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Party images and party identification in Canada

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Canada

PARTY IMAGES AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

IN

CANADA

By

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ABSTRACT

The notion that electors acquire an enduring allegiance to a political party has guided the study of voting behaviour and elections in western democracies for almost three decades. Yet when used outside the United States, where the concept was developed, party identification has been greeted with less unanimous enthusiasm. For Canadian scholars, debate over the concept revolves primarily around (1) the empirical independence of party identification and the vote and (2) the stability of such attachments. Indeed, this debate has occupied much of the efforts of previous analysts in Canada.

In this thesis, we reexamine the conventional wisdom about party identification in Canada by looking at two questions. First, are party identification and the vote distinguishable empirical referents in Canada? And secondly, how can we account for changes in the party identifications of Canadians? Thus, the first question seeks to address the property of independence, and the second, the property of stability.

The first hypothesis is that party identification and the vote are not the same thing, but differ by the impact of short-term forces that contradict partisan attachments.

This hypothesis is supported -- for all types of partisans, the differences between vote and party identification can be understood, at least in part, as a function of short-term forces.

The second hypothesis is that levels of stability and change in party identification are related to individual party images. That is, when these "mental pictures" of the parties serve to reinforce past party identification, identifications will be stable. On the other hand, when these images are in conflict with the party one identified with in the past, there is a smaller likelihood that the individual will remain a stable identifier. We test this hypothesis in two ways. The first relates image of one's own party to patterns of change and stability in identification, while the second correlates the relative image of all three parties with patterns of partisan stability. In both analyses the patterns that emerge are generally consistent with the expectations derived from the hypothesis. All partisans are more likely to change their party identifications when their images of the parties are in conflict with the past party attachments. However, when party images reinforce past identifications, identifications are likely to endure.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In one version or another, the concept of party identification -- the notion that electors acquire an enduring allegiance to a political party -- has been used in innumerable national and cross-national electoral analyses. Yet few concepts in contemporary political science have aroused as much academic discussion and controversy. Throughout the 1970s, based on accumulated evidence from national election surveys in many western democracies, the concept became the target of critical studies. As researchers attempted to "transport" the concept to other nations, challenges were raised against the notion of party identification as a universally meaningful and stable component of the vote. While still granting a high degree of theoretical generality to the concept, many critics question the utility of party identification in models of voting choice in non-American settings. Unlike the American political milieux, where party identification is a well established concept, many Canadian and European scholars argue that the status of party identification within multiparty systems or electoral systems less complex than that of the United States appears more dubious (Budge et

al., 1976; LeDuc, 1984; LeDuc et al., 1984). In particular, the debate revolves around (1) the empirical independence of party identification and the vote and (2) the stability of such party attachments.

The first major challenge to the view of party identification as stable and meaningful outside of the United States questions whether party identification and vote variables measure different phenomena. If party identification is independent of voting preferences then it need not change when individuals switch their votes from one election to another. Analyses of European electorates suggest, however, that this is not the case. In the influential volume Party Identification and Beyond (Budge et al., 1976), the editors question "whether the effective orientation tapped by the party identification questions actually exists independently of voting intention" (Budge et al., 1976: 10). In the published literature, this question was first raised in an investigation of the British electorate and was occasioned by the finding that British voters changed their identifications along with their electoral preferences to a much greater extent than American electors (Butler and Stokes, 1974). In contrasting the British and American electorates, Butler and Stokes (1974) found that British voters were less likely than Americans to distinguish between their current electoral preferences and

their more general partisan dispositions. From this they conclude:

> The majority of voters do in fact have general dispositions towards party which give continuity to their behaviour in a succession of specific choices. But in transferring their vote from one party to another they are less likely to retain a conscious identification with a party other than the one they currently support (Butler and Stokes, 1974: 44).

Along the same lines of argument, studies of the Dutch electorate also cast doubt on whether party identification is independent from current voting preference. In his analysis of the electorate in the Netherlands, Thomassen (1976) provides evidence that expressions of party identification among Dutch voters should not be regarded as a "standing decision" at all. Rather, Thomassen's findings suggest that party identification is not conceptually different from vote preference. Concluding that party identification is simply a reflection of vote preference, Thomassen argues that the use of party identification in relation to voting behaviour in the Netherlands is very doubtful: "what little evidence exists to the effect that party identification and vote preference can be distinguished can also be explained as unreliability of measurement" (Thomassen, 1976: 77).

Analyses of party identification in Germany provide a further thrust against the view of party identification as

independent from current vote intention: For example, the findings uncovered by Kaase (1976) "are very much in agreement with party identification research in other European political systems in pointing to a significant tendency of those respondents who deviated from their party identification in the vote to later adjust their party identification accordingly" (Kaase, 1976: 100). In addressing the problem of equivalence of party identification and current vote preference, Kaase points to the covariation between party identification and voting intention as evidence that the two variables may be no more than two sides of the same coin. On this basis Kaase goes on to conclude that the independence element of party identification is not sufficiently present in the German case to warrant the "sophisticated" analyses of voting behaviour undertaken in the United States. Accordingly, Kaase argues for de-emphasizing the importance of party identification in the analysis of voting behaviour in European political systems (Kaase, 1976: 101).

The second major challenge to the meaningfulness of party identification outside the American national context arises out of the observed instability of party identification over time. As portrayed in The Voter Decides (1954) and The American Voter (1960), party identification, like a religious identity, tended to be quite stable and was

thus viewed as a long-term component of the political system. While it was always recognized that party identification could change under the impact of major issues and, to a lesser extent, as a result of a change in one's personal surroundings, party identification, once established, was an attitude that tended to be stable in the long run.

Systematic cross-national comparisons of the stability of party identification in fact show that the United States is unique in this respect. There is, as is often noted, every reason why this exceptionality is expected. The American political system exhibits a large number of unique institutional characteristics (frequent elections, simultaneous election of a variety of officials at the federal, state and local levels, and independent election of the executive and legislature) which yield a variety of behavioural differences. Faced with a vast array of ballot choices, an enduring sense of partisanship supplies the American voter with an invaluable cognitive-evaluative guide to his or her world of politics. As a result of this persuasive assistance, the stability of party identifications in the United States has been considerable, at both the aggregate and the individual level. This can be contrasted with changes in party identification in other countries which are typically two to three times as great as

in the American case. The Butler and Stokes (1974) study of the British electorate was the first to report that party identification might be less stable in other countries than in the United States. Thomassen (1976), in his analysis of the Dutch data, finds that party identification is actually less stable than vote preference. From this Thomassen concludes that rather than being causally prior to vote preference, party identification is actually affected by the vote (Thomassen, 1976).

More recent analyses support the early evidence that party identification is less stable in other countries than in the United States. Such findings are most clear in LeDuc's (1984) analysis of the dynamic properties of party identification in four nations. In comparing Britain, Canada, the United States and the Netherlands, LeDuc finds that the cross-national level of instability in party identification is substantially higher outside the United States. For example, while 68% of the American respondents maintained the same party identification in three panel waves (1972-74-76) and 11% changed party identification at least once, in Britain (1969-70-74), 64% of the respondents remained stable and 27% changed their party identification as least once. The lower ratio of stable to unstable identifiers is even more pronounced in Canada (1974-79-80) and the Netherlands (1970-71-72). In Canada, 59% of the

sample maintained a stable pattern of identification over the three panel waves, while 23% reported at least one change in their identification. The Dutch case exhibited even greater instability in partisanship. In the Netherlands, only 36% of the respondents maintained the same party identification while 30% reported an unstable party identification (LeDuc, 1984: Table 23-3).

