibly socially conservative views, while the opposite also occurs as those with socially liberal views choose to live an urban lifestyle.

But beyond the possibility of socially conservative individuals moving to the country and socially liberal individuals moving to the city, other structural factors are at play that have less to do with individual desires and conscious decisions about where they might like to live. Jobs and careers that require a high level of education and knowledge are disproportionately located in urban settings. A rather strong element of North American mythology is the move from backward country to the bright lights and economic opportunities of the city. It is almost expected by parents in rural areas that their children will move to the city, either for education or employment, and that they will not likely be returning to live where they grew up. The “heartland” has supplied the population for cities as much as immigration from other countries has. These will tend to be the “best and brightest,” meaning those who are left behind in small towns and the countryside will likely have lower education levels. Add to this the fact that the liberalizing effect of education on social values is well known, and this “sorting mechanism” will undoubtedly contribute to the social conservatism of rural areas and the social liberalism of urban areas as well as to the differing education levels of the respective populations.

While it seems clear that the measurable demographic differences between urban and rural populations are due in part to sorting, there is good reason to

believe that urban/rural value differences are also influenced by “place.”<sup>7</sup> There are qualitative and structural differences in the ways of life of urban and rural communities and differences in the experiences of individuals living in urban or rural settings. Urban and rural environments are different and will have significant and differing effects on the people living in the respective environments. Some of the characteristics of rural or small town environments are amenable to the qualities of Tönnies's *gemeinschaft* societal relations. The relative religious and ethnic homogeneity, the lesser degree of differentiation in wealth, a smaller population that better facilitates primary personal interactions and other characteristics of small towns and rural areas all lead to a commonality of experience that allows for the possibility of social solidarity at least partly based on a collective conscience.

We will, of course, find neither purely “mechanical” solidarity nor *gemeinschaft* society in rural North America, only circumstances and conditions which allow a certain degree of these social forms. Transition is what we find in contemporary rural North America. As both Marx and Weber emphasized, exchange relations and economic rationalization would find their way to every corner of life and every inch of land. Urbanization continues apace as farmers move off the land and into towns and their farms move from being family run operations to corporate managed operations complete with high tech machinery and immigrant labour. The smallest towns take on characteristics of the cities, with the same national chain stores and businesses, the same media, and even the same social problems. Rural areas are no longer isolated: advances in communications technology—cellphones, Internet, television—assure this. Villages disappear entirely due to a mobile workforce.

Modernizing forces have long exerted strong pressures on the remnants of traditions that have persisted in their precarious states only because of the structural characteristics of rural life. In the last fifteen years, rapid advances in mobile phone and Internet technology have created unprecedented pressures on rural life, essentially nullifying the isolation once conferred by great expanses of land. One of the most noticeable differences between urban and rural life has been more widespread exposure to new ideas and different ways of thinking, something that was very limited in rural areas and small towns and had allowed some semblance of a collective conscience. These structural changes force rural areas toward “secular” society (in Becker's sense) and its permeable value system.

Becker believes that the permeable value system associated with secular society is especially prone to pathology. Sacred societies achieve stability from their fixed and unquestioning morality, so long as outside pressures of differentiation are held at bay. Secular society, in Becker's view, also requires a normative basis, but one that is inherently flexible; however, flexibility carries a risk of fragmentation, of things getting out of control. This line of thought

7 In recent years, the influence of “place” has received somewhat more attention in Sociology (e.g., Gieryn 2000).

follows closely in the footsteps of early sociology, specifically the idea that urbanization/modernization brings about social and personal ills. Such ambivalence about modernization is found in the writings of each of sociology's founding fathers, for example with Durkheim's (1893) notion of "anomie," or Weber's (1905) "disenchantment" or "iron cage." Marx, of course, thought capitalism itself was a pathological phase of modernity.

The feeling that things are "coming undone," that there is increasing moral laxity is not uncommon in North America, and can easily be explained as the result of the rapid pace of social change. If, as some of the empirical research described above shows, religion and traditional morality are more important in the day to day lives of rural residents, and if the structure of rural and small town society allows for a greater degree of primary relationships (*gemeinschaft*) and social solidarity derived from sameness (mechanical solidarity), then it can be expected that anxiety and unease about social and moral change could be particularly strong for many rural individuals, and collectively for rural communities.

For many rural communities there is a strong desire to preserve older value systems rooted in sameness. Just as Adams (2008) finds rural Canadians threatened by social change, Knoke & Henry (1977) note that, "[g]rounded in the values of moral integrity and individualistic self-help, rural Americans traditionally have long been suspicious and disdainful of urban centers. The political manifestations—opposition to big government, big business, big labor; isolationism in foreign policy; hostility to non-Anglo-Saxon minorities; intense patriotism—may be seen as part of a general defense of status and a way of life threatened by the encroachment of the urban industrial sector" (p.52). That the process of modernization and the concomitant permeation of modern secular values into rural areas and small towns has already largely occurred means those in rural communities may be especially prone to the "backlash" mentality.

As discussed in the introduction, the backlash mentality has deep roots in American society and the current wave can be traced to the 1950s. In terms of modernization, a process which has clearly touched everyone and every place in North America, the present culture war and backlash draw their strength from a new phase of modernity. The transition to postindustrial society has disrupted old patterns of economic stratification and produced "status anxiety" (Bell 1963). The "new" economy has seen the population divided into a professional/technological elite, the "Great Middle" of the "technologically obsolescent," and an underclass of the "technologically superfluous" (Burnham 1970). According to Burnham, the technological elite tend to be "politically cosmopolitan and socially permissive." In the postindustrial economy, the technological elite is the group in ascendancy, while the "technologically obsolete" middle Americans, defenders of "The American Dream" and its associated values, are in decline. Burnham believes that such reorganizations of social structure produce "not only economic and status conflict, but profound cultural polarizations as well" (p. 140).

Writing in 1970, Burnham sees an increasing “countermobilization” by the threatened middle which he suggests would be “profoundly conservative, if not reactionary, and it would be based upon an intensity of polarized cultural conflict” (p. 141). In agreement with Phillips's (1969) prediction of an emerging Republican majority, Burnham sees the success of George Wallace in 1968 as part of a realignment, “dedicated to producing a popular uprising against the conspiracy of top political elites, intellectuals, blacks, and others against the 'common man'” (p. 143). Not surprisingly in light of our discussion, Burnham finds Wallace's appeal “is clearly greatest in the rural and small-town areas and declines markedly as one approaches the larger metropolitan centres” (p. 145).

This anti-elite sentiment is part of a longstanding anti-intellectual current in American society. Although it is not necessarily dominant, anti-intellectualism cyclically creeps into public life (Hofstadter 1963). By itself, anti-intellectualism need not be associated with either urban or rural life, as anti-intellectualism may be found equally among uneducated country folk, the urban blue collar proletariat, or even the business class. To the extent there are any associations of anti-intellectualism with the urban/rural dimension, they have to do with either the association of the intellectual elite with the elite universities and leading cultural institutions of the highly urbanized Northeastern United States, or the rise of postindustrial society where there is a stark divide between the countryside and professional classes of the cities. This would certainly play into the red state/blue state electoral map in some ways. The Heartland is dotted with the small cities and towns “left behind” in the shift to postindustrial society; however, great swaths of the rust belt are in the Democratic territory of the Great Lakes states and the effect is counteracted by union support for the Democrats.<sup>8</sup> Anti-intellectualism is certainly a consistent motif in the backlash mentality, and given its affinities with evangelicalism (Hofstadter 1964), it is not surprising that it holds a prominent place in culture war rhetoric.

## 2.2 Urban/Rural Cleavages in Politics

Political scientists often discuss voting “gaps” or “cleavages.” One voting gap discussed of late has to do with religion, with the most religious voters increasingly turning toward the Republicans (Olson and Green, 2006). Other gaps, such as the gender gap, have narrowed (Kaufmann, 2006), while the income (or class) gap, although still important, has also decreased in importance

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<sup>8</sup> A recent episode in the run-up to the 2008 Presidential Election is useful for illustration. Democratic candidate Barack Obama, referring to white working-class voters in the upcoming Pennsylvania and Indiana primaries, suggests that “it's not surprising then that they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.” His opponents immediately criticized the remarks as “elitist” and “condescending” (Washington Post 2008).

(Stonecash, 2006). The focus of this study, the urban/rural gap, has been vaguely recognized in both academic and public debate, but not thoroughly studied. As McKee (2007), one of the few recent scholars to study the urban/rural dimension, recently notes, “[s]cholars have made thoughtful contributions to this growing literature on partisan polarization but they have contributed very little to the debate by way of an examination of the voting behavior of rural voters, who, at least according to popular accounts are the reddest of the red state voters” (p.1). Since social scientists have long predicted the end of urban/rural differences, urban/rural political cleavages have not received much attention in North America over the last two or three decades. The study of urban/rural cleavages does, however, have a history in the social sciences.

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified the urban/rural cleavage as a common political cleavage in industrializing nations:

The initial result of a widening of the suffrage will often be an accentuation of the contrast between the countryside and the urban centers and between the orthodox-fundamentalist beliefs of the peasantry and the smalltown citizens and the secularism fostered in the larger cities and the metropolis...the influx of lower-class immigrants into the metropolitan areas and the centers of industry accentuated the contrasts between the rural and urban cultural environments...such cumulations of territorial and cultural cleavages in the early phases of democratization can be documented for country after country” (p.12).

Urban/rural cleavages were primarily the result of the conflicting economic interests of new industry and established agriculture but were also magnified by cultural differences between small towns and cities. Lipset and Rokkan believed that in most cases urban/rural cleavages would be overtaken by class based politics with continued industrialization and increasing public education. Partly because of its early industrialization and partly due to its political structure, they note that urban/rural conflict has been “much less marked in Great Britain than on the continent” (p. 19). Perhaps because of the British influence, urban/rural conflict has received relatively less attention in the English-speaking world than in other parts of the world. With respect to English-speaking democracies, an urban/rural cleavage has been cited in several studies of elections in Australia (Brown et al. 2006; Charnock 1996; Kapferer 1990; Duncan & Epps 1992), but there is little research that focuses specifically on the urban/rural cleavage in Canada or the United States.

Belying the lack of recent attention is a history of rural-based political movements in both Canada and the United States which have generally been populist in nature. Both Canadian and American rural populism of the nineteenth and early twentieth century have usually been closely aligned with Protestantism, and often strongly influenced by evangelical Protestantism (Creech 2006). According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967), in the American case more specifically,

urban/rural cleavages “were typically cultural and religious, and the Whigs, the Democrats and the Republicans centred on contrasting conceptions of public morality and pitted Puritans and other Protestants against Deists, Freemasons, and immigrant Catholics and Jews” (p. 12). The traditional influence of Protestantism is very clearly seen in politics today, with the close alignment of the religious right with the Republican Party and also with the strong Protestant base that the Conservative Party of Canada inherited from the Reform/Alliance. Greenburg, Walker and Greener (2005) find rural America “at once, the most economically populist part of the country in 2004 and also the most culturally conservative” (p. 1). Recognizing this, in recent years Republicans “have openly courted the vote of religious fundamentalists” (Francia and Baumgartner 2005: 356).

Their religiosity is mixed with an emphasis on self reliance that has long been noted as a characteristic of rural culture in the United States as well as Canada. Rural residents are more likely to own property and to be self employed, factors which Gimpel & Karnes (2006) believe to be sources of contemporary Republican support among rural residents. This emphasis on self reliance and independence meshes well with the economic policies of the Republicans and the Conservatives, with their emphasis on small government and lack of government regulation and interference. In fact, the ideology that animates morally conservative politics in North America freely mixes the moral and economic. In the ideology of moral conservatism, free market economics are a moral imperative. This message is the same today as it was nearly thirty years ago when Jerry Falwell (1980), one of the most prominent evangelists of this ideology wrote:

Welfarism has grown because Americans have forgotten how to tithe and give offerings. Until the early days of this century, it was widely recognized that churches and other private institutions carried the primary responsibility, not merely for education, but also for health care and charity. The way to defeat welfarism in America is for those who wish to see God's law restored to our country to tithe fully to organizations that will remove from government those tasks that are more properly addressed by religious and private organizations...The free-enterprise system is clearly outlined in the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. Jesus Christ made it clear that the work ethic was a part of His plan for man. Ownership of property is biblical. Competition in business is biblical. Ambitious and successful business management is clearly outlined as a part of God's plan for His people (p. 12-3).

This suggests that the common economic positions of many conservative voters--small government and lack of economic regulation--may well be based on moral imperatives as much as on a tradition of self reliance, although this ideology obviously also plays into the tradition of self reliance. This is all the more

interesting when one considers that in the both the United States and Canada, much of the rural economic populism of the first half of the Twentieth Century was decidedly leftist and radical (Knoke and Henry 1977; Lipset 1950). Despite many Canadian and American farmers' continued reliance on subsidies and market regulation, there has been a shift toward free market economic thinking.

### **2.3 Urban/Rural Politics in the United States**

In a study of the history of rural political behaviour in the United States, Knoke & Henry (1977) describe rural political behaviour as alternating among "agrarian radicalism, rural conservatism, and mass apathy" (p.52). They conclude that conservatism best characterizes the rural population and that "agrarian apathy and agrarian radicalism are no longer valid characterizations" (p. 61). As early as the 1970's they had also identified a "longstanding" urban/rural divide between the Democratic and Republican parties:

This traditional rural conservatism has provided the mainstay of the Republican party. For more than half a century, rural and small town America has been Republican in party support and voting behavior, while urban and especially metropolitan communities have generally been Democratic...As well as continued preference for the Republican party, contemporary rural residents maintain traditionally conservative stances on a variety of political social issues. (p. 54).

They find the rural population, especially farmers, to be much more conservative than metropolitan populations. Like others at the time, Knoke and Henry believed the future trend would see political differences between the urban and rural populations diminish as the "[e]xposure of rural residents to mass media and the interchange of populations between geographic areas imply a gradual homogenization of social, cultural, and political values" (p. 51). The "wellsprings" of rural political movements had always been fed by the tensions between the economic and social conditions of rural areas and the industrialization and urbanization of the nation as a whole.

Despite predictions of homogenization, contemporary rural areas continue to be affected by social and economic change—often adversely—which has led commentators such as Frank (2004) to search for answers to the question of what happened to the "radicalism" that once characterized rural politics. How has it been replaced by conservatism? The answer again probably lies in the structure of small communities. Lipset and Rokkan identify two criteria of political alignment: in one, there is "commitment to the locality and its dominant culture" while in the other there is "commitment to a class and its collective interests" (p. 13). The latter position may put one at odds with members of the local community, especially prominent members who may be of a higher class,



meaning that a greater degree of *gemeinschaft* works against such a position. This partially explains the greater pressure to conform in smaller communities, which has implications for vote choice. Frank's answer, as was discussed in the introduction, is that the anger has been largely channelled into the "backlash" mentality which has been used effectively as a motivator by the Republicans. It seems to have worked. A election analysis in a newspaper breaks it down:

About 22 percent of voters cited moral values as their top issue, according to surveys taken at the polls. Rural voters drove that trend and, many analysts argue, the margin of victory if the initial surveys are correct. Kerry beat Bush in cities of more than 50,000 people by 9 percentage points, a victory among 30 percent of the electorate. In suburbs, worth almost 46 percent of the vote, Bush won by 5 points. In small towns and rural areas accounting for about 25 percent of the turnout, Bush won by 15 percentage points. Of rural voters, 27 percent said in surveys that moral values was their top issue, compared with 22 percent in suburbs and 17 percent in cities (Reiss 2004).

This is in agreement with Francia and Baumgartner's (2005) aggregate level analysis, which finds that even when controlling for standard demographic factors, "as the percentage of the county's rural population increases so does the percentage of the vote for George W. Bush" (p.354). Their findings lead them to claim "our results reveal deep divisions between rural and urban residents" (p. 362). Greenburg, Walker and Greener (2005) declare that Bush's 2004 election victory can be attributed "not only to red states growing redder, but also to rural voters in blue states voting differently than voters in the cities and suburbs" (p. 7). McKee's (2007) individual level research also confirms that the "conventional wisdom that rural voters are more likely to be so-called values voters is true and this translates into greater Republican support" (p. 21). The findings indicate that rural voters are significantly more likely to vote Republican even after controlling for demographic and social characteristics.

Research on why rural voters were more likely to vote for Bush in 2004 points to moral issues. McKee found moral traditionalism to be a strong predictor of voting for Bush. Francia and Baumgartner (2005) performed a more specific analysis of the reasons rural voters opted for Bush, finding that "the issue of gay marriage was especially significant among rural voters" (p. 362).

## **2.4 Urban/Rural Politics in Canada**

Consistent with the view that the urban/rural cleavage would be most visible in newly emerging nations, there is a history of rural based political movements in Canada. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) note, "[t]he continual expansion of Canada and the domination of certain regions by agriculture has

accentuated sectional conflicts of East and West based on urban-financial versus rural-agricultural conflicts rather than from class struggle between industrialists and workers" (p. 79-80). As industrialization and westward expansion proceeded more slowly in Canada compared to the United States, the territorial conflict took precedence over class conflict early on; however, by the mid twentieth century further industrialization and the rise of public education had paved the way for greater class consciousness to assert itself in the political arena.

The New Democratic Party (NDP), the party that best represents working class interests today, got its start in that early West/rural/agricultural versus East/urban/financial cleavage (Lipset 1950). The NDP was formed in 1961 when the The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a largely agrarian based political movement with populist tendencies, entered into a coalition with the Canadian Labour Congress. Since then, the NDP has steered a course more aligned with labour than agrarian interests.

Until the late 1970s, rural populism in Western Canada found its home in the Social Credit party. With the demise of Social Credit, a void existed for several years which was later filled by the Reform Party. Cutler and Jenkins (2002), in probably the most direct study of the Canadian urban/rural divide, note that since the emergence of the Reform/Alliance Party, a "good deal of anecdotal attention" has been paid to a possible urban/rural divide which characterizes

rural English speaking Canadians as resentful of the affluence of the big cities, feeling that their interests (especially agricultural interests) are ignored, sceptical of or hostile to Quebec's demands for greater powers, wanting a reduction in the number of immigrants accepted into Canada, less willing to accept the claims of Aboriginal people, at odds with the majority view on issues such as gun registration, and morally conservative (p 367-8).

Although there is a slowly growing awareness of an urban/rural cleavage in Canada, there are conflicting views about its importance and source. Thomas (2001) discusses "an important and growing cleavage between Canada's urban centres and their more homogeneous rural, small-town and edge-city population," which he contends is "driven by immigration and the increasing heterogeneity of Canada's urban centres relative to its more homogeneous rural, small-town and edge-city population" (p. 431-2). That the urban/rural cleavage is driven by immigration and the ethnic diversity of Canada's largest cities can only be considered an assumption, because Thomas does not directly test this assertion; he only shows that Canada's three largest cities are much more ethnically diverse and the destination for far more immigrants than the rest of Canada.

Cutler and Jenkins's individual level analysis found no difference between urban and rural attitudes toward Québec, race, and immigrants. They did find urban/rural differences on the question of whether "society would be better off if women stayed at home," on the issue of "homosexual marriage," and on feelings

toward homosexuals. In each case, rural and small town residents were more socially conservative than their urban counterparts. They conclude that an urban/rural divide exists on the basis of "moral traditionalism" and that "[f]eelings about homosexuals clearly define the rural-urban cleavage" (p.378).

Not long after Cutler and Jenkins's research appeared, the Reform/Alliance (which they speculated had exposed an urban/rural divide) was merged with the Progressive Conservatives. With the creation of the "new" Conservative Party, the urban/rural cleavage became more apparent in the 2004 and 2006 Federal Elections. Public and scholarly debate continued sporadically on the urban/rural issue, with the national media picking up on the urban/rural divide in their coverage of the election results (e.g., CBC 2006; The Globe and Mail 2006; Toronto Star 2006). During the Liberal Leadership campaign, Michael Ignatieff stated: "Indeed, I would go further and say that in 2006, the most significant national unity challenge facing our country is no longer the threat of separation. It is the growing divide between rural and urban Canada" (Hamilton 2006). The idea that regional conflicts mask an urban/rural divide is echoed in the *National Post*:

the real quarrel of the regionalists, and of the separatists within them, isn't with the federal government so much as with the modern, urbanized world. The federal government they loathe promotes policies that consistently reflect the preferences of the urban majority: socially in favour of abortion rights, gay rights, and gun control; economically in favour of immigration and environmental policies that remove vast tracts of land to protect endangered species or create protected parkland. Regionalists are disproportionately rural folk who fear or resent the social and economic changes swirling around them (Solomon 2003).

An editorial in the *Toronto Star* (2006), however, warns against reading too much into the apparent urban/rural divide, claiming that "[g]oing by Statistics Canada's list of characteristics that influence what values we think are important, how we voted had far more to do with our income or being born in Canada, as opposed to having a rural or urban identity." This reflects the view of Thomas (2001) that it is demographic differences, particularly the larger number of immigrants and visible minorities in urban areas, that account for the apparent urban/rural divide. It is unlikely that the *Toronto Star* writers are familiar with Cutler and Jenkins's (2002) findings about the greater moral traditionalism of rural Canadians. More recently Michael Adams (2008) argues in the *Globe and Mail* that "Canadian political scientists appear to have largely neglected the rural/urban/suburban continuum, despite the relevance of the issues." He calls the urban/rural "divergence" a

narrative that has been unfolding in this country for decades...As in the United States, where Democratic districts are overwhelmingly urban and

Republican ones overwhelmingly rural, the urban-rural dimension in Canada is overtaking region as a predictor of how people will cast their votes.

Adams attributes the political divergence between urban and rural Canadians to differences in their values and outlook that are reminiscent of Merton's (1968) cosmopolitan/local dichotomy:

urban Canadians are more likely to report a sense of global citizenship and feelings of connectedness with people and events in other countries. By contrast, rural Canadians tend to identify more strongly with their own regions.

Urban Canadians, perhaps because of the cultural diversity they are exposed to and perhaps because of their own greater likelihood of residential mobility, are more outward looking and accepting of diversity, and less focused on their immediate community. Rural Canadians are more attuned to their local communities. To recall some of the urban/rural differences discussed earlier, Adams also describes urban Canadians as more open to change, both social and technological. To rural Canadians, change is seen as a threat, and they are less likely to embrace new technologies.

