

**Small Worlds and Local Strongholds in Canadian Federal Politics:
Deviations from General Patterns of Party Support in the 2000 Election**

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Abstract

It is striking that in all parties some candidates manage to enjoy local support that is considerably greater than their party's average performance in similar electoral districts. In this paper we identify who these candidates were in 2000 and explore the basis of their success. We begin by developing an ecological model that incorporates a range of socio-demographic, economic, political, and geographic variables to estimate the general pattern of support for each party. The ten most highly positive residuals (the difference between the actual level of party support and that predicted by the model) identify candidates and ridings which did significantly better than they should have. The magnitude of these deviations, and the variety of plausible explanations for them, draw attention to the complexity of Canadian election campaigns, and remind us of the need to incorporate influences from different geographic scales (including the local) if we are to fully understand electoral processes and outcomes.

Paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 30 – June 1st, 2003.

Introduction

Conventional accounts of federal elections and campaigns in Canada emphasize the importance of national factors in the determination of election outcomes. National party offices develop elaborate marketing schemes and distribute these to their candidates, infusing a national message in all corners of the country (Bell and Fletcher, 1991). Party leaders have become the centerpiece of the media-intensive modern campaign. Partisan spin doctors seek out congenial settings to portray the leader in the most favorable possible light and to reinforce issue messages. Canada's rich geography provides a wide variety of backdrops for leaders anxious to project an attractive image to a dealigned electorate. The horserace quality of journalism characteristic of modern campaigns contributes to a 'presidentialization' of parliamentary elections (Wilson, 1980b; Mughan, 2000). In this understanding, local candidates and factors are generally presumed to be of little (or no) importance.

This depiction captures an important aspect of Canadian federal elections. The national campaigns of parties and leaders, televised leader debates, leader tours, and the play of issues during the campaign, are all significant determinants of the result on election day. However, politicians and party strategists are aware of another dimension to Canadian election campaigns. This is the one centered on the constituency trenches, the dozens of ridings that comprise the foundations of Canada's single member electoral system. Despite the high profile given by political scientists and journalists alike to the national "air" campaign, the ground war in these trenches may be less glamorous but it is nonetheless crucial. Federal elections are, in some important respects, a collection of simultaneous individual contests and parties are competitive only where they can mobilize a local campaign – in the 2000 general election only the Liberals managed to do so in every electoral district of the country.

Assessing the relative importance of national and local factors in Canadian elections is a surprisingly challenging exercise. Random-sample survey research designs are well-suited to assess national or even regional dynamics during the campaign (Johnston et al., 1992; Gidengil et al., 2001). They are not designed to reveal much about campaign processes and strategies that are developed locally. They can tell us that a small (but non-trivial) percentage of Canadian voters base their choice on the personal qualities of the local candidate (Irvine, 1982; Blais, et al., forthcoming). However, local candidates may matter in a wide variety of other ways, and as we contend, local influences stem from other factors than candidate qualities.

What, then, if anything, can we say about the influence of local factors on election outcomes in Canada? Where do local influences seem strongest? How can particular local deviations from national patterns of party support be explained? What follows is an exploration of the importance and determinants of local deviations from overall patterns of popular support for Canada's five major parties in the last federal election (2000). Specifically, for each party we identify the ten highest positive 'residuals' (the difference between the actual level of party support observed in a riding and the level of support predicted from an ecological model) from a general model of party support to indicate

cases in which riding-specific factors apparently enhanced the local performance of a party's candidate. These highly positive residuals identify those settings in which the local candidate/party attracted more electoral support than would be expected based on general patterns of support for the party in the country. The results of this simple exercise are richly suggestive of the enduring importance of a variety of local influences as determinants of election outcomes in Canada.

How and Why Local Influences Should Matter

Canadians, like other inhabitants of the global village, are embedded in communities that are themselves nested in ever-larger geographic units. Political influences can stem from any of these levels, from the intimate micro-environments of family and neighbors to the national and global scale. In Canada, scholarly interest in the influence of subnational factors on elections has tended to focus on the region or province as the unit of analysis. Given the prominence of the provinces as political actors in Canadian life, and the importance of the themes of regional alienation and Quebecois nationalism in Canadian history, such a focus is understandable. All observers recognize, particularly since the birth of Canada's fourth party system in the federal election of 1993, that geography matters for an understanding of election outcomes and party politics. The emergence of Reform and the Canadian Alliance in the west, and the Bloc Québécois' championing of that province's sovereigntist aspirations at the federal level, are among the most important factors that have called widespread attention to the growing regionalization of the Canadian electorate (Cross, 2002).

This point can and should be taken further. As important as the provincial and regional patterns are to an understanding of Canadian political life, the impress of geography extends much deeper. Within its own boundaries, each of the federal constituencies represents a 'small world' unto itself, with a unique geographic footprint and a distinctive social, economic, and ethnic profile. The parties make autonomous constituency associations their fundamental organizational unit, responsible for resource mobilization, candidate selection and campaigning. Each constituency has a history, both as a physical entity in terms of its political constitution and reconstitution through successive revisions of the electoral map, and as a unique political environment, resulting from the accretion of past election battles. The local intensity of partisan contests, the amount of election money raised and spent, the stability (or not) of party support, the nature and vitality of party organizations, the level of electoral participation, the role of the media, and the impact of incumbents, all are among those features of Canadian political life that exhibit large and significant variation across constituencies. Even the very nature of constituency influence on politics is itself likely to vary across Canada's enormous expanse. Some rural or downtown urban ridings have relatively well-defined collective identities shaped over decades as the primary units of political struggle. Others, particularly in the rapidly growing suburban rings of Canada's major cities, have shorter and more fluid existences and therefore project less obvious forces upon their residents.

