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Notes and Comments

Electoral Change in the United States and Great Britain

RICHARD W. BOYD*

Major inter-election vote shifts are characteristic of present-day American and British elections. In American elections since 1960 the presidency has changed parties on four of the six occasions. In British elections since 1959 the government has changed parties on four of the eight occasions. Students of both election systems ask whether these large and frequent shifts portend either major realignments or the weakening of the parties. The purpose of this Note is to analyse inter-election changes in the United States and Great Britain and to highlight and explain their differences.

One of the many contributions of David Butler's and Donald Stokes's *Political Change in Britain*¹ is a method of analysing inter-election vote shifts. By decomposing aggregate vote change into four components – straight conversion between the Conservatives and Labour, circulation of the Liberals and other minor parties, differential turnout, and the physical replacement of old electoral cohorts by new ones – Butler and Stokes establish the volatility of the British elections of the 1960s and also demonstrate how little straight conversion between the major parties accounted for that volatility.

The importance of the Butler–Stokes analysis is enhanced by the publication of *Decade of Dealignment* by Bo Särilvik and Ivor Crewe.² Särilvik and Crewe extend the Butler–Stokes analysis of vote change through to the 1979 general election, providing an invaluable time series spanning two decades. This new series presents an opportunity for a comparative analysis. The author has calculated the components of inter-election vote shifts for the American presidential elections of 1960–80. This analysis shows that American elections are substantially more volatile than British elections of the same period and that the primary explanation of this difference is the greater importance of straight conversion between the major parties in American elections.

INTER-ELECTION VOTE SHIFTS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1960–80

Table 1 summarizes the sources of inter-election vote shifts for the American presidential elections of 1960–80 and compares them to the British general elections of

* Department of Government, Wesleyan University. I would like to thank Martha Crenshaw of Wesleyan University and Byron Shafer of the Russell Sage Foundation for commenting on an earlier version of this Note and the Russell Sage Foundation for providing me with the time and resources to write it. The data utilized in this study were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data were originally collected by the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan. Neither the CPS nor the ICPSR bear any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

¹ David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, 2nd college edn (New York: St Martin's Press, 1976).

² Bo Särilvik and Ivor Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment: The Conservative Victory of 1979 and Electoral Trends in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

1959–79. Tables 2 to 6 present the complete turnover patterns for American elections. The tables for the American elections are all based on cross-section surveys of the quadrennial presidential election series conducted by the Center for Political Studies. Since evidence of a vote shift depends on respondents' memories of their vote choices four years earlier, these measures are potentially vulnerable to the well-documented tendency of people to remember that they voted when in fact they did not and to recall incorrectly that they voted for the election winner. The Appendix provides details of a procedure for reducing the effects of memory errors so that these cross-section surveys can be treated as though they were panel surveys. It also provides the formulas for the calculations for these tables. This Note turns directly, therefore, to a review of the components of electoral change in the post-1960 period.

TABLE I *Inter-election Vote Shifts in the United States and Great Britain*

	<i>United States, 1960–80</i>					Mean*	
	1960–64	1964–68	1968–72	1972–76	1976–80		
Straight conversion	-9.3	12.7	8.0	-11.4	6.5	9.6	
Circulation of minor parties	0.4	-1.0	3.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.0	
Differential turnout	-3.3	1.7	1.7	-1.9	-0.3	1.8	
Replacement of the electorate	-2.6	1.0	0.7	-0.7	0.6	1.1	
New voters	-2.4	0.5	0.7	0.1	0.5		
Deceased voters	-0.2	0.5	0.0	-0.8	0.1		
Net shift in Republican lead over Democrats	-14.7	14.4	13.5	-14.3	6.6	12.7	
Winner	Dem.	Rep.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.		
	<i>Great Britain, 1959–79</i>						
	1959	1964	1966	1970– Feb.	1970– Oct.	Oct. 1974–	Mean*
	-64	-66	-70	1974	1974	1979	
Straight conversion	-0.6	-3.2	4.8	0	0	3.4	2.0
Circulation of minor parties	-1.2	0.8	1.2	1.3	-1.8	2.4	1.5
Differential turnout	-0.8	-1.6	2.8	0.3	-0.9	3.0	1.6
Replacement of the electorate	-1.7	-0.4	-2.3	-2.3	-0.3	-1.4	1.4
New voters	-0.6	-0.4	-2.4	-2.1	-0.3	-1.0	
Deceased voters	-1.1	0.0	0.1	-0.2	0.0	-0.4	
Net shift in Conservative lead over Labour	-4.3	-4.4	6.5	-0.7	-3.0	7.4	4.4
Winner	Lab.	Lab.	Con.	Con.	Lab.	Con.	

