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The Ethnocultural Model of Voting

A Behavioral and Historical Critique

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Political action, especially individual voting choice, is a subject of major interest to contemporary behavioral scientists. They use models of political behavior to understand and explain a wide range of social tensions, roles, and attitudes. In recent years especially, historians have begun to analyze and reinterpret popular voting in an effort to understand the historical dimensions of these sociopolitical processes.

HISTORIANS AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

For most of the twentieth century, the dominant interpretation of historical political behavior has been an economic one, although Frederick Jackson Turner and his followers often used economic interests as a subset of sectional concerns. The politicization of economic conflict between propertied and unpropertied, capital and labor, "have" and "have not," not only made intuitive sense, but it made coherent the great issues which had rocked our political history: the tariff, federal land policy, railroad regulation, control of business, recognition of

the rights of labor, monetary policy, and welfare issues, to name a few. It also made sensible the political implications of industrialization, urbanization, and westward expansion—those major forces in our development as a nation (see Beard, 1957).

Historians began to raise serious questions about the economic-class conflict model shortly after World War II. In a world marked by violent unrest, by authoritarian politics, and by incisive political conflict, the American experience seemed retrospectively to be serene and peaceful. Our differences, while sharply contested, did not suggest a conflict model, but rather one of consensus. Issues concerning type of government, basic economic systems, or a state church have not been generally politicized. We have agreed upon fundamentals and fought our political battles over means and programs, not philosophy (Hofstadter, 1948; Hartz, 1955).

The consensus model has fallen into disfavor in the last several years. Some younger historians began to reformulate a Beardian hypothesis that emphasized basic economic conflict (see Bernstein, 1967). Yet while they have exposed many logical and methodological fallacies in the consensus interpretation, they have not yet developed an acceptable economic framework to replace it. Part of the reason for this rests in the fact that a new school of history, that which emphasizes ethnocultural conflict in popular voting, has made a more compelling empirical case.¹

The ethnocultural interpretation of political and social conflict has become largely synonymous with what has been called the "new political history." Historians familiar with the behavioral sciences and trained in the manipulation and analysis of large data sets have begun in recent years to rethink and rewrite much of our history. Sophisticated computer technology and social science software have played a large role in making this possible. Vast bodies of individual and aggregate data, in the form of census records, tax lists, vital statistics, church records, and election results remain a great untapped source of historical information. And this type of research has permitted us to focus on the behavior of nonelites in a manner

that was virtually impossible in the study of manuscript sources. The initial—and nearly unanimous—results suggest that our historical political cleavages have been ethnic and religious, not economic.

THE ETHNOCULTURAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOR

Lee Benson (1961) and Samuel P. Hays (1965) have played key roles in the growth of the ethnocultural model. In their own writings and in their training of young historians, they have helped to shape an imaginative and persuasive approach to historical political behavior. Benson (1961: 165) perhaps described the model most concisely when he wrote that "at least since the 1820's, when manhood suffrage became widespread, ethnic and religious differences have tended to be relatively the most important sources of political differences."

Research in recent years seems to support the Benson thesis. Whether in the election of Andrew Jackson or of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the ethnic-religious factor seems to have been a *persistent determinant of political judgment and behavior* (Bogue, 1968; Swierenga, 1971; McSeveney, 1971). National political debate may well have focused on economic issues such as the tariff, but *community reference groups and cultural values provided the basis for electoral cleavage. Ethnocultural historians have cautioned us that these observations do not reflect a simplistic model in which ward heelers appeal to ethnic, religious, or racial prejudices and loyalties in order to divert attention from "real" economic issues. Rather, the real issues of politics have been those most significant relative to life style and values: prohibition, public funding or control of sectarian schools, sabbatarian laws, woman suffrage, and efforts to hasten or retard ethnic assimilation.*

It is the late nineteenth century, the period from the 1870s to the 1890s, whose ethnocultural model of politics I would like to detail. This is the period in which some of the more

sophisticated recent work has been done. And it is here that Richard J. Jensen (1971) and Paul Kleppner (1970), in their studies of midwestern politics have moved beyond the observation of ethnic voting patterns to the development of an ethnocultural explanation of political behavior. Their work is not unique, but is representative of scholars such as Ronald P. Formisano (1971), Lee Benson (1961), Michael F. Holt (1969), Samuel Hays (1965), John M. Allswang (1971), and Bruce M. Stave (1970), among others.² In addition, tangential studies by Walter Dean Burnham (1970), Frederick C. Luebke (1969), Roger E. Wyman (1968a, 1968b), and Samuel McSeveney (1972) permit an examination of the general applicability of the ethnocultural model.