In response to Adams, Tom Flanagan, a political scientist and well-known Conservative, agrees there is an urban/rural divide, but returns to the conventional, and perhaps ahistorical, argument that the divide can be explained by regional and demographic variables. This echoes Thomas (2001). The Liberals dominate in large cities like Vancouver and Toronto "not because they are urban areas, but because they are heavily populated by ethnic groups who are Liberal core supporters" (Flanagan 2008). Conservative strength only applies to rural agricultural areas in Ontario and the West, not Québec or the Atlantic provinces. Along with region, Flanagan considers the other more well established cleavages (e.g., gender, linguistic, and religion) to be more important. Adams is accused of stereotyping rural Canadians as "inbred rural hayseeds." Nevertheless, it seems Flanagan is the one making assumptions and adhering to the conventional wisdom as neither he nor Thomas (2001) have brought forth original empirical research in support of their claims while Adams, as well as Cutler and Jenkins (2002), have. It would seem that there are important differences between urban and rural Canadians that are likely to be manifested in politics.

## **2.5 Canadian and American Culture**

Another question is whether the Canadian political landscape is being shaped by the forces of the backlash movement and culture war that have received so much attention in the United States. The general view here is that there are

important differences between Canada and the United States and Canadian and American cultures, but the similarities are much more striking. On the surface, the United States is much more populous, older, and more powerful politically and economically on the world stage than Canada. However, culturally, any differences between English Canadians and Americans are minor. There are surely regional differences within each country, and although the local cultures within each country often have long histories, ultimately they are secondary to a mainstream North American culture. English speaking North Americans may have different regional accents but nearly everyone is attuned to the same mainstream culture. The perceived differences between Canada and the United States, or even between local subcultures, might be explained as the narcissism of minor differences. The smallest differences stand out only because of the generally shared culture: everyone is a part of the same cultural discourse. No less of an observer than Alexis de Toqueville noted that the British population in Canada is “identical with that of the United States” (1840, Volume 1: 448).

The starting point for comparisons of the values and culture of Canadians and Americans is often Seymour Martin Lipset's thesis that the American Revolution has led to lasting differences in the core values of Canadian and American culture. Lipset (1990a) argues that Canada and the United States “differ in their basic organizing principles...These fundamental distinctions stem in large part from the American Revolution and the diverse social and environmental ecologies flowing from the division of British North America” (p. 267). Because the United States was founded in revolution, Americans are more individualistic, anti-statist and equalitarian. Canada, as a counterrevolutionary nation influenced by the influx of United Empire Loyalists after the American Revolution, has remained loyal to the British crown, which has led Canadians and their institutions to be more statist, elitist, collectivist and accepting of traditional authorities. Lipset's historical analysis has been challenged, primarily by Baer et al. (2001; 1993; 1990a; 1990b), whose empirical analyses show few differences between English Canadians and Americans on a range of political and cultural values. Furthermore, they claim that on some occasions where there are differences between the two nations, they are opposite of what Lipset initially proposed.

Although his overall argument is that Americans and Canadians are different, Lipset (1990a) recognizes the similarities between Canadians and Americans both present and historical, noting that “[g]iven the structural similarities between the two North American societies and the fact that they differ in comparable ways from Britain and much of Europe, there is no reason to anticipate large differences” (p. 270-71). Baer et al. (1990b) agree and go further, suggesting that “within-country variations are almost certainly greater than the variations between nations” (p.276). From national level survey data, Baer et al. (1993) conclude that there are essentially three regional cultures in North America: “a relatively left-liberal Quebec, a more conservative southern United

States and a comparatively moderate sector that largely encompasses the remainder of the two countries" (p. 13-14).

Baer et al's studies focus primarily on political values and attitudes about class and inequality, state intervention in the economy, labour, gender, crime and punishment, and others that Lipset has identified in his work. For the most part, these are essentially the materialist parameters and issues that historically defined left and right in North America. In a more post-materialist vein, Adams (2004) suggests that Canadians and Americans are diverging in certain respects. Interestingly, Adams finds Americans becoming more conformist and deferential to traditional authority and Canadians becoming less so (p. 52), the complete opposite of Lipset's original thesis. This speaks to a larger question which has recently dominated the minds of Canadians: are Canadian and American values and cultures converging or diverging? The United States is so powerful and its media so dominant that a recurring theme in Canada is the loss of Canadian culture in the face of American hegemony. It is often stated that Canadians define themselves by what they are not, especially that they are not American. This is thought to reflect the anxiousness Canadians feel toward the dominance of American culture. Special agencies on behalf of the federal government mandate quotas of Canadian content in television and radio in efforts to maintain a distinct Canadian identity.

Nevitte (1996) does not necessarily see convergence or divergence, but notes that with respect to post-materialism, "Canadian and American values seem to be shifting more or less in tandem" (294). In terms of secularization and morality, he finds Canada more progressive than the United States (which is clearly an outlier among Western nations in this respect) but overall, Canada and the United States, although clearly different from each other, stand apart from Western European countries. While the United States theoretically should be leading the way, in Adams's (2004) view, many of the original promises and ideals of the American Revolution have been subverted in a climate of fear and insecurity. Canada, like Western Europe more generally, continues to more fully realize the ideals of modernity and the enlightenment as its values shift in a post-materialist direction. Adams's contention that Canada is more liberal and post-materialist than the United States echoes Nevitte's findings and is widely accepted as it fits with the predominant ideology of tolerance and multiculturalism in Canada. Lipset somewhat concedes that social changes have led to this reversal:

The historical record suggests that Canadians were more conservative morally than Americans, but that shifts, particularly in the religious ethos of the denominations that predominate in Canada...have made Canadians more liberal than their neighbors to the south...Americans are more moralistic with respect to views about marriage, sex, and pornography. However, Canadians are more inclined to advocate severe punishments for law violators and to support restrictions on handgun ownership and smoking in public places" (1990a, p. 268-9).

It is widely accepted that both now and in the past there has been a stronger vein of puritanism, theological diversity and extremism running through the religious blood of the United States. This is not lost upon Lipset, who correctly sees the importance of the difference in the organization of religion between Canada and the United States. Lipset believed Canadians to be more “moralistic” in the sense of an entrenched authoritarian moral code set out by a powerful church. Canadian religious institutions have historically been large hierarchical organizations—the Catholic, Anglican, and United Churches—that have had some level of state support adding to their legitimacy and power. This is evidenced by, for example, the many “blue laws” and “Sunday observance regulations” that have remained in force much longer in Canada than the United States (Lipset 1968: 65). By contrast, American Catholicism is weak and Protestant sects have flourished and multiplied in the United States rather than uniting under one authority (the United Church) as they did in Canada. Generally there are no overarching church authorities in the United States; this has allowed a greater degree of theological freedom, resulting in a wide spectrum Protestantism ranging from the ultra-liberal to the ultra-conservative or fundamentalist. Lipset continues:

[t]he strength of Protestant evangelical, sectarian, and fundamentalist religion south of the border means that traditional values related to sex, family, and morality in general are stronger [in the United States] than in Canada...Americans are more likely than Canadians to believe in God, to attend church regularly, and to adhere to evangelical and moralistic beliefs (1990b: 84).

Although fundamentalist and evangelical protestantism are significant entities in Canada, as a political force they are historically not as strong in Canada as they are in the United States; however, the new Conservative Party of Canada brings with it Reform/Alliance roots and their strong evangelical Protestant base, possibly exacerbating the existing religious cleavage in Canada in which Catholics, Jews, and other religions overwhelmingly support the Liberals. It is an empirical question whether the rising importance of issues such as gay marriage will cause political-religious realignment along orthodox/liberal lines in Canadian politics like that seen in the United States.

## **2.6 The Culture War**

As the trend in wider society continues in the direction of post-materialist values, the breaking of social barriers, increasing tolerance of alternative lifestyles, and the erosion of traditional ways of life, the backlash has grown. The appeal to “common sense” and “family values” of an imagined simpler time characterizes this reactionary movement, which is seen as a defense mechanism in the face of rapid social change. The struggle between the forces of modernization

and the resulting backlash is now described as a “culture war” which has had a polarizing effect on a range of social views, particularly in the United States. As was discussed in the introduction, the culture war is associated with a wider backlash mentality that has been a prime motivator of right wing ideology in North America for more than forty years.

This latest phase of the backlash was popularized and specifically named the “culture war” by Hunter (1991), who states that “[f]or the practical purposes of naming the antagonists in the culture war, then, we can label those on one side cultural conservatives, or moral traditionalists, and those on the other side liberals or cultural progressives” (p. 46). Hunter's culture war thesis has been the subject of heated debates in sociology (e.g., Evans and Nunn 2005; Williams 1997; Evans 1997; DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996; Evans 2003; Davis and Robinson 1996; Olson and Carroll 1992; McConkey 2001; Hoffmann and Miller 1998; Baker 2005) and political science (e.g., Fiorina 2006; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Knuckey 2005; Ansolabehere et al. 2005; Hillygus and Shields 2005; Sabato 2002), as well as in books aimed at a more general audience (e.g., Frank 2004; White 2003; Himmelfarb 1999).

Although Hunter popularized the term “culture war” and brought its study into the limelight, Evans and Nunn (2005) contend the progenitor of contemporary studies of the culture war was Wuthnow's (1988) *The Restructuring of American Religion*. From this book, Hunter drew the basis of his thesis, namely, that religious conflict had shifted from between religious traditions to within religious traditions. By the 1980s, Catholics, Jews and Protestants who had previously been in conflict now found themselves in unlikely alliances as the conflict “was now between religious conservatives and religious liberals within each of these traditions” (Evans and Nunn 2005: 2). From this shift we have seen the emergence of the “religious right,” described as a “coalition of fundamentalist and evangelical Protestants with conservative Catholics and even Orthodox Jews” (Ibid. 3). Wuthnow traces the origins of this sea-change in the structure of American religion to the postwar expansion and increase in accessibility to higher education, as higher education is the “primary determinant” of liberalism, both religious and political. The stage may have been set for the unlikely alliance of religions even earlier. Hofstadter (1964) notes that McCarthyism “abruptly dropped the old right-wing appeal to anti-Semitism” (p. 69) and “rigid Protestants of a type once intensely anti-Catholic” united “with Catholics of similar militancy in a grand ecumenical zeal against communism and in what they take to be a joint defense of Christian civilization” (p. 74).

Hunter goes further than Wuthnow, arguing the value differences between the two sides of the culture war are not relegated to theology but stem from different worldviews. At the heart of the culture war lies the problem of value pluralism. The orthodox/traditional side of the culture war prefers a morality rooted in an immutable, external authority—in other words in some concrete text such as the bible or in the absolute power of God. This is not possible in the



modern age, as any one particular system of values will be incommensurable with other systems of values. The basis of one group's values is simply not legitimate to another group and thus holds no force for them. As a prominent theorist dealing with the problem of value pluralism, Weber (1922) feared that since the bases for the legitimation of values are incommensurable and non-compromisable, consensus at a societal level would not be possible. As the subtitle (*The Struggle to Define America*) of Hunter's (1991) book suggests, the culture war is ultimately a battle over social consensus in the public sphere (Evans and Nunn 2005: 6).

Hofstadter (1965) too notes the irreconcilable nature of this paranoid style, since it is "mobilized into action chiefly by social conflicts that involve ultimate schemes of values and that bring fundamental fears and hatreds, rather than negotiable interests, into political action" (p. 39). Such irreconcilable differences are sure to result in polarization on specific issues. Homosexuality is a contemporary example of an issue that is clearly motivated by fear and appears to be irreconcilable within the framework of liberal society. Some believe homosexuality is wrong, and they are completely free to believe that; however, others are completely free under the law to be homosexual and to be free of persecution because of their homosexuality.

Interestingly, Hunter seems to neglect the lineage of the current battle between orthodoxy and progressivism to the countercultural movements of the 1960's. Other commentators suggest this is where the current values rift began. White (2003) argues that "[t]he sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s has resulted in a profound rethinking of our values, and the echoes from that era continue to be heard in the political arena" (p. 13). Others trace the origins of the culture war to the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 (Adams 2005). If anything, the social changes of the 1960s accelerated the pace of social change in subsequent decades as sexual and racial barriers were broken down. The counterculture of that era is commonly identified as the forerunner of contemporary moral decline. This is where the notion of the reactionary "backlash" culture connects to the culture war. The orthodox side of the culture war has essentially "hitched" itself to backlash anger, to the point that in exit polls for the 2004 election, 22 percent of voters considered "moral values" the most important issue, just barely higher than economy/jobs (20 percent) and terrorism (19 percent) (Hillygus and Shields 2005). Adams (2005) believes "the political climate in America is a reaction to the social change Americans sense is afoot...Our data suggest that the 'moral decline' of which religious conservatives speak with such alarm may well exist" (p. 11).

## 2.7 The Politics of the Culture War

Given the strong influence of American media and politics in Canada, we should consider the possibility that the moral divide believed to be affecting

American politics is at play in Canada. This question has not been seriously considered in Canada, but whispers of the possibility have crossed the minds of some since the 2004 and 2006 Federal elections. An editorial in the *Toronto Star* clearly rejects the possibility of the culture war having an effect in the 2006 election:

The thinking here is that election issues with a moral dimension provided the Tories with their strong showing in rural ridings while scaring urban voters into backing the "kinder and gentler" Liberals. Not only is this too easy an explanation by half, it's rank speculation...Liberal success in the cities and the Tory victory in the countryside wasn't the result of a U.S.-style contest of pitchforks versus pinstripes. (Toronto Star 2006).

Similar to Thomas (2001) and Flanagan (2008), the editorial goes on to explain the perceived urban/rural divide as a result of the greater proportion of immigrants in cities, who have a distinct tendency to vote Liberal. On the other hand, in their analysis of the 2004 election Gidengil et al. (2006) had earlier raised the possibility of a culture war style values divide:

The NDP did best among secular voters who take liberal positions on issues relating to sexual mores and lifestyles, while the Conservatives fared best with moral traditionalists. Given the importance of Christian fundamentalism in Conservative voting, the 2004 election could mark, not the return of brokerage politics but a foreshadowing of the cultural divisions that are appearing in US elections (p. 21-2).

Their empirical model found socially conservative voters approximately 26 and 28 percent more likely to vote Conservative than Liberal or NDP respectively and Christian Fundamentalists 22 and 24 percent more likely to vote Conservative than Liberal or NDP respectively. As in the United States, the issue of gay marriage received a great deal of attention in the 2004 and 2006 Canadian Federal elections, with Conservative Leader Stephen Harper promising a "free vote" on the issue if elected. The prominence of this issue likely played a part in attracting the religious vote to the Conservatives. The gun control issue was also important at the time, as the Conservative election campaign attacked the Liberals for the handling of the gun registry, which was widely unpopular in rural areas. Party positions on these two issues in particular likely played a strong role in differentiating the parties, making the Conservatives the clear choice for socially conservative voters and painting the Liberals, NDP, and others as socially liberal.

In the United States, moral and social issues like these have become possibly *the* major point of differentiation between Republicans and Democrats. Democratic presidential candidates since Bill Clinton have espoused an economic platform almost indistinguishable from that of Republicans, effectively

neutralizing party differences on economic issues (Kaufmann 2002: 289). In recent elections the differences between the parties are perceived to be based on their positions on moral and social issues such as gay marriage, abortion, gun control, or the place of religion in schools. Erikson (2001) notes that “without much notice, a new life-style division has developed” in electoral politics (p. 48). Famously, exit polls from the 2004 Presidential election showed “moral issues” to be rated the most important issue by voters. This has led some commentators to suggest that the progressive versus traditional cleavage may be as important as race, gender, education and income (Knuckey 2005; Frank 2004; White 2003; Sabato 2002).

This is precisely what the culture war thesis predicts; namely, that moral issues have become the most important determinant of vote choice. Many scholars disagree, however, claiming that economic issues and interests are still most important to voters (Fiorina 2006; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Hillygus and Shields 2005; Ansolabehere et al. 2005). Tied to the importance of moral issues is the question of whether the United States is polarized by these issues. The most dominant metaphor of polarization is the red state/blue state divide, but there is also the question of whether the American population as a whole is polarized. In summary, with respect to the culture war's effect on American politics, empirical research has focused on three main questions. First, are voters polarized over moral issues? Second, are moral issues more salient to voters than economic issues? And finally, does the possible polarization of voters manifest itself geographically in the red state/blue state divide?

According to Fiorina's widely influential book “Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America” (2006), in which he presents statistics from a multitude of sources, all the answers are “no.” Fiorina makes several claims. First, the electorate as a whole is not only *not* polarized, but more often than not “ambivalent” on the culture war's main issues. In a word, most Americans are moderate. Second, it only appears that there has been a general polarization because elites have become polarized on moral issues:

By assumption voter positions have not changed, nor has their behavior: each voter supports the candidate closer to his or her (unchanged) position. The observed change in the candidates' support simply reflects the fact that the candidates have separated on the moral dimension” (p. 177).

Fiorina calls this “partisan sorting” and claims that “for two decades liberals and conservatives increasingly have been finding their way into the ‘correct’ parties (p. x). Third, demographic cleavages such as age, gender and religious affiliation have diminished while religious divisions have increased. However, these have not become more important than traditional economic divisions to voting behaviour. Furthermore, enhanced religious divisions do not equate to divisions

within the electorate:

the common observation that religiosity now is more closely related to party identification may reflect a repositioning of the parties rather than a change in voter attitudes. The Republican Party has become closely allied with white evangelicals, while the Democratic Party has become more assertively secular (p. 181).

Finally, the similarities between red states and blue states are more apparent than the differences, and if anything, red states and blue states are *converging* on culture war issues.

Several other studies have investigated the polarization and moral issues questions. In an attempt to refute the culture war thesis, Ansolabehere et al. (2005) examine opinion survey data over the past thirty years. Their method groups individual opinions on several economic issues on the one hand, and several moral issues on the other, to form scales representing moral and economic issues. They interpret their findings to suggest that on a nationwide basis, voters are not polarized on moral issues, noting that most are moderates. Further tests indicate that economic issues are still a greater predictor of partisanship, although they concede that moral issues have increased in importance over the past thirty years.

Ansolabehere et al. also test the red state/blue state hypothesis. They find that, on average, there are marginal yet statistically significant differences on moral issues between the red states and the blue states, with blue states slightly more liberal on moral issues than red states. Of more interest to them, however, is their finding, similar to Fiorina's, that there has been convergence between the red and blue states on these issues over the past thirty years, rather than the divergence suggested by the culture war thesis. Indeed, superseding the red and blue maps of the 2000 and 2004 elections are new maps showing a "Purple America" (Vanderbei 2004).

The finding of convergence on moral issues and the predominantly purple county by county maps suggest that the red state/blue state analysis is oversimplified. Demerath (2005) compares America's culture war to "real" culture wars in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Israel, and India, and concludes that the United States is not polarized and that the so-called culture war in the United States is a gross exaggeration. Hillygus and Shields's (2005) analysis using a post-election survey concludes that moral values had little effect on vote choice in the 2004 election except in the American South, where abortion and gay marriage had a minimal effect. Klinkner and Hapanowicz (2005) also agree with Fiorina that there is no polarization; however, their empirical analysis leads them to admit that "the 2004 election saw slightly more polarization than in 2000" (p. 1).

All of the above researchers proceeded with the intention of showing that the United States is not polarized and that media attention to moral issues and the

red state/blue state divide is sensationalism. Despite their intentions to refute the culture war thesis, all conceded that at least some of their findings indicated agreement with some aspects of the culture war thesis. The popularity of the red state/blue state analysis as the basis for polarization is clearly related to the structure of the Electoral College, where states are the geographic units and Electoral College votes are allotted on a “winner take all” basis.<sup>9</sup> It is an oversimplification because regardless of whether the vote is very close or a landslide, the state is considered either “red” (if the Republican candidate wins the popular vote) or “blue” (if the Democrat wins). Nevertheless, some of the findings (e.g., Ansolabehere et al. 2005, Hillygus and Shields 2005) lend empirical support to the notion that there are important red state/blue state differences. These differences, however, may not be due to the states themselves, but rather to certain characteristics of the states. For example, as the famous “Purple America” map demonstrates, the red state/blue state divide very likely masks an urban/rural divide.

While the red state/blue state divide can be seen both as a consequence of the structure of the Electoral College and as something played up by a mass media in need of a narrative of conflict with easily identifiable antagonists, polarization—both its existence and how one explains its existence—is open to question. Some empirical studies do find support for polarization. For example, Abromowitz and Saunders (2005) find that

there is a growing political divide in the United States between religious and secular voters...The growing political divide in the United States between religious and secular voters...reflects fundamental changes in American society and politics that have been developing for decades and are likely to continue for the foreseeable future (p. 19).

Fiorina must go to great lengths to argue against polarization, claiming that the polarization of the United States is a “myth” or more precisely, that the appearance of political polarization on cultural issues is an illusion:

There is little evidence that Americans' ideological or *policy* positions are more polarized today than they were two or three decades ago, although their *choices* often seem to be. The explanation is that the political figures Americans evaluate are more polarized. A polarized political class makes the citizenry appear polarized, but it is largely that—an appearance (p. 9).

While agreeing that it is the politically engaged (what he calls the “20 percent True Believers”) that frame the culture war, Adams (2005) comes to a slightly

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<sup>9</sup> The Electoral College allots votes to each of the fifty states plus the District of Columbia. All states except Maine and Nebraska award their Electoral College votes on a “winner take all” basis.

different conclusion: the group in ascendance is the politically disengaged. This may explain how Fiorina comes to the conclusion Americans are “ambivalent” and “as moderate as ever.” The important point here is that Fiorina himself finds that the most politically engaged Americans are indeed more polarized than ever. Fiorina only looks for polarization on a nationwide basis; perhaps polarization would be more evident if we look within particular groups.

If there is increasing polarization among elites, then it is interesting that a lot of the indignation of the backlash is directed at cultural and political elites, mainly the ones on the “progressive” side of the culture war. It could be argued that, in their presentation of themselves on a matrix of particular cultural and policy issues, political elites do so as “identity markers” to a voting public that increasingly votes based on their identification with the candidate. Electoral politics being a game with discrete winners and losers makes politicians ultimately pragmatic. Therefore, they would not adopt these caricatured polar positions unless they believed that it helped them win elections. Well known pollster John Zogby writes that

voters ultimately vote for the candidate or party with whom they most closely identify. That normally means supporting the candidate whose message most truly represents what the voters believe. (White 2003: x).