As in Europe, scholars for some time have questioned the value of party identification in the Canadian context. Here, too, the most popular objection has been that party identification appears to be less stable and less independent from the vote in Canada than in the United States. Thus, when compared to the United States, Canadians' party attachments have been pictured as volatile, transient, and "lacking in independent influence on the individual's vote" (Beck and Pierce, 1977: 32). Noting the strength of the relationship between party identification and vote, some students of Canadian politics have concluded that, for the Canadian electorate, party identification and the vote are not conceptually different; that an identity exists between the two variables. John Meisel (1973), for example, seems to draw this conclusion when he suggests that party identification may be "almost inapplicable" in Canada, shifting as much as the vote itself (Meisel, 1973: 67). Meisel concludes that if party identification is unstable

and tends to covary with the vote in Canada, a more stable measure of the long-term component of the vote may be required.

Challenging this view, Sniderman and his colleagues argue that Canadians are quite ready to profess allegiance to a party, and that "this sense of identification with a party tends to reflect a long-term commitment, not a passing preference" (Sniderman et al., 1974: 286). After noting that the relationship between party identification and the vote is indeed strong, the authors make this argument:

> To judge by these results, party identification is a useful concept in the analysis of the vote in Canada. This, we should emphasize, is scarcely a foregone conclusion. Research on electoral behaviour in Great Britain suggests that . . . party identification . . . . may frequently indicate no more than a person's current electoral preference, not an enduring party loyalty. In Canada, however, the party identification question evidently tends to measure relatively lasting attachments to parties . . . (Sniderman et al., 1974: 286).

Related to the debate over the independence of party identification and voting choice, Canadian researchers in the field of voting behaviour have also focused considerable attention on the question of the stability of party identification in Canada. In one of the earliest investigations of the Canadian electorate, Regenstrief (1965) argues that "[i]f there is anything to be learned

from the elections that have taken place in Canada during the past decade, it is that the political affiliations of Canadians are remarkably unstable" (Regenstrief, 1965: 169). Similarly, Jenson (1975a, 1975b) provides evidence that the amount of instability in party identification in Canada is far higher than in the United States.

More recent analyses of the Canadian electorate furnish us with much the same conclusions. Clarke et al. (1980), for example, find that 36% of the respondents in their 1974 study who report a federal party identification recall having changed that party identification at some point in their lives. Breaking this figure down to examine the time at which the change in party identification occurred, they find that 18% of all partisans changed their attachments in the two year period between the 1972 and 1974 elections. And, over a longer six year period since the 1968 election, the incidence of changing party identification is even higher with fully one-quarter of all partisans changing their party identification (Clarke et al., 1980: 101).

Recognizing that one of the critical questions in the debate about the concept of party identification is its stability over time, Canadian researchers have adopted one of two approaches to account for the observed instability in party identification in Canada. In her treatment of party identification in Canada, Jenson argues that "while party

identification may survive a change in vote over several elections this does not necessarily imply that the party identifications of Canadians are stable over a longer period" (Jenson, 1975b: 544). To sustain this argument, Jenson invokes an alternative definition of the concept; party identification is conceptualized as a "cost-saving" mechanism in the voters' rational calculations. The implication of this definition, as Jenson herself points out, is that party identification in Canada could be either stable or mutable. As a means of reducing the information costs of electoral decision making, party identification would be stable if the party was consistent in the distribution of its policy benefits. On the other hand, party identification would be mutable when, as a result of alterations in party's position, a more reliable cue to behaviour is required (Jenson, 1975a: 206-207).

A second broad explanation for the changing commitments to party in Canada is provided by Clarke et al. (1980, 1984). Based on their analyses of the 1974 National Election Study (NES) data, Clarke et al. (1980) propose a refinement of the concept of party identification to better describe the different types of party identifiers in Canada. The resulting modification is the introduction of a new multidimensional measure labelled "partisanship" that takes account of three potential "qualifiers" of commitment to a

particular political party: consistency of identifications with a party across the federal and provincial levels, stability of identification over time, and intensity of identification (Clarke et al., 1980: 105). Applying this "partisanship" variable to the 1974 data, the authors find that more than six in ten partisans are "flexible" because they deviate in some manner from a strong, stable, and consistent connection with a political party (Clarke et al., 1980). For Clarke et al. it is this characteristic of Canadians' partisan attachments -- that a number of Canadians make only a very limited commitment to "their" party -- that affects how individuals relate to parties. Utilizing data from the three-wave panel study (1974-79-80), the same authors further elaborate on this view by examining the incidence of changing party identification at the individual level. Treating cross-level consistency, stability, and intensity as separate dimensions of "partisanship" in Canada, LeDuc et al. (1984) emphasize that party identifications are not necessarily stable since a majority of partisan identifiers in Canada are "flexible" -- amenable to change in response to short-term forces. It is this condition of "flexibility", the authors argue, that enhances the likelihood of partisan change in Canada (LeDuc et al., 1984: 482-483).

This confusion in the published literature over the

independence and instability of party identification is clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Since these debates have occupied much of the efforts of previous analysts, both in Canada and elsewhere, a reexamination of these issues seems warranted. Therefore, this thesis proposes to reexamine the conventional wisdom about party identification in Canada by looking at two questions: (1) are party identification and the vote distinguishable empirical referents in Canada; and (2) how can we account for changes in the party identifications of Canadians. The first question seeks to address the property of independence, and the second, the property of stability.

To answer the first question, this thesis will present evidence that indicates that party identification and the vote variable measure different phenomena -- to rule out what Norpoth (1984) has labelled the "artifact" hypothesis. Our second concern revolves around the question of the stability of party identification. If the party identification concept is to retain its applicability in Canada, a clearer understanding of its (in)stability, so widely documented by Canadian researchers, is essential. However, the work of Jenson and Clarke et al. notwithstanding, our understanding of the instability in party identification in Canada remains quite limited. Recent scholarly research on the voters' attitudes towards

the parties -- their "party images" -- does, however, seem to offer great potential for accounting for both stability and change in party identification. We will explore this potential by examining the linkage between changes in party identification and the party images voters hold within the context of the Canadian party system. Since there has been relatively little discussion of the relationship between party identification and party images in Canada, our first objective is to develop a basic understanding of the pattern of voter attitudes toward the parties. More specifically, our aim is to determine if there is a relationship between the voters' images of the parties and stability or change in party identification in Canada.

In the chapters which follow we will examine both the question of the independence of party identification and the relationship between instability in party identification and party images using data from the 1984 Canadian National Election Study and the 1974-1979-1980 Panel Study. In Chapter II we will discuss the concept of party image and review the literature on the relationship between party images and party identification. In Chapter III we will develop the operational definitions of the variables we use in our analyses. The hypotheses that our research is designed to test and the data and methodology used to test these hypotheses will also be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter IV will report and discuss the findings of our research. Finally, Chapter V will draw the research together by providing some conclusions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Party identification is a well-established concept in American political science. Though many American scholars may disagree over whether it is best interpreted within a psychological or information theoretic framework, the notion that voters form "standing commitments" to one or the other parties is widely accepted in the United States. In Canada, however, the status of party identification is more dubious. From our discussion in Chapter I, we know the debate over the usefulness of the concept within the Canadian political context was occasioned by observed variations in patterns of the relationship between certain aspects of party identification and political behaviour. In particular, Canadian scholars have focused on: (1) whether the party identification and vote variables measure different phenomena; and (2) the incidence and impact of unstable party identifications of Canadians. Before proceeding to any consideration of these areas of concern, however, it is necessary to deal with a logically prior question: why do independence and stability matter at all?

