

**Political Trust in Canada :
What Matters: Politics or Economics?**

Jean Crête
Réjean Pelletier
Jérôme Couture

Department of Political science
Laval University
Québec City
Québec, G1K 7P4

Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science
Association
York University, Toronto, Ontario, June 1-4, 2006

ABSTRACT

Political Trust in Canada : What Matters: Politics or Economics?

Political trust toward public institution has declined in Canada (Nevitte, 2002; 1996) as in many other countries (Norris, 1999; Pharr et Putnam, 2000; Hibbing et Theiss-Morse, 2001; Dalton, 2004). Building on these findings, this paper reassesses two categories of variables associated with this decline: the economic and the political factors. The first category includes the sociotropic retrospective and prospective evaluation of the economy as well as the evaluation of the financial well-being of one's own household. The second category of variables includes an index of political cynicism as well as the information about the fact that the citizen has «won or lost» the previous federal election. It is first expected that the level of trust will vary with the object (government, Parliament, etc.) toward which it is directed. Then, it is argued that the political factors should weigh more heavily than the economic factors on trust toward institutions. Using statistical tools (regression analysis), the hypotheses are tested on a data set (n= 2 000) extracted from a new survey (2005) of political attitudes of Canadian adults.

1. Introduction

Political trust has been declining in Canada (Nevitte 1996; Nevitte 2002:75) as in many other countries (Dalton 2004: 115; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001; Norris 1999b; Pharr and Putnam 2000). This condition could lead to a reassessment of the idea of representative democracy in developed countries at the very time the idea is exported and adopted in many places in now many waves of democracy. While the deterioration of democracy is not yet a subfield of the discipline as «democracy consolidation» is elsewhere (Guérin, Pétry and Crête 2004; McFaul 2005) they are signs, in old democracies, which preoccupy political actors and question political scientists. For example, why do Canadians withdraw their confidence in their institutions, authorities and even the political system?

To circumscribe the discussion, we use the well known framework popularized by Easton (Easton 1965) and refined by Norris, Dalton and Klingerman (Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999; Norris 1999a : 9-13). Easton, in his description of the political system, distinguished three main objects: the community, the regime and the authorities. Norris, Dalton and Klingerman further differentiate in the regime three aspects: the principles, the performance and the institutions. To sustain itself the system needs to be supported by the members of the system. Following Easton Norris and her colleagues recognize two characteristics of support; they distinguish diffuse support from specific support but they suggest that the two characteristics are the opposite ends of a continuum¹. Starting at the diffuse end of the continuum and going down to the specific end, one would find the five objects of support in the following order: political community, the regime principles, the regime performance, the regime institutions and finally at the specific end the political authorities.

This study is interested in regime institutions. We will focus on two categories of factors affecting the confidence in the regime institutions. First we examine the impact of the

¹ While the unidimensionality (a single continuum) of support is debatable we will not examine this issue here)

economy on political confidence and then, in a second step, we will examine the impact of political variables on confidence, the same dependent variable. Then we will confront both explanations before bringing all variables in a multivariate model to sort out the relative importance of both explanations.

2. Trust in public institutions

Confidence is a relational concept. An individual grants his confidence to another individual, a group or an institution which can betray it. Betrayal presumably leads to a reassessment of the relation. Thus, confidence is not unconditional. Indeed, it is entrusted to individuals, groups or institutions for specific purposes. Trust rests on the belief that the individuals, groups or institutions are worth the reliance assigned to them. When dealing with institutions we can look at it from two different angles. A political institution can be assessed according to its potential capability of promoting the interests of those who put their confidence in it. The assessment would rest on moral values or the basic legitimacy of the institution. A second angle stresses the competence or proficiency of the institution in carrying out its duty. For example, the judgment can bear on the implementation of policies according to electoral promises, or on the performance or the quality of the execution of its duty (Levi and Stoker 2000). Philosophers have observed that people are often willing to do their part, to forego the benefit of free-riding, but there are not willing to be suckered (Heath 2000: 65). Trust is the glue which keeps society together and allows individuals, on their own or as a group or in an institution, to overcome the prisoner's dilemma (González and Crête 2006: 103-110; Heath 2000 : 75) We can expect the expression of trust to be the product of a judgment base on political experience. The degree of trust in political institutions should tell a lot about how political actors embedded in institutions have performed compared to what was expected from them.

2.2 How should we measure trust?

A whole set of studies measure trust by constructing indexes based on answers to questions relative «to the government» or «the people running the government».