The tendency of voters to vote for the candidate perceived to be “most like themselves” was especially strong in the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections. In 2004, one poll found that 57 percent would rather have a beer with George W. Bush (who doesn't drink) than John Kerry, while another poll found 56 percent of voters thought Bush came off as a “real person” compared to only 38 percent for Kerry (Benedetto 2004). Much of Bush's appeal came from his perceived “authenticity” and “character” as a “regular guy” who could relate to Middle America and its values. This was despite his privileged family background and Yale education. Greenburg, Walker and Greener (2005) find this appeal to be especially strong in rural areas:

Focus groups, and other research, clearly revealed that rural voters simply felt an affinity for George Bush. That an upper class Bostonian encountered difficulty in connecting at the human level with every day, largely more conservative, rural voters is not surprising (p. 4).

Rep. Mike McIntyre, a congressman from North Carolina notes that rural voters consider bedrock values first. Politicians need to be “credible” by sharing the same characteristics and values as rural voters, “You've got to be genuine, people see that in a heartbeat” (Reiss 2004).

If it is true, as Adams argues, that the single largest political group in the United States is made up of the politically disengaged, then it is possible the polarization of political elites is meant to appeal to the true believers. However, it

is also widely believed that Republicans used “moral issues” to “get out the vote” among social conservatives. The most well-known example of this is the gay marriage bans that were on the ballot in eleven states in the 2004 election. These were clearly an attempt to mobilize socially conservative voters who may be politically disengaged in general, but highly motivated by this single issue. This would suggest that some latent polarization may exist in the general population or that Republicans were able to tap some backlash anger with this issue. The politicians who have adopted these extreme positions on specific moral issues are thus not only trying to motivate voters with hot button issues, but also to show that they share the values and characteristics of those who believe they are regular Middle Americans.

## 2.8 Summary and Hypotheses

In her book about the culture war, Himmelfarb (1999) begins by quoting Adam Smith's description of the two systems of morality that characterize “civilized” societies: the “strict or austere” morality of the “common people and the “loose” or “liberal” morality of the “esteemed,” the “people of fashion” (p. 4). In today's world, many would probably associate highly educated urban professionals with “people of fashion” and see small town and rural “folk” as the “common people.” Although the book does not specifically discuss an urban/rural divide, the cover of another book about the culture war (White 2003) shows a subdued and slightly blurred but tranquil lone barn in a field on one half and a colourful and fragmented scene of frenetic city life on the other half. The associations between urban/rural and the progressive and orthodox poles of the culture war are often implied but rarely explored in any detail. A common thread in both urban/rural differences and the culture war is the role of education. The association of a higher level of education with urbanism and liberalism aligns with the constellation of factors that intersect with modernity and the traditionalism/progressivism and rural/urban continua (see Table 2.1).

Among observers who discuss urban/rural trends over time, Adams (2008) is one of the few who see the characteristics of urban and rural populations diverging. Schnore (1966) believes convergence of urban and rural culture is overstated and that important differences still exist, at least at the time he wrote. Most others (e.g., Cutler and Jenkins 2002; Knoke and Henry 1977; Lipset and Rokkan 1967) believe urban/rural differences will diminish over time. There are three main reasons why differences are widely expected to disappear: the first is the reach of modern industry and technology, especially communications technology and mass media into rural areas; the second is some combination of residential mobility and immigration; and the third is education. Each of these factors has been discussed earlier; however, education is the one that ties

**TABLE 2.1: Some associations between education/knowledge and the dichotomies discussed in this study.**

<b>increasing education/knowledge---&gt;</b>	
traditional	progressive
conservative	liberal
“common people”	“people of fashion”
rural	urban
local	cosmopolitan
gemeinschaft	gesellschaft
organic solidarity	mechanical solidarity
sacred	secular
communal	associational

urban/rural differences to the culture war. On urban/rural political differences in Canada, Cutler and Jenkins conclude,

The bottom line is that some of the urban-rural cleavage on these questions can be put down to education, while the remainder appears to be something about a non-urban political culture. These two components of an explanation fit together if education is considered as a mechanism of socialization to the dominant, mainstream values of a society...The importance of education for explaining the existing differences suggests that the cleavage may be a legacy of previous political conflict and socialization. When one considers that Canada is likely to become progressively more urban and educated, we might expect a further reduction of the cleavage and a political system less responsive to rural Canada in the future (p. 385).

The most recent studies of urban/rural characteristics all show that rural populations are significantly less educated than urban ones (e.g., McKee 2007; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Cutler and Jenkins 2002).

Since education is clearly associated with liberalism, it is not surprising that studies have found it to be a factor in explaining the relative social conservatism of rural residents. Recall that Wuthnow (1988) considers the liberalizing tendency resulting from increasing accessibility to higher education in the postwar period to be the primary cause of the realignment of American religious conflict from between religions to within religions, that is, from conflict



among Catholics/Protestants/Jews to conflict between the orthodox and liberal wings of each religion. Hunter (1990) picked up on this religious realignment, broadening the argument to all of American society: this is not simply a “war” of religious doctrine, but a “culture war” pitting orthodox/traditionalists versus liberal/progressivists. If education is the great liberalizing force in modern society, and there are differing levels of education in urban and rural areas, then education level may be a conduit by which the culture war should express itself territorially through an urban/rural cleavage.

It should be noted that education levels are rising *in general* (at least as measured by credentials and educational attainment) but the gap in education levels between urban and rural areas remains. The general rise in education levels might explain why some studies, such as Fiorina 2006 and Ansolabehere et al. 2005, found red states and blues states converging on social issues over time. There is no doubt that North American society as a whole has become more liberal in terms of social views. As social conservatives and moral traditionalists feel the water rising around them, moral issues seem all the more urgent and the need for legislative and political (re)action all the more pressing.

Education, however, is only one avenue by which the culture war may be expressed in the urban/rural dimension. Something about the characteristics and structures of urban and rural places themselves leads to an association of urban with liberal/modern and rural with conservative/traditional. Some of these characteristics, diversity/homogeneity for example, may be indicated by demographic variables like race or visible minority status. Others, such as *gesellschaft/gemeinschaft*, are more qualitative and are therefore not easily operationalized statistically. It will have to be assumed that any urban/rural differences remaining after controlling for demographic characteristics will be explained by some combination of the theoretical differences between urban and rural places discussed in the literature review. Insofar as the culture war is manifested in the political sphere, the relationship between urban/rural place of residence and the culture war can be tested using the 2004 Canadian Federal election and the 2004 United States Presidential election.

Based on the findings of this literature review, it is hypothesized that there are important cultural differences between urban and rural populations. Individuals living in small-towns and rural areas will exhibit a greater tendency toward social conservatism. This will be tested by comparing the scores of urban and rural survey respondents on moral traditionalism and the major social issues identified by the culture war thesis: opposition to abortion, opposition to gun control and opposition to gay marriage. It is expected that rural respondents will have higher scores than urban respondents on all of these measures of social conservatism, even after controlling for social and demographic characteristics.

While the generally lower levels of education and the ethnic homogeneity of rural areas will contribute to the social conservatism of individuals living in rural areas, it will not completely explain it. Instead, lower education levels and

ethnic homogeneity are conducive to a rural social milieu that is more socially traditional. Conversely, the greater social differentiation and higher education levels will help explain the greater progressivism of urban populations.

It is expected that a similar pattern of urban/rural differences will be found in both English Canada and the United States since there are great similarities between the cultural values, patterns and the degree and history of urbanization and settlement between the two countries.

The other part of this analysis looks at the history of urban/rural voting. It is hypothesized that the urban/rural divide has grown in recent elections in both Canada and the United States. The growth of this urban/rural gap is expected to coincide with the increased salience of social and moral issues in the political sphere. The social conservatism of George W. Bush in the United States and the new Conservative Party in Canada is seen as a product of the "culture war." Although the culture war is generally assumed to apply to the American context, it is expected that the effects of this cultural divide will be felt in Canadian politics as well. This is reflected in the emergence of more explicit social conservatism on the part of the Reform/Alliance/Conservatives in Canada and Republicans in the United States. Since the culture war is defined as a battle between traditionalists and progressivists, and traditionalism is associated with rural life and progressivism is associated with urban life, the culture war should manifest itself in urban/rural voting differences.

Having established the association between rural-traditional and urban-progressive and having shown an urban/rural gap in voting that is associated with the rise of the culture war, individual vote choice will be examined. It is hypothesized that moral traditionalism and individual attitudes on the seminal issues of the culture war will explain urban/rural voting differences. Rural voters will be more likely than urban voters to vote Republican in the United States and Conservative in Canada when controlling for social and demographic characteristics; however, all else being equal, it is expected that urban/rural differences in voting will be diminished when moral traditionalism and opposition to gun control, abortion and gay marriage are taken into account. If this is the case, it would confirm that the social conservatism of rural voters at least partly explains urban/rural differences in vote choice and would suggest that the urban/rural dichotomy is a principal axis of the culture war.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Data and Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study consists of three major parts using two types of data. Aggregate level data will be used to investigate urban/rural differences over time in U.S. Presidential Elections and Canadian Federal Elections. Individual level data will be used to more closely examine the 2004 Federal Election in Canada and the 2004 Presidential Election in the United States. The first part of the study is mainly descriptive and uses both the aggregate and individual level data to look at differences between the urban and rural populations in the United States and Canada. The second part of the study examines the urban/rural gap in Canadian and American elections since 1920 using aggregate level data. The third part of the study will analyze the 2004 elections in Canada and the United States to test whether the urban/rural divide is the product of social conservatism.

### **3.2 Aggregate Level Analysis**

The primary aim of this portion of the study is to look at urban/rural differences over time in Canada and the United States. The time period examined will be from 1920 to the present. This spans 26 Federal Elections in Canada and 22 Presidential Elections in the United States. In Canada the geographic unit most sensible for our task for which Federal Election data are available is the federal electoral district, which is more commonly known to Canadians as a “riding.” For the United States, detailed records of Presidential Election results are available at the county level. The election data is all available from the public record. Specifically, I compiled the Canadian election results from the Elections Canada website as well as the *History of Federal Ridings since 1867* on the Parliament of Canada website. The U.S. data were compiled from Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections (Leip, 2008).

U.S. counties vary greatly in social composition, population, size, and history as well as from state to state. The boundaries of some counties are essentially arbitrary lines drawn on a map while others have boundaries with historical or geographic significance. Others still, particularly in Virginia, are not necessarily counties, but separate towns and cities that are treated as counties.

Counties in the United States are long established and have been relatively stable for decades. Canadian ridings on the other hand are changed regularly. Ridings, like counties, vary in size and social composition but not so much in population. Indeed, there are population differences; however, approximately every ten years federal electoral districts are redrawn to reflect changes in population. Thus, boundaries are changed and new ridings are added on a regular basis. Each iteration of riding boundaries is known as a "representation order." Although U.S. counties and Canadian ridings are in many ways not comparable, this should not present too much of a problem as counties and ridings, while still the primary units of analysis, are not what we are interested in. Rather, counties and ridings are the geographic units that are being used to construct variables reflecting urban and rural zones, which *are* what we are interested in.

Several alternatives were considered in creating the aggregate level urban/rural variable. The first inclination was to use population density for each county and riding, either to categorize them as urban or rural or for use as a continuous variable. This method was rejected for several reasons. Using population density to construct a categorical variable is problematic because population is usually not evenly distributed within either ridings or counties. Ninety-five percent of a county's population could be concentrated in a single city with the balance of the land area largely deserted. The resulting population density could hypothetically be classed as low or medium and thus not accurately reflect the urban/rural character of the area's population. In the other extreme (as is the case in some states with counties small in area or with towns or small cities classified as counties), the geographic unit could encompass only a single small town of a few square miles, thus yielding a misleadingly high population density.

A second possibility was to use a readily available measure such as the Rural-Urban Continuum Code devised by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA's classification scheme ranges from "0=central counties in metro areas of 1 million or more" to "9=completely rural or less than 2500 urban population, not adjacent to metro area." It was found that the continuum codes could not be reasonably used as a continuous or ordinal variable because the second level of the continuum was not ordered in relation to the other levels. The problematic second level contains "fringe counties in metro areas of 1 million or more." Since the metropolitan statistical areas defined by the U.S. Census Bureau can encompass vast rural areas surrounding cities, the second level of the continuum variable often had more in common with levels five and six on the continuum than it did with levels one, three, or four. The second problem would be in applying the codes to Canadian ridings, whose boundaries are constructed to contain certain populations and population centres. The result is that ridings were generally constructed to include at least one town or city over 2500 people. Therefore, no ridings would occupy the most rural levels on the continuum, which we are interested in for the present study. Otherwise these codes could have been applied to Canadian ridings fairly easily given the

relatively small number of ridings.

In the end a sample strategy of selecting counties or ridings that are decidedly urban or rural in character was chosen. By choosing only counties or ridings whose borders fall entirely or nearly entirely within the central area of a large city we can be sure that the area chosen will be urban in character. Likewise, by choosing counties or ridings known to be primarily rural (i.e., containing only small towns and no cities) we can be sure that area chosen will contain a population of rural voters.

### **3.2.1 Constructing Urban and Rural Zones from U.S. Counties**

In the 48 states comprising the contiguous United States there are over 3100 counties. For this analysis, Alaska and Hawaii are excluded<sup>10</sup>. Due to the large number of counties and the impossibility of being familiar with the towns and cities of every county, choosing which counties would be classed as urban or rural required establishing objective selection criteria. Many variables are available for U.S. counties, including percent urban (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau), population density (persons per square mile), total population, and the USDA's rural-urban continuum codes. For a county to be classified as urban, it had to be over 90 percent urban, have a rural-urban continuum code of zero, two, or three (i.e., a central county of a metropolitan area), have a total population over 250,000 and have a population density of more than 400 persons per square mile. In the analysis, 63 to 104 counties were classified as urban over the time period from 1920 to 2004. As urbanization has increased over the time period of the study, so has the number of urban counties. The average population of counties classified as urban was 969,105 while the mean percent urban was 93.9 percent and the mean population density was 3414.54 persons per square mile.

For classification as rural, counties must be less than 10 percent urban, be coded "9=completely rural or less than 2500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area" on the rural-urban continuum, have less than 40,000 in total population and have a density of under 50 persons per square mile. In the various analyses, between 497 and 592 counties were classified as rural in the 1920 to 2004 period. The number of rural counties has decreased over time due to urbanization. For rural counties, the mean percent urban is less than one percent, the average population is 6453 and the average population density is 9.75 persons per square mile. The remaining counties not classified as urban or rural were coded as "base" counties.

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10 Alaska is not divided into counties. Populated areas are organized into boroughs which are similar to counties; however, much of Alaska's land area is unorganized. Hawaii is excluded because it is culturally and ethnically distinct from the continental United States. The American National Election Study also does not include Alaska and Hawaii in its sample.

### 3.2.2 Constructing Urban and Rural Zones from Canadian Ridings

In Canada, the number of ridings is much smaller than the number of U.S. counties, and this number was made even smaller because Québec and the Territories are excluded from the analysis. The exclusion of Québec is to ensure we are looking at English North American culture. The ridings in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were excluded because they are not typical ridings: they are extremely vast in area and their populations are small and disproportionately native, which is not the population of interest for this study. As mentioned previously, the boundaries and number of ridings change regularly to reflect changes in population, with each new distribution known as a “representation order.” The number of ridings used in the analysis ranges from 158 in the representation order of 1914, to 230 in the representation order of 2003. Because of the small number of ridings and the very small number of large metropolitan areas in Canada, classification of urban and rural ridings was achieved manually by looking at historical federal electoral district maps. Urban ridings were selected from the central areas of the largest metropolitan areas in Canada: Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and Halifax. Although Halifax is much smaller than the other metropolitan areas listed, from 1965 to the present the boundaries of the riding of “Halifax” have been roughly within Halifax's urban area, and as the largest and most prominent city in Atlantic Canada, this was the best choice to represent the region. The Alberta cities of Edmonton and Calgary have experienced much of their growth over the past 30 to 40 years; thus, Edmonton was not included prior to 1953 and Calgary was not included prior to 1968 as there were no ridings totally within their urban core boundaries. Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Hamilton were all well established as Canada's largest cities outside Québec by the 1920's and thus all have consistently had ridings whose boundaries fall completely within their urban cores for the entire study period of 1920-2006. The average population density of ridings classified as urban is 4217.45 persons per square kilometre. The number of urban ridings increases from 11 in 1921 to 22 in 1979, falling to 21 from 1988-2006.<sup>11</sup>

Rural ridings were also selected from historical federal electoral district maps, based on whether or not they contained any significant cities. Since riding boundaries are drawn to include roughly equal populations in each riding, virtually all of them include large towns or small cities; however, the majority of the ridings classified as rural do not contain any cities. Some ridings contain small cities such as Chatham, Ontario or Brandon, Manitoba. That these small cities are included in ridings classified as rural should not be problematic as the character and culture of such cities is not at all like that of larger cities despite them being technically “urban.” The small cities included in rural ridings are

<sup>11</sup> In recent years the redistribution of ridings has often led to decreased representation of inner cities in favour of suburban and rural ridings.

largely surrounded by large agricultural areas and culturally they are generally more similar to the surrounding small towns and rural areas than to large urban centres. The average density of rural ridings is 10.21 persons per square kilometre. The number of rural ridings varies from 69 in 1921 to 103 in 1949, with the number of rural ridings steadily decreasing (due to urbanization) to 73 by 2006. As with the United States, all Canadian ridings not classified as urban or rural were coded as “base.”

### 3.2.3 Urban/Rural Differences Over Time

To examine urban/rural differences over time, two indices were constructed based on those used by Walks (2005) in his study of the inner city/suburban cleavage in Canada. Each of the indices was constructed separately for Canada and the United States. The values of these indices can be plotted on graphs to visually represent urban/rural differences over time.

### 3.2.4 The Rural/Urban Index

The first index compares the share of the vote for each political party in rural and urban areas by calculating the logged ratio of rural vote percentage to urban vote percentage. Base-two logarithms<sup>12</sup> are used to maintain symmetry between cases where the rural percentage is greater than the urban percentage and vice versa. Thus, the urban/rural index is the log of the ratio of the proportion voting for each party in rural zones to the proportion voting for each party in urban zones (see formula 1). Ratios above zero indicate the particular political party receives more support in rural areas, while ratios below zero indicate more support in urban areas.

#### Formula 1: Rural/urban index

$$\text{rural/urban index} = \log_2 \left( \frac{\text{party vote percent in rural areas}}{\text{party vote percent in urban areas}} \right)$$

For the Canadian data, ratios are calculated for all elections from 1921 to 2006 and a ratio is calculated for each of today's major political parties. The Liberal Party of Canada is the only party that has existed continuously throughout the study period. The Conservatives have taken various forms since 1921, as the Conservatives; then briefly as the “National Government” in 1940; then as the Progressive Conservative Party; and finally, with the merger of the Progressive

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<sup>12</sup> Base-two logarithms are used because the magnitudes of the ratios are more easily interpreted as powers of two.

Conservatives and Canadian Alliance in 2003, as the Conservative Party of Canada. For this study all iterations of the Conservatives have been merged and are represented simply as “Conservative” in the results section. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) began running candidates in the 1935 Federal Election and was a significant force in Canadian politics until 1961 when the party was dissolved and reborn as The New Democratic Party (NDP). As such the CCF and NDP data were also merged and are represented in the results as CCF/NDP. The Reform Party began in 1988 as a western protest party, but with the decline of the Progressive Conservatives, they had emerged as the Official Opposition by 1997. In an attempt to further their appeal as a national party, the Reform Party was rebranded as the Canadian Alliance for the 2000 Federal Election. In 2003, the “Unite the Right” movement resulted in their merger with the then-devastated Progressive Conservatives in a bid to defeat the Liberals, who had won three consecutive majorities. The current Conservative Party of Canada was thus born and eventually was able to form a minority government after the 2006 election.

The situation is much simpler in the United States. Although third party candidates achieved some measure of success in 1924, 1968 and 1992, none has come remotely close to actually winning the presidency during the study period of 1920-2004. Ratios are calculated for George Wallace in 1968 and Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996. Otherwise, ratios are only calculated for the Presidential candidates of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.

### 3.2.5 The Ideological Leaning Index

The second index also follows Walks (2005) and is called the Ideological Leaning Index. This index compares the ratio of right wing to left wing votes in the rural and urban zones to the ratio of right wing to left wing votes in the total area not classified as urban or rural (See formula 2 and formula 3). The total area not classified as urban or rural is here known as the “base.” This category contains the majority of ridings and counties, many of which are mixed urban and rural, containing villages, towns and smaller cities, as well as suburban and exurban areas. Using the ratio of urban/rural zone to base helps neutralize the effects of whichever party won the overall election. As with the previous Rural/Urban Index, this index is logged to base-two to maintain symmetry above and below parity when presented in graphical form.

#### Formula 2: Ideological Leaning Index, rural

$$Ideological\ Leaning\ Index_R = \log_2 \left( \frac{\text{rural RW}}{\text{rural LW}} \div \frac{\text{base RW}}{\text{base LW}} \right)$$



**Formula 3: Ideological Leaning Index, urban**

$$Ideological\ Leaning\ Index_U = \log_2 \left( \frac{\text{urban RW}}{\text{urban LW}} \div \frac{\text{base RW}}{\text{base LW}} \right)$$

For the Canadian data, the right wing voting percentage consists of the percentages voting for the various forms of the Conservative Party (Conservative, National Government, Progressive Conservative, Conservative), Social Credit and Reform/Canadian Alliance. The left wing voting percentage consists of the Liberals plus the CCF/NDP. Although the Liberals have long been considered to be in the centre of the political spectrum and even somewhat to the right depending on one's own political stance, they are often the most viable alternative for non right wing voters. In addition, inasmuch as popular political discourse has been hijacked by the right, the Liberals are a de facto left wing party from some perspectives. In any event, the Liberals have been much more likely to champion left leaning policies than the Conservatives. As such, perhaps to the objection of some readers, they are included in the left wing percentage. For the United States, Republican and Democratic percentages are used to measure right wing and left wing respectively. Third party candidates either garnered a negligible percentage of the vote by county or were not the clear right or left wing choice.