For our purposes, we will define the ethnocultural interpretation of politics as one that argues that among all of the personal, interpersonal, intergroup, and intragroup factors which determine political behavior, *generally* (but not exclusively) ethnocultural grouping is the most important. This is a different perspective from a simple interest in ethnic history and politics. It posits that the ethnoreligious group was the primary determinant of political values and behavior. Paul Kleppner (1970: 35) summarized the model well:

Partisan affiliations were not rooted in economic class distinctions. They were political expressions of shared values derived from the voter's membership in, and commitment to, ethnic and religious groups. Collectively, such values provided the voter with a perspective through which he filtered existential stimuli and by means of which he translated an array of diverse events into personally relevant terms.

Clearly this is more than an observation of differential political behavior among various ethnic and religious groups. Contemporary politicians and journalists as well as later scholars have long noted this. But they have tended to dismiss it as a spurious relationship or as "irrational" behavior.

The ethnocultural historians have amassed impressive evidence to test and validate their interpretation. Further, they

have developed a plausible model to explain it. Republican supporters (and in most cases Whig in the 1830s and 1840s) were the pietistic or evangelical church groups—excepting the Southerners—immigrants as well as old stock. The major Democratic constituents were the liturgical church groups, predominantly the Irish Catholics and German Catholics and Lutherans, as well as Southerners, including those transplanted into the North. Democrats had some support from non-evangelical native Protestants as well.

The ethnocultural historians have demonstrated that this relationship between religion and politics remain strong when economic factors are controlled. This challenges effectively what Samuel Hays has called the liberal (economic) interpretation of history. Richard Jensen (1971: 58) argues that "religion was the fundamental source of political conflict in the Midwest. Religion shaped the issues and the rhetoric of politics, and played the critical role in determining the party alignments of the voters."

These new behavioral historians have postulated a model which makes rational rather than chaotic the relationship between cultural group and political behavior. Religion and ethnicity are primary forces, abetted by the family, in the process of socialization. As variables in political behavior, these are significant as reference groups. But the behavioral historians go beyond simple reference group theory in the development of their model, for reference groups can be transitory and their members significantly cross-pressured. Rather, the values learned and perceptions affected by membership in an ethnic or religious group are more complex and permanent. The pietists (described in some instances as Puritans or evangelicals) were concerned with "right behavior," to use Kleppner's concise phrase. They viewed the state as a positive authority with which to regulate and direct the behavior of individuals and groups. Blue laws and prohibition were probably two of the major concerns of the pietists and the consequences of their action.

Liturgicals (or ritualists), on the other hand, stressed right belief. They were more concerned with doctrine and dogma

than they were with secular behavior. Indeed, in the great battles over prohibition and sabbatarian laws, the Irish and the Germans, whether Catholic or Lutheran, provided the basis of the opposition to the pietists. Beyond this, the liturgicals placed a high value on a parochial education as a significant part of the process of socialization and religious indoctrination. They jealously and zealously protected their schools and sought public funding for these institutions. Pietists saw the schools as part of a black-robed conspiracy to resist assimilation and to raid the public funds. They insisted upon public controls over these institutions. Doctrinal differences influenced secular behavior.

To the ethnoculturalists, Wisconsin politics in the period from the 1850s to the 1890s has provided impressive validation of their model. In the period immediately prior to the Civil War, the Know-Nothing (anti-Catholic) movement and the moral issues of slavery and prohibition laid down political cleavages along ethnic and religious lines. Republican enactment of a prohibition law in 1873 and a public school law in 1890 with strong anti-Catholic and anti-foreign overtones exacerbated the old tensions. Republican gubernatorial losses following passage of these two losses (the only losses the party suffered in Wisconsin between 1854 and 1932) indicated the strength of the Germans and Catholics when aroused. Religious and doctrinal overtones existed in other campaigns, but always a good bit more subtly.