Following the publication of an article by Hetherington at the end of the 1990's it appears that most following studies have used his index of political confidence². This index has the advantage of seizing, at the same time, the moral aspect of confidence to the government (are people running the government crooked?) and the aspect related to the competence of this one (trust the government to do what is right). The index is based on four questions, one asking if the government can be trusted to do what is right and three questions measuring cynicism (are people in government crooked? wasting money? Government run by few big interests?). Indeed, Berstein in a study published in 2001 uses Hetherington's index as an independent variable measuring cynicism to explain confidence in specific institutions. Furthermore, some authors (Levi and Stoker 2000) have argued that the measurement of political confidence should not rest only on the indicators of trust in government.

What we want is a measure of support for the regime institutions, not just one institution. Preferably the measure should be a measure of diffuse support to stay in line with the argument put forward by Easton. Some authors, for example Norris (1999b : 222), have done that by looking at many institutions the parliament, the army, the Court and so on. This study follows this path.

2.3 Measurement

The measure is an aggregate of the degree of confidence in six specific Canadian federal institutions: the parliament, the government, the army, the political parties, the civil service and the Supreme court (see appendix 1). The data are extracted from a telephone survey conducted between October 16th and November 5th by Léger Marketing of a representative sample of Canadian adults (18 years old and over)³. The confidence scale varies from 0, meaning «No confidence at all» for each institution, to 3

² Index Heterington

- 1) *How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right ? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time*
- 2) *Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it ?*
- 3) *Would you say the government is pretty much run by few big interest looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people ?*
- 4) *Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of are crooked ?*

³ Data are weighted by gender, region, language and age according to Statistics Canada census data.

which means that the respondent had a «Great deal of confidence» for all six institutions. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.81 shows that there is a high degree of congruence between the six elements of the index.

The average confidence level for the whole sample is 1.54 on this scale varying from 0 to 3 which means that the confidence level is barely above fifty percent. Furthermore, there are noticeable differences between geographical areas. Table 1 shows the distribution across Canada. As can be expected by observers of the Canadian scene, the Atlantic region and Ontario are the two areas where confidence in federal institutions is higher and Québec where it is lower. The survey was conducted in 2005 that is before the election of the Conservative Party of Canada.

Using this snapshot of the Canadian society, we want to sort out which factors, or which group of factors, those centered on the assessment of the economy or those focusing on politics, are more likely to explain individual variations in the degree of confidence in regime institutions.

3. Economics and Political Confidence

3.1 Introduction

The role of public policies, particularly those which influence the perception of the economic performance of the government, has been a major concern of political science (McAllister 1999). It was shown that governments which are perceived as delivering economic welfare and prosperity are more likely to be re-elected (Fiorina 1981; Lewis-Beck 1990). So if the perception of the economy has an influence on electoral results, we may think that the same perception should also have an impact on confidence in the democratic institutions. However, studies focusing on the role of the economy in the establishment and the maintenance of confidence in democratic institutions are very few. One can wonder if, in the search for explanations, the seminal work of Almond and Verba (1963) on civic culture has not been an obstacle to the incorporation of the economy as a factor influencing popular support towards the political institutions. However, more recent work identifies the economic performance as a predictor of political confidence. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish the measurable objective

performances of the economy (measures of GDP and unemployment, for example) from perceptions citizens have of those phenomena. Clarke, Dutt & Kornberg (1993: 1015) argued that the economic conditions have a limited effect on political support because the contemporary Western democracies have not known disasters or miracles which could affected confidence to a significant degree. Dalton (2004 : 115), however, notes that small changes in the economy may have significant impact on perceptions:

« Statistics on economic performance follow a strongly autoregressive process that moderate change, but public perceptions of the economy are often highly responsive to short-term factors. For instance, the drop in objective economic indicator during the 1974-5 and 1980-1 OPEC recessions were fairly modest, but the drop in American' confidence about the economy was quite sharp.»

3.2 Measures of subjective performance of the economy

Thus, the relation between the state of the economy and political confidence should preferably be established through measurements of the perceptions, or subjective economy, rather than by the measurements of actual economy. Furthermore, according to McAllister (1999), this perception is based on a socio-tropic assessment rather than an egocentric point of view. In other words, the perceptions the public has of the economy are shaped by statements relating to the national economy as they are publicized by the medias rather than by the strict economic circumstances of the individual. The perceptions would also be grounded on a judgment related to the past, a retrospective assessment, rather than a prospective calculation of a future economic situation. This hypothesis that the retrospective perception of the economy is related to political confidence found an empirical footing in at least two studies (Bélanger and Nadeau 2005; Citrin and Luks 2001). Unfortunately, other studies also found significant relationships between political confidence and judgments on the future of the economy (Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn 2001; Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn 2000) as well as for assessments based on personal conditions.(Dalton 2004; Listhaug 1995; McAllister 1999; Richardson, Houston and Hadjiharalamous 2001). Moreover, no study tried to link these three classic dimensions of the economic performance evaluation to the overall political confidence. All things considered, the economy is a factor to be included in the explanation of political confidence but which aspect of it remains open for discussion.