Variable though constituency-based identities may be, however, Canada's single member plurality electoral system ensures that the parliamentary constituency provides

the immediate connection most Canadians have to the federal electoral politics. Their experience of national political life is, to a significant degree, shaped and filtered through the local constituency lens. Many of the forces acting on them politically take shape in the local constituency environment, and take their coloration and distinctive characteristics from the nature of the local setting. Whether they are aware of it or not, their parliamentary constituency serves as a container that delimits a set of interests, processes, and institutions that combine to give form and substance to their political lives. Even what are ostensibly national issues, such as the Free Trade Agreement that figured so prominently in the 1988 election campaign, are interpreted by voters in part at least with reference to local conditions and opportunities or vulnerabilities (Cutler, 2002). There are, then, compelling reasons to take seriously those political influences associated with the characteristics of constituencies.

Geographic factors: In a single member plurality electoral system such as Canada's, constituencies occupy an identifiable and unique geographic space. The location of a riding is arguably the most fundamental source of its character. For example, life in the Nova Scotia riding of *Bras d'Or--Cape Breton* is different from, say, that experienced by those in the Saskatchewan district of *Cypress Hills--Grasslands* in large part because, as a region, the coastal Maritimes differs significantly from the prairies. A substantial component of constituency variation is, therefore, a function of macro-geographical regional differences. Yet, as impressive as the differences separating Canada's regions may be, there remains within each of these units a great deal of local differentiation. The physical features of a riding, its topography, climate, and natural resource base all combine to shape its history and development. Beyond supplying these raw materials for development, however, the geographic location of a constituency itself can be associated with important consequences for its political life. Ridings in remote areas of the country may be insulated by their geography from some of the impact of broader political or electoral forces (Wilson, 1980a). Similarly, the sense of physical isolation from population centers can contribute to a sense of political distinctiveness and even alienation among residents of some 'hinterland' constituencies (Weller, 1977). Elizabeth Gidengil (1990) has shown that the sentiments of political efficacy held by individuals (the degree of personal political empowerment they feel) vary in relation to their residence in regions at the center or periphery of the country. These sentiments of political marginalization are themselves part of a more generic set of psychological identification processes whereby individuals develop deep-seated sentiments of attachment to their home. In many cases, the object of such attachments to place will be provinces or regions (e.g., Québec, or 'the Maritimes'), but in other cases there may be smaller scale attachments to particular communities that exist wholly within a single constituency or group of constituencies (e.g., Toronto, Vancouver Island, or the Gaspé) (Elkins and Simeon, 1980; Schwartz, 1974).

Another politically salient characteristic of a riding's geography is the extent to which it is comprised of rural, urban and/or suburban communities. Traditional practices in the drawing of electoral district lines have seen rural ridings tending to be geographically expansive, yet comparatively under-populated. They often include a number of distinct, smaller settlements, each often with its own local media outlet(s). In

demographic decline for decades, rural Canada tends to experience somewhat slower rates of economic growth and social change, and attracts many fewer immigrants. Social conservatism and appeals to ‘family values’ are more commonplace in rural areas. By contrast, urban and suburban ridings are geographically smaller, yet more densely populated. Media markets in urban/suburban Canada encompass numerous federal constituencies. Canada’s urban/suburban areas are ethnically-diverse, cosmopolitan in outlook, rapidly growing, and relatively affluent. Related to these basic demographic and lifestyle differences, journalists have pointed to the resurgence of a rural-urban cleavage in political behaviour based on a number of economic and political issues. Perhaps the most recent example of a political issue that pitted rural dwellers against their urban/suburban counterparts has been that of mandatory gun registration.

Socio-Economic Factors: Rural-urban differences in political life, though rooted in geographic conditions, draw attention to the variations in constituency environments related to their social organization. The distinctive lifestyles that arise among residents in rural, urban, and suburban societies have long been a mainstay of sociological analysis in Canada. There are a number of other aspects of the social organization of constituency settings that also are of political salience. Prominent among these are the processes of filtering that are responsible for the spatial distribution of individuals with particular characteristics. The settlement patterns of waves of immigrants over decades, for example, give a distinctive coloration to the politics of different areas. More subtle processes of residential segregation of social classes or ethnic groups in urban Canada also serve to create differentiated neighbourhoods that are relatively homogeneous on these dimensions (Harris, 1984). So closely associated are social characteristics and urban space that most city dwellers develop complex ‘cognitive maps’ that are amalgams of both social and geographic features (see Duncan, 1987). Even familiar metaphors such as the saying that someone ‘comes from the wrong side of the tracks’ draw upon this blending of society and space in the contemporary consciousness.

The effect of these social and historical processes is to facilitate the creation of distinctive local cultures – a ‘sense of place’, or what Northrup Frye has described as “the imaginative sense of locality,” that is characteristic of Canadians (quoted in Elkins & Simeon, 1980: 3). The daily routines and informal social interactions that take place within local contexts bring residents into contact with the prevailing local ethos, and often generate social pressures towards conformity. Informal social and geographic features can also erect barriers to interaction, resulting in the social differentiation and separation of residential spaces in urban areas. In these circumstances, isolation may give rise to negative group stereotyping and sentiments of inter-group hostility. Either of these processes – disposing residents towards consensus and conformity in the first instance, towards conflict and hostility in the second example – have been described as ‘contextual’ or ‘neighbourhood’ effects (Blake, 1978).