According to Kleppner and Jensen, even the major electoral realignment completed in 1896 related more to doctrinal perceptions than to William Jennings Bryan's economic and monetary proposals. In 1896, many saw Bryan as the more pietistic candidate.

It is impossible to do justice in a few pages to the cumulative decades of research and volumes of findings of the ethnocultural historians. Suffice it to say that they have done their work well. It is virtually impossible to avoid their frame of reference in writing on American political history. Their observations are supported by statistical evidence. Their model

of behavior is much more imaginative and convincing, retrospectively, than anything that has preceded it.

Yet the new ethnocultural school has not defined a universal model of historical voting behavior in the United States. Nor have these historians generally claimed to have achieved this. A behavioral approach to voting virtually rules out a monistic interpretation. In the remainder of this paper, I would like to offer a critique of the methodology and concepts employed in the approach that Richard Jensen and Paul Kleppner represent and offer some suggestions for a behavioral framework for interpreting historical voting.

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND THE ETHNOCULTURAL MODEL

DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION

Historians trained in modern social science techniques find it often frustrating to turn from literature rich in survey data to historical aggregations. Some individual data are available but for political historians the dependent variable, voting choice, is always in aggregate form. This causes serious methodological problems in terms of designing statistical tests and making inferences about individual behavior and causal relationships. In addition to simple correlation analyses, many of the ethnoculturalists have identified and examined clusters of aggregations, attempting to control for other variables—e.g., analyzing heavily German Lutheran units by making comparisons with clusters of units containing large numbers of pietistic Lutherans or German Catholics, and intracluster comparisons between wealthy and poor German Lutherans.

Nearly all the ethnoculturalists have used this technique of examination and inference. But they have generally not questioned the assumptions involved in using relatively homogeneous units for their observations. If our society has indeed been marked by sharp ethnocultural conflict, then homo-

geneous communities might not be microcosms for the analysis of the behavioral implications of these tensions. Further, one might question the use of "German Lutheran" or any such description without reference to time and place. This fails to control for differential levels of acculturation as a function of quantitative (as well as qualitative) relationships with the dominant culture. Clearly Luebke's (1969: 35) impressive work in Nebraska demonstrates that cultural "mix" was important, but without minimizing the overall influence of religion:

If the mixed immigrant community was small, establishing social and religious institutions on an ethnic basis was difficult. Unless the German was a resident of a ghetto, he was forced to mingle with the dominant native American stock, which greatly increased the tendency to conform to majority standards.

In a recently published study, Samuel McSeveney (1972) found ethnocultural factors quite significant in voting in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut in the 1890s, but modified, at times considerably, by factionalism, localism, and personalities.

The use of homogeneous communities, of course, opens a further question of definition. The ethnoculturalists are not generally precise in defining a "largely German" town. Kleppner (1970: 21, 23), for example, refers to units that are the "most heavily Catholic" in the city, that are a "stronghold of German Lutherans," and are "working class," but without giving a measurement for the specific cases in these descriptive categories. Obviously, relative is the operational term here. Of Jensen's (1971: 142) Wisconsin "German" units, an examination of the 1895 Wisconsin state census reveals that Wheatland had 26% German natives, Randall had 24%, and Lomira 27%. His Iowa German counties were those in which over 10% of the 1900 population was German-born (Jensen, 1971: 96, n. 14). There would, of course, be second- and third-generation Germans in these towns as well, but literature on ethnic acculturation, while conceding the persistence of ethnic ties, would generally caution us against treating such individuals as culturally monolithic (see discussion in Luebke, 1969: 40-41, ch. 3 and throughout).