Thus, the retrospective and the prospective dimensions of the socio-tropic assessments as well as the individual evaluation will be incorporated in the study of the influence of the economy on political confidence.

3.3 Hypotheses

From this literature we extracted three hypotheses concerning the relation between the economy and political confidence.

Hypothesis 1 Sociotropic and Retrospective

- a. The individual who positively evaluates the economic situation of the previous year will have more confidence in political institutions than others.
- b. The individual who negatively evaluates the economic situation of the previous year will have less confidence in political institutions than others.

Hypothesis 2 Sociotropic and Prospective

- a. The individual who positively evaluates the economic situation of the year to come will have more confidence in the political institutions than others.
- b. The individual who negatively evaluates the economic situation of the year to come will have less confidence in the political institutions than others.

Hypothesis 3 Egocentric

- a. The individual who evaluates his financial standing positively will have more confidence in the political institutions than others.
- b. The individual who evaluates his financial standing negatively will have less confidence in the political institutions than others.

4. Political variables and Political confidence

4.1 Introduction

According to Pippa Norris (1999), we can identify three theoretical currents which try to explain the variation of the degree of political confidence. They are the cultural theories, the theories of the governmental performance and the institutional theories of political support. Using this framework we will select political variables which can potentially

explain the observed variations in confidence in the institutions. The political character of these variables comes from the fact that their conceptualization is expressed by a judgment on the use by the authorities of their capacity to get things done.

4.2 Cultural theories

First, let start with the cultural theories that assume the existence of a dominant public philosophy with regard to the public sphere and which is transmitted through socialization. One feature of such a culture would be cynicism. And political cynicism is a feature which can explain long term differences between degrees of confidence. Indeed, Bernstein (2001) found a negative relationship between cynicism and political confidence. The idea that political confidence is affected when citizens believe that politicians are impotent and corrupted should not come as a surprise. Our measure of cynicism is made up of four questions analogous to those composing the index of Hetherington (see appendix 1). There is a congruence between the four elements of the index since Cronbach's alpha reaches 0.69. Graph 4 illustrates the bivariate relation between political confidence and cynicism and as such boosts the relevance of hypothesis 4 and the cultural theories underpinning it. In addition, the Pearson's coefficient of correlation of -0.44 is significant; it summarizes the negative and moderate relationship in the direction predicted by the theory.

Hypothesis 4

More cynical is the individual, less he or she will have confidence in political institutions. The less cynical the individual is, the more confidence she or he will have in political institutions.

4.3 Institutional theories

Institutional theories will postulate that the support for democratic institutions will be in relation with the accumulated experience of the individuals. Thus, the capacity of a political system to provide political benefits for the greatest number would be determining in the overall degree of confidence. The winners would be mobilized

whereas the losers would feel excluded from the political system. So what influences political mobilization such as partisanship or the fact of being on the winning (or losing) side at election time would affect the degree of confidence in the medium term. The political confidence of an individual would be higher when the party of its political allegiance is in power. This relation between partisanship and political confidence was shown in several studies (Bélanger and Nadeau 2005; Bernstein 2001; Gross, Aday and Brewer 2004; Richardson, Houston and Hadjiharalamous 2001; Uslaner 2001). Pippa Norris (1999b: 219) emphasizes the relation between the dichotomy winner/loser and political confidence as she wrote::

«Evaluation of the political regime reflect our experience of whether we are winner or loser over successive elections, defined by whether the party we endorse is returned to government.»

An individual whose preferred political party is excluded from power will have less confidence in the institutions. This relationship was shown by Newton (1999) and Norris (1999). Our fifth hypothesis is derived from this literature.

Hypothesis 5 Winner/loser

Individuals who voted for the winning party (the Liberal Party in this study) will show greater confidence in political institutions than others.

Table 2 shows that there is a difference in the average score of political confidence between the individuals who claim having voted for the Liberal party (1.79) and those who voted for the other parties or declared that they did not voted (1.39). Moreover, the measure of association (Cramer's V) between the vote for the winning party and political confidence confirms the strength of this relationship.