* Mean of the absolute values of each row.

Source: For the United States, computed by the author. For Great Britain, adapted from Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 65.

Comparative Vote Shifts in the United States and Great Britain

Five patterns stand out in these estimates of inter-election change. Firstly, the average total vote shift in the American series is quite high, reflecting an electoral volatility rooted in the current decomposition of American parties. The average vote shift in the American elections is almost three times the magnitude of British shifts. Butler and Stokes emphasize that 'Electoral change is due not to a limited group of "floating" voters but to a very broad segment of British electors.'³ This is even more true of American voters.

TABLE 2 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1960-64*

Voting in 1960	Voting in 1964						Actual vote 1960
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	19.0	8.3	0.2	2.5	1.6	31.6	34.7
Democrat	3.6	24.6	0.1	1.9	1.5	31.7	34.8
Other	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5
Didn't vote	1.0	3.8	0.0	20.7	1.7	27.2	29.9
New voter	1.2	3.6	0.0	4.1		9.0	
Total	25.4	40.3	0.3	29.2	4.8	100.0% (N = 1,290)	
Actual vote, 1964	26.7	42.3	0.3	30.7			

Straight Conversion Between the Parties

Secondly, in the American elections since 1960, the dominant element in electoral shifts is straight conversion between the major parties. On the average, straight conversion accounts for roughly three-quarters of the net vote shift since 1960. One reason can be inferred from the formulas in the Appendix. Any vote captured from the major-party opposition is worth two votes. It is simultaneously a vote gained by one major party and a vote lost to the other. In contrast, a party that successfully mobilizes a new voter, a non-voter, or a previous supporter of a minor party enjoys a net gain of only one. For this reason conversion is more important than recruitment to the short-term fortunes of political parties.

Caution is appropriate when comparing straight party conversion in British and American elections. Candidate choice in a presidential election is predictably less influenced by long-term party attachments than in a parliamentary election. Even so, the magnitude of conversion in present-day American elections is consistently large, while only the Labour victory of 1966 and the Conservative victories of 1970 and 1979 display even small net vote shifts between the major parties.

³ Butler and Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, p. 185.

TABLE 3 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1964-68*

Voting in 1964	Voting in 1968						Actual vote 1964
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	14.4	1.1	3.5	3.4	1.8	24.0	26.7
Democrat	7.4	20.8	2.6	5.1	2.2	38.1	42.3
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Didn't vote	3.3	3.3	2.1	17.4	1.5	27.6	30.7
New voter	2.6	2.1	0.6	4.6		10.0	
Total	27.7	27.4	8.9	30.4	5.5	100.0% (N = 2,682) Weighted N	
Actual vote, 1968	29.4	29.0	9.4	32.2			

Circulation of Minor Party Supporters

Thirdly, some minor-party candidacies flower in a transitional period of major-party realignments, while others have no evident significance for major-party fortunes. For example, the Wallace vote in 1968 was rooted in the long-term, pro-Republican realignment in the South, and Wallace exemplified the conservative positions on race and social issues that have been central to that realignment. Although the Wallace vote came predominantly from Independents and disaffected Democrats,⁴ Table 3 shows that this strength came more from previous Republican (Goldwater) voters than from Democratic (Johnson) voters, in spite of a smaller pool of Goldwater voters from which Wallace could recruit. The second preference of Wallace voters in 1968 was the Republican, Nixon, rather than the Democrat, Humphrey.⁵ And as Table 4 shows, 1968 Wallace voters swung overwhelmingly to Nixon in 1972, contributing over 3 percentage points to the 1972 shift in the Republican lead. The Wallace candidacy, then, was consistent with the Republican realignment in the South.