The requirement that party identification and the vote

be independent derives from the definition of the concept itself. Early voting studies classified adherents of the various political parties on the basis of their vote in the relevant election (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Berelson et al., 1954). By cross-tabulating vote with social background variables, and in particular religion, urban-rural residence, and occupation, these researchers discovered a number of factors predisposing electors to vote for a certain party. On this basis, adherents of the various parties -- those who consistently voted for the same party -- could be classified according to their predisposition to vote Democrat or Republican. In contrast, The Voter Decides (1954), the initial study conducted by Campbell and his associates at the Michigan Survey Research Center, defined party identification as "the sense of personal attachment which the individual feels toward the [party] of his choice" (Campbell et al., 1954: 88-89). Just as people identify with religious, racial, and ethnic groups, so too do they identify with political parties.

The crucial assumption here, derived from the more generic social-psychological concept of reference groups, is that "people may belong to a party through their sense of personal identification with the party . . . [and] that much of our individual sense of personal identity is derived from groups to which we belong" (Miller, 1976: 22; emphasis in

the original).(1) This emphasis on reference groups becomes clear in the following excerpt from The Voter Decides:

> Group membership may be said to have importance psychologically in the degree to which it influences the attitudes and behaviors of those who share it . . . . This sense of personal attachment which the individual feels toward the group of his choice is referred to . . . as identification, and with respect to parties as groups, as party identification (Campbell et al., 1954: 89).

The findings uncovered by Campbell et al. (1954) in their analyses of the 1952 presidential election supported the view that personal attachments to a party were of importance to the individual's psychological make-up.

> The high degree of family similarity in party identification, the relatively small percentage of party switching, the small number of people who call themselves Independents -- all these indicate the importance of parties as points of psychological anchoring (Campbell et al., 1954: 107).

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(1) The concept of "reference group" is one of the central analytic tools in social psychology. In its most familiar usage, the concept signifies that group whose perspective constitutes the frame of reference of the actor. Thus, Shibutani (1968) speaks of a reference group as groups "whose outlook is used by the actor as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field" (p. 107). Similarly, Sherif (1968) characterizes reference groups as "those groups which the individual relates himself as a part or to which he aspires to relate himself psychologically" (p. 86). In this kind of individual-group relationship, Sherif goes on to argue, "the values or norms of his reference groups constitute the major anchorages in relation to which his experience of self-identity is organized" (p. 87).

Moreover, these personal attachments were of importance in accounting for voting behaviour. Not only was it found that party identification correlated powerfully with the vote, party identifiers could be distinguished on the basis of the intensity with which they held their identification. For example, weak party identifiers reported more frequent split-ticket voting and declared that they were less likely to support disagreeable candidates of their own party than those with stronger identifications. From this evidence, Campbell et al. (1954) concluded that party identification, along with candidate and issue orientations, functioned as independent factors affecting voting choice.

The emphasis on group attachments was further expanded upon by the Michigan scholars in The American Voter (1960). In this volume, Campbell et al. hypothesize that the American political parties serve as the most important group-object on the political horizon. Once imbued with positive or negative associations by an individual, this individual-group relationship acts as the most critical dimension defining and organizing the individual's political cognitions. Party identification -- the individual's affective orientation to this important group-object in his environment -- allowed one to "know" more about the policies and personalities associated with the parties than was

possible on the basis of their direct contact with the issues and candidates of the day. Accordingly, the psychological attachments of tens of millions of Americans to one of the parties was seen as the central and causally decisive element of electoral behaviour. (Campbell et al., 1960: 121). No longer treated as conceptually coordinate with candidate evaluations and issue orientations (as was the case in The Voter Decides, 1954), party identification provided the crucial link between the individual's perceptions and evaluations of the more immediate factors leading to vote choice and a host of antecedent factors, such as the elector's social class and other group affiliations (Campbell et al., 1960: 126).

Clearly, this description of party identification and its role as the paramount factor within the "field of psychological forces" explicitly dispenses with the notion that party identification simply denotes one's voting record. As Campbell et al. (1960) state, party identification is not congruent with the current intention to vote for one party or the other. Nor does it, in the vast majority of cases, reflect formal membership or an

active connection to a party.(1) In general, the tie to party is a "psychological identification, which [can] persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support" (Campbell et al., 1960: 121). Thus, for example, an individual would view himself as a Democrat while allowing his candidate preferences to sway him towards voting for the Republicans.

The Michigan scholars also went to considerable lengths to show that, as a corollary to this definition, party identification was stable. According to The American Voter, party identification was a "standing commitment" to a party. While an individual's vote would change under the influence of factors peculiar to a particular campaign, identification with the party remained remarkably stable. Speaking to this level of stability, the authors state:

> When we examine the evidence of the manner in which party attachment develops and changes during the lifetime of the individual citizen, we find a picture characterized more by stability than by change -- not by rigid, immutable fixation on one party rather than the other, but by a persistent adherence and resistance to contrary influence (Campbell et al., 1960: 146).

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(1) Basic to reference group theory is the notion that the groups to which the individual relates need not always be the groups in which the individual is actually a member. As Sherif (1968) puts it, one's identifications "need not always be with groups in which he is registered, is seen to be, or announced to be a member" (p. 87).

This "persistent adherence", or standing commitment, is based on two main factors. First, there is the person's family background. Normally, party identification is learned early in life and results primarily from transmission across generations within the family. In essence, an individual inherits a partisan identification much as one acquires a religious identity. More importantly perhaps, the significance of a psychological attachment to a party produces a strong effect on the manner in which an individual structures his attitudes towards the elements of politics, especially parties, leaders, and issues. Identification with a political party functions as a supplier of cues by which the individual can evaluate and deal with the complex and sometimes confusing world of politics. In a world in which national politics is far removed from the common citizen, the individual voter is forced to depend on sources of information at least one step removed from "direct" experience (Campbell et al., 1960: 128). Thus the role ascribed party identification by Campbell and his colleagues is that of a force which colours or shapes the formation of the voters' partisan evaluations. Consequently, the effect of party identification is not only to supply cues to political behaviour, but to provide cues of a very specific type.

Identification with a party raises a

> perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favorable to his partisan orientation. The stronger the party bond, the more exaggerated the process of selection and perceptual distortion will be (Campbell et al., 1960: 133).

By allowing the partisan to ignore and even misperceive information, party identification functions to ensure that new political objects are viewed in terms of their party connections.(1)

This selective perception and distortion, when coupled with the prevailing beliefs about childhood political socialization,(2) led to the construction of a theory that cast party identification as a long-term, stable factor in the citizen's political life. If one's party identification was developed in youth, largely as the result of one's association with parents' partisan preferences, and was

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(1) It is useful to note, again, the importance of reference group theory to the development of the concept of party identification. In social psychology, as Shibutani (1968) points out, there is abundant evidence to show that once an individual had incorporated a particular outlook from his group, he sees things from a standpoint peculiar to that group. That is, perception is selective, with the individual often misinterpreting or responding selectively to stimuli from the environment.

(2) In the socialization and role theory literature, early childhood socialization is seen to affect the course of personality development in later life. Biddle (1979), for example, suggests that initial socialization is likely to be "more lasting, more wholistic, more central, more likely to determine later role learning . . ." (p. 284).

ubiquitous in its influence over the other aspects of electoral behaviour, it followed that the forces that impinged upon identification arose from unpredictable and seemingly nonpolitical factors. The findings uncovered by Campbell et al. (1960) proved consistent with this view, leading the authors to conclude that though the elements of politics may change, there remained the overriding capacity of general partisan orientations to maintain stability. Although recall questions suggested that instability did occur, the subject of change in party identification was largely dismissed as an unimportant aspect of political behaviour.