Political Factors: Diverse constituency settings provide a varied set of opportunities and constraints for the country’s politicians. Social, economic, and ethno-linguistic characteristics of constituencies are the raw materials with which politicians and their supporters work. In doing so, they create organizations that reflect and

ultimately perpetuate local distinctiveness. The franchise model of Canadian party organization provides ample latitude to adjust the ‘product’ to accommodate local sensibilities (Carty, 2002). During election times, local candidates tailor the appeals of their party to the tastes and concerns of the constituency electorate. Social interaction between local party officials and core activists and other residents in the constituency cultivates a locally-specific image of the party (McNenemy, 1989). Some local parties will develop distinctive ties of support with community groups (and in some cases, local parties may even be ‘captured’ by community activists championing a single issue, such as the ‘right to life’). In a variety of ways, then, constituency party organizations take on their coloration from the environment they inhabit. Successfully adapting to the local setting carries obvious consequences for the outcome of elections.

Political actors also reinforce the distinctiveness of constituencies as political contexts. The actions of MPs, motivated by a desire to cultivate a ‘personal vote’ that would insulate them from the vagaries of their party’s political fortunes, can further contribute to the creation of distinctive constituency political environments (Docherty, 1997: 171-201; Eagles, 1998). Long-serving Members, or ones with particularly distinguished or charismatic personal qualities may construct what are effectively local fiefdoms that may deter potential challengers. While some doubt the effectiveness of these efforts (Franks, 1987: 259; Ferejohn and Gaines, 1991 are equivocal on this point), other research has demonstrated that incumbent candidates in federal elections enjoy approximately a five to eight percent advantage over their challengers (Krashinsky and Milne, 1991). While conventional wisdom has suggested that Canadians vote for the party or its leader rather than its local candidate, many have questioned this on the basis of intuition (long-standing MPs appear, for example, to build up particularly strong networks of support that seem impervious to national trends in their party’s level of support). Scholarly evidence of candidate effects has been more difficult to uncover (Irvine, 1982). However, a recent contribution based on an analysis of the 2000 federal election suggests that candidates generally, and not just incumbents, have a significant impact on the voting decision of individual voters (Blais et al., forthcoming).

Other features of a constituency’s competitive context may also generate political consequences besides the presence (or not) of an incumbent candidate. A closely balanced contest may elicit a particularly intense and committed campaign from the candidates and local organizations of the contending parties. Such races may draw extra-local party resources (money, volunteers, or visits by party leaders and notables) into them in an effort to tip the balance on election day. Different patterns of fund raising and expenditure by candidates (left on their own to provide for most constituency campaign funding) will also play a role in the determination of the local outcome. Highly competitive races that attract disproportionately high levels of campaign-related expenditures may in turn stimulate political interest and result in higher levels of voter mobilization. Uncompetitive (or “safe”) seats, by contrast, may have to struggle to capture much public interest or involvement.

Identifying Local Deviations from General Patterns of Political Support

Clearly there are many reasons for taking local influences on Canadian elections seriously. A full appreciation of the various factors identified in the preceding section will require the combination of a variety of quantitative and qualitative research strategies and designs. Here we start by using a quantitative strategy to identify constituency settings in which electoral results differed markedly from the general pattern of party support in the 2000 general election. We use multivariate regression analysis to identify the contribution made by a variety of factors known to be relevant to constituency-level outcomes. The general model can then be used to generate estimates of the support levels a political party should attract given the specific characteristics of individual ridings and their electorates. We attempt to incorporate as many of these general determinants of party support as possible, including the geographic effects associated with provincial or regional levels, estimating a common ecological model (with minor variations) for each of the five major parties. Deviations from the model's predicted values for a party's vote in individual ridings remain – by definition – unexplained and we infer that these deviations are explicable by reference to local or idiosyncratic features of the riding itself. At that point we try to identify what these might be using qualitative data and analysis drawn from constituency profiles (Hill, 2002) and accounts of riding races during the 2000 election.

Our general model incorporates the three broad types of factors mentioned in the preceding section, namely, geographic, socio-economic and demographic, and political influences. In terms of geographic factors, we control for the influences on party support stemming from the regional (in the case of the Maritimes, the North, and Saskatchewan-Manitoba) or provincial settings (for Newfoundland, Québec, Alberta and British Columbia) by incorporating dummy variables for these units. (Ontario is the reference category and, as such, a dummy for that province is excluded from the model.) In the case of the BQ, our model incorporates a dummy variable for ridings in the city of Montréal to separate out any effects that may attach to the metropolitan area within the province.

The socio-economic and demographic features of riding electorates are represented in our general model by six different variables. Four of these pertain to the nature and vitality of economic activity in the riding – viz., the proportion of the workforce employed in agriculture; the proportion employed as managers; the percentage of the workforce who are unemployed, and the proportion of residents who have college degrees. The remaining two measures tap politically salient features of the etho-linguistic composition of riding electorates – the proportion of residents who are immigrants; and the proportion of residents reporting French as their mother tongue.

Finally, we are interested in measuring (and statistically controlling) the effects of a variety of political features of riding environments. First, we wanted to control for the effects of incumbency. While this is a contextual feature associated with the local constituency (either a party is offering an incumbent for re-election or it is not), the impact of incumbency is ostensibly general in that its putative advantages are felt across constituencies. Second, we wanted to remove the generalized effects of partisan mobilization within the riding, so we controlled for the proportion of the allowable

spending limit that the party's local candidate reported spending in the 2000 election. Finally, in the case of the incumbent Liberal Party candidates, we also controlled for the caché that ostensibly attaches to a candidate who held cabinet office in the preceding parliament by including a dummy variable for all those Liberal candidates in 2000 who had held cabinet office at the time of the dissolution of the House. It is clear that this model incorporates the impact of many electoral forces that we would consider "local" in nature. With these influences statistically controlled, the residuals that are the focus of attention point to the operation of local district and/or candidate-specific factors that result in an exceptionally high level of support.