**3.2.6 Descriptive Statistics**

Means will be used to describe and compare urban and rural populations with the aggregate data. Means will be compared using independent samples t tests, making provisions for unequal variances. Since this portion of the study is exploratory and descriptive, no specific hypotheses are made and two-tailed tests are used.

**3.2.7 Regression Analysis using Aggregate Data**

The indices described above will reveal “raw” urban and rural cleavages in national elections in the United States and Canada over time. However such differences may simply be the result of demographic differences between urban and rural ridings. Regression analysis will be used to test for urban/rural differences in election outcomes at the county/riding level while controlling for demographic variables. To do this, census data including age, sex, income, visible minority status, and education were obtained for counties and ridings in select years. American county level census data were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau website. Riding level data from the 2001 Census of Canada for the Representation Order of 2003 were obtained from Statistics Canada. Canadian

riding level data from the 1991 Census of Canada for the Representation Order of 1987 were obtained from the Canadian Census Analyzer on the University of Toronto's Computing in the Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) dataserver. Data from the 1961 Census of Canada for the Representation Order of 1952 were obtained from the The Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) courtesy of Blake (1999).

Aggregate data from the 1961 Census for the Representation Order of 1952 include age, income, visible minority status, and education. The age variables are percentage of population 19 and under and percentage of population 65 or older. Education is measured by two variables. First is percentage of population age four and over not attending school with less than three years of high school. The second is percentage of population age four and over not attending school who have attended university. There are also two variables measuring income: percentage of male wage earners earning less than \$3000 per year and percentage of male wage earners earning more than \$10,000 per year. Data were provided for percentage of population of British, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Scandinavian, other European, Asiatic, Native, other, and not stated. Percentage visible minority is assumed to be the total percentage listed as Asiatic, Native, other, and not stated. No breakdown by sex was given for the population.

Data from the 1991 Census for the Representation Order of 1987 were available to construct variables for age, education, sex, and income. As with the 1961 data, age is measured by two variables, percentage 19 and under and percentage 65 and older. Sex is measured as percentage of the population who are female. Education is also measured by two variables, percentage of the population over 15 years of age without a secondary school certificate and percentage of the population 15 years of age or older with a university degree or higher. The income variable is median household income. Variables for the Representation Order of 2003 are the same as those for the Representation Order of 1987 but using data from the 2001 Census and including percentage of the population who are visible minorities. The final variable included in each of the three time points is region, coded as Atlantic Canada (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick), Ontario, the Prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta) and British Columbia.

For the United States, aggregate data for age, sex, income, visible minority status, and education were available for each year. Visible minority status is measured by the percentage reported as visible minorities. Sex is measured by percentage female. Education is measured by two variables: percentage of the population 25 years or older without high school diploma and percentage of the population age 25 or older with university degree or higher. The age variable is constructed as with the Canadian data. The income variable indicates median household income. Region is coded according to the primary regions defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: Northeast, South, Midwest, and West. Percentage

university or higher, percentage visible minority and median household income had skewed frequency distributions in all years in both Canada and the United States. Logarithmic (base-ten) transformations of each of these variables resulted in distributions near normal.

Regression analyses for Canada and the United States (using riding and county level data respectively) will be conducted at these three time points to further investigate rural/urban differences over time. The time points were chosen based on coinciding election years in the two countries and constrained by the availability of Canadian data. For the United States, the 1968, 1988, and 2004 elections were chosen for analysis. The 1965, 1988, and 2004 elections were chosen for Canada. The dependant variable for the United States is the percentage voting for the Republican Presidential candidate in each county. For Canada, the dependent variable is the percentage voting Conservative in each riding. For the 1988 election, Reform Party votes are combined with the Conservatives' totals. For each election year, a simple model where the dependant variable is regressed on urban/rural zone only will be compared to a full model containing the control variables listed above. This allows us to examine the extent to which urban/rural differences in Conservative/Republican voting are influenced by demographic factors at the aggregate level.

### **3.3 Individual Level Survey Analysis**

Urban/rural differences will also be studied at the individual level using survey data. We cannot draw firm conclusions about individual behaviour from aggregate level data; however, survey data can be used to examine whether culture war issues influence possible differences in vote choice among urban and rural voters. To investigate these issues, data from the 2004 American National Election Study and the 2004 Canadian Election Study are used. The 2004 versions of these surveys include variables that can be used to gauge respondents' attitudes toward abortion, gun control and same sex marriage, the three issues most identified with the culture war. In addition, both the Canadian and American surveys include a set of questions that can be used to measure respondents' degree of moral traditionalism. In the Canadian portion of the study, because of Québec's linguistic and cultural differences from the rest of Canada and the United States and because the Bloc Québécois continues to dominate federal politics in Québec and is not easily classified as left or right, respondents from Québec will be excluded from this analysis. Thus, this analysis focuses on respondents in English North America.

A key independent variable is urban/rural residence. The other key independent variables in this study reflect the most important aspects of the culture war. These variables represent respondents' attitudes on moral traditionalism, abortion, gay marriage and gun control.

### 3.3.1 Data Considerations

Multiple imputation was used to deal with missing cases.<sup>13</sup> This technique utilizes the valid data available for a case to construct distributions of likely values for a given variable from which random draws are used to fill in the missing value. Bayesian multiple imputation produces consistent estimates when missing data are “missing at random” (MAR) and not when they are “missing not at random” (MNAR). Except in some special circumstances, “list-wise deletion” (better called “complete-case analysis”) produces consistent estimates when missing data are “missing completely at random” (MCAR), but even then is less efficient than multiple imputation.

For each of the Canadian and American datasets, ten draws were made for each missing value to create ten complete (imputed) datasets.<sup>14</sup> Using this method preserves the cases that would otherwise be lost to listwise deletion and does not unduly bias parameter estimates and standard errors. The results discussed below are the average results of analyses on each of the ten imputed datasets, with standard errors computed by Rubin's method (Rubin 1987; 1996).

Special consideration had to be given to the dependent variables (whether respondent voted for Bush and whether respondent voted for the Conservatives) in the logistic regression models of vote choice. On the surveys, respondents were asked whether they voted or not, and separately, for whom they voted. There were missing values for each of these variables. With multiple imputation, missing values are imputed for both the dependent and explanatory variables. Therefore values would be imputed for all cases where there were missing values for “whom respondent voted for.” It is possible that in some of these cases, the respondent may be incorrectly classified as voting for Bush or another candidate when he or she did not vote in the election at all. To compensate for this possibility values were imputed for “whether respondent voted in the election” and the datasets were subsequently subsetting to include only those who voted. Because some values of “whether respondent voted” are imputed, the size of the subset is different for each imputed dataset. The average N of the subsetting sample is reported in the results.

13 Imputation procedures were performed using the Multivariate Imputation by Chained Equations (mice) package for the R statistical computing environment. For the Canadian data (N=3275), there were 478 missing values for income, 75 for religion, 45 for education, 837 for abortion, 1951 for moral traditionalism (the questions comprising the moral traditionalism index were only asked to a subset of respondents), 847 for gay marriage, 10 for gun control, 108 for visible minority, 45 for age, and 16 for union household. In the American dataset (N=1212), there were 142 missing values for income, 14 for religion, 66 for gay marriage, 165 for abortion, 148 for moral traditionalism, 375 for whether respondent voted, 385 for whether respondent voted for Bush, 10 for gun control, 8 for visible minority and 6 for union household.

14 In addition to all the variables used in the regression models, home ownership, couple status, employment status and whether one voted in the election were used as predictors in the imputation process.

Survey design was also taken into consideration for the analyses. Common implementations of statistical techniques such as logistic regression assume simple random sampling of the data when calculating estimates and standard errors. The CES and ANES are complex surveys which do not meet the assumption of a simple random sample; however, the design effects of the surveys can be incorporated into the analysis using resampling variance estimation procedures.<sup>15</sup> Note that due to the weighting applied by the survey designs, reported N's will not be whole numbers.

### 3.3.2 ANES Survey Design

The ANES is based on a stratified, multi-stage area probability sample of United States households designed to reflect the voting age population of the United States. The ANES includes a person-level analysis weight which incorporates sampling, nonresponse, and post-stratification factors. The sampling part of the weight variable compensates for the unequal selection probability of a respondent in multi person households compared to single person households. The cases are also weighted to adjust for differences in response rates among the various sampling areas. Finally, the sample was post-stratified by education and age to match census data. In other words, when the weight variable is used, the distributions of age and education in the sample will match those of the census and thus better reflect the population.

The ANES dataset includes variables that can be used to specify the sampling design when used with appropriate statistical software. The “sampling error stratum code” describes the sample strata, and the stratum-specific “sampling error computation unit code” (SECU) is used to specify the primary sampling unit. As suggested in the ANES documentation, the “balanced repeated replication” (BRR) method was used for variance estimation. The subsetting of the ANES sample to include only those who voted was also incorporated into the survey design. The complete sample size is 1212. The weighted sample size is 1066.03. The weighted subset of respondents who voted in the election averaged 946.07.<sup>16</sup> This suggests a voter turnout rate of more than 88%. It is well known that the ANES severely overestimates voter turnout, in recent years by well over 20% (Burden 2000). Means in the subset did not differ from means in the total sample for any variables.

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15 Procedures for the analysis of complex survey samples are provided by the survey package for the R statistical computing environment.

16 This is the average size of the ten multiply imputed subsets.

### 3.3.3 CES Survey Design

The sample in the CES is designed to include all voting age Canadians who speak French or English and reside in one of the ten provinces (the Territories were excluded). The survey was conducted by telephone and random digit dialling was used to select households. The smaller Atlantic provinces and Québec were oversampled while the rest of the provinces were undersampled. A weight variable was included to adjust for the unequal probability of selection in multiperson households and for the unequal probability of selection based on province of residence. Since the present study is interested in English Canada only, the sample was subsetted to exclude Québec. No strata or PSU variables were included with the dataset; thus, the bootstrap method was used to create the replicate weights used in variance estimation. The subsetting of the CES sample to include only those who voted was also incorporated into the survey design. The complete sample size is 3275. The weighted sample size is 3281.35 and the subset of respondents who voted in the election averaged 2797.61. This indicates a voter turnout rate of over 85 percent; thus it appears that the CES overestimates voter turnout by a similar margin as the ANES. Means in the subset did not differ from means in the total sample for any variables, except age. A t test shows the mean age for the total sample (46.59) is slightly lower than the mean age (48.47) in the voting subset ( $p < .001$ ).

### 3.3.4 Urban/rural

Urban/rural place of residence is operationalized using the criteria set out by the U.S. Census Bureau and Statistics Canada. This means that for both Canada and the United States, the “rural” category includes respondents who live “out in the country” or in very small towns or villages, while urban includes those who live in large or small cities and their suburbs. Suburban was not included as a category as separate analyses on the CES found suburban voters were not significantly different from urban voters on the issues of interest to this study.<sup>17</sup> The ANES simply classified respondents as urban or rural, so no suburban category is possible. For the subsample used in this study, 74.3 percent of Canadian respondents are classified as urban and 25.7 percent rural, while for the

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<sup>17</sup> It is believed that the conservative tendencies of suburban voters found in previous studies have more to do demographic factors, namely the preponderance of suburban middle class families, and the corresponding interest in tax relief and safety, than with social conservatism or moral traditionalism (see Walks 2005). As a more specific example, the socially conservative Federal Conservatives were quite unsuccessful in the suburban “905” area around Toronto where the far less socially conservative Provincial Conservatives enjoyed considerable success in the 1995 and 1999 Ontario general elections. In the American context, the conservatism of suburban voters was more aroused by earlier backlash issues such as fear of drugs and crime or race (“white flight” to the suburbs).

United States, 79.2 percent of respondents are urban and 20.8 percent rural.

### **3.3.5 Moral Traditionalism**

Following previous research (e.g., Knuckey 2005, McCann 1997), moral traditionalism is operationalized by constructing a scale from several questions concerning lifestyle and morality. For both the American and the Canadian data, respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.
- The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behaviour to these changes.
- This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional [family values] (on the Canadian questionnaire) [family ties] (on the American questionnaire).

Each item was scored on a five-point scale and recoded for consistency in direction with high scores indicating moral traditionalism. The moral traditionalism scale was created by summing respondents' scores on each of the three questions. Thus the moral traditionalism scale can range from 5 to 15, with a score of 5 indicating low moral traditionalism and a score of 15 indicating high moral traditionalism. Cronbach's alpha for the Canadian data was 0.614 and for the American data, 0.619. The most generally accepted threshold for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 (Nunnally 1978). The alphas here are somewhat low but acceptable for the purposes of exploratory research and given the small number of items used to create the scale.

These questions are believed to tap a “general sense of moral authority” associated with the culture war rather than specific issues preferences (Knuckey 2005: 654). This is consistent with Hunter's (1991) original formulation of the culture war as ultimately based on moral authority:

Because this is a culture war, the nub of political disagreement today on the range of issues debated—whether abortion, child care, funding for the arts, affirmative action and quotas, gay rights, values in public education, or multiculturalism—can be traced ultimately and finally to the matter of moral authority. By moral authority I mean the basis by which people determine whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, and so on. Of course, people often have very different ideas about what criteria to use in making moral judgements, but this is just the point. It is the commitment to different and opposing bases of moral authority and the world views that derive from them that creates the deep cleavages between antagonists in the

contemporary culture war (p. 42-3).

Thus the moral traditionalism score can be used as an indicator of a respondent's "core values" with respect to moral traditionalism and it is likely causally prior to a respondent's preferences on specific moral issues such as abortion or same sex marriage.

### **3.3.6 Gun Control**

The ANES and CES both contain variables which can be used to measure respondents' attitudes toward gun control. The CES asked respondents: "do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?" with the statement "only the police and the military should be allowed to have guns." Respondents who agree with the statement are likely more favourable to gun control than those who disagree with the statement. Responses were coded 1=strongly agree, 2=somewhat agree, 4=somewhat disagree, and 5=strongly disagree. Those who responded "don't know" were coded 3.

The ANES asked: "do you think the federal government should make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now, make it easier for people to buy a gun, or keep these rules about the same as they are now?" Again, the responses are scored on a Likert scale. The resulting variable should be an indicator of respondents' attitudes toward gun control. The variable is coded 1= a lot more difficult, 2=somewhat more difficult, 3=about the same or don't know, 4=somewhat easier, and 5=a lot easier.

### **3.3.7 Abortion**

The CES and ANES ask different questions about attitudes toward abortion, but both should serve as valid measures of respondents' attitudes toward abortion. The question on the CES asked: "do you think it should be: very easy for women to get an abortion, quite easy, quite difficult, or very difficult?" Responses were coded 1=very easy, 2=quite easy, 3=don't know, 4=quite difficult, and 5=very difficult.

The ANES asked respondents to choose from the following four options:

1. By law, abortion should never be permitted.
2. The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
3. The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.
4. By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a



matter of personal choice.

The coding of the responses was reversed so that a higher score would indicate a pro life attitude thus maintaining this study's convention that attitudes associated with socially conservative views be coded higher.

### **3.3.8 Gay Marriage**

Each survey also asked respondents about their views on gay marriage. The CES posed the statement: "Gays and lesbians should be allowed to get married," and asked respondents "do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?" Responses were coded 1=strongly agree, 2=somewhat agree, 4=somewhat disagree, and 5=strongly disagree. Those who responded "don't know" were coded 3. The ANES question was more to the point: "Should same-sex couples be allowed to marry, or do you think they should not be allowed to marry?" It will be treated as a dichotomous variable.

### **3.3.9 Control Variables**

Standard social and demographic variables are included as controls. These include age, sex, household income, whether anyone in the household is a union member, religious denomination (three dummy variables: Catholic, other religion, and none/atheist, with Protestant as the reference category) and education. Age is measured in years. The average age of Canadian respondents is 46.58 and the average age of American respondents is 46.57. On the ANES, education is measured by highest level of education achieved, ranging from "1=8 grades or less and no diploma or equivalency" through "4=more than 12 years of schooling, no higher degree" to "7=advanced degree, including LLB." The median score is four. The CES also measures education by highest level of schooling, but on an eleven point scale ranging from "1=no schooling" through "6=some technical, community college, CEGEP, College Classique" to "11=professional degree or doctorate". The average education score for English Canadians is seven. The CES measures household income in ten categories ranging from less than \$20,000 to more than \$100,000. On the ANES income is grouped into 23 categories ranging from "none or less than \$2,999" to "\$120,000 and over." The median household income score on the ANES is 16 (\$45,000-\$49,999 per year) and median household income on the CES is five, or between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year. Because of the purported regional voting differences in each country, dummy variables were included for "red states" in the United States and "the West" in Canada. These regions are commonly identified as the most socially conservative in their respective countries. For the United States, red states include all the states that George W. Bush won in the 2004

Presidential Election (except Alaska, which is excluded from the analysis). The Canadian West encompasses British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

### **3.3.10 Dependent Variables**

The dependent variable is vote choice in the 2004 Canadian Federal Election and 2004 United States Presidential Election. For the American analysis vote choice is coded “1” if the respondent voted for the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, or “0” if the respondent voted for another candidate. In Canada, voters do not directly elect the Prime Minister; rather the party that wins the most seats in the election forms the government and its leader becomes Prime Minister. With this in mind, the party that one votes for is often considered more important than the individual candidate in a riding. Thus, Canadian studies emphasise party in research on vote choice. The dependent variable in the Canadian analysis is coded “1” if the respondent voted for the Conservative candidate or “0” if the respondent voted for another party's candidate. Some readers may object to dichotomizing vote choice, especially in the Canadian case<sup>18</sup>, but the present study is interested in what sets apart conservative voters, or more specifically whether moral traditionalism is responsible for the urban/rural divide in which rural voters favour Conservatives/Republicans. In this case, the Conservatives in Canada and George W. Bush in the United States are the only choices for those motivated to choose their vote by their social conservatism. Because the dependant variables are dichotomous, logistic regression will be used to estimate the parameters affecting vote choice.

### **3.3.11 Descriptive Statistics**

Means will be used to describe and compare urban and rural respondents. Means will be compared using independent samples t tests making provisions for unequal variances. Where specific hypotheses are made about mean differences one-tailed tests are employed; otherwise, standard two-tailed tests are used. For nominal variables such as gender and visible minority status, urban/rural comparisons use the chi-square test of independence. For the comparison of medians of variables such as education and household income, Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon tests are used.

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18 In Canadian Federal politics, the Conservatives clearly occupy the centre-right to right position on the political spectrum, while the Liberals and NDP occupy the centre to left positions. In terms of social policy and ideology, both the Liberals and the NDP are even more clearly to the left of the Conservatives, who are the only choice for those who wish to vote for a socially conservative party.

### **3.3.12 Logistic Regression Analysis of Vote Choice**

Separate logistic regression models will be run for Canada and the United States. The models for both countries will use the same array of independent variables to make them as comparable as possible. For each country, there are three models. First, vote choice is regressed on urban/rural residence to test whether there are indeed urban/rural differences when controlling for demographic and social characteristics of the respondents. Next, the moral traditionalism scale is added to the model to test whether and to what degree moral traditionalism accounts for the hypothesized differences in vote choice of urban and rural respondents. Finally, the social issues variables (gay marriage, gun control and abortion) are added to model 2 to examine their effect on vote choice and the urban/rural cleavage.

### **3.4 Looking Ahead**

The next three chapters will present the results. Chapter Four will investigate characteristics of the populations of urban and rural areas that could translate into potential urban/rural differences in elections. Are urban dwellers more educated and socially progressive? Are rural residents more socially conservative? Are there Canadian/American differences in the characteristics of urban and rural populations? These issues will be investigated using both the aggregate level county/riding data and the individual level survey data using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Chapter Five will examine the aggregate data in terms of election outcomes over the period 1920-2006. Have there been historical urban/rural cleavages in national elections? Or is the urban/rural divide a recent phenomenon? Do rural areas have a history of voting conservative? Are urban areas progressive? Are there parallels between Canada and the United States in urban or rural voting patterns? Aggregate level data can only answer some of these questions. Chapter Six will examine individual vote choices of urban and rural voters. Is the urban/rural gap simply due to demographic differences between residents living in country or city? Can moral traditionalism explain the urban/rural cleavage? What role do social issues such as abortion, gay marriage and gun control play? Does the culture war affect Canada, just the United States, both, or is it inconsequential to vote choice in both nations?

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Urban/Rural Differences in the United States and Canada**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the focus will be on painting a picture of urban/rural differences at both the aggregate and individual levels. The stereotypical view of the “backwards country folk” versus the “sophisticated and cultured” city dweller is likely a gross over-generalization, but there is no doubt that the vastly different environments presented by city and country will have marked effects on the people living in them. Exploring potential differences in attitudes and demographic characteristics here will help to understand how these affect the relationship between vote choice and urban/rural place of residence in chapter six. Where possible, this chapter will also compare the data in a cross national context. It is expected that there will be few differences between English Canada and the United States. The characteristics of urban populations in Canada will be similar to those of urban populations in the United States and the rural populations of each country should also be similar. In other words, urban/rural differences are likely to be found within countries, but not so much between countries. Given the types of urban/rural differences found in previous empirical studies (McKee 2007; Adams 2007; Gimpel & Karnes 2006; Greenburg, Walker and Greener 2005; Francia and Baumgartner 2005; Cutler and Jenkins 2002; Knoke & Henry 1977; Schnore 1966), it is expected that rural individuals will be on average more socially conservative than urban individuals and that this will only partly be explained by demographic characteristics such as education level.

### **4.2 Urban/Rural Characteristics of Ridings and Counties**

Table 4.1 shows the mean differences on several social characteristics for Canadian ridings classified as urban and rural in 2001. Urban and rural ridings differ in all characteristics except median household income and percent aged 65 or older. There are particularly stark differences in education; education levels are much higher in urban ridings. The U.S. data in Table 4.2 shows a similar pattern in education, percent female and percent visible minority. In both countries, a larger percentage of the population has not graduated from high

school in rural areas compared to urban areas. Urban areas also have a much larger percentage of the population that is university educated than rural areas. Urban areas in both countries have a slightly larger percentage of females than males. As one would expect, the percentage of visible minorities is much higher in urban areas in both countries, where the percentages are almost identical. The age structure is slightly different in Canada and the United States. Most notably, urban ridings in Canada have a smaller percentage of young people than American urban counties. There is also a difference in median household income between urban and rural areas in the United States which is not found in Canada.