From this brief reexamination of the theoretical development of the concept of party identification, it is apparent that the critical insight of the Michigan researchers consists of two points. First, most electors feel an underlying psychological attachment to a party (termed party identification) which can be distinguished from current vote intention. Second, while temporary inconsistencies between voting choices and party attachments can be produced by the appeals of candidates and issues, the majority of voters remain impressively stable in their

attachment to their party.(1) By definition, therefore, the concept refers to a psychological attachment to a party which is stable over time and which is to a certain extent independent from the vote. However, as we have noted above, analyses using the concept of party identification within the Canadian context question the existence of one or both of these properties. Therefore, for this analysis the questions become: is party identification empirically distinct from the vote?(2) and how can we account for the observed instability of party identification in Canada? Since the major focus of this work concerns the nature of party images and their relationship to the stability of party identification, we shall deal with this issue first. We will return to the question of the independence of party

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(1) This is not to say that attachment to parties is immutable. There is first the fact that individuals often have multiple reference groups. In instances where several groups are employed simultaneously in the same realm of attitude, conflicting consequences may be produced for the individual. Moreover, reference group theory assumes that the individual drops and acquires reference groups as one passes from one group situation to another from time to time. Thus reference groups can, and do, change for some individuals.

(2) As Budge et al. (1976) observe, one has to recognize the important distinction between the empirical independence of party identification and vote and the more general conceptual question of how best to relate voters to political parties. For the most part, researchers grant the conceptual point. Considerable debate revolves, however, around the question of the empirical independence of party identification and vote. It is this latter question that occupies our attention here.

identification in subsequent chapters.

One of the first problems encountered by scholars interested in examining the relationship between party identification and party images is the problem of untangling the causal flow between the two measures. Does party identification shape cognitions and evaluations of the political parties or do party attachments change under the impact of such cognitions and evaluations? Study of this question has been greatly influenced by The American Voter (1960). From their analyses of the linkage between identification and partisan attitudes (e.g. personal attributes of the Presidential candidates, issues of domestic policy, comparative record of the two parties in managing the affairs of government), Campbell et al. conclude that the influence of party identification on partisan attitudes is far more important than the influence of such attitudes on party identification. Examining this relationship, these researchers are convinced that the data reflect "primarily" the role of partisan attachments in shaping attitudes toward political objects (Campbell et al., 1960: 135). This conviction, they state, is based on the observed stability of party identification and the assumed priority in time of party identification and the attitudes and evaluations it may affect.

This statement of causal priorities -- that attitudes

and evaluations are shaped or influenced by party identification -- is, in the end, an inference. For Campbell et al. (1960), it seemed likely that, for many voters, party identification created a perceptual screen or filter which coloured or shaped cognitions and evaluations of the elements of politics. However, it is also abundantly evident, as noted in The American Voter, that "changes in party identification can be motivated by prior attitudinal commitment and do occur with some frequency" (Miller, 1976: 28). According to Campbell et al. (1960):

> If the individual has developed attitudes not consistent with his party allegiance, that allegiance presumably will work to undo the contrary opinions. But they in turn must exert some pressure on the individual's basic partisan commitment. If this pressure is intense enough, a stable partisan identification may actually be changed (pp. 134-135; emphasis in the original).

In this manner, an individual may be induced to change his party identification when partisan attitudes disagree with those of the party.

Though the proportion of changes in party identification motivated by such pressures is generally small in the United States (Nie et al., 1979: 58), there is now good evidence that this does happen. Indeed, several studies favour the view that party identification is responsive to the continuing performance of parties and

candidates, and the evolution of political attitudes. It is as if citizens respond to day-to-day politics by withdrawing or investing support in the parties as their appraisal of events dictate. Fiorina (1981), for example, argues that short-term forces -- attitudes toward candidates, issues, and the political parties -- relate to changes in party identification. "Just as a religious affiliation learned at a parent's knee may give way when one later runs afoul of some particular dogma, so a socialized, affective party ID may crumble in the face of short-term political forces" (Fiorina, 1981: 89). Consonant with this view, he proposed a model of party choice based on the accumulated retrospective evaluations of the two political parties. As modeled here, party identification reflects the events that transpire in the political world. In other words, rather than viewing party identification as shaping the interpretation of political events and conditions, such events and conditions are seen to modify party identification. The findings provided by Fiorina (1981) lend considerable credence to the conception that party identification is responsive to evaluations of the two parties. On the basis of this evidence, he concludes that party identification is both cause and consequence of some kinds of political behaviour; that "[to] take it purely as the former may lead to statistical misspecification and subsequent error" (Fiorina,

1981: 97-98).

Suggestive evidence that more immediate political factors impact upon party identification is also provided by Kinder and Kiewet (1984). These researchers find that changes in the intensity of Americans' party identifications between 1972 and 1976 follow assessments of the parties' performance and competence. Specifically, they observe that "Democrats became more strongly identified with their party to the degree that they held a dim view of the current government's performance on economic problems . . . and to the degree that they felt the Republicans to be inferior economic problem solvers . . ." (Kinder and Kiewet, 1984: 226-227). Though complementary, this pattern was not as consistent or as strong for Republican identifiers. Additionally, Kinder and Kiewet (1984) find no evidence to support the hypothesis that ratings of government performance and evaluations of party competence merely represent a rationalized expression of party identification. Quite the reverse, they conclude that such attitudes constitute important short-term forces which act on (and through) party identification.

Evidence of the impact of short-term forces on party identification is also reported by Jackson (1975). Examining the determinants of American voters' partisan affiliations, he suggests that "party affiliations are the

result of voters' current evaluations of the issue positions associated with each party and their previous party attachments" (Jackson, 1975: 101). Using a two-stage least squares procedure, Jackson finds that all fluctuations in party identification can be accounted for by changes in issue evaluations and perceptions of party positions. Weak Republicans, for example, become marginal Democrats after their evaluations shift to marginally favouring the Democrats. In a similar manner, strong party identifiers also switch party identification as a result of a massive reevaluation of the parties' issue positions (Jackson, 1975: 116). While such results do much to erode the notion of party identification as a stable, predetermined exogenous variable at the centre of the electoral process, Jackson is cautious not to press his conclusion too far.

> This does not deny that individual party affiliations may be stable over several elections, exert influence on what positions people take on different issues, and have perceptual effects on voters' evaluations of the parties' and candidates' positions. It does argue, however, that party affiliations are themselves subject to change based upon the positions people take on issues and their evaluations of party positions (Jackson, 1975: 116).

Finally, researchers have also considered the possibility that voters' party identification may be affected by comparative candidate evaluations. Page and

Jones (1984) argue that preferences based on a candidate's character or policy stands are likely to affect the strength -- and at times even the direction -- of party identification. Employing three-stage least squares regression techniques to estimate the parameters of a simultaneous equation model of American electoral behaviour, they find that candidate evaluations show a modest independent effect (.13) on voters' party identification (Page and Jones, 1984: 122). Although the effect is not large, it does indicate that party identification is not impervious to electoral stimuli; that citizens alter their party identification as a consequence of their overall evaluation of the candidates. From these observations, Page and Jones (1984) go on to conclude that party attachments do not function purely as "fixed determinants" of the vote. Despite the presence of such stabilizing influences as parental socialization and consistency of party vote, changes in party identification clearly are affected by attitudes towards the candidates and other campaign stimuli. This finding, they hope, "will help lay to rest the notion that partisanship can be treated as an unmoved mover in the analysis of voting behaviour" (Page and Jones, 1984: 123).