The scope for other, unmeasured, local factors to play a role in party support in this approach is thus determined by the explanatory power of the general model itself. As such, it is important to incorporate as many general factors in the model as possible to avoid over-estimating the impact of local factors. In this respect, the models performed very well in explaining variation in support across constituencies for Canada's five major parties. Table One presents, in schematic form, the overall results of this model for each party. The adjusted R-squared figures show that they account for between eighty and ninety percent of variation in constituency-level differences in party support. The regionalization of the Canadian electorate is also readily apparent in Table One. Two-thirds of the regional/provincial dummy variables for the four parties that competed in all parts of the country were significant, suggesting that party support differed in these areas from the pattern in Ontario (of course the BQ did not offer candidates outside Québec). These coefficients confirm the Alliance's persistent problem in eastern Canada and the Liberals' difficulties in the west. Table One also confirms the uniformly positive influences of incumbency and spending on the vote (though surprisingly Liberal cabinet ministers did not enjoy any particular advantage at the polls beyond the effects of incumbency alone). Despite the oft-heard arguments concerning the weakness of socio-economic and demographic factors as determinants of voter behavior in Canada, the table shows that these aggregate characteristics of riding environments, such factors do play a role in accounting for constituency-level variations in party support

Table One About Here

Local Deviations from General Patterns of Party Support

While Table One describes the general effects of the component variables of our ecological model on support for each of the parties as a whole, our attention can now turn to local deviations from this norm. Subsequent tables report the ten most highly positive constituency-level residuals in 2000 (i.e., ridings in which candidates attracted more votes than the ecological model for their party predicted they should). To take the first case in Table Two, for example, the candidate for Lac-Saint-Louis, Clifford Lincoln, won 22.29 percent more of the riding's total vote than the general model of Liberal vote shares predicts. Expressed as a percentage of the party's average vote in all ridings, this meant that Lincoln's surplus was 55.7% higher than the average for all Liberal candidates in the same election. In the discussion that follows, we consider each of the parties in turn. To help us identify ridings that have some enduring status as a party stronghold, we

estimated identical ecological models for the 1997 election. The final column of Tables Two to Six reports the unstandardized residuals from these 1997 models. While ridings that have substantial positive residuals in both elections can be fairly described as party strongholds, those that were not strong positive residuals for the party in 1997 must have some other, more idiosyncratic, explanation for their exceptional 2000 performance. Looking again at Lac-Saint-Louis, we see that the Liberals had an almost 17% positive residual in the 1997 election. Clearly, this riding is a bastion of exceptional and enduring Liberal support.¹

i) The Liberal Party

In Table Two we present the ten most positive Liberal residuals – all are at least a third higher than the party’s average constituency vote share across the country. Clearly, although campaigning at the national, regional, and local levels produces substantial regularities in Liberal support (the general model accounts for 82% of the variance), there apparently remained considerable scope for local settings and campaigns to exert an influence.

Table Two about here

What accounts for these local deviations? Obviously, we must look beyond the variables included in our ecological model (by definition the deviations represent unexplained variance). Our observations, though impressionistic, point to the kinds of influences that remind us of the importance of the constituency connection in Canadian elections. While each riding is doubtless its own small political world, several more general points can be made about these local races. The first and fifth most positive Liberal residuals came from the west end of the island of Montréal – two suburban ridings with highly competent but not particularly high profile incumbent MPs. These settings, which include substantial anglo and allophone populations have proved infertile ground for the nationalist cause and the BQ in particular (Lac-St.-Louis voted 89% and Pierrefonds-Dollard 85% “No” in the 1995 referendum on sovereignty). Paralleling their lackluster province-wide performances, neither the Conservatives, the Alliance, nor the NDP could mount credible local campaigns in 2000 (the NDP candidate had fewer votes than the Marijuana Party’s candidate in Pierrefonds-Dollard). The result was that the substantial federalist majority had essentially one place to go on the riding ballot – to the local Liberal.

The strength of the federalist cause among a heavily francophone population in the eastern Ontario riding of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (60% of residents claiming French as their mother tongue) is arguably responsible for the third highest Liberal residual. Don Boudria, the riding’s MP since 1984, has carved out a certain profile for himself within the Liberal party over the years, but his personal following is unlikely to be substantial enough to account for the almost 18% advantage the Liberals enjoyed in

¹ The 1997 models also perform strongly in explaining the interconstituency variation in party support – the adjusted R-squared figures for each party are as follows: Liberals - .711; Reform - .919; NDP - .880; Progressive Conservative - .752; BQ - .727.

2000 over their natural support base. (This riding stood out as having the Liberal party's most positive residual, 30.1%, in 1997, but it was also a stronghold in 1988 –Boudria's second election, and first reelection– when it was again the country's most positive Liberal residual (Eagles, 1990)). It seems likely that the combination of language, riding location (many of the riding's residents commute to jobs in the neighboring province of Québec), and federalist politics accounts for this riding's distinctive pattern of Liberal support.