Following Hetherington (1999), we can say that those who voted for the opposition parties are more distrustful. Table 3 reports the confidence level by political parties. The supporters of the Bloc Québécois are the least confident (1.17) in Canadian institutions as one might expect. They are followed by the Conservatives (1.41) and Independents (1.43). The most confident of the losers are in the NDP with an average degree of confidence of 1.64. This may reflect the role of the NDP in 2005. Indeed, the NDP

voted with the minority Liberal government which accommodated the NDP with a suitable budget. The leadership of the NDP interpreted their own behaviour as an act of responsible governance, as sharing power. Among all the opposition parties, it was the party closer to power.

4.5 Theory of government performance

The third thread comes out of the theories related to the performance of the government. According to this line of thoughts confidence should not be a stable phenomenon. Indeed, it should vary with demands of the citizens and according to the degree of the governmental response. So confidence would reflect the satisfaction of the citizens with regard to the government of the day. Thus, issues related to the performance of the government, such as the position of the government on some salient political issues, would be determining in the degree of confidence. Most studies interested in the link between the preferences of voters for some public policies and confidence in the institutions looked at this relationship through the model proposed by Anthony Downs (1957). These studies focus on the difference between the preference of the individuals and the subjective evaluation of the position of the government mainly on the left/right axis (King 1997; Miller 1974; Miller and Listhaug 1998). However, Dalton (2004: 143) calls into question this design of the link between the preferences and confidence in the institutions. He writes:

« We suggested that a conversation with a typical citizen in California, Paris, or Sydney would find agreement on the poor policy performance of government. If one pursued the conversation, however, I think certain differences would appear. You both might agree that government is performing poorly, but when you talk about specifics you would probably find that you have different policy examples in mind. While one person is concerned with the government's shortfalls in social programmes, the other might feel that not enough is being done to protect the environment, or that taxes are too high, or that government is not correctly dealing with globalization issues. »

Taking stock, we asked our respondents what was the most important issue for them and then their assessment of the government performance on this issue. We used this assessment as their judgment of the government of the day and put it in the equation explaining confidence in political institutions. Hypothesis 6 expresses this relation between the preference for a public policy and its implementation and political confidence.

Hypothesis 6

The individual who evaluates positively the work of the government on the issue he considers a priority will have more confidence in the political institutions than others.

Table 4 illustrates the relation. There is a significant difference in the level of confidence between individuals who judge the work of the government positively (1.88) and the individuals who judge this work negatively (1.43). Moreover, the association (Gamma) depicts a moderate relation between these two variables.

5. Politics and Economics

The literature, up to now, has mainly showed that the relation between the economic variables and political confidence is weak (Dalton 2004; Listhaug 1995; McAllister 1999; Miller and Listhaug 1999). A contrario, electoral studies show a more significant relationship between economy and vote. How can we explain this difference?

We know from electoral studies that the evaluation of the economy is a factor related to the satisfaction of the government. Fair or not, culprit or scapegoat, the actual economic problems are attributed to the government of the day. Thus, the evaluation of the economy is a short time determinant linked to the success of the policies of the government in place. Members of a political system do not always think «economy».

The satisfaction of the citizens can depend on other factors such as the performance of the government in honouring its electoral promises or in delivering a policy considered to be a priority by the citizens. So the satisfaction of the citizens at the time of an election plays a significant role since the poll makes it possible to punish or reward the

performance of the government. Political confidence is not the simple reflection of the satisfaction of how the government does its job. As the theoretical framework of Pippa Norris shows, it includes cultural and institutional factors, in addition to the factors related to the performance of the government. Furthermore the presence of a phenomenon such as political cynicism can contribute to undermine economic performance in the evaluation of confidence. Indeed, governments considered impotent or interchangeable have a low probability of being judged according to their performance. In this case, the ambient values will come to explain the level of support of the regime. All things considered, the impact of the economic variables cannot have the same effect on political confidence that they have on elections. On the one hand, the evaluation of the economy is only one facet of the performance of a short-term government. On the other hand, the political variables being the product of cultural and institutional factors have deeper roots and in consequence will influence the degree of confidence in a more stable manner.

General hypothesis

The political variables will have a stronger impact on confidence than the economic variables.

6. Regression analysis

6.1 Method and Specification of the model

To falsify our specific hypotheses and our general hypothesis, we carried out a multivariate regression analysis using ordinary least squares. We have retained the 1443 individuals who did answer to all the relevant questions in our survey. We have introduced in the analysis some socio-economic variables such as gender, age, education and language to control their effect. We specified our analysis in three different models in order to check our general hypothesis. Table 5 reports the detailed results. Thus, model 1 measures the impact of the economic variables, model 2

measures the effect of the political variables and model 3 confronts the two types of explanation.