Findings such as those of Fiorina (1981), Kinder and Kiewet (1984), Jackson (1975), and Page and Jones (1984) have led scholars to conclude that the "traditional" view of

party identification -- a view in which identification acts as a political beacon light guiding members of the electorate through the maze of issues and candidates -- is not fully supported by the data. Indeed, extensive changes observed in the affective and cognitive responses of voters to the elements of politics are accompanied by corresponding changes in their orientation toward the parties. Thus it is apparent that party identification does respond to day-to-day political stimuli: "while party identification is relatively viscous and thus acts to retard electoral change, it is not solely a 'long-term force' or 'standing decision'" (Shively, 1980: 222-223). Not completely immovable, party identification is affected by the performance of the parties, by policy considerations and by evaluations of the candidates.

This "revised" view of party identification as sensitive to the continuing performance of the parties and politicians, and the evolution of political attitudes has moved the concept of party identification to the centre of the political process.(1) As we have seen above,

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(1) It is important to note, however, that the revisionist notion of party identification retains the conception of identification as a lagged, stable attachment. As Howell (1981) notes, the view that party identification is a combination of the standing decision and responses to political events "still presumes that party ID is a lagged political attitude, to be changed only <u>after</u> a period of disaffection from one's party" (p. 164).

researchers have examined the influence of issue and candidate evaluations on changes in party identification. Yet largely ignored among these perspectives is the relationship uniting party identification and the citizen's popular images of the political parties. Though numerous scholars have studied party images (Declercq et al., 1976; Kirkpatrick et al., 1976; Maggiotto and Piereson, 1977; Feldman and Zuskerman, 1982), there has been relatively little continuity of effort to extend our knowledge of the role of party images in affecting changes in party identification. Indeed, examination of the extant literature reveals, for the most part, a preoccupation with only the direct impact of party images on voting choice. Despite this overwhelming concentration on party image as a predictor of vote, some scholars have attempted to analyze the relationship between party images and changing party identification. In order to gain a fuller understanding of this relationship, we will examine the efforts of these various scholars.

Early understanding of the influence of party images in altering party attachments is shaped by Sellers' (1965) investigation of the American electorate. In attempting to account for electoral realignments, Sellers speculates that individuals first adopt a favourable image of the party with which they will come to identify before they actually alter

their party identification. Whereas attitudes toward the parties are commonly determined by party identification in periods of "equilibrium" -- phases of stable party balance -- during realignment phases the "crucial factor would seem to be the gross images of the parties as they are perceived (whether accurately or not) by the voters in the process of forming or, to a lesser extent, changing identifications" (Sellers, 1965: 26). During the realignment of the 1790s, for example, many Republican identifiers may have been influenced mainly by an image of the Federalist Party derived from "the snobbery of conspicuous Federalists in their communities" (Sellers, 1965: 27). Similarly, Sellers suggests that in the 1890s "Eastern urban voters moved more heavily into the Republican ranks partly because they perceived the Democrats as the party of radical hayseeds, while less numerous Southern and Western farmers saw the Republicans as the party of Wall Street" (Sellers, 1965: 27). On the basis of these observations, the author concludes that voters' images of the parties do impel some voters to alter their party identification. Thus party identification, though strong enough to stabilize the system, is malleable enough to cause voters with established identifications to change them to the party whose image has become more appealing.

The empirical treatment of party images begins with

Matthews and Prothro's (1966) classic study of southern Negro political behaviour. In what is probably the best-known work involving the concept, these researchers describe party images as "mental pictures" individuals have about a party. These "mental pictures" are apt to be "vague, often confused and contradictory" (Matthews and Prothro, 1966: 378).(1) Further, such an image is not the same thing as an individual's psychological attachment to a party -- his party identification -- because two individuals who are equally committed to a party psychologically may vary a good deal in the way the party is perceived and evaluated. Matthews and Prothro (1966) make the following argument:

> Although the two concepts obviously are related, two people may identify with the same party but have different mental pictures of it and evaluate these pictures in different ways. Party identification is no doubt the more basic and less changeful of the two -- the evidence is overwhelming that it is formed early in life and does not easily or often change. But, while party image is not so deeply rooted or so stable as party identification, it is likely to be less ephemeral than voter attitudes

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(1) Matthews and Prothro operationalize "party images" using the open-ended questions which asks the respondent what they like and dislike about the Democratic and Republican Parties. Each response favourable to the Republican Party and unfavourable to the Democratic Party is assigned a value of +1 and each response favourable to the Democratic Party and unfavourable to the Republican Party is assigned a value of -1 for each respondent. This scale is then collapsed into five categories.

> toward the issues and candidates of specific campaigns (p. 378).

In other words, an individual's party image, while likely to be associated with his party identification, consists less of purely psychological and affective components, and more of evaluative components. Viewed in this manner, party images are best described as a "medium-term" force (Trilling, 1975b; 1976), different from the "long-term" forces which produce the "normal vote" or the "short-term" forces which cause defections from the "normal vote".(1)

Matthews and Prothro (1966) go on to argue that the pattern of defections observed among southern Democrats from 1952 on is not the result of the influence of short-term factors such as personalities and issues. Instead, they demonstrate that in the 1960-1964 period, party images played a crucial role in the process of altering the traditional party loyalties of Southerners. By classifying individuals by pattern of party identification (past-present), Matthews and Prothro show that switchers from a Republican to a Democratic identification had the most pro-Democratic mean party image score and those from a Democratic to a Republican identification had the most pro-Republican score of all switchers (p. 393). Given these

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(1) For a complete development and discussion of the concept of the "normal vote" see Campbell et al. 1966, Chapter 2.

findings, they conclude that patterns of stability and change in party identification are strongly related to party images: individuals who report a change in party identification have party images which favour the party of their new identification.(1)

Several American studies are suggestive of similar conclusions. Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) report that their data, based on the six national election studies conducted between 1964 and 1974, indicate that individuals with party images marked by "hostility" toward the opposition party act as a stabilizing force within the polity by making compromise with the opposition unthinkable. Conversely, they speculate that the "fluid" behaviour of partisans with favourable images of the opposition suggests the "enhanced possibility of critical shifts in party identification . . ." (Maggiotto and Piereson, 1977: 766).(2)

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(1) Of course, cognitive dissonance theory would argue that, having changed party identification, one would develop favourable images of one's new party in order to reduce dissonance. The fact that Matthews and Prothro rely on recall data therefore leaves open the possibility that party images are brought into line with one's new party identification as part of a process of rationalization.

(2) Maggiotto and Piereson operationalize "party image" as the "thermometer" rating respondents gave the two parties. Ratings higher than 50 indicate generally favourable ratings, while ratings lower than 50 indicate generally hostile feelings. Since scores or exactly 50 are open to multiple interpretations, the authors remove these responses from their analyses.

In Voters' Choice (1975), Pomper, using data drawn from the four elections from 1960 to 1972, reports that rather than letting their past partisanship determine their current preferences, citizens often become Democrats or Republicans because of their evaluations of the two parties. The relationship is particularly evident when examining changes in party identification: "[w]hile stability in partisanship is most common, persons who develop unfavourable images of a traditional party do tend to change parties" (Pomper, 1975: 163). Investigating changes in party images from 1952 to 1968, Knoke (1976) suggests that the "net balance of Democratic and Republican images . . . yields valuable insight into the process of partisan change in the past two decades" (p. 46). Though the exact causal relationship between party images and party identification remains ambiguous, his findings indicate the "erosion of attitudes disposing respondents to support a party may be a prelude to abandoning one's psychological identification with that party" (Knoke, 1976: 51). Lending support to this causal sequence is Knoke's finding that party identifiers generally have more polarized party images than do Independents (Knoke, 1976: Table 3.3).