To summarize, the major difference between urban and rural areas in North America is that urban areas have more highly educated and ethnically diverse populations than rural areas. The other common difference is the slightly larger percentage of females in urban areas. Education levels and the percentages of visible minorities and females could be significant predictors of election outcomes for counties and ridings. Given the liberalizing tendency of education, these findings suggest that urban areas could be more politically liberal than rural areas.

**TABLE 4.1: Mean differences between urban and rural ridings in Canada, 2001 Census data**

	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)<sup>a</sup></i>
% female	51.0	50.4	.021
% age 19 and under	19.6	28.0	<.001
% age 65 or older	13.2	14.0	.355
% less than High School	23.5	35.3	<.001
% university degree or higher	28.8	9.6	<.001
% visible minority	31.2	10.0	<.001
median household income	43203	43295	.972
	N=21	N=74	

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed tests

**TABLE 4.2: Mean differences between urban and rural counties in the United States, 2000 census data**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)<sup>a</sup></i>
% female	51.4	50.0	<.001
% age 19 and under	25.2	25.3	.811
% age 65 or older	12.0	18.0	<.001
% less than High School	17.4	23.3	<.001
% university degree or higher	29.9	13.9	<.001
% visible minority	31.6	11.3	<.001
median household income	48020	29733	<.001
	N=105	N=497	

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed tests

The next question is whether these characteristics have changed over time. Table 4.3 shows urban/ rural differences in Canada using data from the 1961 census. It can be seen that urban ridings had higher education levels in 1961 too, but the differences in education level between urban and rural ridings are not as great as in 2001. There are significant differences between urban and rural income levels, although this measure (income of male wage earners over 15 years of age) is not directly comparable to the measure used for the 2001 data (median household income). In 1961 there was no difference in the percentage of visible minorities in urban and rural areas. The percentage of visible minorities is small across the board as large scale immigration from non-European countries was just beginning at this time.

Data for the United States are presented in Table 4.4. The results from the 1970 census show the same pattern of urban/rural differences as the 2000 census, the main differences over time being a substantially more educated population and a smaller proportion of visible minorities in both urban and rural areas in 1970 compared to 2000. The very high percentage of the population age 19 and younger likely shows the effect of the postwar baby boom.

Although there are few changes in the pattern of urban/rural differences in the United States over the period 1970-2000, the Canadian data show some changes between 1961 and 2001, most notably in the emerging difference between urban and rural areas in percentage of visible minorities. The 1961

**TABLE 4.3: Mean differences between urban and rural ridings in Canada, 1961 census data**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)<sup>a</sup></i>
% age 19 and under	30.5	43.8	<.001
% age 65 or older	11.4	8.8	<.001
% less than High School	46.0	54.4	.001
% university degree or higher	6.7	4.0	<.001
% visible minority	5.1	4.0	.221
% income < \$2,999	36.6	49.3	<.001
% income > \$10,000	1.8	0.8	.023
	N=20	N=96	

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed tests**TABLE 4.4: Mean differences between urban and rural counties in the United States, 1970 census data**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)<sup>a</sup></i>
% female	52.0	50.2	<.001
% age 19 and under	66.9	64.8	<.001
% age 65 or older	10.0	13.7	<.001
% less than High School	33.9	52.2	<.001
% college 4 or more years	11.9	5.9	<.001
% visible minority	17.3	7.1	<.001
median household income	10270	6340	<.001
	N=63	N=592	

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed tests

Canadian data and 1970 American data show similar urban/rural differences in education, with the overall education level being much higher in both countries by 2001. Despite the overall increase in the percentage with university education and the overall large decrease in percentage with less than high school education, the education gap between urban and rural areas has actually widened.

### **4.3 Urban/Rural Differences at the Individual Level**

While aggregate data will be useful for investigating urban/rural differences in election outcomes for ridings and counties over time in the next chapter, it cannot tell us much about the political attitudes and vote choices of individuals. Survey data from the ANES and CES will allow us to examine the attitudes and choices of individuals. In this section we will examine whether individuals residing in urban areas differ from individuals residing in rural areas on the moral traditionalism scale and in attitudes toward abortion, gun control and gay marriage. In turn we will investigate the extent to which these differences are explained by individual differences on a host of control variables such as age, sex, religion, income, union membership, region and education. We can also use these data to ascertain whether or not there are differences between English Canadians and Americans on the moral traditionalism scale. Previous research has found rural populations to be socially conservative (McKee 2007; Gidengil et al. 2006; Francia and Baumgartner 2005; Greenburg, Walker and Greener 2005; Cutler and Jenkins 2002; Knoke & Henry 1977); therefore, it is expected that there will be urban/rural differences on all of these issues in both Canada and the United States even after controlling for demographic characteristics. Rural individuals are expected to express greater moral traditionalism and are more likely to have socially conservative attitudes on gun control, gay marriage and abortion than urban individuals. As Lipset (1990) and Adams (2003) have theorized, it is expected that Americans will, on average, score higher than Canadians on the moral traditionalism scale.

#### **4.3.1 Urban/rural differences in demographic characteristics**

With the aggregate level data there were important differences in the demographic characteristics of the urban and rural populations, particularly in education and ethnic diversity. In this section we will examine urban/rural demographic differences from the 2004 ANES and CES samples. Looking at table 4.5, we find urban respondents to be more ethnically diverse, better educated and younger on average than rural respondents. There are some different findings here compared to the aggregate data with respect to income: urban respondents on the CES averaged slightly higher household incomes than rural respondents,



while with the 2001 aggregate data for Canadian ridings, no urban/rural difference was found for income. Conversely, the American aggregate data (table 4.6) shows much higher average incomes in urban areas, whereas there is no difference in income between urban and rural respondents on the ANES. These differences

**TABLE 4.5: Urban/rural differences in the 2004 CES sample (Canada)**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)</i>	<i>Full sample</i>
% female	52.24	52.07	.935 <sup>b</sup>	52.20
mean age	46.01	48.25	.002 <sup>a</sup>	46.59
median education	7	5	<.001 <sup>c</sup>	7
median HH income	5	4	<.001 <sup>c</sup>	5
%visible minority	13.89	6.37	<.001 <sup>b</sup>	11.96
N	2438.67	842.69		3281.35

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed test, <sup>b</sup>chi-square test, <sup>c</sup>Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test

**TABLE 4.6: Urban/rural differences in the 2004 ANES sample (United States)**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)</i>	<i>Full sample</i>
% female	51.66	46.59	.179 <sup>b</sup>	50.61
mean age	45.83	49.40	.004 <sup>a</sup>	46.57
median education	4	3	.012 <sup>c</sup>	4
median HH income	16	17	.350 <sup>c</sup>	16
%visible minority	30.59	14.96	<.001 <sup>b</sup>	27.35
N	844.75	221.28		1066.03

<sup>a</sup>two-tailed test, <sup>b</sup>chi-square test, <sup>c</sup>Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test

between the individual and aggregate level data might be accounted for by either differences in the ways the variables are measured or by the different ways that “urban” and “rural” are specified in the surveys and the aggregate data. The aggregate data are based on samples of urban and rural ridings taken from the “base” while the survey data divide the total sample into two categories. The samples of urban ridings and counties in the aggregate level data look more specifically at the cores of major cities. The Canadian ridings selected for the urban sample in particular generally exclude all but the most urban areas of cities. Many of the U.S. counties selected as urban contained portions of suburban areas as county borders are not drawn to coincide with urban/suburban boundaries. Although the U.S. counties likely contain a greater proportion of suburban area than the Canadian ridings, they are still mostly composed of the central cores of major cities. The “urban” category in the individual level surveys likely contains more suburban respondents and also many respondents living in smaller cities that would not have been included in the urban sample of the aggregate data for both countries.

#### 4.3.2 Moral Traditionalism

So far we have seen that rural populations tend to be older, less educated and less racially diverse than urban populations, all characteristics that would point to greater social conservatism in rural areas. It is therefore hypothesized that rural respondents will on average score higher than urban respondents on the moral traditionalism scale. Table 4.7 shows the raw differences between urban and rural respondents in Canada and the United States on the moral traditionalism

**TABLE 4.7: Mean differences on the moral traditionalism scale, CES and ANES 2004**

	Canada	United States
urban	9.81	10.44
rural	10.58	11.30
total	9.99	10.62
N	3281.35	1066.03
sig. (urban vs. rural) <sup>a</sup>	<.001	.007
sig. (Canada vs United States) <sup>a</sup>	<.001	

0=low moral traditionalism, 15=high moral traditionalism, <sup>a</sup>one-tailed test

scale. Rural respondents score higher on the scale than urban respondents in both countries, confirming the hypothesis. In Canada the difference is 0.77 and in the United States the difference is 0.86. While the urban/rural difference in each country is significant, it is small, approximately one quarter of a standard deviation in each country. Again it should be kept in mind that the urban and rural measure used in the individual analysis is not as extreme as that used in the aggregate analysis. The urban and rural categories used here cover the entire sample; there is no base category. As such, both the urban and rural categories used here contain many individuals who live in small cities, towns, suburbs and other areas not strictly urban or rural thus diluting the pool of respondents in the urban and rural categories. If a measure similar to that used in the aggregate analyses were available for this analysis it is quite possible that urban and rural respondents would show greater differences here. Given the dilution of the urban and rural categories by respondents who are not strictly urban or rural, these small differences could indicate substantial differences between urban and rural respondents on the moral traditionalism scale. Interestingly, and in contrast to some other accounts (e.g. Adams 2005), English Canadians and Americans on average score very similarly on the moral traditionalism scale. The mean scores on the moral traditionalism scale for the United States and Canada differ by only 0.63, which is statistically significant but minuscule as this difference is less than one-fifth of the standard deviation of each country's sample.

**TABLE 4.8: OLS Regression predicting moral traditionalism score (Canada)**

	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sig.</i>
(Intercept)	11.263	0.495	--
rural	0.320	0.168	.080
female	0.228	0.164	.192
age	0.018	0.005	.005
education	-0.243	0.038	<.001
HH income	-0.029	0.027	.294
union HH	-0.157	0.142	.282
west	0.327	0.150	.050
visible minority	0.268	0.259	.318
<i>religion</i>			<.001
Catholic	-0.384	0.231	.136
other religion	-1.299	0.472	.023
no religion/atheist	-2.081	0.193	<.001

Dependent variable is moral traditionalism scale.

Reference category for religion is protestant.

N=3281.35

**TABLE 4.9: OLS Regression predicting moral traditionalism score (United States)**

	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sig.</i>
(Intercept)	11.842	0.821	--
rural	0.270	0.347	.450
female	0.101	0.204	.628
age	-0.018	0.014	.221
education	-0.734	0.184	.001
HH income	0.060	0.013	.001
union HH	0.014	0.157	.931
red state	0.127	0.178	.488
visible minority	-0.580	0.205	.014
age*education	0.012	0.003	.002
<i>religion</i>			<.001
Catholic	-0.625	0.228	.016
other religion	-2.652	0.500	<.001
no religion/atheist	-2.274	0.288	<.001

Dependent variable is moral traditionalism scale.

Reference category for religion is protestant.

N=1066.03

The moral traditionalism scores discussed above are raw scores. Tables 4.8 and 4.9 show the results of regressing the moral traditionalism scale on urban/rural place of residence controlling for sex, age, education, household income, union households, region and religion. Once the control variables are added there is no significant difference between urban and rural respondents on moral traditionalism in the United States. In Canada, rural residents score slightly higher than urban residents on the moral traditionalism scale ( $p < .040$ , one-sided) with controls.<sup>19</sup> Age has a weak positive relationship with moral traditionalism in Canada. Greater education has a negative impact on moral traditionalism scores in Canada and the United States, except for senior citizens in the United States, for whom a level of high education is associated with higher moral traditionalism scores. Income has a positive effect in the United States but not in Canada. Being protestant is associated with higher moral traditionalism scores than those with no religion or other non-Catholic or non-Protestant religions in both Canada and the United States. There is no difference in moral traditionalism scores between red and blue states. Given the very small mean urban/rural differences in the raw moral traditionalism scores, it is not surprising urban/rural differences did not

<sup>19</sup> two-sided p-value (.080) is reported in table 4.8

stand up in the United States and were barely significant in Canada after controlling for social characteristics.

### 4.3.3 Social Issues

Gay marriage, abortion and gun control are central issues in the “culture war.” Variables measuring respondents' attitudes on these issues were available on the ANES and CES. Since each survey provided different measures for these variables, direct Canadian/American comparisons like those with the moral traditionalism scale are not possible; however, we can look at urban/rural differences within each country. In line with our finding that rural residents score slightly higher on the moral traditionalism scale and are hypothesized to be more socially conservative in general, it is predicted that rural respondents will on average be more opposed to gun control, abortion and gay marriage than urban respondents.

**TABLE 4.10: Opposition to gay marriage, gun control and abortion, Canada 2004**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)</i>	<i>sample</i>
gay marriage <sup>b</sup>	2.82	3.27	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	2.97
gun control <sup>b</sup>	2.61	3.55	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	2.85
abortion <sup>b</sup>	2.80	3.11	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	2.90
N	2438.67	842.69		3281.35

<sup>a</sup>one-tailed test, <sup>b</sup>higher scores indicate opposition

**TABLE 4.11: Opposition to gay marriage, gun control and abortion, United States 2004**

	<i>urban</i>	<i>rural</i>	<i>sig. (urban vs. rural)</i>	<i>sample</i>
gay marriage	63.1%	78.3%	<.001 <sup>b</sup>	66.26%
gun control <sup>c</sup>	1.97	2.44	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	2.07
abortion <sup>c</sup>	2.17	2.54	.001 <sup>a</sup>	2.24
N	844.75	221.28		1066.03

<sup>a</sup>one-tailed test, <sup>b</sup>chisquare test, <sup>c</sup>higher scores indicate opposition

Table 4.10 shows the mean differences between urban and rural respondents in Canada and American scores are shown in Table 4.11. For the Canadian results, each variable is measured on a 5-point scale with higher scores indicating more socially conservative attitudes. Rural respondents score substantially higher than urban respondents on opposition to gay marriage, gun control and abortion in Canada. In the United States, 78 percent of rural respondents oppose gay marriage compared to 63 percent of urban respondents. For the American data, gun control is measured on a 5-point scale and abortion on a 4-point scale, high values indicating socially conservative views. Again, there are differences in the attitudes toward gun control and abortion between urban and rural respondents. These findings strongly support the idea that rural respondents are on average more socially conservative on these issues in North America.

To investigate the extent to which differences in urban and rural attitudes on these issues are explained by the differing social characteristics of urban and rural populations, gay marriage, abortion and gun control were regressed on control variables for each country. The results are shown in Tables 4.12 and 4.13. Urban/rural differences remain on all three social issues variables in Canada and for abortion and gun control in the United States with demographic controls. Higher education levels have a negative effect on opposition to gay marriage, gun control and abortion in the United States and on gay marriage and abortion in

**TABLE 4.12: OLS Regression, social issues, Canada 2004**

	gay marriage	gun control	abortion
(Intercept)	3.194	2.657	3.766
rural	0.245**	0.899***	0.182**
female	-0.408***	-0.491***	0.021
age	0.019***	0.000	-0.004
education	-0.087***	0.008	-0.076***
HH income	-0.039**	0.029*	-0.035**
union HH	-0.224*	0.000	-0.110
west	0.167*	0.524***	0.153*
visible	0.529***	-0.455***	0.181
religion	***	***	***
Catholic	-0.033	-0.348***	0.157*
other religion	-0.543**	-0.376**	-0.293
no religion/atheist	-1.050***	0.020	-0.703***

sig. \*\*\* p<.001 \*\* p<.01 \* p<.05

N=3281.35

Protestant is the reference category for religion.

Canada. Older respondents are more likely to oppose gay marriage in both countries. Women are more favourable to gun control in both Canada and the United States. Protestants are generally more socially conservative than other religions, atheists, and those with no religion. Higher income is negatively related to opposition to abortion in both countries. For region, respondents from Western Canada are more socially conservative than other Canadians. Respondents from red states score slightly higher than those from blue states on opposition to gun control and are much more likely to oppose abortion. There is no red state/blue state difference on opposition to gay marriage. One result runs against the stereotypes. Perhaps most surprising is that visible minorities in Canada are on average more opposed to same sex marriage than other Canadians. This may have to do with Canada's policy of multiculturalism which encourages immigrants to retain their culture. Many cultures around the world are traditionally intolerant of homosexuality, just as North America's dominant Judeo-Christian culture is traditionally intolerant of homosexuality.

**TABLE 4.13: Regression, social issues, United States 2004**

	<b>gay marriage<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>gun control<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>abortion<sup>bc</sup></b>
(Intercept)	0.563	2.529	2.818
rural	0.366	0.313**	0.228*
female	-0.266	-0.437***	-0.116
age	0.029***	-0.003	0.003
education	-0.280**	-0.063*	-0.081**
HH income	0.031	0.012	-0.027**
union HH	-0.084	0.034	0.106
red state	0.131	0.172*	0.337***
visible	-0.035	-0.317**	-0.024
religion	***	***	***
Catholic	-0.740*	-0.127	-0.040
other religion	-1.945**	-0.728***	-0.566**
no religion/atheist	-1.243***	-0.116	-0.652***

sig. \*\*\* p<.001 \*\* p<.01 \* p<.05

N=1066.03

Protestant is the reference category for religion.

<sup>a</sup> logistic regression

<sup>b</sup> OLS regression

<sup>c</sup> although ordinal logistic regression yields a similar result, OLS regression is reported for simplicity

#### 4.4 Summary

The results presented in this chapter suggest that there are fundamental differences between urban and rural populations. Urban populations have higher education levels than their rural counterparts. This is true now and in the past and in both Canada and the United States. While overall education levels are increasing in both countries, an urban/rural gap remains and is widening. Urban populations are also increasingly more ethnically diverse than rural populations in both Canada and the United States. These findings support the commonly held assumption that urban populations are more diverse and better educated than rural populations and should partly explain the greater social liberalism of urban areas.

Moving to the individual level, it can be seen that rural residents are generally more socially conservative than their urban counterparts as measured by opposition to gay marriage, gun control, abortion and moral traditionalism. After controlling for demographic characteristics, there are still urban/rural differences on gun control and abortion in both countries as well as gay marriage and moral traditionalism in Canada. These findings will be of importance for the analyses in chapter six. There is limited support for a red state/blue state moral divide. There is a large difference between red states and blue states on the issue of abortion and a small difference between them on gun control.

In both Canada and the United States, education plays a role in liberalizing views on gay marriage and abortion and is associated with lower moral traditionalism scores. Protestantism is also associated with greater moral traditionalism and socially conservative attitudes toward gay marriage, gun control and abortion in both countries. While "Protestant" is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of religious practises and beliefs, some of whom are extremely liberal in their social views, the most socially conservative individuals in both Canada and the United States are also likely to be Protestants.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: Urban/Rural Differences in Canadian and American Federal Elections, 1920-2006**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter it was found that there are differences between urban and rural populations, particularly in education levels and racial composition. In the contiguous United States and English Canada, rural residents are on average more socially conservative than those who live in urban areas. Additionally, it was found that being more educated had a negative effect on moral traditionalism and all measures of social conservatism except gun control in Canada. These differences could translate into differences in election outcomes. In this chapter we use aggregate level data to examine the results of federal elections in Canada and Presidential elections in the United States from 1920 to the present, looking specifically at differences in the results between urban and rural areas. First we will look at graphs comparing the percentage of votes received by various political parties in urban and rural areas over the years as measured by the urban/rural index. Contrary to the conventional view that urban/rural political differences should have diminished over time (e.g., Lipset and Rokkan 1967), it is hypothesized that urban/rural political differences have grown in the past ten to 20 years. This is because as social and moral issues have become increasingly salient in the national politics of both Canada and the United States, the greater social conservatism of rural voters will mean political parties on the right of the political spectrum will receive an increasing percentage of the rural vote. Likewise, since urban areas tend to be more socially liberal, political parties on the left will receive an increasing share of the urban vote when moral issues are at stake. Next we will look at the ideological leaning index for Canada and the United States from 1920 to the present. The ideological leaning index will allow us to examine the history of urban/rural predilections for right or left voting. Again it is expected that a growing tendency for rural areas to vote to the right and urban areas to vote to the left will be observed. At the end of the chapter three time points are chosen for a closer examination of urban/rural differences in election results. Multiple regression will be used to examine urban/rural differences in election results controlling for demographic characteristics.

## 5.2 The Urban/Rural Index

The urban/rural index measures the ratio of the share of rural to urban votes for each political party in the United States and Canada. The ratios are then logged to make the graphs symmetrical.<sup>20</sup> Positive values indicate that a given political party received a greater share of the rural vote than the urban vote. Negative values indicate that a political party has garnered a greater share of votes in urban areas than it has in rural areas. Zero indicates urban/rural parity.