In contrast, Anderson's candidacy had no clear implications for the future of the major-party balance in the United States. His supporters in 1980 were disproportionately Independents whose issue positions were much like the electorate's as a whole.⁶ Anderson's supporters appeared to be motivated more by a dislike for Carter

⁴ Richard W. Boyd, 'Popular Control of Public Policy: A Normal Vote Analysis of the 1968 Election', *American Political Science Review*, LXVI (1972), 429-49; 468-70, p. 468

⁵ Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, Jerrold G. Rusk and Arthur C. Wolfe, 'Continuity and Change in American Politics: Parties and Issues in the 1968 Election', *American Political Science Review*, LXIII (1969), 1083-105, pp. 1090-2.

⁶ Gerald M. Pomper, *The Election of 1980: Reports and Interpretations* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1981); William Schneider, 'The November 4 Vote for President: What Did It Mean?' in Austin Ranney, ed., *The American Elections of 1980* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981); and Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich and David H. Rhode, *Change and Continuity in the 1980 Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1982).

and Reagan than a high regard for Anderson. He drew his votes, as Table 6 attests, almost equally from previous Ford and Carter voters in 1976.

TABLE 4 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1968–72*

Voting in 1968	Voting in 1972						Actual vote 1968
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	18.3	2.2	0.1	2.1	1.5	24.1	29.4
Democrat	6.2	12.9	0.0	3.2	1.4	23.8	29.0
Other	4.4	1.2	0.7	1.0	0.4	7.7	9.4
Didn't vote	2.3	1.9	0.3	19.8	2.1	26.4	32.2
New voter	5.0	4.2	0.0	8.9		18.1	
Total	36.2	22.4	1.0	35.0	5.3	(100.0% (N = 1,486))	
Actual vote, 1972	38.2	23.6	1.1	37.0			

In the British election series, the parallel question is the implication of the Liberal surge in the two 1974 general elections for the subsequent major party balance. The Särilvik and Crewe analysis implies that the Liberal surge has more in common with the Wallace than the Anderson case because the Liberal surge did benefit the Conservatives up to 1979. Conservative defectors to the Liberals in 1974 either stayed Liberal in 1979 or returned to the Conservatives. In contrast, Labour defectors used 'their 1974 move to the Liberals as neither resting place nor turn-round point, but as half-way house on a journey that brought them over to the Conservative party by 1979'.⁷

Differential Turnout

Fourthly, the potential effect of abstention on election outcomes is quite high, even in countries with high voting rates such as the United Kingdom. For example, Särilvik and Crewe tabulate the number of voters who change their voting patterns across all successive pairs of general elections from 1959 to 1979.⁸ Roughly two-thirds of the electorate were constant in their voting patterns. That is, they either consistently voted for the same party at both elections or consistently abstained. The other third changed by either switching among the parties or by switching between voting and abstention. Switching by abstention was by far the more common of the inconsistent vote patterns. Typically, a quarter of the entire electorate eligible to vote in successive elections would vote in one but not the other.

The net effect of differential turnout is significant in the British election series. Table 1 shows that differential turnout is second only to straight conversion in its average contribution to British election shifts. The net effect of differential turnout was

⁷ Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 59.

⁸ Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 62.

TABLE 5 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1972-76*

Voting in 1972	Voting in 1976						Actual vote 1972
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	21.0	8.0	0.3	3.2	1.6	34.0	38.2
Democrat	2.3	14.9	0.6	2.4	0.9	21.0	23.6
Other	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.0	1.1
Didn't vote	1.6	2.8	0.1	26.4	2.1	33.0	37.0
New voter	2.0	2.0	0.0	6.9		10.9	
Total	27.1	28.3	1.1	38.9	4.6	100.0% (N = 2,238)	
Actual vote, 1976	28.4	29.7	1.1	40.8			

perhaps decisive in 1964 and 1970: in both elections the partisan effect of differential turnout exceeded the victory margins of the winning party.

Angus Campbell coined the term 'peripheral electorate' for people who vote in only some elections.⁹ He hypothesized that these occasional voters surge sharply to the winning candidate, who is given an advantage by the dominant short-term forces of a campaign. This pattern accurately describes British elections as well. As Table 1 indicates, differential turnout favours the winning party in every British election in the series.