6.2 Results

Model 3 makes it possible to note the weak impact of the socio-demographic variables on political confidence. Indeed, the expression of confidence or non-confidence is based, as Levi and Stocker (2000: 476) had noted on the lived political experience and not on social characteristics of the individuals or the features of their character. So model 3 shows that only individuals 55 years old and older have statistically less confidence in the political institutions than the others. This result is congruent with the theory which predicts that the young people begins their political experiment with a positive prejudice towards the institutions which disaggregates with time (Dalton 2004: 91). Moreover, the degree of confidence of Canadian reaches 2.03 on the scale of 3 as the constant summarizes. This result means that by maintaining all the factors constant Canadians have "enough confidence" in the political institutions. Finally, the general hypothesis is confirmed. Indeed, the model 1 which includes the economic variables does not explain more than 13 % of the variance as R^2 indicates whereas the second model which deals with the political variables explains 34 % of the variance. Moreover, the conjunction of the two models washes away most of the statistical significance of the evaluation of the economy. All things considered, the complete model allows a level of explanation of 35 % of the variance. Thus, the political model dominates over the economic one.

6.3 Specific hypotheses

The hypothesis of McAllister (1999) predicting that the link between the evaluation of the economy and political confidence passes through a socio-tropic evaluation and only a retrospective one is partially confirmed. Indeed, only the retrospective negative judgment of the economy (hypothesis 1b) has a significant impact on political confidence when political variables are taken into account. Without the political factors (Model 1), the prospective evaluations of the economy have also an effect on confidence. Moreover,

one's negative personal financial evaluation (hypothesis 3b) is statistically correlated with political confidence. When the political variables are brought into the model, the personal situation loses some strength, but remains significant.

Of the seven political variables included in model 2, four have a strong effect on confidence in institutions. Cynicism (hypothesis 4) is the variable which has the most impact. Indeed, an increase of a point on the scale of cynicism makes the political confidence decrease a quarter of a point. As regards the relation between winner/loser and confidence, hypothesis 5 is confirmed with a significant relationship at a threshold of 1 per thousand. However, the relation between partisanship and political confidence is only partially confirmed. Indeed, compared to the partisans of the liberal party only the partisans of the Bloc Québécois have a degree of confidence statistically lower when other variables are taken into account. Finally, the proposal by Dalton (2004) on the relationship between perceptions on the preferred public policy of an individual (hypothesis 6) and political confidence is confirmed. All things considered, the political factors are more significant than the economic factors.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we showed the importance of taking account of the economic and political variables in the study of confidence in political institutions. Thus, we started with the idea of taking account of the many dimensions an individual evaluates the economic situation. Moreover, the theoretical framework of Pippa Norris (1999) enabled us to identify the political variables and to measure the anticipated effect of the conjunction of the economic and political hypotheses. So we showed that a negative evaluation of the retrospective economy is associated with a lower level of political confidence. Moreover, a negative evaluation of the personal financial standing is associated with a lower level of political confidence. However, the political factors are much more important than the economic factors as the ratios of explanation of our analyses of regression show.

Indeed, the evaluation of the economy is only one of the facets of the performance of a short-term government whereas confidence can also be influenced by deep tendencies related to the political culture. Thus, cynicism, the relation winner/loser,

the judgment on the implementation of a preferred public policy and to a lesser extent partisanship have a significant effect on political confidence.

Appendix 1

A) Political Confidence Index

Question :

I am going to name a number of organizations we have in Canada. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence (3), quite a lot of confidence (2), not very much confidence (1), or none at all (0)?

Intitutions : federal political party, the Supreme Court, federal public service, federal government, Armed force, federal parliament.

α : 0,81

scale (0-3)

Operational definition :

(Political party + Supreme Court + public service + government + Armrd force + parliament)

6

B) Cynicism Index

Question :

I will now read four statements. For each one, please tell me if you strongly agree (3), somewhat agree (2), somewhat disagree (1), or strongly disagree (0) .In Canada, generally, those elected to public office soon lose touch with the people. In Canada, generally, governments don't care much what people like you think. In Canada, generally, politicians are ready to lie to get elected. In Canada, all federal parties are basically the same; people don't really have a choice.

α : 0,69

Scale (0-3)

Operational definition:

(lose touch + don't care + lie + don't really choice)

4

C) Partisan identification

Question :

In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a: Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Bloc Québécois or None of these

Coding : 1 = Party identification (Bloc Québécois ou Conservative ou N.D.P. or Independent)
0 = other

Reference (Constant) : Liberal party

D) Winner / Loser

Question :

At the last federal elections in June 2004, for which party did you vote ?