Additional supporting evidence of this relationship between party identification and party images is provided in Wattenberg's (1982) cross-national assessment of party

identification and party images in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia. Wattenberg argues that by simply examining the level of party identification in these democracies, one is left with an incomplete picture of how stable party attachments are likely to be. To overcome this problem, he proposes an examination of the pattern of party images in these societies in order to interpret the role that party identification plays. Using the open-ended questions asking respondents what they like and dislike about the two major political parties in the four nations, Wattenberg creates an index of evaluations in which respondents can be classified as either being positive, neutral, or negative toward each of the major parties.(1) After collapsing the data, a six-fold classification representing the respondents' rating of both the parties combined is created for each country.(2)

The results of Wattenberg's (1982) analyses cast doubt

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(1) Republican and Democratic in the United States; Conservative and Labour in Great Britain; Conservative and Liberal in Canada; and Liberal and Labour in Australia.

(2) Unlike Matthews and Prothro's (1966) study of party images, the resulting typology does not distinguish between pro-Republican and pro-Democratic party images. Rather, respondents' evaluations of the parties are arrayed along a continuum ranging from those who have negative attitudes toward both parties to those who rate both parties in a positive fashion. Thus which party the respondent feels warm, neutral, or cold to is irrelevant.

on the assumption that all partisan identifiers hold a positive image of their own party and a negative image of the opposition, thereby ensuring long-term stability in the party system. The results of his analysis show that in none of the four countries is "anything very close to the idealized version of the electorate having polarized perceptions of the two major parties the actual case" (Wattenberg, 1982: 29-30). Importantly, this pattern is least prominent in Canada, where in 1974 only 19% of the respondents held a positive attitude towards one of the major parties and a negative attitude towards the other. In addition, the nature and extent of deviations from a clear-cut, positive-negative pattern reveals that Canada is quite different from the other three nations. In Canada the positive-neutral pattern is more frequent than the positive-negative. By contrast, in the other three countries examined, the percentage of respondents falling into the latter category outnumber the former by at least a margin of three to two. In addition, the data reveal that greater than one in four (27.6%) Canadians exhibit a negative-negative or negative-neutral pattern in their evaluations of the two major political parties. In comparison, such "negative" image holders constitute less than 20% of the sample in the United States and Great Britain -- 13.6% and 18.6% respectively (Wattenberg, 1982:

Table 2). Interpreting these findings, Wattenberg (1982) hypothesizes that one reason why party identification in Canada appears to shift as much as the vote itself is because "public attitudes toward the parties are far less polarized than in the other countries" (p. 31). In the absence of more widespread polarized, positive-negative attitudes towards the two major Canadian parties, few Canadian partisans possess a sense of rejection of the other party necessary to insulate them from shifts to the opposition. When combined with the presence of large numbers of "negative" identifiers, the images Canadians hold of the major parties is hardly conducive to stability in party identifications. Thus despite the fact that the vast majority of Canadians report a nominal party identification, one can expect a high degree of instability in party identification (Wattenberg, 1982: 32-33).

Most of the evidence we have examined thus far on the relationship between party images and party identification has been speculative in nature. While these studies have suggested some derivative propositions, their authors provide little empirical evidence with which to evaluate the theoretical claim that party images play a role in the transformation of party identifications. Consequently, on the basis of these studies, one cannot rule out the possibility that changes in party identification cause

individuals to change their party images as part of a process of rationalization of their changes in identification. Indeed, Matthews and Prothro (1966) and Knoke (1976) explicitly acknowledge as much. However, evidence from a number of empirical studies does exist that adds scope to the suggestive analyses encountered above.

Using the 1972-1974 NES/CPS Panel Study, Howell (1981) relates changing party identifications to past voting behaviour and past attitudes. The study begins with an "attempt to identify the most influential factors among a host of short-term forces with possible impact on changing partisanship" (Howell, 1981: 165). To make sense out of the 45 possible independent variables representing past short-term forces, each variable is crosstabulated with change in identification. Selecting only those short-term forces with gamma coefficients greater than or equal to .20, Howell finds that approximately one-fourth were actually related to change among Republicans and Democrats (Tables 1 and 2). Her findings indicate that by far the best predictor of future changes in party identification is past voting behaviour. Notably, however, party images also play a part in future changes.(1) When past voting behaviour and each of candidate evaluations, issue opinions, evaluations

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(1) Howell operationalized "party images" as the evaluations of the Democratic and Republican Parties derived from the "feeling" thermometer scores for the two parties.

of incumbent performance, and party images are entered into separate equations to predict future party identification, the data reveal that three of the four attitudes contribute insignificantly to changes in party identification. The estimates from the four equations indicate that, among the four attitude variables, only party images produce a statistically significant effect on partisan change (with a standardized regression coefficient of .12). This effect, as the author goes on to note, is equal to the effect produced by past voting behaviour on partisan change (i.e. Beta = .12). Interestingly, however, this observation does not deter Howell (1981) from concluding that voting contrary to one's past party identification was the only significant identifying characteristic of individuals who change their identification (p. 177).(1)

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(1) The absence of some mention of the impact of party images on partisan change seems odd. For this conclusion -- that past voting behaviour is the major instrument of partisan change -- to be accurate, political attitudes should have a negligible impact on changes in party identification. However, examination of equations representing the impact of prior identification, vote, and attitudes on party identification at time 2 reveals that party images do indeed have a significant impact -- equal to that of past vote. It is surprising, therefore, that Howell concludes the following: "Among a long list of past attitudinal and behavioral motivations for changing one's partisanship, past voting behavior had by far the strongest association with adopting a new party ID in the future" (p. 177). No less surprising is the conclusion that issues also play a role in partisan change (Beta = .03) though, seemingly, party images do not (Beta = .12).

In an article focusing on the "dynamic" aspects of party identification, Franklin and Jackson (1983) use a probit model to estimate the effects of several factors producing changes in identification. Using data on the American electorate for the period from the late 1950s to 1980, these researchers compare the extent and magnitude of the changes in party identification likely to result from the effects of aging, past voting behaviour, and evaluations of the parties.(1) The results of their analysis indicate that the forces with the greatest impact on party identification are the evaluations of the parties, with coefficients that are statistically significant and consistently greater than the coefficients assessing the impact of past votes or age effects on subsequent identification (Franklin and Jackson, 1983: Table 2). To

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(1) Franklin and Jackson operationalize evaluations (i.e. "party images") as the relative distance between the respondent's preference on each of a series of policy issues and the party most likely to pursue the policy in question. The strength of the preference is determined by whether the respondent does or does not strongly favour or oppose the policy. Thus the variable is scaled to range from -1, corresponding to a strong Democratic preference, to +1, signifying a strong Republican evaluation. The construction of this issue-based evaluation variable, while not conventional in the party image literature (though for a similar construction see also Meisel, 1973), is in keeping with the view that the measurement of the feelings individuals have about the parties can vary widely. Feldman and Zuckerman (1982) argue that these feelings may "come from studies of issues, they may be likes or dislikes, affective ties, or general beliefs about the parties" (p. 198).

illustrate this point, the authors furnish the following example:

> . . . [a] previously strong Democrat with strongly pro-Democratic evaluations has approximately a 0.82 probability of remaining a strong Democrat . . . .In contrast, if confronted with strongly pro-Republican evaluations, the same individual has only a 0.04 chance of remaining a strong Democrat, and about an even chance of becoming at least an independent Republican (Franklin and Jackson, 1983: 968).