These occasional voters are also important to electoral change in the United States. Differential turnout contributed from 1.7 to 3.3 percentage points to the winning candidate's lead in each of the elections from 1964 to 1976. As Campbell's hypothesis predicts, these occasional voters favoured the election victor in every case except 1980. In both 1968 and 1976, the shift of the peripheral electorate exceeded the respective victory margins of Nixon and Carter. In short, in spite of the fact that the great bulk of non-voters in the United States are people who are unregistered and who never vote,¹⁰ the pool of occasional voters is sufficiently large to have a systematic and important effect on electoral change.

Replacement of the Electorate

Fifthly, electorates turn over far more rapidly than an average lifespan of seventy-plus years might suggest. Past patterns of birth rates have enlarged the proportion of both

⁹ Angus Campbell, 'Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change', in Angus Campbell, *et al.*, *Elections and the Political Order* (New York: Wiley, 1966).

¹⁰ Robert S. Erikson points out that about 90 per cent of registered Americans vote in presidential elections. See 'Why Do People Vote? Because They Are Registered', *American Politics Quarterly*, ix (1981), 259-76. Thus, the proportion of occasional voters is actually significantly greater in Great Britain than in the United States, as one can verify by comparing the individual vote shift tables for the two countries.

the young and the old in contemporary American electorates.¹¹ The proportion of the electorate that dies between presidential elections ranges from 4.8 per cent to 5.5 per cent in this election series. Newly eligible voters typically constitute about 10 per cent of the electorate in these elections and were 18 per cent in 1972 when the Twenty-sixth Amendment enfranchised 18 year-olds for the first time. The combined effects of these actuarial cycles is to change the composition of the electorate very rapidly. Less than half of the 1980 electorate was eligible to vote in 1968.

TABLE 6 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1976-80*

Voting in 1976	Voting in 1980						Actual vote 1976
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	17.7	2.4	1.7	2.4	1.3	25.5	28.4
Democrat	5.7	15.4	1.4	2.8	1.4	26.6	29.7
Other	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	1.0	1.1
Didn't vote	2.9	3.6	0.6	27.2	2.2	36.6	40.8
New voter	1.9	1.4	0.7	6.3		10.4	
Total	28.6	23.1	4.7	38.8	4.9	100.0% (N = 1,246)	
Actual vote, 1980	30.0	24.3	4.9	40.8			

The physical replacement of the British electorate is comparably high. Särilvik and Crewe estimate that 15 million people joined or left the electorate between 1970 and 1979, a turnover of one-third in only nine years. Table 1 shows that the replacement of the British electorate is a significant source of inter-election vote shifts. Because the balance of the newly eligible British electorate voted Labour in every election in this series, Labour has been the consistent beneficiary of the cycle of births and deaths.¹²

In contrast, in the United States the effect of physical replacement is small overall and uneven in partisan direction. In 1964 new voters did support Johnson over Goldwater, contributing 2.4 percentage points to the shift in the Democratic lead. However, new voters have not given the Democrats a majority since. Only in 1976 did the Democrats even hold their own. But, of course, Republicans won the election in 1968, 1972 and 1980. In the main, newly eligible American voters shift by small margins along with older voters to the victorious candidate. In no sense have the new voters had a disproportionate effect on the volatility of American electoral change since 1960. Low voting rates by the new voters reinforce their lack of clear partisan preferences. The validated voting rate of the newly eligible has fallen from 51.4 per cent in 1964 to 32.2 per cent in 1976 and 34.7 per cent in 1980.

¹¹ Richard W. Boyd, 'Decline of US Voter Turnout: Structural Explanations', *American Politics Quarterly*, ix (1981), 133-60.

¹² Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 65.

In spite of the fact that 5 per cent of the American electorate dies between presidential elections, the effect of mortality on the partisan balance is also small, except during landslide elections. Landslides leave the winning party with a large pool of voters literally at mortal risk prior to the next election. Following the 1964 Democratic landslide, for example, mortality gave the Republicans a 0.5 per cent advantage in 1968. Similarly, mortality favoured the Democrats in the 1976 election by 0.8 per cent following the 1972 Republican landslide.