Coding : 0 = Opposition vote or abstention 1 = Liberal vote

E) Positive job

Question :

What is, in your opinion, the single most important problem facing the *federal* government today? Reducing debt, Improving social welfare programs, Improving health care, Creating jobs, Cutting taxes, Fighting crime, Preserving national unity, Improving environment. How good a job does the *federal* government do with respect to this problem? A very good job, Quite a good job, Not a very good job, Not a good job at all

Coding : 1 = A very good job or Quite a good job
0 = Not a very good job or Not a good job at all

F) Retrospective economy

Question :

Over the past year, has Canada's economy ? Gotten better, Gotten worse, Or stayed about the same?

Coding:

Positive past : 1 = Better 0 = Worse or stay about the same

Negative past : 1 = Worse 0 = Better or stay about the same

Reference (Constant) = Stay about the same

G) Prospective economy

Question :

What about the next 12 months: Will Canada's economy ?

Coding :

Positive future : 1 = Better 0 = Worse or stay about the same

Negative future : 1 = Worse 0 = Better or stay about the same

Reference (Constant) = Stay about the same

H) Personal financial status

Question :

And you, financially, are you better off, worse off, or about the same as a year ago?

Coding :

Positive personal : 1 = Better 0 = Worse or stay about the same

Negative personal : 1 = Worse 0 = Worse or stay about the same

Reference (Constant) = stay about the same

References

- Almond, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture : Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bélanger, Éric, and Richard Nadeau. 2005. "Political trust and the vote in multiparty election : The canadian case." *European journal of political research* 44:121-146.
- Bernstein, Jeffrey L. 2001. "Linking presidential and congressional approval." Pp. 98-117 in *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?*, edited by John R. Hibbing and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chanley, V.A., T.J. Rudolph, and W.M. Rahn. 2001. "Trust in the Reagan years and beyond." Pp. 59-78 in *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?*, edited by John R. Hibbing and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chanley, Virginia A., Thomas J. Rudolph, and Wendy M. Rahn. 2000. "The origin and consequence of public trust in government: Time-series analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64:239-256.
- Citrin, J., and S. Luks. 2001. "Political Trust Revisited." Pp. 9-27 in *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?*, edited by John R. Hibbing and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalton, Russell J. 1999. "Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies." Pp. 57-77 in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2004. *Democratic challenges, democratic choices : the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Easton, David. 1965. *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- González, Patrick, and Jean Crête. 2006. *Jeux de société: Une initiation à la théorie des jeux en sciences sociales*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Gross, Kimberly, Sean Aday, and Paul R. Brewer. 2004. "A Panel Study of Media Effects on Political Trust and Social Trust after September 11, 2001." *Politics* 95:49-73.
- Guérin, Daniel, François Pétry, and Jean Crête. 2004. "Tolerance, protest and democratic transition: Survey evidence from 13 post-communist countries." *European Journal of Political Research* 43:369-393.
- Heath, Joseph. 2000. *The Efficient Society: why Canada is as close to utopia as it gets*. Toronto: Viking Penguin.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1999. "The effect of political trust on the presidential vote, 1968-1996." *American Political Science Review* 3:311-326.
- Hibbing, John R., and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse (Eds.). 2001. *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- King, David C. 1997. "The polarization of American parties and mistrust in government." in *Why people don't trust government*, edited by Jr. Joseph S. Nye, Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