Geographic distinctiveness also seems likely to account for the unusual pattern of Liberal support in three exceptional deviant ridings – Labrador, Nunavut, and Timmins-Cochrane. All are sprawling ridings (Nunavut occupies about a third of Canada's entire landmass relatively remote from the Canadian heartland. In these relatively isolated contexts, local candidates and causes can take on heightened significance. In the case of Timmins-Cochrane, incumbent Benoît Serré had undoubtedly earned some personal support in this large rural riding for his decision to defy the Liberal whip and vote against his party on the issue of mandatory gun registration during the preceding parliament.

The remaining four highly positive Liberal residuals are all found in urban ridings located in central and western Canada. Three of these ridings had been held in the past by prominent Liberal politicians (Mont Royal by Pierre Trudeau; Vancouver Quadra by John Turner; and Winnipeg South Center by Lloyd Axworthy). Mont Royal's overwhelmingly federalist electorate (a 93% "No" vote was registered in the 1995 referendum) had elected Liberal incumbents since 1940 (defying even Diefenbaker in the Conservative sweep of 1958), and the lack of any other viable alternatives to the BQ undoubtedly accounts for much of the positive residual. Through of the retirements of long-serving incumbent Liberals, both Quadra and Winnipeg South Center were open seats in 2000, and new Liberal candidates may have benefited from the party-building efforts of their predecessors. Finally, in Scarborough Rouge River, long-time incumbent Liberal Derek Lee's legal training and activism in the fields of immigration law reform undoubtedly enhanced his appeal to the two-thirds of the riding's population who were born abroad (the highest proportion of any Canadian constituency). After his first election in 1988, Lee's sizeable majorities have grown and in the 2000 election he took 8 of every 10 votes.

ii) The Canadian Alliance

The ten largest positive residuals for the Canadian Alliance (Table Three) are smaller than enjoyed by their Liberal counterparts but related to the Alliance's average riding vote share are, in fact, almost indistinguishable from the Liberals (ranging from above a third to over 50 percent above the party's constituency average). The 2000 election was the one in which the Alliance was determined to break out of its western Canadian regional confine. However, it is noteworthy that many of the provincial/regional geographic dummies continue to be statistically significant. Moreover, the fact that six of the party's most positive residuals were located in western Canada suggests that the party still enjoys its greatest strength there. With the exception of Provencher, these ridings were all Reform strongholds, with strong support reaching back to the earthquake

election of 1993. They represent the bedrock of neo-conservatism that in recent years has supported Tory, Reform, and now Alliance candidates.

Table Three about here

More interesting, perhaps, are the ridings east of Manitoba where the Alliance did unexpectedly well. The high positive residual in the New Brunswick riding of Miramichi came in a riding known to have relatively strong anti-french and conservative voters. Despite the fact that roughly 30% of the electorate are francophones, a Confederation of Regions candidate won about 10% of the vote in 1988. In 2000, the Alliance's Ken Clark was able to build upon these foundations to finish a strong third with 16% of the vote – 9% more than the model predicted he ought to have garnered.

The Alliance's most positive residual is Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, one of the two Ontario seats won by the party (where Alliance candidate Cheryl Gallant won 13% more of the vote than the model predicted). Although this large rural riding in eastern Ontario had long been Liberal territory, the Alliance's breakthrough here was, in part, the result of the local Liberals' internal problems. The Liberal incumbent (from 1997) was Hec Clouthier, an MP with a reputation for flamboyance. His route to the House of Commons had been rocky. On his first attempt in 1993 he challenged long-time Liberal incumbent MP Len Hopkins for the Liberal nomination. The procedural controversies that ensued split the local party, only to be resolved with party leader Jean Chrétien's intervention and his naming Hopkins as the official party candidate. Clouthier then ran as an independent, but the 20% of the vote he attracted was not enough to unseat Hopkins. In 1997, Clouthier successfully challenged Hopkins for the Liberal nomination, and he went on to win the seat with about 40% of the vote. In 2000, Clouthier's share of the vote declined by about a percent, but the Tory and NDP vote collapse left the Alliance with an unexpected opportunity. Its strong opposition to the Liberal gun control initiatives was probably another factor leading to the consolidation of the non-Liberal vote in this rural riding.

The Alliance's anti-francophone image has obviously hindered the party's performance in Québec, so it is particularly interesting to look at the two ridings in the province where its 2000 performance was significantly higher than our general model predicts. In the case of Québec East (the party's 7th most positive residual) the sovereigntist cause was weaker than in many parts of the province. In 1997, the BQ won the seat with only 39% of the local vote, with the Liberals and the Conservative candidates splitting the federalist vote. In 2000, the Alliance candidate Robert Martel benefited from the collapse of the Tory vote (from 25% to 7%). In addition, Mr. Martel's past support for the Parti Québécois in provincial elections probably appealed to some soft nationalists in the riding. The result of this unusual configuration of political forces was a narrow Liberal victory, with the BQ running second and the Alliance a distant (but still unexpectedly good) third in 2000. The Alliance's ninth most positive residual in the midtown Montréal riding of Outremont came in the only riding on the island in which the Liberal incumbent's share of the vote declined. This riding also appears in the top twenty

most positive BQ residuals, suggesting that both parties made stronger than usual inroads into the traditional Liberal vote in this ethnically diverse urban riding.

iii) The New Democratic Party

More than is the case for the other established parties, New Democratic Party campaigns traditionally combine the twin goals of defending their incumbents while targeting a small set of selected ridings. Evidence of these strategies can be seen behind some of the party's most positive residuals in 2000 (Table Four). Bill Blaikie's ten point bonus in Winnipeg Transcona, had been built up over a long time and was heavily guarded by the party. His 2000 victory represented his eighth straight election in the riding, and his campaign funds were entirely supplied by the wider party. The same dependence on party funds characterized the campaign funding of NDP incumbent Bev Desjarlais in the northern Manitoba riding of Churchill. Judy Wasylycia-Leis, the NDP incumbent holding Winnipeg North Centre, also did much better than the party model predicted she would. She had originally taken the seat for the party in 1997, and her prospects looked so good that the Alliance didn't even field a candidate against her in the riding. Acadie-Bathurst had surprised everyone by going NDP in 1997 and incumbent Yvon Godin exploited strong union backing to strengthen his grip on the seat in 2000, while holding off a strong campaign from Liberal candidate (former MLA and provincial fisheries minister) Bernard Thériault.