A corollary question that faces all students of voting behavior, but might be raised in the context of selection of representative units, involves levels of participation. This is particularly crucial in the analysis of still-acculturating immigrant groups. If a civil unit is composed of two-thirds Germans this obviously does not mean that two-thirds of the voters are Germans. Kleppner, for example, analyzes the French Canadian vote in Michigan and Wisconsin by looking at "French Canadian lumbering" units. Yet, in New England at any rate, French Canadians were characterized by extremely low levels of political participation. As late as the 1930s one-third of the French Canadians (and 38% of the Italians) in Burlington, Vermont, never voted (Anderson, 1937: 207-210). Similar evidence of low levels of participation exists for towns in New Hampshire and Connecticut in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Bourassa, 1972; McSeveney, 1972: 125). In characterizing civil units, "Who voted?" is a more critical question—if a more elusive answer—than "What were the general population profiles?"

THE RELIGIOUS VARIABLE

Religion is a more crucial variable in the ethnocultural model than is national stock. It is religion that provides the key to descriptions of differential behavior and the interpretive framework to understand it. Yet there are methodological problems in defining religious characteristics. Religion was not a universal characteristic of the population. Religious sociologists differ on measurement of religiosity, but clearly they would agree that church membership is not the only measurement of a religious person (see, for example, Glock and Stark, 1965: ch. 2; Yinger, 1970: 24-32). It remains, however, the only objectively verifiable one for historical aggregates. Both Jensen and Kleppner have attempted to make meaningful the figures on religious communicants. Kleppner (1970: 99) has estimated that the increase in membership in major religious groups from 1870 to 1890 was from 65% to 75% of the population in

Michigan, from 75% to 85% in Ohio, and from 60% to 85% in Wisconsin. Jensen (1971: 85-88) has estimated that, in 1890, 73% of the population of the Midwest belonged to a church. My own estimates for the religious population of Wisconsin and Iowa in 1890, using the federal census of religious bodies and population over fifteen years of age as the base, are 52% and 46%, respectively. Clearly, this does not mean that the balance of the population was irreligious or atheist. Probably few were. Yet, as we shall see later, this methodological problem of description can lead to a broader conceptual problem of definition.

Richard Jensen has made a major effort to break down voting aggregates by locating and analyzing contemporary directories that list occupation, religion and political preferences for individuals. In these compilations, he demonstrates that few of those individuals who belonged to old stock, pietistic churches described themselves as Democrats, while the Catholics were predominantly Democratic. Nonpietistic Protestants were found between these two extremes.

Jensen's individual analyses underline the earlier questions about religion. Only 43% of one group and 50% of the other expressed a religious preference. This is of some significance in light of the commercial nature of these publications: non-membership must have been socially acceptable.

RELIGION AND CLASS

The Jensen tabulations are relevant to a major methodological question concerning the ethnocultural school: have they adequately controlled for class? Or, correlatively, have they satisfactorily demonstrated that there has been no relationship between religion and class? Jensen's compilation for eight Illinois townships, for example, shows that, among liturgicals, 25.2% were involved in business, professional, and white-collar occupations, as opposed to 42.5% of the pietists. More significantly, 46.9% of the liturgicals were unskilled laborers, as compared to 14.1% of the pietists. These data

would indicate some relationship between religion and occupation. And, indeed, the liturgicals, especially the Roman Catholics, were largely recent immigrants who moved to the cities and took low-paying, low-status jobs. There are no general data on religion and occupation, but census tabulations for 1890 linking ethnicity and occupation are revealing (U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, 1897). For example, native white of native parents composed 62.49% of the white population in 1890; foreign-born whites were 16.59%. Yet the immigrants composed 43.41% of the common laborers and the native stock group composed 41.26%. As the ethnoculturalists have properly warned us, however, the immigrant community should not be treated as a monolith. A ranking among major immigrant groups using percentage of that group working as laborers shows that 34.15% of the Italians in 1890 were laborers, followed by Hungarians (32.44%), Irish (25.16%), French Canadians (16.43%), Bohemians (15.90%), Swedes and Norwegians (14.95%), Danes (13.30%), Germans (11.58%), Russians (10.96%), and various British groups at ten percent or less. Significantly, the groups with the highest proportion of their members working as laborers tended to be liturgical in religious doctrine. Of course, many of the groups listed here had but recently arrived in 1890, and it should not be too surprising that new immigrants began as laborers. Beyond this, cultural heritage does affect occupational choice (or option) in ways not directly related to employment discrimination. Yet these complex qualifications do not affect the basic relationship between job status and nativity. The Irish were not recent arrivals. They were among the earliest of the major immigrant groups and, among second-generation Irishmen, laborer was still the most common occupation. Some 17.88% of the native-born with Irish mothers were laborers (there were no compilations on native-born with Irish fathers). This compared with 8.51% of the overall second-generation group. French Canadians and Italians showed equally minimal generational mobility.