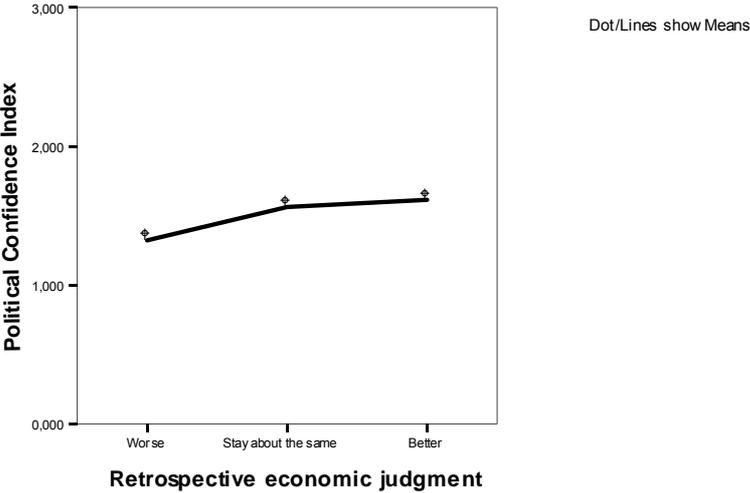
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. 1999. "Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis." Pp. 31-56 in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levi, Margaret, and Laura Stoker. 2000. "Political trust and trustworthiness." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3:475-507.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael. 1990. *Economics and elections: the major western democracies*. Ann Arbor MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Listhaug, O. 1995. "The dynamics of trust in politician." in *Citizens and the State*, edited by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McAllister, Ian. 1999. "The Economic Performance of Governments." Pp. 188-203 in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McFaul, Michael. 2005. "Transitions from Postcommunism." *Journal of Democracy* 16:5-19.
- Miller, Arthur H. 1974. "Political Issues and Trust in Government : 1964-1970." *American Political Science Review* 68:951-972.
- Miller, Arthur, and Ola Listhaug. 1998. "Policy Preferences and Political Distrust." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 23:161-187.
- . 1999. "Political Performance and Institutional Trust." Pp. 204-215 in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nevitte, Neil. 1996. *The Decline of Deference : Canadian value Change in Cross-National Perspective*. Peterborough, On: Broadview.
- . 2002. *Nouvelles valeurs et gouvernance au Canada*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Norris, Pippa (Ed.). 1999a. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1999b. "Institutional Explanation for Political Support." Pp. 217-235 in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pharr, Susan J., and Robert D. Putnam (Eds.). 2000. *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Richardson, L.E., D.J. Houston, and C.S. Hadjiharalamous. 2001. "Leaders of American governmental institutions." Pp. 83-97 in *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?*, edited by John R. Hibbing and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2001. "Is Washington really the problem?" Pp. 118-133 in *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?*, edited by John R. Hibbing and Elisabeth Theiss-Morse. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Table 1

| Region | Political Confidence Index mean |
|---------------------|--|
| Atlantic N = 123 | 1,74 |
| Quebec N = 428 | 1,39 |
| Ontario N = 618 | 1,62 |
| Prairies N = 280 | 1,49 |
| B.C. N = 219 | 1,53 |
| Total N = 1667 | 1,54 |
| Anova | 14,73 sig : p < 0,001 |

Figure 1

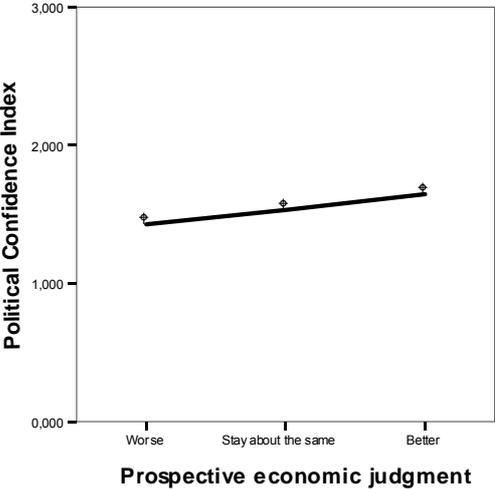
Over the past year, has Canada's economy gotten better, gotten worse or stayed about the same ?