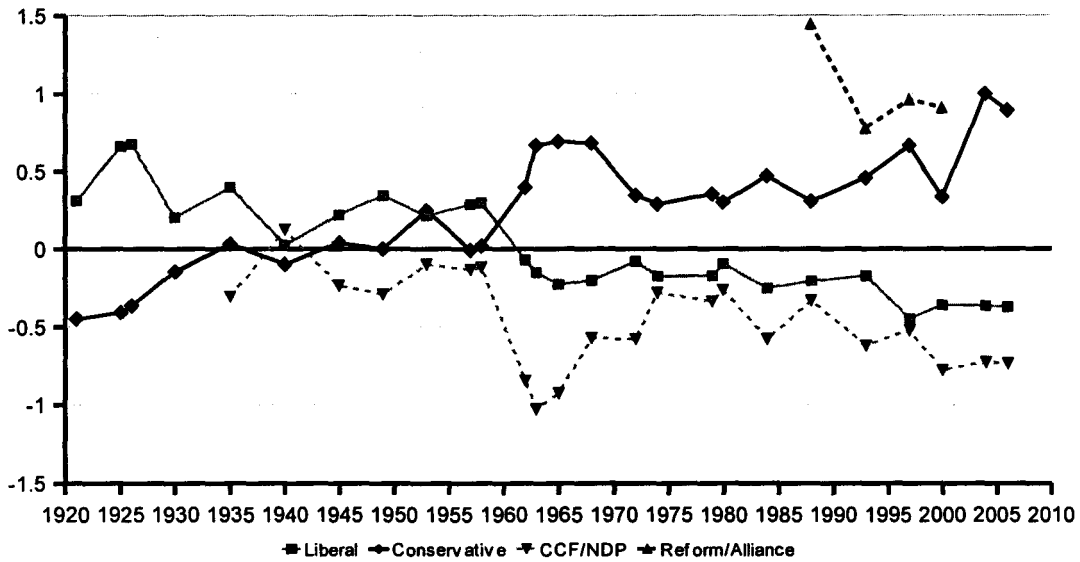
Figure 5.1 shows the urban/rural index for current Canadian political parties for all Federal elections during the period 1920 to 2006. There was a major realignment of the urban/rural vote in 1962, which is also the first federal election for the NDP. In 1961, the CCF entered into a partnership with the Canadian Labour Congress. As a result, the CCF party was dissolved and the NDP was born. The CCF had started as a coalition of farmers and labour groups but it appears that with the transition to the NDP, the party lost much of its rural farm support. The graph suggests that some of that support went to the Conservatives, who had had roughly equal levels of urban and rural support since the 1930s. The 1962 election also marks the beginning of greater urban support for the Liberals, who previously had a greater share of the rural vote. Through the 1970s the NDP seems to have won back some of its support in rural areas, but has continued to receive a greater share of urban support than rural up to the present time. Urban/rural support for all parties was relatively stable during the 1970s and 1980s, however, with the advent of the Reform Party changes in the urban/rural vote appear once again.

From its inception, the Reform Party has had a much larger share of the rural vote than it has had of the urban vote. The rebranding of the Reform Party as the Canadian Alliance for the 2000 election had little effect on its urban/rural vote share. In 2003, the merger of the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservatives resulted in the Conservative Party of Canada. Interestingly, the new Conservative Party's ratio for the 2004 and 2006 elections is about the same as that of the Reform/Alliance. Meanwhile, in the 2000, 2004 and 2006 elections, the Liberals and NDP captured a greater share of the urban vote relative to their shares of the rural vote than they had in previous elections.

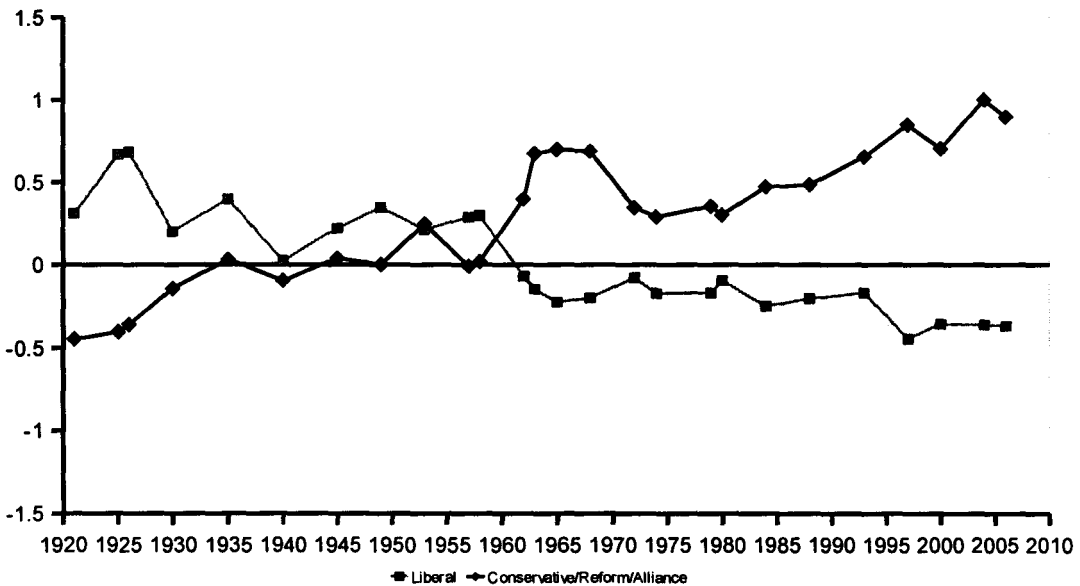
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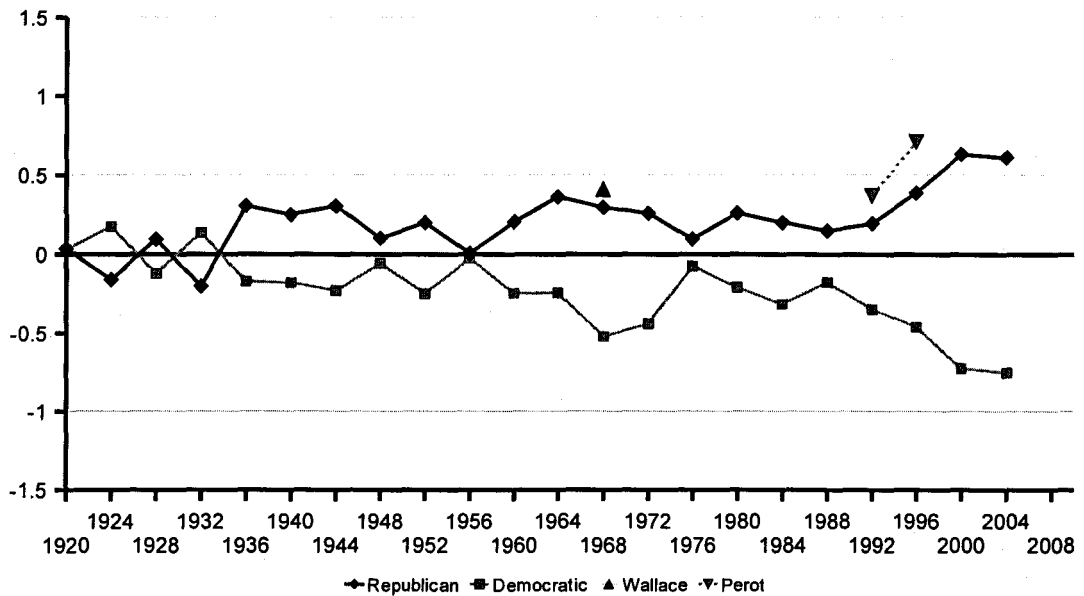
20 For example, if the the Conservatives received 40% rural of the rural vote and 30% of the urban vote, the unlogged ratio would be 1.33. If the Liberals captured 30% of the rural vote and 40% of the urban, the ratio would be 0.75. A value of 1 would indicate urban/rural parity. If the ratios are logged to the base-2, they would be 0.42 and -0.42 respectively, with 0 indicating urban/rural parity.

**FIGURE 5.1: Rural/Urban index for Canadian Federal Elections 1921-2006:  
major parties**



**FIGURE 5.2: Rural/Urban index for Canadian Federal Elections 1921-2006:  
Liberals and Conservatives/Reform/Alliance only**



**FIGURE 5.3: Rural/Urban index for United States Presidential Elections, 1920-2004**

The urban/rural gap between the two major parties (the Liberals and Conservatives) is greatest in the 2004 and 2006 elections. Figure 5.2 shows the Liberal Party plotted against the combined ratio for the Progressive Conservative Party, Reform Party, Canadian Alliance and the new Conservative Party. In this chart a growing gap between the urban and rural vote shares for these parties can clearly be seen. The growth of the Reform Party and its subsequent merger with the Progressive Conservatives seems to have exacerbated urban/rural political differences in Canada.

A similar trend is evident in the results of Presidential elections in the United States. Figure 5.3 charts the urban/rural index for Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates in elections from 1920 to 2004. As the most successful third candidate runs in recent times, points are also plotted for George Wallace in 1968 and Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996, who both show strong rural support. Prior to 1936, there is no clear urban/rural preference for Republican or Democratic candidates. Since 1936, Republican presidential candidates have had a slightly greater share of support in rural counties than urban counties in most elections. Likewise, Democratic candidates have enjoyed somewhat greater urban support during that time frame. The gap widens again by the end of the 1960s with the Republican realignment (Phillips 1969; Burnham 1970). As in Canada, starting in the 1990s there is again a growing urban/rural gap between the parties. The last two Presidential elections, 2000 and 2004, show the largest urban/rural

gaps in the study period. The previous largest urban/rural gap occurred between 1964 and 1972, about the same time as Canada's largest previous urban/rural cleavage. Interestingly, the elections with the most successful third party runs coincide with a widening urban/rural gap between the Republicans and Democrats. Both Wallace and Perot, who can be considered "backlash" candidates, received the greatest share of their support from rural areas.

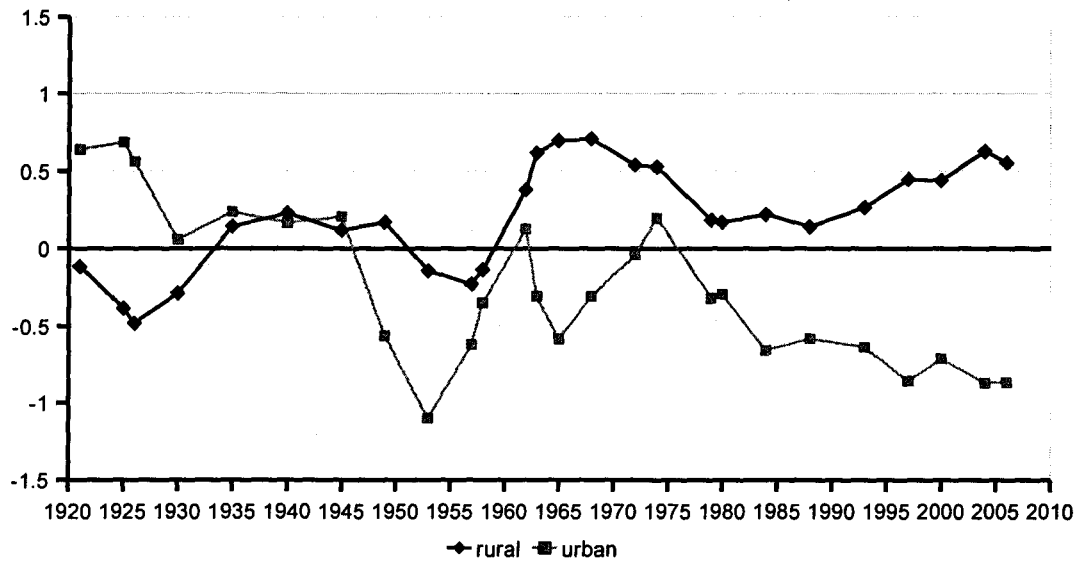
### **5.3 Ideological Leaning of Urban and Rural Areas**

Figures 5.4 and 5.5 chart the ideological leaning index scores for urban and rural areas in English Canada and the United States. The ideological leaning index compares the ratio of right wing to left wing voting percentages in urban and rural zones respectively to the ratio of right wing to left wing percentages in base zones. Positive values indicate the urban or rural zone is politically to the right of the base population, while negative scores indicate the urban or rural zone is left of the base population.

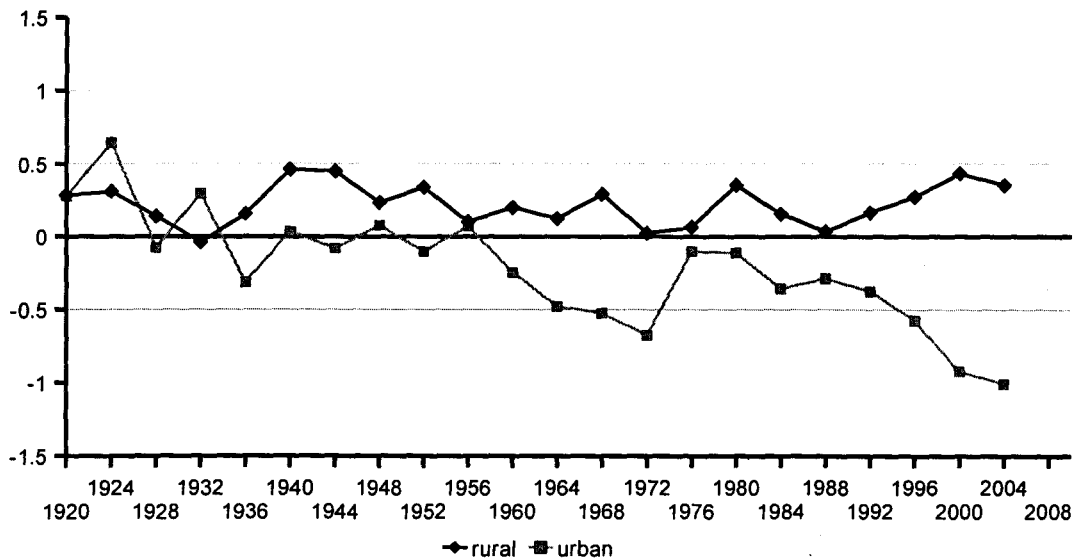
The Canadian chart shows some wild fluctuations in the ideological leaning of urban ridings up until about 1979/80. Since 1979, urban ridings have consistently favoured the Liberals and NDP compared to the rest of Canada. Since the 1960s, rural ridings in Canada have favoured right wing parties: the Progressive Conservatives, Social Credit, Reform Party/Canadian Alliance and Conservatives. Rural ridings leaned the most to the right during the mid 1960s before coming back toward the centre of the political spectrum through the 1980s. Since then, the ideological leanings of rural ridings have been gradually increasing to the right. By the 2004 and 2006 elections, the ideological leaning of rural ridings had returned to its 1960s levels.

The American ideological leaning chart in Figure 5.5 shows a bit more stability than Canada's. In most elections since 1920, rural counties have shown slightly greater support than the base population for Republican candidates. Urban counties voted very closely to the base population until the 1960s, when they veered toward greater support for the Democratic side, again coinciding with the electoral realignment toward Republican dominance. Urban counties jumped back to the centre for the 1976 and 1980 elections before beginning an increasingly precipitous leftward trend. The most important finding for the present study is that both the Canadian and American charts show the largest ideological gap between urban and rural areas in the most recent elections.

**FIGURE 5.4: Ideological Leaning, Canadian Federal Elections 1921-2006**



**FIGURE 5.5: Ideological Leaning, United States Presidential Elections 1920-2004**



#### **5.4 Comparing urban/rural differences over time in Canada and the United States**

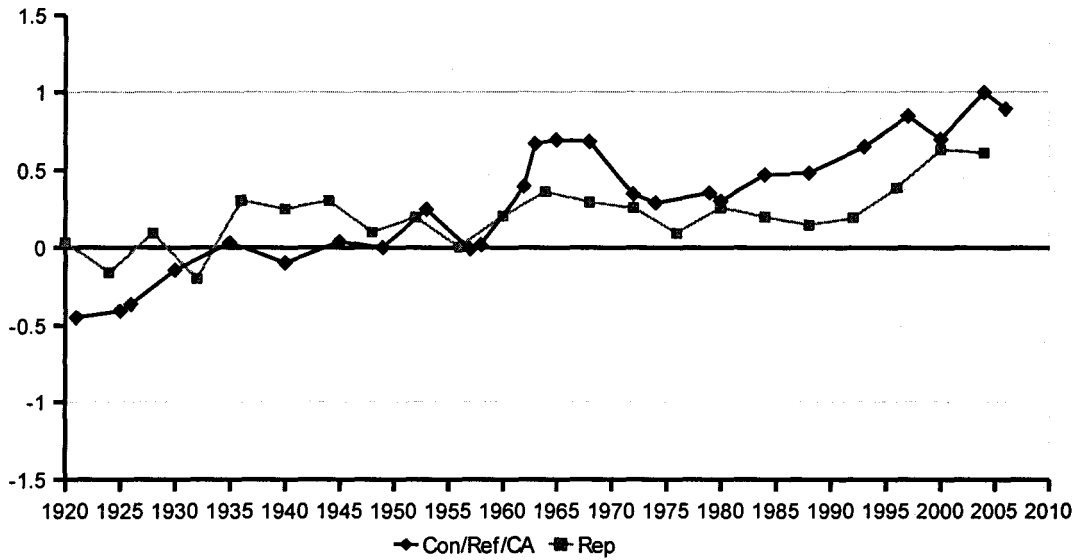
It is clear that the urban/rural gap as measured by the rural/urban index is currently at its greatest in both Canada and the United States. Now we will compare the Canadian and American indices to see how closely they align. Figure 5.6 shows the rural/urban index for the Progressive Conservatives/Reform/Canadian Alliance/Conservatives in Canadian Federal Elections and for Republican Presidential candidates in the United States between 1920 and 2006. For easier comparison, the rural/urban index for the Liberals/CCF/NDP and for Democratic Presidential candidates is shown separately in figure 5.7. Looking at figure 5.6, the Conservative line is a bit more exaggerated than the Republican line, its sensitivity possibly being enhanced by the smaller sample size of the Canadian data. Both the right wing Canadian and American lines show increasing support in rural areas compared to urban areas from 1988 to present. Both also show an increase in rural support during the 1960s. Support for centre/left parties in Canada and Democratic Presidential candidates in the United States became increasingly urban-based in the 1960s. The Liberals and the Democrats started out with urban/rural parity (or even slightly more rural support in the Liberals' case). Both lines move toward more urban support from 1988 onward. The lines in figure 5.7 follow each other quite closely. Democratic candidates have moved slightly further toward urban support than Canadian Liberals/NDP while the Canadian Conservatives have move slightly more toward the rural side than the Republicans.

Figure 5.8 shows the ideological leaning index for rural ridings in Canada and rural counties in the United States. Rural areas in both countries have generally leaned slightly to the right wing parties; however, rural counties in the United States have been very close to the centre in many years while Canada's rural ridings have at times flirted with left wing parties. What stands out the most in this chart is that the Canadian and American lines follow each other very closely since about 1979/80. Prior to 1980, they rarely coincided so closely.

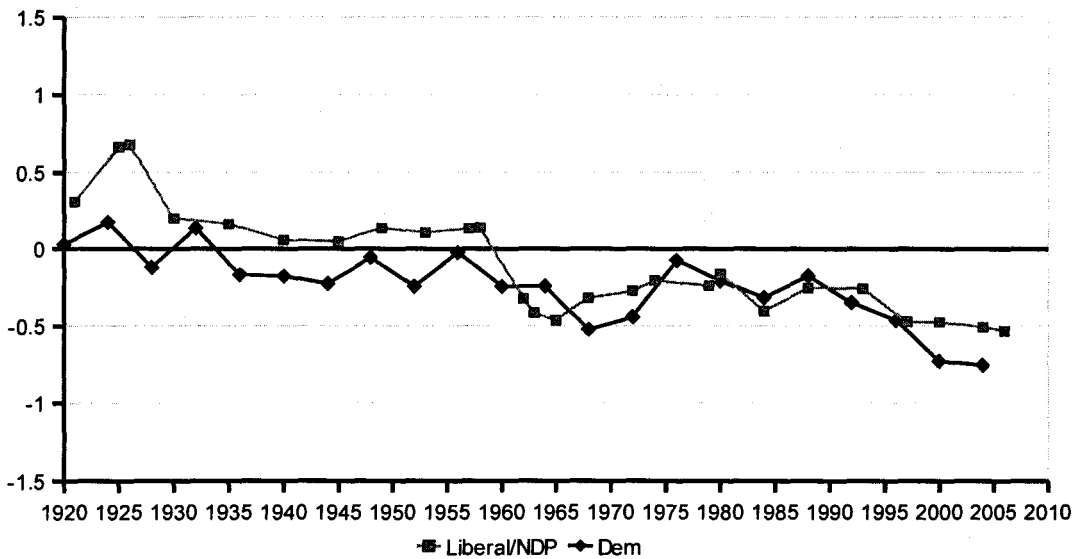
The lines for urban ridings/counties are similarly close in the period since 1979/80, as shown in figure 5.9. Urban areas in both Canada and the United States even showed a slight tendency to the right in the 1920s and 1930s. Since the 1960s, urban counties in the United States have consistently leaned toward Democratic candidates. From the late 1970s onward, urban areas in Canada and the United States have followed a similar path of left wing preference.

Strong conclusions cannot be drawn from this descriptive data, but these charts are suggestive of an urban/rural political phenomenon that spans the Canada/U.S. border. The voting trends of urban and rural areas have followed each other very closely in Canada and the United States. It appears the urban/rural divide applies across English North America.