Landslides excepted, the partisan consequences of mortality are minor in the United States because the mean age differences between Republicans and Democrats have not been very large since the 1950s¹³ and perhaps even since the completion of the New Deal realignment after 1936.¹⁴ Yet, even though the average mortality rates of Republicans and Democrats are fairly equal, these averages do mask interesting and potentially important differences between sub-groups. For example, in 1970 the remaining life expectancy of a person reaching the age of twenty was 57 years for white women, 52 years for non-white women, 50 years for white men, and 45 years for non-white men. Since non-whites cast between 16 and 22 per cent of all Democratic votes between 1968 and 1976,¹⁵ the higher mortality rates of non-whites would appear to put the Democrats at a systematic disadvantage. The reality is somewhat different.

TABLE 7 *Probable Death Rates of Voter Groups Between Presidential Elections, in Percentages**

Voter group	Five election average	1976-80	Proportion of 1976 electorate
Non-white male Democrats	7.5%	8.3%	1.6%
White male Republicans	6.7	6.9	12.2
White male Democrats	6.3	6.0	10.3
Non-white female Democrats	4.9	5.5	2.7
White female Republicans	4.1	3.3	16.4
White female Democrats	2.9	3.4	12.9
All Republicans	5.3	4.9	29.1
All Democrats	4.6	4.8	27.5

* The entries in the first two columns are the percentages of Democratic and Republican voters who probably died before the next presidential election. There are too few non-white Republicans to compute meaningful averages in several of the election years. The proportions in the final column have not been adjusted to conform to the actual election results.

¹³ See Warren E. Miller, Arthur H. Miller and Edward J. Schneider, *American National Election Studies Sourcebook, 1952-1978* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 332, and Everett Carl Ladd, Jr. with Charles D. Hadley, *Transformations of the American Party System: Political Coalitions from the New Deal to the 1970s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 75-83.

¹⁴ Although the issue is probably not settled, the present evidence seems to support the view that the New Deal realignment owed more to a conversion of Republican voters to the Democrats than to a mobilization of Democratic new voters. For this reason, the realignment did not produce large age differences between the parties. See Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, 'The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis', *American Political Science Review*, LXXV (1981), 951-62 and Ladd, *Transformations of the American Party System*, pp. 75-83. Compare Kristi Andersen, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority: 1928-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

¹⁵ Robert Axelrod, '1976 Update', *American Political Science Review*, LXXII (1978), 622-4.

As Table 7 reveals, the average percentage of deaths in the American voter coalitions varies substantially across groups, from 7.5 per cent for non-white male Democrats to only 2.9 per cent for white female Democrats. While a higher total percentage of Republicans than Democratic voters died after every election in the series, the net differences were fairly small because the large sub-group differences almost cancelled each other out, leaving the parties roughly at parity. One can see, however, a possible consequence of the gender differences that emerged between the party coalitions in 1980. To the degree that Democrats attract a disproportionate percentage of women, the much lower mortality rates of women could be a significant long-term advantage for the Democratic party.

CONCLUSION

The most dramatic difference between inter-election shifts in the United States and Great Britain is the greater frequency of straight conversion between the major parties in American elections. The average shift attributable to straight conversion in the United States exceeds the British average by a factor of four. The consequence is that inter-election shifts are much larger in the United States than in Great Britain.

One explanation for the difference is undoubtedly constitutional. In American elections the attributes of individual presidential candidates are an important determinant of a vote. In a parliamentary election, where votes are cast directly only for candidates for parliament, the importance of partisanship is undoubtedly greater. Magnifying this constitutional difference, however, is the continuing atrophy of American electoral parties, so strongly evident in the volatility of these elections.

Another important pattern is the rapidity of the replacement of the electorate in both countries. The anomaly is perhaps that this physical replacement does not have an even greater impact on the partisan balance over several elections than it does. In Britain, new voters did support Labour on balance, but not by a great margin. In the United States new voters shifted with the rest of the population to the winning candidate, and they voted at low rates. While mortality rates differ significantly by race and sex within each party, death-rates are non-partisan because sub-group differences cancel each other out.

Except for straight conversion, the magnitudes of the other sources of inter-election shifts were relatively similar in the United States and Great Britain. The consistency of such patterns in both nations over a period of two decades underscores the richness of an analysis of inter-election shifts.

APPENDIX

The Accuracy of Vote Reports

Studies by Weir,¹⁶ Himmelweit, Biberian and Stockdale,¹⁷ Särilvik and Crewe,¹⁸ and van der Eijk and Niemöller¹⁹ have shown a tendency for systematic memory errors in

¹⁶ Blair T. Weir, 'The Distortion of Voter Recall', *American Journal of Political Science*, xix (1975), 53-62.