Gamma = 0,22 sig : p < 0.001

Figure 2

**What about the next 12 months :
Will Canada's economy get better,
get worse or stay about the same**

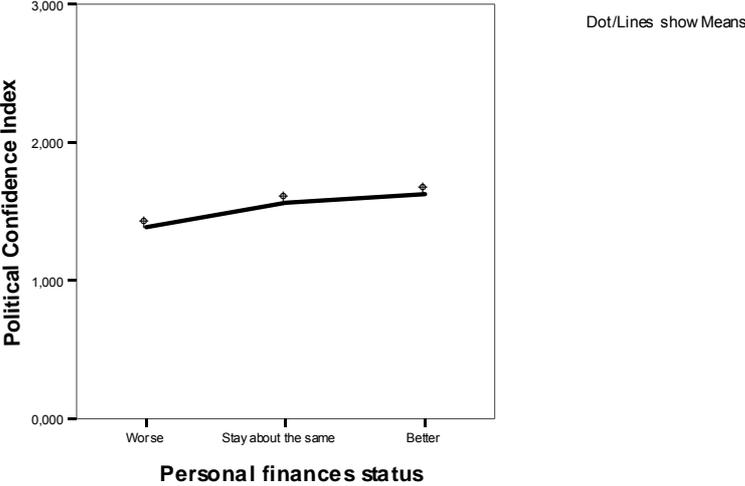


Dot/Lines show Means

Gamma = 0,19 sig : p < 0.001

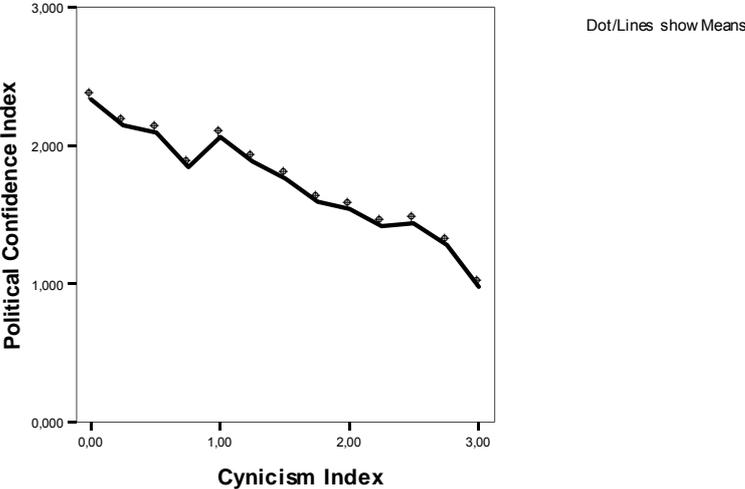
Figure 3

And you, financially, are you better off, worse off, or about the same as a year ago ?



Gamma = 0,19 sig : p < 0.001

Figure 4



Pearson coefficients = -0.44 sig : p < 0.001

Table 2

| Vote | Political Confidence Index mean |
|---|---|
| Winner (vote Liberal party) | 1,79 |
| Loser (Vote opposition party or not vote) | 1,39 |
| Mean difference | 0,40 sig : $p < 0.001$ (t -test) Cramer's V : 0,35 |

Table 3

| Party identification | Political confidence index mean |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Liberal | 1,78 |
| Conservative | 1,41 |
| N.D.P. | 1,64 |
| B.Q. | 1,17 |
| Independent | 1,43 |

Table 4

| How good job the federal government do with respect to this problem ? | Political Confidence Index mean |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| A very good job or Quite a good job | 1,88 |
| Not very a good job or Not a good job at all | 1,43 |
| Mean difference | 0,45 sig : p < 0.001 Gamma = 0,49 |

Tableau 5 Regression analyses

| Political Confidence Index | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | Economic perceptions | | Political factors | | Full | |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> |
| Constant | 1,68 | 38,13*** | 2,00 | 33,71*** | 2,03 | 31,98*** |
| <i>Socio-demographics</i> | | | | | | |
| Gender (male) | -0,04 | -1,46 | -0,02 | -0,93 | -0,04 | -1,47 |
| Young (18-34) | -0,04 | -1,08 | -0,02 | -0,70 | -0,03 | -0,89 |
| Senior (55 & more) | -0,15 | -3,91*** | -0,12 | -3,53*** | -0,13 | -3,96*** |
| University | 0,11 | 3,00** | 0,02 | 0,56 | 0,02 | 0,74 |
| High school | 0,01 | 0,36 | 0,01 | 0,29 | 0,02 | 0,56 |
| French | 0,18 | -5,02*** | -0,06 | -1,63 | -0,06 | -1,66 |
| Other language | 0,09 | 1,98* | 0,08 | 2,07* | 0,07 | 1,89 |
| <i>Economic perceptions</i> | | | | | | |
| 1a) Positive retro | 0,04 | 1,03 | | | -0,003 | -0,11 |
| 1b) Negative retro | -0,15 | -3,81*** | | | -0,11 | -3,31*** |
| 2a) Positive prospective | 0,13 | 3,31*** | | | 0,07 | 1,91 |
| 2b) Negative prospective | -0,09 | -2,47* | | | -0,02 | -0,62 |
| 3a) Positive personal | -0,02 | -0,56 | | | -0,06 | -1,78 |
| 3b) Negative personal | -0,21 | -5,57*** | | | -0,10 | -3,11** |
| <i>Political factors</i> | | | | | | |
| 4) Cynicism | | | -0,27 | -12,70*** | -0,25 | -11,57*** |
| 5) Winner | | | 0,27 | 8,67*** | 0,26 | 8,32*** |
| 6a) B.Q. | | | -0,15 | -2,69** | -0,14 | -2,55* |
| 6b) Conservative | | | -0,06 | -1,56 | -0,07 | -1,68 |
| 6c) N.D.P | | | 0,08 | 1,66 | 0,08 | 1,70 |
| 6d) Independent | | | -0,06 | -1,84 | -0,04 | -1,28 |
| 7) Good job | | | 0,30 | 9,69*** | 0,28 | 9,24*** |
| N | | 1443 | | 1443 | | 1443 |
| R ² | | 0,13 | | 0,34 | | 0,35 |

OLS estimated by SPSS

* P < 0,05 ** si P < 0,01 *** si P < 0,001