Table Four About Here

NDP incumbents have traditionally used their time in office to build up strong local party machines (Carty, 1991). While these may not fully shelter an MP from the vagaries of Canada's volatile electorate, their investments in organization-building appears to have some enduring value. Several of the party's most positive residuals represent a reactivation of party support in ridings that had previously been held by New Democrats. The party's most positive residual came in Windsor St. Clair, a riding though narrowly captured by the Liberals in the 1990s, had regularly elected a New Democrat in the 1980s. NDP candidate Joe Comartin came close in 1997 and ran a strong second (less than a 100 vote margin) in a 1999 by-election before winning narrowly in 2000. As the director of the Canadian Auto Workers legal services, he had strong union backing and had started an early and vigorous campaign for 2000. Timmins-James Bay had also been a NDP seat in the 1980s. The party's 10th most positive residual came in a less likely setting – Newfoundland's Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte. However, this riding had had a brief flirtation with the party in the late 1970s when Fonce Faour captured the seat in a 1978 by-election, making him the province's first NDP MP. He held it in the 1979 general election, only to go down to defeat months later in the 1980 election to a young Liberal upstart, Brian Tobin. Through the 1980s the NDP had been reduced to near oblivion in this rural riding. Yet in 2000, against a backdrop of NDP losses in Atlantic Canada, fisherman, Trevor Taylor managed to exploit this political history, winning 7% more of the local constituency vote than could be expected of an electoral district of its general complexion.

Trinity-Spadina's atypically strong NDP result might be seen as a special instance of this more general pattern of party restoration. The NDP's Dan Heap had held this heavily ethnic downtown Toronto riding in 1988. Heap's retirement before the 1993 campaign paved the way for a Liberal comeback that year, and the riding has experienced tight two-way races between these parties ever since. After narrowly losing to the Liberals in 1997, the NDP attracted 'star candidate' Michael Valpy in 2000. Valpy mounted a vigorous campaign (raising the most money in individual donations of any NDP candidate in the country) and though he beat the party's expected performance by almost 13%, he still fell about 10% short of incumbent Liberal Tony Ianno's 48% of the vote.

One feature of these NDP local strongholds stands out. All but one (Blakie's Winnipeg-Transcona) are in constituencies where the Liberals and New Democrats are the top two parties. This suggests that these are ridings that have a distinctively left political orientation and that the very absence of any serious right-wing alternative may make it easier for the NDP to establish, and maintain, a particularly vigorous presence.

iv) Progressive Conservatives

The ten most positive Conservative residuals (Table Five) ranged from 9 to 19 percent above the predicted value (the top three representing surpluses above the expected level of support that are themselves larger than the party's mean level of support across all ridings!). There are a number of plausible explanations for these above-the-norm Tory performances. In some cases, candidates who polled better than expected were running in rural and suburban areas traditionally known for their "small-c" conservatism, but where for some reason Reform (prior to 1997) and the Canadian Alliance had experienced difficulty penetrating the electorate. This is clearly the case in the three PEI ridings that are among the top four most positive residuals for third parties have always found it difficult to penetrate Prince Edward Island. In Cardigan, for example, candidates of the two old parties took 95% of all votes in 2000, while in Egmont and Malpeque they took 89% and 88% of the total. In these settings, then, the general problem facing the right of dividing its support between two major parties was not a factor. Despite the better than average or expected Tory support, however, all three seats did go Liberal in 2000.

Table Five About Here

Other stronger-than-predicted Tory finishes came in ridings where there were relatively tight three-way contests. Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboine in Manitoba, the Ontario seats of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, Brampton Centre, and Oxford are four ridings where the Liberals, Conservatives, and Canadian Alliance finished in tight three way races in 2000. That the Liberal candidates won each of these seats speaks volumes for the problem facing the opposition. In several races, local idiosyncracies probably had a hand in generating the exceptionally positive Tory vote. In Brampton Center, for example, Beryl Ford had run a strong campaign for the party in a neighbouring riding during the previous election. That experience and team, along with a divisive Alliance

nomination (after which the losing candidate came out in favor of Ford), were probably responsible for the Alliance collapse that allowed the Conservatives to do better than predicted. In Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, the Tory candidate Laurie Scott was the daughter of a long-serving Tory MP and may well have benefited from name recognition and family loyalties.

In general, it would appear that riding-specific circumstances played a big part in contributing to better-than-predicted Tory performances. In the rural Nova Scotia riding of Kings–Hants, incumbent Conservative Scott Brison had stepped down in July of 2000 so that newly-(re)elected Conservative leader Joe Clark would have a safe seat from which to return to the House of Commons. This is a riding that had been held for the Conservatives from the end of the Second World War until 1993 by a father and son team (though Pat Nowlan, Jr. was expelled from the Tory caucus by Brian Mulroney for his opposition to the Meech Lake Accord in the early 1990s). Clark won handily over a New Democrat but served only weeks before the November general election was called. Brison regained this Tory stronghold when Clark moved to run in Calgary Centre. Although technically not, an incumbent in 2000, Brison’s local party machine would probably have been able to withstand the difficulties of running two campaigns in a matter of months better than those of the other parties.