**FIGURE 5.6: Rural/urban index comparing Canada and the United States: Conservatives vs. Republican candidates**

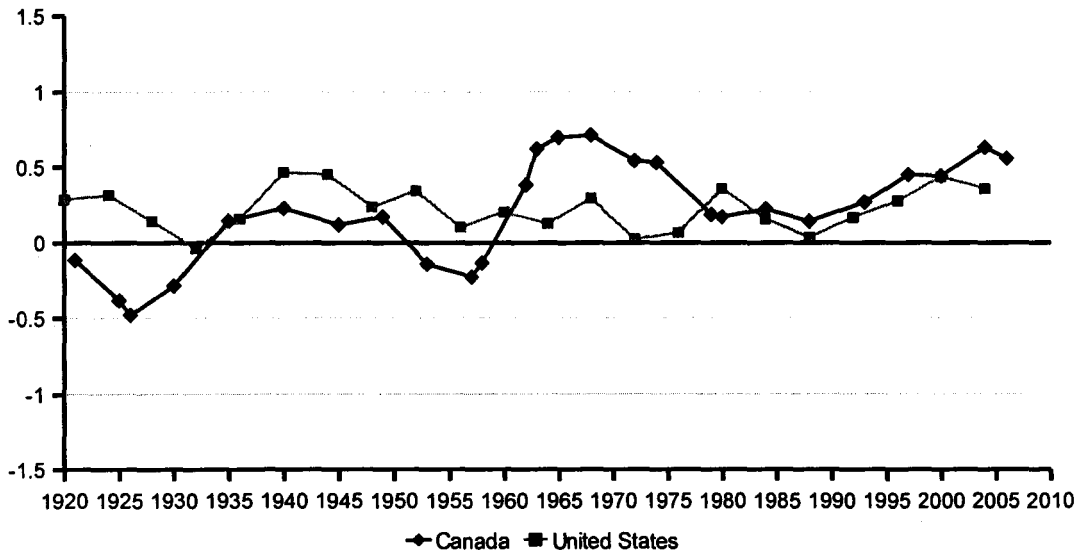


**FIGURE 5.7: Rural/urban index comparing Canada and the United States: Liberals/NDP vs. Democratic candidates**

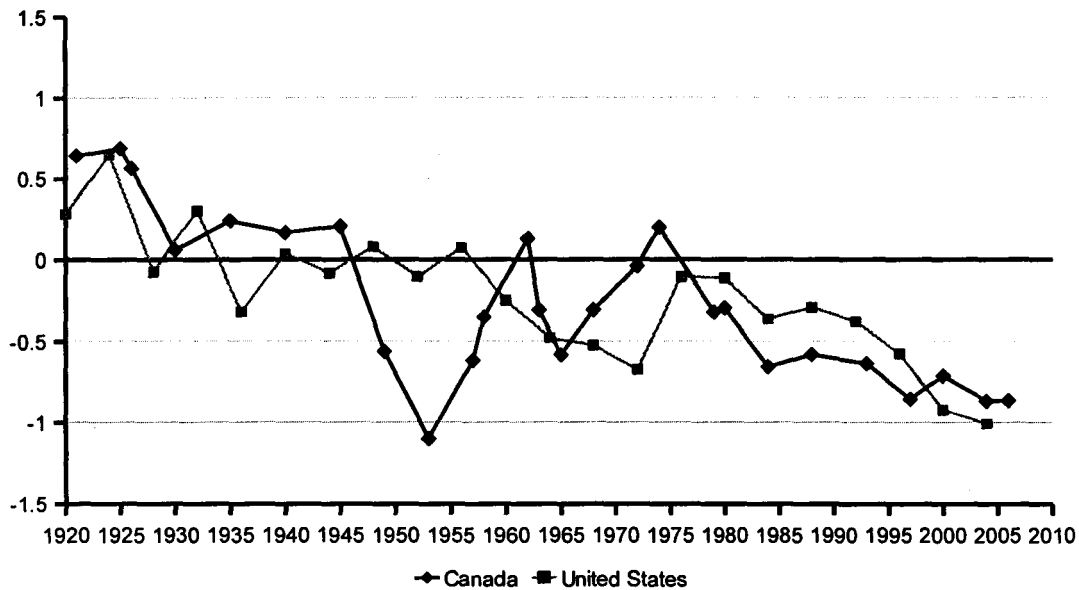




**FIGURE 5.8: Ideological leaning index for rural ridings/counties: Canada vs. United States**



**FIGURE 5.9: Ideological leaning index for urban ridings/counties: Canada vs. United States**



### **5.5 Regression analysis for 1965/1968, 1988 and 2004**

The urban/rural differences presented in the charts above are “raw” differences. Thus, it is possible that those differences could be explained by other variables, such as region or the social composition of ridings and counties. Regression analysis can be used to control for the effects of region and the social composition of ridings and counties. Three elections for each country were selected for analysis: the 1965 Canadian Federal election and the 1968 United States Presidential election, and the 1988 and 2004 Federal and Presidential elections in each country.

From the charts above, we saw that the 1960s were a period where the urban/rural divide was considerable, especially in Canada. The 1960s were marked by many large scale social changes such as the sexual revolution and civil rights in the United States. Many social issues became major political issues. For this study, the 1968 Canadian Federal Election would have been preferable to the 1965 election for capturing the spirit of the times, but complete aggregate data for the Representation Order of 1966 was not available. However, the 1965 Federal Election showed the largest urban/rural gap other than the present one, so it is not a bad choice. The 1968 Presidential election included the strongest third party candidate of modern times in George Wallace. This election hinged on important issues such as civil rights and the Vietnam War and was marked by widespread social unrest. The 1968 election also marks the beginning of Republican dominance in the South, the groundwork for this having been laid in the 1964 Presidential election.

The urban/rural gap was relatively stable at the time of the 1988 elections in Canada and the United States. Culture war rhetoric had not yet come to the forefront in the United States although the domination of the Republican Party by social conservatives had grown throughout the Reagan and Bush Presidencies. The Progressive Conservatives under Brian Mulroney were still very much near the political centre on social issues, focusing instead on economic issues such as free trade with the United States. But the newer American style social conservatism was brewing in Canada by this time with the Reform Party participating in the 1988 election for the first time. No Reform Party candidates were elected and the party received just over 2% of the total vote. The dependent variable for the 1988 regression is the sum of Reform and Progressive Conservative percentages in each riding.

Urban/rural differences were at their peak in both countries at the time of the 2004 elections. George W. Bush won his second term as President amid security issues and as culture war rhetoric was still at its height. In Canada, by the 2000 election the Progressive Conservatives had fallen from being one of the two major parties to fifth party status and were reduced to just 12 seats. Meanwhile, the Reform Party had changed its name to the Canadian Alliance and was enjoying its second stint as the official opposition. The nature of conservatism in

Canada was clearly changing. After the merger of the Reform/Canadian Alliance with the remnants of the Progressive Conservatives, the new Conservative Party emerged with a different character than its predecessor. In the 2004 Canadian election, the newly merged Conservative Party under the leadership of Stephen Harper reduced the Liberals to a minority government. Although the new Conservative Party under Harper had made some attempts to distance itself from the social conservatism of the Reform/Alliance and that found in the United States, it was widely accused of having a “hidden agenda.” Even with the attempts to temper its social conservatism, first with the rebranding as the Canadian Alliance and later as the “new” Conservatives, it can safely be said that between 1988 and 2004 the major right wing party in Canadian politics has moved to the right on social issues.

The rural/urban index and ideological leaning index charts presented earlier suggest that there has been an urban/rural divide in North America since the 1960s which has been growing in the most recent elections. The control variables in these regression models will give us a clue as to the nature of the urban/rural gap in three different phases of the urban/rural divide. The 1960s show a distinct urban/rural gap in Canada and to a lesser extent in the United States. The 1980s shows a smaller gap and relative stability in partisan urban and rural vote shares. The era of the “culture war” from the 1990s to the present shows the urban/rural gap increasing again.

Table 5.1 shows the estimated difference between the urban and rural vote percentages for the Republican candidates in U.S. counties and the Conservatives in Canadian ridings. The estimates without controls are simply the differences between the urban and rural means for Canadian ridings and U.S. counties. The estimates with controls are taken from the 1965/1968, 1988 and 2004 regression models shown in tables 5.2 and 5.3. The Conservatives received on average 16% more support in rural ridings than urban ridings in 1965. This number dropped to approximately 10% in 1988 and rose again to over 22% in 2004. A similar pattern is seen in U.S. counties, with the Republicans receiving on average 9% more support in rural than urban counties in 1965, dropping to 5% in 1988 and rising to 22% in 2004. Urban/rural differences were smaller in the United States than Canada in the first two time periods but urban/rural differences were virtually the same in 2004.

Controlling for region and social composition, urban/rural differences remain in all time periods for both Canada and the United States. In 1965, region and the social composition of ridings accounts for some of the urban/rural differences in Canada. For 1968 in the United States and for the 1988 elections in both countries, social composition and region do not account for urban/rural differences at all. By 2004, region and social composition account for a great deal of variation in urban/rural differences, the urban/rural difference dropping from 22% to near 10% in each country when holding social composition constant and controlling for regional effects.

**TABLE 5.1: Estimated rural-urban difference in Conservative/Republican vote**

	<i>Republican/Conservative vote: rural% - urban%</i>	
	<b>no controls</b>	<b>w/ controls</b>
<b>1965/8</b>		
Canada	16.29	10.43
United States	9.06	10.75
<b>1988</b>		
Canada	10.00	9.82
United States	5.16	11.64
<b>2004</b>		
Canada	22.21	9.15
United States	22.26	10.25

All within country differences shown here are significant ( $p < .001$ ). Predicted values are estimated from the regression parameters in tables 5.2 and 5.3 with control variables set at their means and factors set at their proportions in the data.

Table 5.2 shows the results of the regression models predicting percentage of Conservative votes at the riding level for 1965, 1988 and 2004. Canada's well-known regional differences are apparent in each of the years, interacting with urban/rural zone in 1988. Social composition variables are as expected in 1988 and 2004: the Conservatives received less support in ridings with higher percentages of females, visible minorities and university educated residents and greater support in ridings with more senior citizens and higher median incomes.

The American results are shown in table 5.3. There is an interaction between urban/rural zone and region in 1968 and 1988. At the national level, there is an overall difference between urban and rural counties in support for Republican candidates in each of these years. In 2004, these county level data generally support the "red state/blue state" regional hypothesis. Counties in the Northeast and Midwest were less likely to vote for Bush than counties in the South and West. There were urban/rural differences in all the regions except the Northeast; however, since the Northeast is the most highly urbanized region of the United States, containing several of its largest cities and having few unbroken rural areas, only three counties in the Northeast met this study's criteria for rural classification. Thus, a good test of urban/rural differences in this region in the present study is impossible and the interaction term was dropped in the final

**TABLE 5.2: OLS regression predicting percentage voting Conservative in Canadian federal ridings**

	1965		1988		2004	
	b	sig.	b	sig.	b	sig.
Intercept	-42.35	--	-42.91	--	-84.16	--
<i>urban/rural zone</i>		.007		<.001		<.001
urban	-8.3	.007	-3.41	.550	-2.09	.482
rural	2.13	.212	5.44	.158	<b>7.06</b>	<.001
<i>region</i>		<.001		<.001		<.001
Atlantic	<b>18.14</b>	<.001	<b>-42.91</b>	<.001	-5.22	.157
Ontario	<b>23.14</b>	<.001	-3.41	.464	<b>-7.79</b>	<.001
Prairies	<b>28.55</b>	<.001	<b>5.44</b>	<.001	<b>13.74</b>	<.001
<i>region*urban/rural zone</i>				.003		
Atlantic*urban	--	--	-2.73	.805	--	--
Ontario*urban	--	--	2.36	.693	--	--
Prairies*urban	--	--	2.52	.721	--	--
Atlantic*rural	--	--	-1.88	.711	--	--
Ontario*rural	--	--	-2.07	.636	--	--
Prairies*rural	--	--	<b>12.76</b>	.007	--	--
<i>social composition</i>						
% female	--	--	<b>-2.78</b>	.006	<b>-2.78</b>	.004
% age 19 and under	<b>0.81</b>	.007	-0.39	.252	0.39	.231
% age 65 and older	<b>2.5</b>	<.001	<b>0.93</b>	.014	<b>1.22</b>	.002
log % visible minority	<b>5.41</b>	.008	--	--	<b>-3.51</b>	.001
% less than HS	<b>-0.3</b>	.041	<b>-1.19</b>	<.001	<b>-0.64</b>	.004
log % university or higher	5.69	.541	<b>-24.31</b>	.005	<b>-8.35</b>	.024
log median HH income	--	--	<b>62.00</b>	<.001	<b>60.48</b>	<.001
log % income over \$10,000	-2.01	.619	--	--	--	--
% income under \$3,000	<b>0.28</b>	.020	--	--	--	--
<i>N</i>	186		217		230	
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.611		.525		.677	

**TABLE 5.3: OLS regression predicting percentage voting for Republican Presidential candidates in U.S. counties**

	1968		1988		2004	
	<b>b</b>	<b>sig.</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>sig.</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>sig.</b>
Intercept	-67.66	--	-49.48	--	37.40	--
<i>urban/rural zone</i>		<.001		<.001		<.001
urban	-6.50	.051	-8.05	.001	-8.51	<.001
rural	4.57	<.001	3.62	.002	1.74	.002
<i>region</i>		<.001		<.001		<.001
Northeast	-3.22	.001	-0.47	.615	-8.04	<.001
South	-8.98	<.001	4.88	<.001	8.19	<.001
Midwest	-1.10	.153	-1.19	.092	-5.00	<.001
<i>region*urban/rural zone</i>		.001		<.001		
Northeast*urban	-2.60	.542	1.20	.693	--	--
South*urban	9.84	.015	4.65	.097	--	--
Midwest*urban	0.39	.925	2.70	.377	--	--
Northeast*rural	1.58	.688	-1.24	.827	--	--
South*rural	-2.23	.142	-4.77	.001	--	--
Midwest*rural	0.75	.627	0.06	.964	--	--
<i>social composition</i>						
% female	-0.01	.924	0.35	.017	-1.56	<.001
% age 19 and under	0.47	<.001	0.09	.198	1.60	<.001
% age 65 and older	0.07	.439	-0.10	.151	1.00	<.001
log % visible minority	-8.58	<.001	-3.61	<.001	-9.13	<.001
% less than HS	-0.02	.518	-0.03	.090	-0.36	<.001
log % university or higher	9.74	<.001	3.76	.011	-4.71	.013
log median HH income	20.98	<.001	20.51	<.001	14.65	<.001
<i>N</i>	2934		3083		3099	
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.595		.108		.350	

model (shown in table 5.3). That the most highly urbanized region also had the lowest county-level support for Bush could also be interpreted as support for the urban/rural hypothesis.

All social composition variables are significant for the 2004 Presidential election. As expected, counties with higher percentages of females, visible minorities and university educated residents had, on average, lower levels of

support for Bush. Having higher numbers of residents with less than high school education is also negatively related to the percentage of votes for Bush. This is similar to the Canadian models, where percent with less than high school was negatively related to percentage of Conservative votes. It is possible that many of those with less than high school educations have low incomes or are more likely to benefit from social programs so voting for right wing parties would not be in their economic interest; however, this cannot be tested definitively at the aggregate level. Counties with larger populations of residents 65 or older and those with higher median household incomes are likely to have higher levels of support for Bush. The only social composition predictors consistent over the three models are percentage of visible minorities and median household income.

## **5.6 Summary**

The social composition of counties and ridings seems to account for more of the variation in the urban and rural percentages voting for right wing parties in English North America in the 2004 elections than it did in the 1965/68 and 1988 elections. In 2004, higher percentages of females, visible minorities and university educated residents are associated with lower support for right wing parties and higher median household income and a greater percentage of senior citizens is associated with greater support for right wing parties. In the previous chapter we found that urban populations were better educated, more ethnically diverse and had a higher proportion of females than rural populations. It is difficult to draw conclusions about individual behaviour from aggregate level data, but we can use these results to formulate hypotheses to be tested using individual level data. It seems likely that “who you are” accounts more than ever for how you will vote and “who you are” depends a lot on where you live.

Looking at urban/rural differences over time shows that the recent growth of the urban/rural divide coincides with the rise of social and moral issues in national level politics of both Canada and the United States. Individual level analysis from chapter three shows that urban and rural residents differ on these very same issues: rural residents are more socially conservative than urban residents on average. Interestingly, both Canada and the United States also showed large urban/rural ideological gaps in the mid to late 1960s, a time of tumultuous social change in the Western world. Do moral traditionalism and socially conservative attitudes explain the current urban/rural divide? In the next chapter we will test this hypothesis.

## **CHAPTER SIX: Urban/Rural Differences in Vote Choice in United States and Canada, 2004**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter urban/rural differences were examined over time. It was found that rural areas have an increasing tendency to vote to the right and urban areas have an increasing inclination to vote left. The urban/rural cleavage coincides in time with the rise in importance of moral and social issues in North American national politics. At the aggregate level urban/rural differences in voting are only partly explained by the social composition of urban and rural areas. We also know that rural residents are on average more socially conservative than those residing in urban areas and that some of this, but not all of this, is accounted for by characteristics such as age, education, income and visible minority status. In this chapter we return to the individual level to examine vote choice in relation to these variables for the 2004 Federal election in Canada and the 2004 Presidential election in the United States.

### **6.2 Urban/rural differences in vote choice**

Using aggregate level data, the average percentage voting Conservative in Canada's rural ridings in 2004 was 44.5 percent compared to 22.3 percent in urban ridings. Looking at the individual level survey data from the 2004 CES, 48.4 percent of rural respondents voted Conservative compared to 34.5 percent among urban respondents. The rural numbers from the aggregated data and survey data match very closely while the urban numbers are slightly different. This is likely because respondents classified as urban in the survey do not strictly live in the cores of Canada's largest metropolitan areas, which comprise the sample of urban ridings in the aggregate analysis. For the United States, the average percentage voting for George W. Bush in 2004 in rural counties was 65.5 percent and in urban counties, 43.2 percent. From the 2004 ANES sample, 63.1 percent of rural respondents voted for Bush compared to 43.6 percent of urban respondents. The aggregate and survey numbers match very closely. Means from different levels of analysis (counties/ridings vs. Individuals) are not directly equivalent, but the fact that these percentages match fairly closely increases confidence in the validity of



the measures. As with the aggregate results, the survey results make it clear that there were significant urban/rural differences in the 2004 elections in Canada and the United States.

Now we will turn to regression analysis to help us understand the nature of urban/rural differences in vote choice. To do this, logistic regression models using the CES and ANES survey data were constructed. The dependent variable for the Canadian models is whether the respondent voted for the Conservatives or not. Likewise, the dependent variable in the American models is whether the respondent voted for the Republican Presidential candidate, George W. Bush, or not. For each country there are three models: model one assesses urban/rural differences controlling for demographic variables (sex, age, education, income, religion, region, union and visible minority status); model two adds the moral traditionalism scale to model one; and model three adds the social issues variables (gun control, abortion, and gay marriage) to model two. Essentially we are looking to see whether the addition of the variables controlling for social conservatism will reduce the effect of urban/rural place of residence on vote choice. It is hypothesized that the urban/rural differences in vote choice are mediated by the greater social conservatism of rural voters; therefore, it is expected that urban/rural differences in voting will be reduced with the addition of moral traditionalism and the social issues variables to the equation.

### **6.3 Urban/rural differences controlling for demographic variables**

Table 6.1 shows the logistic regression results predicting the probability of voting Conservative in Canada (excluding Quebec) from the 2004 CES. Western voters were more likely to vote for the Conservatives than non-western voters. Being a visible minority or having a union member in the household made respondents less likely to vote Conservative. Protestants were more likely to vote Conservative than other religious groups and those with no religion. Household income was just barely significant with a one-sided test ( $p < .035$ , two-sided tests are reported in table 6.1). Education, gender and age had no effect on vote choice. The urban/rural gap remains significant after adding the demographic control variables. The estimated difference in the probability of voting Conservative between urban and rural voters is estimated at 10.3 points compared to 13.6 without controls (see table 6.3).

The 2004 ANES results (table 6.2) paint a similar picture. Here too the urban/rural gap remains significant with control variables in the equation. The estimated difference between urban and rural voters dropped from 19.5 points without controls to 13.0, holding all demographic variables constant. The signs of the coefficients for each variable are the same as those for the Canadian data, with visible minorities and those with union members in the household less likely to vote for Bush than whites and non-union households. Income is also positively

**TABLE 6.1: Logistic regression predicting Conservative vote choice, 2004 Canadian Federal Election**

	<i>model 1</i>		<i>model 2</i>		<i>model 3</i>	
	b	sig.	b	sig.	b	sig.
(Intercept)	-0.666	--	-2.476	--	-3.392	--
rural	<b>0.434</b>	.001	<b>0.397</b>	.005	0.186	.177
west	<b>0.627</b>	<.001	<b>0.600</b>	<.001	<b>0.505</b>	<.001
female	-0.085	.471	-0.122	.307	0.111	.392
age	0.006	.108	0.003	.410	0.000	.925
visible minority	<b>-0.776</b>	.005	<b>-0.843</b>	.003	<b>-0.904</b>	.003
education	-0.021	.412	0.013	.621	0.023	.366
union HH	<b>-0.374</b>	.008	<b>-0.360</b>	.016	<b>-0.308</b>	.042
HH income	0.037	.070	<b>0.044</b>	.037	<b>0.054</b>	.013
religion		<.001		<.001		<.001
Catholic	-0.605	<.001	-0.566	<.001	-0.563	<.001
other	-0.794	.027	-0.590	.087	-0.478	.170
no religion/atheist	-0.645	.001	-0.314	.079	-0.123	.486
moral traditionalism	--	--	<b>0.162</b>	<.001	<b>0.084</b>	.001
gun control	--	--	--	--	<b>0.184</b>	<.001
gay marriage	--	--	--	--	<b>0.289</b>	<.001
abortion	--	--	--	--	0.081	.127

Average N=2797.61. Dependent variable is vote choice (1=Conservative Party of Canada, 0=other party). The significance test for religion is derived from a likelihood ratio test comparing the model with and without religion. The tests for individual coefficients are Wald tests.

associated with voting for Bush. Voters in red states are no more likely to vote for Bush than those in blue states, controlling for social characteristics.

So even controlling for demographic characteristics, rural voters are significantly more likely to vote Conservative/Republican than urban voters. This means urban/rural place of residence has its own independent effect on vote choice. Demographic differences do seem to explain some of the urban/rural difference in vote choice; this is more the case in the United States than Canada. This is consistent with the aggregate level results in chapter five which showed that demographic characteristics explained some of the urban/rural difference in

support for the Conservatives/Republicans at the riding/county level.

There are a few differences in predictors compared to the aggregate level models. With the individual-level analysis, education, age and gender are not significant. Gidengil et al. (2006:2) suggest that social background variables are generally poor predictors of vote choice in Canada; however, this is generally not considered to be true in the United States.

**TABLE 6.2: Logistic regression predicting Republican vote choice, 2004 U.S. Presidential Election**

	<i>model 1</i>		<i>model 2</i>		<i>model 3</i>	
	b	sig.	b	sig.	b	sig.
(Intercept)	-0.452	--	-4.034	--	-6.063	--
rural	<b>0.524</b>	.038	0.496	.090	0.298	.392
red state	0.229	.261	0.220	.317	0.063	.925
female	-0.301	.099	-0.355	.097	-0.011	.961
age	0.004	.441	-0.006	.236	-0.007	.301
visible minority	<b>-1.491</b>	<.001	<b>-1.489</b>	<.001	<b>-1.523</b>	.001
education	-0.042	.584	0.001	.995	0.113	.120
union HH	<b>-0.955</b>	.001	<b>-1.095</b>	.001	<b>-1.217</b>	.002
HH income	<b>0.065</b>	.023	0.051	.089	0.055	.070
religion		.052		.005		.005
Catholic	-0.291	.232	-0.081	.737	-0.070	.890
other	-0.976	.055	-0.169	.764	0.609	.315
no religion/atheist	-0.264	.311	0.569	.120	0.933	.043
moral traditionalism	--	--	<b>0.365</b>	<.001	<b>0.270</b>	<.001
gun control	--	--	--	--	<b>0.541</b>	<.001
gay marriage	--	--	--	--	<b>1.150</b>	.002
abortion	--	--	--	--	<b>0.243</b>	.049

Average N=946.07. Dependent variable is vote choice (1=Republican, 0=other). The significance test for religion is derived from a likelihood ratio test comparing the model with and without religion. The tests for individual coefficients are Wald tests.