Obviously, these general figures are not conclusive of anything. Yet they do suggest a relationship between occu-

pation and ethnicity that must be investigated further before we can completely rule out occupational class as an intervening or contributing variable in the ethnocultural model of political behavior. Indeed, Robert Hodge and Donald Tremain (1968) recently demonstrated that even subjective class perceptions are influenced by nonoccupational associations.

CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS AND THE ETHNOCULTURAL MODEL

THE COMPLEXITY OF CULTURE

Beyond these general methodological problems, the ethnocultural interpretation also raises some conceptual questions. For example, the ethnocultural historians generally treat religion and ethnicity as unidimensional concepts, without reference to time, place, rate of acculturation, or individual personality. The latter two are elusive, admittedly, for which historical variables would be extremely difficult to generate. Nevertheless, we must recognize that ethnicity is part of an interactive social system and while significant it is by no means universally dominant. The Irish Catholic immigrant living in a solidly Irish ward in Boston in 1900 would relate to his ethnicity in different ways than he would if he found himself living in an exclusive Brahmin section—and in different ways yet if he moved to a French Canadian mill town or to an old stock but poor pietistic farming community in Vermont. Environment is a crucial variable in behavior. Society is not static, nor are the perceptions and relationships which shape it. McSeveney (1972: 226) found, for example, that Germans and evangelical Protestants voted similarly in New Jersey in 1893. Perhaps most significantly, they voted Democratic in Atlantic County and Republican elsewhere. And the dominant issue (racetracks) was a “moral” one, apparently eliciting neither a strictly doctrinal nor a uniform partisan response.

Ethnicity cannot be conceptualized as the dominant variable

in all social relationships. It is not a singular characteristic. The ethnoculturalists concede this when they point to the “deviant” South, in which the dominant, old-stock white pietists were overwhelmingly Democratic. Racial tensions and prejudices obviously influenced this development. But there might well be other exceptions to the ethnocultural rule. For example, more work needs to be done on the election of 1896 before we can describe it as supportive of the ethnocultural model. Those pietistic farmers who supported Bryan in 1896 may have done so because his evangelical style appealed to their sense of “right behavior.” Jensen (1971: 270) argued, for example, “In the spring and summer of 1896 the silverite monetary doctrines captured the imagination and excited the utopian longings of pietistic midwestern farmers” (see also Kleppner, 1970: 338-368). Yet these voters might also have responded to Bryan as farmers, and their pietism may have been a supportive—or irrelevant—factor. Roger Wyman (1968b) found economic forces—not class—significant in the Wisconsin realignment, but conditioned by politicoreligious traditions.

RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE AND INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

The ethnocultural historians have not adequately defined the model whereby doctrinal predilections, abetted by religious cues, have measureable behavioral implications. The model is at once too simple and incomplete: A basic religious frame of reference and value hierarchy interpreting diverse stimuli and information and relating them to the dominant (pietist/liturgical) values, with predictable behavior patterns. We might well remember religious sociologist J. Milton Yinger's (1970: 455) conclusion in dealing with the relationship between religious fundamentalism and right-wing politics:

Fundamentalist religion does not “cause” reactionary politics any more than hydrogen “causes” sugar, regardless of the availability of carbon and oxygen. It may, if present in the right amounts, and under particular conditions, be part of a compound. But in different situations, other compounds are formed.