In Winnipeg South Center, comments made during the campaign by Alliance candidate Betty Granger about the “Asian invasion” of British Columbia caused the party to truncate her local campaign in the interests of defusing the negative national press she generated. The natural place for the Alliance’s lost support would have been David Newman’s Tory candidacy which may explain his comparatively strong result.

v. The Bloc Québécois

Table Six lists the top ten most positive BQ residuals from the 75 Québec ridings and provides clear evidence that, even within the boundaries of a single province, there can be sizeable local deviations from the normal pattern of party support. Although the BQ downplayed its separatist agenda during the campaign, it is obvious that the sovereigntist message of the BQ appeals most strongly to the native-born, francophone, rural populations of the province. However, it is also clear that the appeal of Quebecois nationalism is especially concentrated in ridings exhibiting particular concentrations of these characteristics. Lac-St. Jean–Saguenay, Richilieu–Nicolet–Bécancour, and Rimouski–Mitis are three instances of this kind of nationalist heartland. Of these, Lac-St. Jean–Saguenay is Canada’s most francophone riding. Its name has become almost synonymous with nationalism in the province, and the founder of the BQ, Lucien Bouchard, represented it in the House of Commons between 1988 and 1997. After Bouchard’s 1996 resignation from federal politics became the Parti Québécois premier, 22 year old Stéphan Tremblay picked up the BQ banner and, increasing the party’s grip on the electorate, his 2000 winning margin (43%) was the largest of any BQ candidate.

Table Six About Here

There are other patterns observable in these ridings. In several cases, it seems likely that Bloc support was enhanced by the presence of ‘star candidates’ (local heroes) such as party leader (and the first elected BQ MP) Gilles Duceppe, and Louis Plamondon one of the founders of the party. Ironically, Duceppe’s regular absences from his home riding during the campaign apparently did little to hurt his cause there, while his campaign appearances in other ridings appears to have done little to shore up the performances of his BQ colleagues (see Bélanger, et al., 2003). Similarly, the party’s high profile vice-president, Pierre Paquette, ran strongly in the St. Lawrence valley riding of Joliette.

Finally, BQ support was higher-than-predicted in several suburban Montréal ridings. The party’s most positive residual came in the north shore suburb of Terrebonne-Blainville, where Diane Bourgeois survived a nasty campaign in which she and her Liberal opponent complained of vandalism. In Chateauguay, BQ candidate Robert Lanctôt held off a strong Liberal challenge to hold the seat vacated by Maurice Godin, and in the process picked up about 10 percent more of the vote than expected on the basis of the ecological model.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the ecological models that underpin this analysis point to the existence of powerful geographic, socio-economic and ethno-linguistic, and political forces that structure variation in the support going to candidates for Canada’s major parties. It is important to note that many of these identifiable regularities operate through local-level processes such as campaigning and political mobilization, incumbency advantages, etc.. Once these regularities have been statistically controlled, however, it is equally clear that there remain electoral settings that are substantially out of step with larger political currents and relationships. This should be a reminder that, however nationalized and professionalized Canadian elections may appear, they remain in important respects a complex amalgam of constituency races held simultaneously.

Our analyses suggest that the substantial riding-level deviations observed fall generally into three broad types. First, more than half the most positive residuals in 2000 for the Liberals, Alliance, NDP, and the BQ were found in settings that also gave unexpectedly high levels of support to candidates for these parties in the preceding election. These real bastions of party support endure over time either because of party organizational strength or the advantages built up behind popular incumbents. In these settings, local factors serve as powerful insulators from national political trends. Only the Conservatives, a party struggling to preserve its very existence, does not appear to have any strongholds in this sense. Secondly, some of the ridings that appear as deviant in 2000, but not strongly so in 1997, are found in large, geographically remote settings in the Canadian hinterland (e.g., Western Arctic; Nunavut; Labrador, Churchill; Humber-St.Barbe-Baie Verte). In these settings, the tyranny of distance creates opportunities for local and transient factors to bend the more general patterns of party support. Finally, the remaining positive residuals in 2000 likely stem from a variety of riding-specific factors, associated perhaps with a local scandal, a peculiarity in the local partisan choices

available to voters, or other idiosyncratic factor. Taken together, both the substantial regularities in the local structuring of party support and the significant deviations from these patterns testify to the enduring importance of the local dimension in Canadian federal elections.

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Table One
Ecological Models of Major Party Support, 2000
(Direction of impact; significant coefficients only*)

	Libs	CA	PC	NDP	BQ
Geography					
NF		-	+		n/a
Maritimes		-	+		n/a
Quebec (Montreal for BQ)		-		-	+
MB-SK	-	+	-		n/a
AB	-	+			n/a
BC	-	+	-	+	n/a
North				+	n/a
Socio-Economic & Demography					
% Degrees	-	-	+	+	-
% Managers	+	+		-	+
% Unemp	+		-		+
% Agric		+		-	
% French MT		-	-		
% Immigrants	+	-	-		
Political					
Incumb	+	+	+	+	+
% Limit Spent	+	+	+	+	+
Cabinet Min (LIB only)		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Adj R-squared	.823	.924	.837	.889	.814