The authors go on to conclude that party identifications are subject to change, with much of the impetus for change coming from shifts in voters' evaluations of the parties. Although previous party identification does exert a significant brake on shifts in party preferences, "it is like a sea anchor, which retards drift rather than arrests it entirely" (Franklin and Jackson, 1983: 969). Thus, in situations where one party is consistently preferred by an individual, favourable evaluations will lead to a strengthening of party identification. Conversely, when evaluations are altered to strongly favour the opposition party, conversions in party identification can and will take place.

A study by Carmines, Renten and Stimson (1984) also examines the contention that party images have the power to move party identifications. Using time-series analysis, these researchers argue that evolving party images are the

"intervening causal link" between events in the political environment and a change in affect toward the two major parties.(1) Accordingly, their causal model specifies two ongoing processes: (1) there is an image-shaping process; and (2) following the newly changed party images, there will be a change in party identification (Carmines et al., 1984:548). Though Carmines et al. conclude that their findings provide no reason to doubt that party images play an intervening role between past party behaviour and subsequent changes in party identification, the data they provide in this regard are inconclusive. Moreover, the conclusions they draw from these data seem inconsistent. Thus, on the one hand, they claim only an implicit linkage between party images and changing identifications and, on the other hand, a direct causal link in which changes of party images lead to shifts in party identification.

Trilling's (1975a, 1975b, 1976) discussions of the role

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(1) Carmines et al., operationalize "party images" differently for the presidential and off-year studies. For presidential elections they are a summary count of the number of likes and dislikes respondents furnished about the two parties. In the off-year studies, the "feeling thermometer" items are used to tap respondents' rating of the parties. For both measures, Republican scores are subtracted from Democratic scores to produce net Democratic "advantage". Both scores were then adjusted to produce a standard metric (mean: 50, standard deviation: 10). Though the measurement techniques are different, the authors argue that "liking" and "feeling warm" seem a short conceptual distance from one another (p. 555).

of party images in altering partisan loyalties constitute the most extensive treatment of the concept to date. Using data drawn from the national surveys conducted by the SRC/CPS in each election year from 1952 to 1972, Trilling (1975b) argues that both stability of party identifications and changes in identifications are related to individual party images.(1) When party images serve to reinforce party identification, stability in identification is observed. Conversely, when "images are in conflict with identification, identifications are much more likely to be altered" (Trilling, 1975b: 75). Examination of the relationship between patterns of stability (and change) in party identification and party images over this twenty year period indicate that when party image is not strongly directed toward the party with which the individual identified in the past, there is a smaller likelihood that the individual will retain that past identification.

> In fact, the more one's party image favors the party with which one did <u>not</u> identify in the past, the more likely is one to convert to that party in the

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(1) Trilling operationalizes "party image" using the open-ended questions which ask respondents what they like and dislike about the two political parties. The image variable is devised by counting as positive each response favourable to the Republican Party or unfavourable to the Democratic Party and as negative each response favourable to the Democratic Party or unfavourable to the Republican Party. This scale is then collapsed into five categories: Strongly Pro-Democratic; Mildly Pro-Democratic; Neutral; Mildly Pro-Republican; and Strongly Pro-Republican.

present. That is, among individuals with past Democratic identifications who have strongly pro-Republican party images, only one third or less still identify with the Democratic Party. This is to be compared with the 95% or higher figures of past Democratic identifiers with strongly Pro-Democratic images who identify in the present with the Democratic Party . . .(Trilling, 1975b: 75-77; emphasis in the original).

Similarly, there is a precise parallel in the case of individuals with past Republican identifications. Among past Republican identifiers who have strongly pro-Democratic party images, very few identify with the Republican Party in the present -- no more than a high of 14.8% in 1952 and as few as 0.0% in 1968 (Trilling, 1975b: Table 4). On the basis of these data, Trilling (1975b) concludes that "[w]hen images serve to reinforce past identifications, identifications are stable, but when they conflict with past identifications, identifications are likely to be altered" (p. 91).

In Party Image and Electoral Behavior (1976), the role of party images in explaining stability and change in party identification is explored more fully by Trilling. In this study, the author uses the 1956-1960 SRC/CPS Panel Study to compare patterns of identification change to party images whose temporal location is known. Although the panel data indicate that the ability of party images to induce changes in party identification is considerably weaker than his

previous findings suggest (Trilling, 1975b), Trilling reports that this ability is nevertheless apparent among panel members. For instance, among 1956 Republican identifiers, party images consistent with past party identification "induced" stability in identification: 93.1% of those who had strongly pro-Republican party images in 1956 retained their Republican identifications in 1958. In contrast, among 1956 Republican identifiers with mildly pro-Democratic party images in 1956, 38.7% became Democratic identifiers by 1958. Over the longer four-year period between 1956 and 1960 a similar pattern is apparent for individuals who were Republican identifiers in 1956 -- 92.0% of those with strongly pro-Republican images in 1956 retained their Republican identifications in 1960 while 30.0% of 1956 Republican identifiers with mildly pro-Democratic images switched to the Democratic Party in 1960 (Trilling, 1976: Table 8.6).

Trilling's analysis of the specific patterns of shifting partisan attachments provides further support for the proposition that party images are related to changes in party identification. Replicating the Matthews and Prothro (1966) study, mean party image scores are presented for all possible combinations of party identification (full seven-point scale) for each wave of the panel. The findings reported by Trilling (1976) indicate that "party images at

time 1 seem to strongly affect party identifications at time 2" (p. 201). For those Democratic identifiers in 1956 who were to become Republican identifiers in 1958, their mean party image scores were more pro-Republican than for those 1956 Democratic identifiers who were to remain Democratic identifiers in 1958. Similarly, among those 1956 Republican identifiers who switched to the Democratic Party in 1958, mean party image scores were less pro-Republican than those who were to remain Republican identifiers. This same pattern is also evident in the 1958-1960 wave and the longer 1956-1960 wave of the panel. Judging from these results, Trilling (1976) concludes that party images seem to play a crucial role in transformations of individual party identifications, accounting for such diverse behaviour as stable and unstable partisanship.

Findings such as those of Howell (1981), Franklin and Jackson (1983), and Trilling (1975b, 1976) have led many American scholars to conclude that party images -- the mental pictures individuals have of the political parties -- can have a powerful impact on the stability of party identifications. Significantly, however, understanding of the party images of Canadians remains rather limited; few treatments of the concept or its role can be found in the literature. In an early effort to study Canadian electoral behaviour, Meisel (1973) suggests an interesting theoretical

role for party images. Meisel argues that party identifications in Canada are typically volatile, unlike the stable identifications that are said to exist in the United States. As a consequence, the student of electoral behaviour is deprived of his traditional tool for examining the long-term component of the vote. In place of party identification, he suggests that party images might provide a more stable measure of the long-term component of the vote. What is more interesting for our purposes, Meisel suggests that party images could also be used to extend our understanding of the nature of party attachments in Canada:

> It is plausible to assume that an individual perceives and evaluates parties in some sort of coherent pattern which both logically and chronologically precedes the Identification with a party and the voting decision. One can postulate a three-step process . . . comprising a firming up of party perceptions in a stable set of coherent evaluations, Party Identification and the vote itself (Meisel, 1973: 113).

Unhappily, Meisel neither formalizes nor tests such a model.