Few contemporary religious sociologists would qualify this statement. Religion is significant, but seldom dominant. And we have no hard evidence to indicate otherwise historically. Indeed, the low levels of religious membership discussed earlier calls into question the process by which nonmembers receive the requisite stimuli. For example, Gerhard Lenski (1961: 174-179) and Philip Converse et al. (1961) have discovered, respectively, differences in political attitude and behavior between communicants and noncommunicants. As Jensen, Kleppner, and others have convincingly demonstrated, the stimuli were present in various forms in the period extending from the 1830s into the twentieth century. But they failed to define the process by which a non-church member living in a heterogeneous community (a much more common type than the ethnoculturalists imply) receive all the stimuli. We do not know the types of cues that he was given—and by whom—to relate these stimuli to his value hierarchy and to interpret this relationship against the political options. The ethnoculturalists have inferred a good bit about this process from the election results—politicians seeking the ethnic vote and members of ethnoreligious groups transforming these appeals into relevant data—but the method remains unclear. Kleppner's (1970: 249) warning about relating the 1893 depression to political behavior might well be considered in relation to the ethnocultural interpretation: "Certainly not all voters, and probably not even a very large proportion of them, perceived the subtle and complex interrelationships between the advent of the depression and the alternatives of public policy."

The question of stimuli-response cannot be answered simply by demonstrating the existence of doctrinal differences and the presence of politicoreligious stimuli. Their salience *relative* to other stimuli is the critical problem. How does the old-stock, pietistic Wisconsin farmer arrange and rank stimuli and values if he perceives the Democratic candidate as the candidate of Rum and Romanism and the Republican candidate as a representative of the tariff policy that caused the bottom to fall out of the Chicago hog market? And the latter, it could be asserted, has

been a condition at least as common historically as politico-religious tensions. In addition, we must explicitly recognize the influence of traditional party allegiance on individual voting choice. This might well be an independent, conditioning force that transcends immediate options and "rational" choices.

Herbert George, a Colorado newspaper editor who was a sometime Populist and a notorious anti-Catholic, observed in 1896 that he "would vote for the pope of Rome if we knew him to be right on the money question and we are no Catholic sympathizer either" (Wright, 1969: 397). Without this explicit statement, it might make intuitive sense to interpret George's shift from his earlier Republicanism to support for Bryan in 1896 as a politicoreligious response to Bryan's evangelism. Yinger (1970: 205) observed that, in such a model, "Values are sometimes used to explain behavior, having themselves been inferred from examination of behavior. Until this problem is solved, values should be treated as descriptive terms, not explanatory variables."

ETHNOCULTURAL FACTORS AND STATUS

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the ethnoculturalists have failed to consider the relationship between ethnoreligious groups and status. They have attempted to control for class but have virtually neglected the more comprehensive concept of status. It might be argued that the latter is more relevant to the American experience. As indicated earlier, the linkage between ethnoreligious factors and class may indeed be significant. But there may be even more universal and persistent linkage with status. Controlling for the wealth of civil units and the occupation of individuals inadequately deals with this problem. Michael Parenti's (1967: 723) conclusions are relevant:

Even if full social acceptance is won without serious encounters with bigotry, it is unlikely that from childhood to adulthood one will have escaped a realization that some kind of stigma is attached to one's minority identity, that one is in some way "marginal." Ethnic identifications are, after all, rarely neutral.

The evidence would suggest that, in the nineteenth century, "full social acceptance" would be exceptional.

It would seem a reasonable hypothesis that the Catholic immigrant groups (excepting possibly the Germans in some areas) generally in the nineteenth century ranked near the bottom of the status hierarchy, regardless of economic success. In his study of "Paper City," Kenneth Underwood (1957: 191) observed that

Objective data of occupation, income and place of residence may place some Protestants and Roman Catholics in the same economic class, but subjective data such as "consciousness of kind" and degree of esteem evidenced in visiting and freely associating in activities with one another, dating with intent to marry, reveal cleavages based on religion and nationality.