#### **6.4 Controlling for moral traditionalism**

In model two, the moral traditionalism scale is added to the regression equations. Greater moral traditionalism moderately increased the probability of voting Conservative in Canada in 2004 and strongly increased the probability of voting for Bush in the United States in 2004 (tables 6.1 and 6.2). The increase in the estimated probability of voting Conservative between respondents scoring lowest (moral traditionalism=5) and highest (moral traditionalism=15) on the moral traditionalism scale was 35.8 points while in the United States this difference was 70.1 points (see table 6.4). The strength of moral traditionalism as a predictor of voting Conservative or Republican lends strong support to the idea that moral issues played a major role in vote choice for the 2004 elections.

Adding the moral traditionalism scale to the model had very little effect on the urban/rural gap. This can be seen in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 as the rural coefficients for both countries were not substantially reduced in model two compared to model one (from 0.524 to 0.496 for the United States and from 0.434 to 0.397 for Canada). Recall from chapter four that moral traditionalism scores were only marginally higher for rural respondents compared to urban respondents in each country. It appears that moral traditionalism alone, as measured by the moral traditionalism scale, does not account for urban/rural differences in vote choice. As was mentioned in chapter four, it would be interesting to examine the moral traditionalism scale in relation to categories of urban and rural that were more strictly urban and rural (i.e., more akin to the categories used in the aggregate analysis, with a base category containing respondents living in suburbs, smaller cities and towns).

#### **6.5 Controlling for social issues**

Model three shows the effects on vote choice after adding variables associated with conservative social issues. Looking at the Canadian results in table 6.1 under model three, it can be seen that opposition to gun control and gay marriage are positive predictors of voting Conservative. Opposition to gay marriage is the strongest predictor of Conservative vote choice among the three. The probability of voting Conservative increases by 25.9 points for those scoring five on opposition to gay marriage compared to those scoring one, and similarly the probability increases by 16.9 and 7.5 points for gun control and abortion respectively (table 6.4).

The coefficients for visible minority status, union households and living in Western Canada remain virtually unchanged. This is true across all three models, which suggests that the lower probability of voting Conservative among visible minorities and union households is not related to their social conservatism or lack thereof. Even with controls for social conservatism, the odds of voting

Conservative are still 66 percent higher for western Canadians than for those in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. This should not be surprising as Alberta (in particular) has a history of voting Conservative that began well before social conservatism became prominent in North American politics.

It was expected that opposition to gun control, gay marriage and abortion would be strong predictors of Conservative vote choice, but what effect do they have on the urban/rural divide? With the social issues variables in the model, urban/rural place of residence is no longer a significant predictor of Conservative vote choice. From table 6.3 it can be seen that controlling for these three social issues reduces the predicted urban/rural gap in Conservative vote choice to just

**TABLE 6.3: Predicted probability of voting Conservative/Republican (%)**

	Canada	United States
	Conservatives	Republican
<i>no controls</i>		
urban	34.5	43.6
rural	48.1	63.1
difference	13.6	19.5
<i>w/ controls</i>		
urban	33.9	42.5
rural	44.2	55.5
difference	10.3	13.0
<i>controlling for moral traditionalism</i>		
urban	33.6	42.1
rural	43.0	54.4
difference	9.4	12.3
<i>controlling for social issues</i>		
urban	34.5	43.9
rural	38.8	51.3
difference	4.3	7.4

Cell entries show the estimated probability of voting Conservative or Republican for urban and rural respondents multiplied by 100 while holding the other variables at their average values. The estimates are derived from the logistic regression models shown in tables 6.1 and 6.2.

**TABLE 6.4: Estimated effect size of social issues variables on Conservative/Republican vote choice**

	Canada	United States
moral traditionalism	+35.8	+72.2
oppose gun control	+16.9	+46.5
oppose gay marriage	+25.9	+27.8
oppose abortion	+7.5	+17.9

Cell entries represent the differences in the estimated probability of voting Conservative or Republican over the total range of values for each variable while holding the other variables at their average values. The estimates are derived from the logistic regression models 2 and 3 shown in tables 6.1 and 6.2.

4.3 points from 10.3 in model one (see table 6.3). In chapter four it was found that rural respondents were on average more socially conservative on each of these issues than urban respondents. From these results, we can conclude that the social conservatism of rural respondents helps to explain urban/rural differences in voting for the 2004 Canadian Federal Election.

Looking at the results of model three for the United States, it can be seen that the social issues variables are all significant predictors of the probability of voting for Bush in 2004. There is a 46.5 point difference between those who most favour gun control and those who most oppose gun control in the probability of voting for Bush (table 6.4). The probability of voting for Bush increases by 27.8 points for those who oppose gay marriage compared to those who do not oppose gay marriage; the size of this effect is very similar to that in Canada. The predicted difference between those who least oppose abortion and those who most oppose it is 17.9. As was the case with Canada, the coefficients of the demographic control variables were not seriously affected by the inclusion of the social issues variables in the model. Union households and visible minorities continue to be associated with not voting for Bush.

With the social issues variables in the model, the difference between rural and urban voters in the probability of voting for Bush is reduced to insignificance. As with Canada, we can conclude that on average the more socially conservative attitudes of rural voters (chapter four) helps to explain the urban/rural difference observed in the probability of voting for George W. Bush in the 2004 Presidential Election.

## 6.6 Summary

The logistic regression results show that the issues of gay marriage, gun

control and abortion were significant predictors of right wing voting in Canada and the United States in 2004, and that differences between urban and rural individuals on these issues translated to urban/rural differences in vote choice. Moral traditionalism was also a strong predictor of right wing vote choice but urban/rural differences cannot be explained solely on the basis of urban/rural differences in moral traditionalism. The urban/rural gap in vote choice is partly explained by differences in the demographic characteristics of urban and rural voters, but no demographic variable had as strong of an impact on vote choice as any the social issues variables. Although the social issues variables had a greater effect on vote choice in the United States than in Canada, the 2004 elections in the two countries show remarkable similarities. After controlling for demographic characteristics the rural/urban difference in right wing vote choice is similar in Canada and the United States. Controlling for demographics, moral traditionalism and social issues, the predicted rural/urban difference in right wing vote choice is close (4.3 in Canada versus 7.4 in the United States) in both countries (table 6.3). Despite the outward differences between Canadian and American national politics, the Canadian/American similarities shown in this chapter and the previous one suggest there are urban/rural trends associated with social conservatism that affect all of English North America.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, vote choice in recent elections has been used as an empirical indicator of a larger cultural conflict: rural/traditional versus urban/progressive. With the advent of culture war rhetoric—itsself a product of the backlash mentality—social and moral issues have come to the forefront of public and political discourse in North America. The culture war's major political issues—abortion, gay marriage and gun control—have opened up an urban/rural cleavage in the national politics of both Canada and the United States. Although the culture war may not be strictly a war between urban and rural areas, rural and urban lifestyles and cultures epitomize the poles of the culture war.

The results in chapter four show that urban/rural differences are not completely the result of demographic differences. Rural populations are more socially conservative than urban populations even after controlling for demographic characteristics. Rural place of residence is among the strongest predictors of opposition to gun control, opposition to abortion and opposition to gay marriage. This is true in both Canada and the United States. The results in chapter four show that the characteristics of urban and rural populations are uniform across English Canada and the United States. Overall, education is the second most influential variable. Education is negatively related to socially conservative attitudes on all three issues, except gun control in Canada. In comparing the characteristics of urban and rural populations, education level stands out as one of the major differences between the populations. The results show that there were differences in education levels between urban/rural areas in the past, but despite increasing education levels overall, the gap has widened. This has important implications for urban and rural cultural differences, since education is the primary liberalizing force in North American society. The current socioeconomic climate exacerbates the educational gap, however, as the move to a postindustrial, globalized, knowledge-based economy threatens not only the rural and small town way of life, but also their material wellbeing. The “technologically obsolete,” those who are “left behind” or “dispossessed” in small towns and rural areas, are especially prone to backlash resentment as their economic prospects dwindle while highly educated “urban professionals” are seen to be thriving and steering society's agenda. This technological gap is reported by Adams (2008) in his analysis of urban and rural populations in Canada. Adams also describes increasing ethnic and cultural diversity as an “opportunity” for



urbanites but a “threat” for rural residents. Despite large urban/rural differences in the percentage of visible minorities, this study found few direct effects of visible minority status on moral traditionalism or social issues. It was argued earlier, however, that the level of ethnic and cultural diversity play a part in the structural differences of urban and rural areas. These results do not contradict the notion that the greater ethnic and cultural homogeneity of rural areas plays a role in explaining their relative traditionalism.

Chapter five examined the urban/rural gap over time by looking at national elections in Canada and the United States since 1920. The results confirm that there is a substantial urban/rural cleavage in both Canadian and American national politics in recent elections. The urban/rural gap has actually grown to its widest point in the most recent elections. More importantly, the most recent widening of the gap coincides with the rise of the culture war and its emphasis on social and moral issues in politics. The most recent widening of the gap also coincides with the rise of the Reform Party in Canada and the candidacy of Ross Perot in the United States. Both Perot and the Reform Party of Canada—which interestingly also happens to be the name of the political party founded by Perot—received proportionately more of their support from rural areas. The urban/rural cleavage is apparent in both countries since the mid 1960s, suggesting that the contemporary culture war is indeed related to the backlash more generally. In both Canada and the United States, the urban/rural gap narrowed during the 1970s to early 1980s but has never closed. The 1960s also mark the beginning of an urban/rural gap in ideological leaning. Since the 1960s, rural areas in both Canada and the United States have leaned distinctly to the right. Almost step-for-step, these trends are very close in both Canada and the United States, suggesting that the forces behind the urban/rural cleavage are similar for both countries. Race is one factor that contributed to the urban/rural split in the 1960s, although for different reasons in each country. In Canada, greater numbers of visible minorities came into the country and settled mainly in the largest cities. In the United States, blacks were migrating from rural areas into cities and voting overwhelmingly Democratic while whites were moving out of cities. Otherwise, Canada and the United States share a similar culture and have a common history of urbanization and modernization. This has continued as both nations share a similar socioeconomic climate while facing the challenges of the transition to a postindustrial economy. The culture war can be considered part of the backlash reactionary phenomenon in relation to the changing values and socioeconomic circumstances of postindustrial society. While the backlash seems to have an urban/rural dimension in general, the moral issues of the culture war have exacerbated urban/rural differences to a larger extent than other backlash issues such as race or crime.

Chapter six analyzed individual vote choice for the 2004 Canadian Federal Election and 2004 United States Presidential Election. The aggregate results in chapter five showed a substantial urban/rural cleavage in both Canada

and the United States for this election; this cleavage was confirmed in the analysis of individual vote choice. Urban/rural differences in vote choice stand up even after controlling for standard demographic variables, suggesting that there is something about urban and rural places themselves that is influencing vote choice. This is contrary to the claims of Thomas (2001) and Flanagan (2007) who argue that urban/rural voting differences in Canada are due to the greater proportion of immigrants found in large cities. Visible minority status does have a negative effect on Conservative/Republican vote choice, but it is independent of the urban/rural variable.

Another variable of theoretical interest to the vote choice models is region. In Canada, where regional differences are generally regarded as cardinally important, it is not surprising that Western Canadians were found in chapter four to be slightly more socially conservative than other Canadians on the issues of gay marriage, gun control and abortion. What may be surprising is that these regional differences are generally smaller than urban/rural differences on these issues. In the Canadian vote choice models, Western Canadians are more likely to vote Conservative even after controlling for demographic differences. In contrast to rural Canadians, Western Canadians are still more likely to vote conservative after the social issues variables are included in the model. This means that, contrary to popular belief, social conservatism does not explain the Conservatives' greater support among Western Canadians. Western Canadians are more likely to vote Conservative for some other reason. In the United States, the regional rift that is in vogue is the red state/blue state divide. The results in chapter four lend some credence to the notion of such a divide. Red state voters are slightly more conservative on the issue of gun control than blue state voters, and considerably more conservative on the issue of abortion. On the other hand, as with the Canadian results, there are urban/rural differences on these issues too. In the United States, red state voters were not more likely than blue state ones to vote for Bush in 2004, controlling for social-background characteristics. So, although red state voters were found to be more socially conservative on the issues of abortion and gun control, this did not translate into vote choice. These results clearly demonstrate that urban/rural differences in vote choice in 2004 are not explained by race or region.

Rural voters were found to be more socially conservative on the issues of gun control and abortion, but in their case it *did* translate into a greater probability of voting for Bush. This supports the hypothesis that the urban/rural divide is more important than the red state/blue state divide in explaining the results of the 2004 Presidential Election. In Canada too, the greater social conservatism of rural voters on the issues of gun control, gay marriage and abortion translated into a higher probability of voting Conservative. Although moral traditionalism was the strongest predictor of voting Conservative or Republican, it did not explain the urban/rural gap; however, the prominence of the specific social and moral issues of gay marriage, gun control and abortion in the 2004 elections is responsible for

the large urban/rural gap in both countries.

It has been suggested by Burnham (1970) that cultural polarizations are likely during times of great transition. The "American Dream" (which Canadians dream about too), material affluence, security and the value consensus of the mid-twentieth century are long gone but they are not forgotten as the non-urban middle class faces the continuing threat of technological obsolescence and a declining standard of living in the globalized postindustrial economy. Writing at the end of the 1960s, Burnham suggests

a decisive triumph of the political right is more likely than not to emerge in the near future...If the historically progressive role of the middle class has been played out, it is only too evident that the American middle class is peculiarly subject to threat and anxiety as a fruit both of the international and domestic transformations which have unfolded since World War II (p. 192).

These threats have continued to unfold since then. The culture war can be seen as part of the reactionary backlash against these threats that can be traced to the mid twentieth century. Burnham theorizes that for the threatened populations, "the pressure upon them produces stress which makes them particularly available for political mobilization by third parties" (p. 135). In the United States during the 1960s, the Presidential candidacy of George Wallace mobilized this resentment and capitalized on the racial fears experienced by whites in the face of the civil rights movement (Phillips 1969). Burnham calls Wallace's movement "cryptofascist" and dedicated to the "little man" against a technical and political elite, who were perceived to threaten "his material interests and his way of life" (p. 189). The results in chapter five show that Wallace received disproportionately greater support from rural areas, confirming Burnham's claim that such movements would find their greatest support in rural areas and small towns.

It is therefore no surprise that the third parties that emerged in Canada and the United States as precursors to the current inflammation of the culture war also found substantial support in rural areas. In Canada, the Reform Party effectively mobilized backlash resentment, beginning in Alberta—the home of Canadian rural populism—and evolving into a national party in the form of the new Conservative Party. In the United States, Ross Perot tapped into anxieties about the shrinking middle class, free trade and globalization. Perot's success, especially in the 1992 election, hinged not only on attracting liberals and conservatives in equal measure, but on mobilizing the politically disengaged.

Although Perot did not put forth an overtly socially conservative platform, he can be seen as part of the backlash because he drew on rural populism and rallied against political and cultural elites. His appeal was to "common sense." He was pro choice on the issue of abortion but staunchly opposed to gun control.

At one point in the 1992 campaign, Perot actually led Bill Clinton and George Bush in the polls but it is widely believed that Perot lost significant support when he flip-flopped on the issue of homosexuality. His original stance was against “gays in the military” (a major issue at the time) and also against homosexuals participating in his campaign or administration (if elected). As the results in chapter five show, Perot's support was disproportionately rural in both 1992 and 1996.

Burnham theorizes that successful third party runs in the United States do not lead to revolution; rather, the basis of the third party's success is absorbed into one or the other of the two major parties. There is a good possibility this is what has happened in the United States in the 2000-2004 period. While early aspects of the backlash (race in particular) engendered an urban/rural gap, the backlash's subsequent turn toward the issues of drugs, crime and small government did not stimulate much urban/rural conflict (see chapter five). Since the backlash has seized upon the moral issues of the culture war, rural voters have shifted decidedly to the right. Republicans, who have continued to utilize the backlash resentment of elites, have mobilized the anxious rural and small town portions of the electorate with the hot-button moral issues of abortion, gay marriage and gun control.

The results in chapter six show that moral traditionalism, opposition to gun control, opposition to gay marriage, and opposition to abortion strongly influenced voting for George W. Bush in 2004. As social issues have come to prominence in recent elections, the greater social conservatism of rural voters on these issues has led to an important urban/rural cleavage. This does not suggest that a critical realignment of the sort Burnham discusses has taken place. Instead, the prominence of culture war issues would seem to be the latest incarnation of the backlash mentality that has animated the Republican domination that ensued from the realignment of 1968. It is more likely that this is political opportunism on the part of the Republicans and that the potential for culture war issues to have continuing prominence in national politics is limited.

Only time will tell for sure, but it is possible that the North American urban/rural divide may be specific to roughly the 2000-2006 period. During this time Republicans have openly courted the religious vote and the moral traditionalism of certain voters in the United States has been used quite effectively to garner political support. It has been noted that although the Christian Right (for example) has been successful in putting moral issues on the political radar, their legislative success with respect to issues such as abortion, school prayer and homosexuality has been extremely limited (Frank 2004; Hopson and Smith 1999). Despite the lack of legislative success, these issues can still be effectively used as “wedge issues” in political campaigns and as motivators to “get out the vote.”

Similarly, the Conservative Party of Canada attempted to retain the socially conservative base of the old Reform/Alliance. Although the results in chapter four show that Canadians are on average only slightly lower on the moral

traditionalism scale than Americans, the social conservatism of the federal Conservative Party has become a liability. The Conservatives have increasingly attempted to distance themselves from socially conservative views of late.<sup>21</sup> This is not to say that they are no longer a socially conservative party, because much of their base constituency and many party members continue to support such views.

The reason for the moderation of their social views probably is the result of two main factors. First, the values of Canadians in general continue to move in a post-materialist direction, suggesting socially progressive and secular views continue to dominate the mainstream (Adams 2003; Nevitte 1996). Second, the structure of the Canadian political system and the geographic distribution of seats means that for the Conservatives to win a majority, they need to win seats in the seat-rich urban and suburban Golden Horseshoe, where nearly a quarter of Canada's population lives. Their socially conservative base, concentrated in rural areas, simply cannot win them enough seats to form a majority government. Their lack of success in Toronto's suburbs is very likely due to their party's social conservatism, as voters in these areas have previously shown strong support for the neoliberal economic policies and tough stance on crime at the provincial level that the federal Conservatives also offer. It will be interesting to see if urban/rural differences continue to be manifest in Canadian politics, given the "moderation" shown by the Conservatives and the fact that no single issue has defined the Liberals under their current leader, Stéphane Dion.

The future is more unclear in the United States. If, as Burnham and Phillips argue, electoral realignment occurs approximately every thirty-six years, it is quite possible that we're witnessing the twilight of the Republican hegemony that started with Nixon in 1968. Phillips discussed the basis for the emergence of the Republican majority; this study discusses the last gasp of the Republican majority, namely an appeal to the iconic and deeply rooted mythology of values of the American Heartland. While Phillips identified some demographic factors that set the stage for the Republican majority—white flight to the suburbs, migration of African-Americans to the northern cities, and migration to the sunbelt—these trends (with the notable exception of migration to the sunbelt) have run their course (black migration) or could possibly reverse (suburbanization). All indicators suggest that the loss of stature experienced by the great northern cities through the mid to late twentieth century is reversing as urbanism enjoys a renaissance and people move back into and revitalize the cities.<sup>22</sup> Another signal that Republican dominance may be ending was the 2006 midterm elections which saw the Democrats sweep to victory in the House of Representatives and win a majority of the Senate seats and Governorships that were contested.

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21 The most prominent example is probably the Harper government's deliberate engineering of the House of Commons vote on same-sex marriage to fail, thus removing this divisive issue from the agenda without extensive damage to his socially conservative constituency.

22 Rising fuel costs and a new interest in urban living are driving the revitalization of downtowns and inner cities destroyed by suburbanization.

At this time of writing, the 2008 Presidential candidates for the Republicans and Democrats, Barack Obama and John McCain respectively, do not seem set to divide the country on moral issues. With the United States experiencing a recession, it seems likely that economic issues and the war in Iraq will be at the top of voters' minds. As Hofstadter has recognized, the "paranoid style" of politics—of which the culture war is an example—is a luxury of good economic times. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that the issues discussed in this study will completely disappear. The tendency for voters to choose the candidate they most identify with will have implications for Barack Obama in rural and small town America, where he is likely to be perceived as part of the urban liberal elite. Some of this came through in the Democratic primaries, where much of Obama's support came from the young, the highly educated, and the urban while Hillary Clinton attracted the older, blue collar vote. It is unknown how important these factors will be relative to economic issues and the Iraq War in the general election. The Democrats obviously have the upper hand in the 2008 election no matter who the candidate, since the incumbent party is always at a disadvantage during a recession and the administration of George W. Bush is setting records for unpopularity.

Although the culture war may be winding down and moral issues may once again fade from political importance, urban/rural differences remain as a latent political cleavage, ready to be tapped when the time is right. This study has confirmed that there are many important differences between urban and rural populations, leading to greater moral conservatism among rural residents. Some of these differences stem from the demographic characteristics of urban and rural populations such as the liberalizing effect of education, and some of these differences are due to the structure and forms of sociation extant in urban and rural environments themselves. It remains to be seen whether or not the "culture war" is indeed the last reactionary gasp of a slowly disappearing conservative era or not. Despite predictions that increasing education and the spread of communication technology and modernization would erase urban/rural progressive/traditional distinctions, the greater social conservatism of rural areas continues to hold for now.

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