* t > 1.65 for a one-tailed test. Coefficients available on request

Table Two
Largest Liberal Positive Residuals – 2000 Election

Riding (Province)	2000 Candidate (all elected as MPs)	Unstandardize d Residual 2000	% above average Liberal riding share of vote, 2000	1997 Residual
Lac-Saint-Louis (PQ)	Clifford Lincoln	22.29	55.7	16.9*
Labrador (NF)	Lawrence O'Brien	18.97	46.1	9.5
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (ON)	Don Boudria	17.63	42.9	30.1*
Nunavut	Nancy Karetak- Lindell	16.65	40.5	14.5
Pierrefonds-Dollard (PQ)	Bernard Patry	16.25	39.5	12.9
Timiskaming-Cochrane (ON)	Benoît Serré	15.39	37.4	15.5*
Mont Royal (PQ)	Irwin Cotler	14.02	34.1	-0.1
Scarborough – Rouge River (ON)	Derek Lee	13.39	32.6	11.2
Vancouver Quadra (BC)	Stephen Owen	13.33	32.4	-2.1
Winnipeg-South Centre (MB)	Anita Neville	13.30	32.3	17.2*

* Riding among top 10 most positive residuals in 1997.

Table Three
Largest Canadian Alliance Positive Residuals – 2000 Election

Riding (Province)	2000 Candidate	Unstandardized Residual 2000	% above average Alliance riding share of vote, 2000	Reform 1997 Residual
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (ON)	Cheryl Gallant*	13.21	52.6	2.7
Prince George – Peace River (BC)	Jay Hill*	13.21	52.6	14.9**
Yellowhead (AB)	Rob Merrifield*	11.89	47.4	3.3
Fraser Valley (BC)	Chuck Strahl*	11.23	44.7	9.2**
Kootenay-Columbia (BC)	Jim Abbott*	10.56	42.1	10.8**
Langley-Abbotsford (BC)	Randy White*	10.20	40.6	8.7**
Quebec East (PQ)	Robert Martel	9.90	39.4	3.4
Provencher (MB)	Vic Toews*	9.78	39.0	3.6
Outremont (PQ)	Josée Duchesneau	9.32	37.1	No candidate
Miramichi (NB)	Ken Clark	9.12	36.3	4.8

* Elected MP in 2000; ** Riding among top 10 most positive residuals in 1997.

Table Four
Largest New Democratic Party Positive Residuals – 2000 Election

Riding (Province)	2000 Candidate	Unstandardized Residual 2000	% above average NDP riding share of vote, 2000	1997 Residual
Windsor – St. Clair (ON)	Joe Comartin*	16.25	170.9	12.0**
Winnipeg-North (MB)	Judy Wasylycia-Leis*	13.00	136.7	14.0**
Trinity – Spadina (ON)	Michael Valpy	12.68	133.3	11.9**
Winnipeg – Transcona (MB)	Bill Blaikie*	10.37	109.0	10.4**
Western Arctic	Dennis Bevington	8.61	90.5	-1.3
Churchill (MB)	Bev Desjarlais*	8.60	90.4	-1.2
Kings – Hants (NS)	Kaye Johnson	7.89	83.0	6.0
Acadie – Bathurst (NB)	Yvon Godin*	7.66	80.6	1.6
Timmins – James Bay (ON)	Len Wood	7.54	79.3	13.7**
Humber – St. Barbe – Baie Verte (NF)	Trevor Taylor	7.39	77.7	-4.2

* Elected MP in 2000; ** Riding among top 10 most positive residuals in 1997.

Table Five
Largest Progressive Conservative Positive Residuals – 2000 Election

Riding (Province)	2000 Candidate	Unstandardized Residual 2000	% above average PC riding share of vote, 2000	1997 Residual
Cardigan (PEI)	Kevin MacAdam	19.08	149.2	9.8
Egmont (PEI)	John Griffin	14.27	111.6	9.8
Charleswood-St.James-Assiniboine (MB)	Curtis Moore	13.02	101.8	2.7
Malpeque (PEI)	Jim Gorman	12.38	96.8	3.8
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock (ON)	Laurie Scott	11.27	88.1	2.1
Kings-Hants (NS)	Scott Brison*	10.89	85.2	-0.6
Miramichi (NB)	David Kelly	10.19	79.7	1.7
Winnipeg-South Centre (MB)	David Newman	9.87	77.2	7.1
Brampton Centre (ON)	Beryl Ford	9.57	74.8	-3.9
Oxford (ON)	Dave MacKenzie	8.68	67.9	5.1

* Elected MP in 2000; ** Riding among top 10 most positive residuals in 1997.

Table Six
Largest Bloc Quebecois Positive Residuals – 2000 Election

Riding (Province)	2000 Candidate	Unstandardized Residual 2000	% above average BQ riding share of vote, 2000	1997 Residual
Terrebonne – Blainville	Diane Bourgeois*	17.07	42.4	6.5
Joliette	Pierre Paquette*	11.31	28.1	0.2
Lac-Saint-Jean - Saguenay	Stéphan Tremblay*	10.99	27.3	17.0**
Chateauguay	Robert Lanctôt*	9.84	24.5	6.3
Repentigny	Benoît Sauvageau*	7.92	19.7	11.4**
Kamouraska – Rivière-du-Loup – Temiscouata – Les Basques	Paul Crête*	7.43	18.5	-5.7
Bas Richelieu – Nicolet - Bécancour	Louis Plamondon*	6.71	16.7	10.1**
Saint Hyacinthe – Bagot	Yvan Loubier*	6.34	15.8	3.8
Laurier – Sainte Marie	Gilles Duceppe*	6.29	15.5	9.2**
Rimouski – Mitis	Suzanne Tremblay*	6.24	15.5	-1.2

* Elected MP in 2000; ** Riding among top 10 most positive residuals in 1997.