The consequence of mobility for many ethnics was status inconsistency (see Knoke, 1972). This is a difficult factor to isolate relative to the ethnocultural model of political behavior. The persistent Democratic voting of a successful Irish businessman may have been the product of either a transcendent doctrinal orientation or it may have resulted from his experience with a Republican status hierarchy that refused to acknowledge his success and accept his mobility. The behavioral pattern (Democratic voting) would be the same in both cases, and ethnicity would be salient in each. Yet the one model would stress doctrinal forces as primary agents and the other would emphasize status.

H. Richard Niebuhr (1929: 25) asserted that religious denominations are sociological groups that, in addition to their religious functions, "represent the accommodation of religion to the caste system." Clearly this is too strong for the general American system, but it might be reformulated to suggest that historically our status system has rested to a large degree on religion and ethnicity. Case studies of blacks, Chicanos, Orientals, Jews, Irish, and eastern and southern European Catholics would seem to support this. Northern Europeans, largely Protestant, encountered fewer barriers to assimilation, and their

religion was clearly a factor in this. Anti-Catholicism historically has been more than a pietist versus ritualist conflict. Witness the strong anti-Catholicism of German Lutherans.

Richard Jensen's data show occupational differentiation between pietists and liturgicals. He infers from this that job discrimination may have existed on political grounds. The liturgicals tended to be Democrats and the pietists Republicans. But, he concludes (Jensen, 1971: 314-315), "There is no evidence of it [job discrimination] on religious grounds." This seems a rather tenuous cause-and-effect relationship that indeed runs counter to the ethnoculturalists' emphasis on the saliency of religion.

BEHAVIORALISM AND HISTORICAL VOTING

Despite these criticisms of their methodological approach and conceptual framework, the fact remains that the ethnocultural historians have immeasurably raised our levels of knowledge and understanding of the processes of historical voting behavior. They have forced us to confront religious differences and ethnic tensions as a significant political force. They have broadened our framework to include local issues as salient components of political debate and cleavage. Their religious-doctrinal-theological interpretation of observations of ethnoreligious voting has been the basis of these criticisms rather than the observations themselves. Seymour Lipset (1964: 72) observed several years ago that four variables influenced "the basic political differentiation among American religious bodies." These were (1) social status, (2) economic class, (3) anti-Catholicism "in both its religious and ethnic form," and (4) the "level of concern with 'public morality.'" The ethnoculturalists generally have focused on the last variable to the exclusion of the other three.

Behavioral scientists have liberated us from the need to search for "the" interpretation of voting. Behavior is too complex for neat categorization, easy description, or general-

ization. In the study of voting, we must first of all differentiate between the individual and the group. The latter is discrete by definition, homogeneous in composition, and usually unitary in function and behavior. Thus the group "Methodists" is composed of members (formal or informal) of the Methodist church, deals with doctrinal, administrative, and social problems of Methodism, and behaves as Methodists. An *individual Methodist*, however, has a variety of other roles that he may play: e.g., carpenter, homeowner, mortgagor, father, urbanite, German native, and member of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Masons, the Knights Templar, and a building trades union. These and other roles and statuses may independently or collectively affect his behavior, depending on issue saliency, perceptions, and cognitions (for an essential agreement, see Kleppner, 1970: 100-101, 120). Further, as Robert Merton (1957: 233) has suggested, groups to which an individual does not belong are likewise relevant to his perceptions and behavior. Beyond this, we must distinguish between associational and communal membership.³ The latter is informal and not easily defined but, as Lenski (1961: 157-165) observed, it has greater behavioral implications. So while "Methodism" is analytically convenient—and at times a crucial predictor of behavior—it is as limited as "working class" in its usefulness. Religious association is part of a vast matrix of individual memberships and roles.⁴ The high correlation of religion with voting does not mean that we should assume a causal relationship or infer a doctrinal source of individual motivation. In Colorado, ethnicity was a high correlate of political behavior in the 1880s and 1890s. Yet multivariate analysis reveals an economic rather than cultural saliency after 1890 (Wright, 1969).

The preliminary findings of my research into New Hampshire politics indicate that, in the 1880s, towns dominated by the Freewill Baptists or by the Methodists were largely Democratic, while the Congregational towns were Republican. All three religious groups tended to be pietistic, but the Freewill Baptists were the most pietistic—and, apparently, the most Democratic.