¹⁷ Hilde T. Himmelweit, Marianne Jaeger Biberian and Janet Stockdale, 'Memory for Past Vote: Implications of a Study of Bias in Recall', *British Journal of Political Science*, viii (1978), 365-75.

¹⁸ Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 360.

¹⁹ C. van der Eijk and B. Niemöller, 'Recall Accuracy and Its Determinants', *Acta Politica*, xiv (1979), 289-342.

the recall of party choice. Recall of a past party choice is influenced by current preference. This most often means that memory errors are biased in favour of the election winner. For example, Weir's re-analysis of the 1956–60 CPS election panel of American voters revealed that 16 per cent of those who reported in 1956 that they had voted for Stevenson recalled in 1960 that they had voted for the victor, Eisenhower – a considerable bandwagon vote for the incumbent.

I have replicated Weir's study on the 1972–76 CPS panel and have found no significant systematic bias in the recall of candidate choice in this second panel. Just under 93 per cent of the 1976 panel respondents recalled voting for the same candidate they had reported as their choice in 1972. Moreover, the small percentage of misreports were not influenced by Nixon's victory or by the respondent's partisanship. We can conclude, therefore, that memory errors of past presidential votes are not invariably large. Rather, the magnitude of errors appears to reflect the differential popularity of the former candidates at the time respondents are asked to recall their previous vote choices. After Watergate, this popularity differential between Nixon and McGovern was much smaller than the difference between Eisenhower and Stevenson. Another understandable example of significant and systematic memory error is people's recollection of their vote in 1960. Following Kennedy's assassination the recall of having voted for Kennedy in 1960 was quite inflated. However, the cases of Eisenhower and Kennedy appear to be the exception rather than the rule in the American election series reported here. After 1964 memory errors in candidate choice are relatively unbiased.

In contrast to the case of candidate choice, recall of turnout invariably produces inflated estimates for both the current election and the previous one. Fortunately, in 1964, 1976 and 1980, the CPS field staff validated respondents' vote and registration reports by visits to local election officials. The 1976 study validated 1972 reports as well. These validation checks serve admirably to control response error in reports of current turnout. Only the 1968 study cannot be so corrected.

The inflation of turnout for a prior presidential election is similarly a tractable problem. Using the 1972–76 CPS panel as an experiment (turnout reports were validated for both elections) the error in 1972 turnout self-reports can be reduced to under 10 per cent simply by assuming that a respondent not validly registered for 1976 was also unregistered and thus a non-voter in 1972. These results are sufficiently satisfactory to enable us to treat a cross-section survey with a voter validation component as though it were a wave of a panel survey. (A 10 per cent error in unvalidated turnout reports for current elections is typical for CPS surveys.) All tables except Table 3 are thus corrected. Only when validated information on current registration and voting was missing were self-reports of current and past turnout accepted as valid.

The Computation of Electoral Shift

Table 8, drawn from the 1972–76 CPS panel survey, is presented for two reasons. Firstly, a panel survey with validated turnout for both waves is the ideal data base for the computation of inter-election shifts. Comparing this table to Table 5, one sees that the correction for turnout described above does produce estimates of vote shifts that are as similar as one could reasonably expect, given that sampling error accounts for some variation between the tables.

Secondly, Table 8 also presents the Butler–Stokes formulas for the computation of

TABLE 8 *Inter-election Vote Shift, 1972-76, CPS Panel*

Voting in 1972	Voting in 1976						Actual vote 1972
	Republican	Democrat	Other	Didn't vote	Deceased	Total	
Republican	$p_{11} =$ 19.1	$p_{12} =$ 8.1	$p_{13} =$ 0.3	$p_{14} =$ 4.9	$p_{15} =$ 1.7	34.0	$p_1 =$ 38.2
Democrat	$p_{21} =$ 2.3	$p_{22} =$ 13.3	$p_{23} =$ 0.4	$p_{24} =$ 4.2	$p_{25} =$ 0.9	21.0	$p_2 =$ 23.6
Other	$p_{31} =$ 0.4	$p_{32} =$ 0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.1
Didn't vote	$p_{41} =$ 3.4	$p_{42} =$ 4.6	0.3	22.8	2.0	33.0	37.0
New voter	$p_{51} =$ 2.0	$p_{52} =$ 1.9	0.0	7.0		10.9	
Total	$p_{.1} =$ 27.1	$p_{.2} =$ 28.3	1.1	38.9	4.6	100.0% (N = 1,246)	
Actual vote, 1976	28.4	29.7	1.1	40.8			