A doctrinal interpretation of this behavior is not consistent with the observation, but it is true that the Congregationalists represented historically the religious establishment in the state while the others were the progeny of the dissenters. A complex of tradition, status, religion, and economics seemed to influence behavior. With regard to the latter, it is revealing that it was virtually impossible to locate "poor" Congregational communities and "wealthy" Freewill Baptist communities. It might be suggested that, in the Midwest, these three groups all tended to be more "establishment" and enjoyed higher status than the Catholic immigrants.

Conversely, it appears that, among the liturgicals in New Hampshire, the Irish were overwhelmingly Democratic and the French Canadians, when voting, marginally so, with occasional support for the Republican Party. This can best be understood by a study of the sharp conflicts between these two groups over control of the church hierarchy and over the language to be used in the various parishes. The Irish were more acculturated than the French Canadians and probably served more often as foremen in the mills. Religion was a factor in this behavior. Doctrine was not; or, at the most, it was minimally so.

As Yinger (1970: 456) put it,

Knowledge of religious training, membership, or expressed belief by itself yields relatively little power to predict political attitudes and behavior. Knowledge of the structural context, non-religious cultural elements in the environment, and a wide range of individual tendencies is needed before we can state what the implications of given religious forces are.

In short, we must know more about broad social and institutional configurations before we can construct a behavioral model of historical voting. The ethnocultural historians have taken us a major step in that direction. The journey is by no means over.

NOTES

1. The differences here may often be more apparent than real. Benson (1961), for example, essentially agrees with the consensus approach, while stressing ethnoreligious conflict. I think it fair to say that few of the ethnoculturalists explicitly embrace the consensus framework.

2. I have chosen to focus on Jensen and Kleppner because their work together represents the most extensive effort to develop a model of voting behavior and because this permits a somewhat fixed reference point for my discussion. I do not mean to imply that their work is necessarily better—and certainly not weaker—than the other ethnocultural studies. I do not think that their work has probably captured more attention among historians than that of the other ethnoculturalists, excepting Benson and Hays. And it must be recognized—and admitted—that it is difficult to generalize about such a diverse, rich body of literature. Certainly the criticisms which make up the bulk of this paper are not equally applicable to all these historians, nor, in all cases, even to Jensen and Kleppner who freely concede the complexity of the problem. My comments instead focus on general themes and central tendencies.

3. Ferdinand Tonnies clarified this distinction, and both Weber and Durkheim made analytical use of it. For a brief discussion, see Lenski (1961: 19).

4. A significant factor in the development of the ethnocultural school is the pluralist interpretation of political and social relations. Often the two are used synonymously (Swierenga, 1971: 67). I regret not having space to examine this relationship here. Suffice it to say that the ethnocultural interpretation has not developed a matrix of groups but rather has substituted vertical social cleavages for horizontal ones. Further, their model operationally defines a dichotomous politics (pietist versus liturgical) rather than a pluralist one (see Yinger, 1970: 425-430, esp. illustration on 426). His "columnar model" coincides with the ethnocultural one (see also Gordon, 1964: 42-51).

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American Legislative Behavior

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Legislative history once belonged to the parliamentarians, a small band of aficionados whose carefully wrought studies were read by each other and almost no one else. To most historians, the legislative process and its constitutional development was not a matter of concern. Political history dealt with men and events and great issues and decidedly not with the texture of institutional life in America. Then, in the 1960s, the discovery of a core of behavioral theory detailing how political decisions are now made, encouraged a number of historians to look again at the American Congress. Primarily interested in the Civil War and Reconstruction, these historians argued that behavior-based legislative theories and accompanying statistical models would supply new answers to a host of questions which had divided the historical craft. When did sectionalism emerge as the dominant force in America? When and how was the Whig Party destroyed? Who were the radicals who gave Reconstruction its peculiar cast?

In part, the new legislative history also reflected a rekindled interest in the quantification of historical data and hence the belief that counting could control the historian's traditional biases. Again the behavioral sciences supplied technique,