Components of shift in Republican lead over Democrats, 1972-76

-11.6	Straight conversion	$2 \times (p_{21} - p_{12}) +$
0.1	Circulation of minor parties	$(p_{23} - p_{13}) + (p_{31} - p_{32})$
-2.0	Differential turnout	$(p_{24} - p_{14}) + (p_{41} - p_{42})$
-0.7	Replacement of electorate	$(p_{25} - p_{15}) + (p_{51} - p_{52})$
-14.3	Net shift in Republican lead over Democrats	$(p_{.1} - p_{.2}) - (p_1 - p_2)$

electoral shifts. The tables are iterated by the Mosteller technique²⁰ so that the original relationships of the cell entries to each other are maintained but with the entries summing to the actual vote statistics at the margins of the table.²¹ This iteration compensates for any remaining error in the measures of vote shifts, so long as that error is random with respect to the joint distribution of the current and prior year vote reports. This iteration procedure has been used previously by Axelrod,²² Butler and Stokes,²³ and Särilvik and Crewe.²⁴

²⁰ Frederick Mosteller, 'Association and Estimation in Contingency Tables', *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, LXIII (1968), 1-28.

²¹ Sources for the actual vote were Richard M. Scammon and Alice V. McGillivray, eds, *America Votes 14* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981) and US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1980*, Series P-20, No. 370, p. 2.

²² Robert Axelrod, 'Where the Votes Come From: An Analysis of Electoral Coalitions', *American Political Science Review*, LXVI (1972), 11-20.

²³ Butler and Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, p. 79.

²⁴ Särilvik and Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment*, p. 360.

The last row, labelled 'new voter', represents the validated vote choices of the newly eligible respondents in the cross-section survey in the current presidential year. These sample proportions are applied to the actual number of new voters in each election. The vote choices of those who have died since the last election cannot be known directly, of course, but they can be estimated with precision using the sex-race-age specific mortality tables of *Vital Statistics of the United States*.²⁵

All calculations are performed before the results are rounded to one decimal point. This is the explanation for any apparent arithmetical errors of 0.1 per cent in the tables. Additional technical documentation on the correction of memory errors and the computation of electoral shifts is available in an earlier paper;²⁶ this paper and other technical documentation can be provided to interested readers by the author.

²⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services, *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Volume II – Mortality, Part A, for the years midway between presidential elections: 1962, 1966, 1970, 1974 and 1978.

²⁶ Richard W. Boyd, 'Electoral Change in America: Measuring Swing with Recall Questions', paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 1983. Inquiries may be addressed to the Department of Government, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. 06457, USA.

The Impact of Race on Political Behaviour in Britain

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In contrast to the United States, where analyses of the political behaviour of blacks number in the hundreds, if not more, substantial studies of the political attitudes and behaviour of Britain's non-white minority are fairly scarce. As non-whites have become more visible in the political arena, however, attention by academics has increased.¹ But as yet there have been few countrywide, empirical, and systematic investigations of the political behaviour and attitudes of this population.² Our Note uses multivariate methods to investigate the extent of political participation of Britain's non-white minorities in the 1979 election. We focus on a wide variety of political activities and a few selected issue concerns. We attempt to place our findings in the context of some theories of ethnic politics that have developed to explain black political behaviour in Britain and in the United States.

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¹ Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Race in Britain* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984); John Benyon, ed., *After Scarman* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1983); Nathan Glazer and Ken Young, eds, *Ethnic Pluralism and Public Policy* (London: Heinemann, 1983).

² See Zig Layton-Henry and Donley T. Studlar, 'The Political Participation of Black and Asian Britons', Department of Politics, University of Warwick, Working Paper No. 36, 1984; Ian McAllister and Donley T. Studlar, 'The Electoral Geography of Immigrant Groups in Britain', *Electoral Studies*, III (1984), 139–50.