The study of the 1974 Canadian National Election by Clarke et al. (1980) expands our understanding of the nature and role of the images Canadians hold of the political parties. These researchers note that "Canadian political scientists have long felt that understanding the 'images' or mental pictures which individuals hold of political parties or other political objects can contribute significantly to

our ability to comprehend the fundamental elements of electoral behaviour in Canada" (Clarke et al., 1980: 113). Summarizing the distribution of party images, Clarke et al. (1980) report that respondents in the 1974 study were only slightly more likely to hold an image of the party they identified with than of another party -- 81% articulated an image of their own federal party while 77% articulated an image of a party other than their own (Table 6.1).(1) In addition, they find that the absolute number of images of the other parties is greater on average than the images of one's own party.

More revealing than the absolute number of party images is Clarke et al.'s (1980) examination of the proportion of party identifiers holding particular combinations of party images. Here they report finding a large proportion of respondents who do not conform to the pattern of party images that might be associated with the concept of party identification as an enduring attachment for voters. As a stable attachment to a political party, we would expect party identification to operate in such a manner as to

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(1) Clarke et al. operationalize "party image" as the absolute number of comments offered in response to the standard open-ended party likes and dislikes questions. Thus the initial data on the distribution of images does not reveal whether, on balance, these respondents possess a positive or negative image of the parties. The authors do make this distinction in subsequent analyses.

produce a predominance of positive images of one's own party and negative or neutral images of the competing parties. However, Clarke et al. (1980) find that 54% of federal identifiers have a positive image of one of the competing parties and 42% have a negative image of their own party (Table 6.1).(1) Examining these patterns more closely, the authors find that unstable partisans tend to manifest the "own negative/other positive" combination more frequently than do those who are stable in their identifications (39% versus 24%) (Clarke et al., 1980: Table 6.4). Commenting on these findings, they speculate that the reason for the instability in party identifications in Canada may well be linked to the party images of the citizens. As to the possible effects of party images on party identification, Clarke et al. suggest two possible processes leading to changes in party identification. On the one hand, identifiers with one party could be "pulled" across party lines by strong positive images of another party. Alternatively, identifiers could be "pushed" away from a

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(1) This latter finding is very similar to findings reported by Wattenberg (1982) in his cross-national investigation of party images. Wattenberg's comparison of two-party systems and multiparty systems indicates that party identification is more likely to be a negative identification in two-party systems than in systems where more than two parties operate. In the four two-party systems examined, an average of 14% of the major party identifiers were more negative than positive toward their own party in contrast to an average of only 6% in the multiparty systems.

former partisan attachment by negative images of that party (pp. 121-122).

We have now examined the salient literature pertinent to the study of party images and their linkage to party identification. At the outset of this chapter, we discussed the development of the concept of party identification and the theoretical necessity that it exhibit both the property of independence and the property of stability. Deferring investigation of the former to subsequent chapters, findings regarding the many factors now shown to impact upon party identification were then examined. From a review of this literature, it is apparent that party identification does respond to political stimuli; that it is not solely a "long-term" force or "standing decision". A key component to this literature is the notion that party identification, while acquired early in adolescence, and still the most stable of political attitudes, responds to events during adulthood. Party identification, therefore, is learned and relearned throughout one's life. Finally, we examined evidence regarding the influence of party images -- the "mental pictures" voters have of the political parties -- on changes in party identification.

Although there has been relatively little discussion of the concept of party image, the few empirical treatments that have appeared suggest that images of the parties may

play a crucial role in the transformation of party identifications. Yet the same works also indicate that the exact causal relationship between party images and party identification remains ambiguous, confounded by the interconnections between past party identification and current party images. Since the resolution of this interactive process is beyond the scope of the present analysis, the emphasis of this thesis will be on investigating whether party images are associated with stability and instability of party identification. In adopting this approach, we do not seek to refute the more "orthodox" approach, which assumes a hierarchical relationship from party identification to other aspects of political behaviour, for clearly the images held by the electorate are in part a function of party identification. Bearing in mind this dynamic process, our attention in this thesis focuses on the relationship between party images and changes in party identification.

CHAPTER III

HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

Since the publication of the original Butler and Stokes finding that British voters are less likely than Americans to make a distinction between their current vote intentions and party identification, critics of party identification have questioned whether party identification is anything other than an expression of voting preference. The attack on this basis has been most severe from European sources (e.g. Thomassen, 1976; Budge and Farlie, 1976; and Kaase, 1976). Examining the relationship between party identification and vote, many students of European politics have argued that the very strength of this relationship serves only to increase the suspicion that the two variables are not independent. Researchers in these countries have frequently suggested that the utility of party identification is severely impaired by the concept's inability to distinguish itself from voting preference (Mughan, 1981: 375). Some Canadian authors, Meisel in particular, seem to have been drawn to such a conclusion also. However, as Jenson (1975b) argues, such findings "ought not to be used alone as sufficient grounds for

dismissing party identification as a valid concept in the analysis of Canadian voting behaviour" (p. 545). Therefore, our first concern in this thesis is to present evidence that indicates that party identification is distinct from the vote -- to rule out what Norpoth (1984) has labelled the "artifact" hypothesis (p.466). For the "artifact" hypothesis to be accepted, evidence must be presented to indicate that, for the Canadian electorate, party identification and the vote represent substantially the same thing. On the other hand, the "independence" hypothesis maintains that the difference between vote and party identification is caused by both systematic short-term forces and measurement error (Cain and Ferejohn, 1981: 35).

Our second concern in this thesis revolves around the property of stability in party identification. In this regard, we will be interested in determining whether there is a relationship between voters' images of the Canadian political parties and instability in party identification. Although the literature on party images is rather scanty, past research in the United States indicates that the "mental pictures" individuals have of the political parties can help explain both stability and change in the party identifications of Americans (Trilling, 1975b; 1976). With regard to Canada, the findings of Clarke et al. (1980) lead these authors to speculate that the reason why some Canadian

identifiers have unstable party attachments may be linked to the nature of their party images. However, beyond such speculative comments on the possible effects of party images on party identification, there are no Canadian studies which examine the relationship between these two variables.

In consideration of these findings, our second hypothesis is that levels of stability and change in party identification are related to individual party images. That is, when party images serve to reinforce past party identifications, identifications will be stable. However, when party images are in conflict with the party one identified with in the past, there is a smaller likelihood that the individual will remain a stable identifier.

The "independence" hypothesis outlined above will be tested using data from the 1984 Canadian National Election Study.(1) The study is a single-wave, post-election survey of a representative sample of the Canadian electorate. The sample design consists of a multi-stage, stratified cluster sample, with systematic oversampling of the less populated provinces. The weighted sample for the entire survey is

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(1) Data from the 1984 Canadian National Election Study, which was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, were made available by the Study's principal investigators. The data were collected by R. D. Lambert, S. D. Brown, J. E. Curtis, B. J. Kay and J. M. Wilson. The original collectors of the data and the SSHRCC bear no responsibility for the analyses and interpretations presented here.

3380 respondents. To test the second hypothesis -- that of the role of party images in the transformation of party identifications -- we use data from the 1974-1979-1980 Canadian Panel Studies.(1) In 1979, 1295 persons participating in the 1974 study were reinterviewed. Similarly, in 1980 1731 of the 1979 respondents were reinterviewed, including 822 persons who had participated in the 1974 study. The weighted sample size for these three interlocking panels (1974-79, 1979-80, 1974-79-80) is 1353, 1770 and 865, respectively.

To test the "independence" hypothesis the maximum likelihood logit technique will be used to estimate the probability of defection as a function of short-term forces.(2) The logit procedure is a statistical technique designed to explore the relationship between several independent variables and a single nominal dependent

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(1) The 1974-1979-1980 Panel Studies were conducted by H. D. Clarke, J. Jenson, L. LeDuc and J. H. Pammett with funding form the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The original collectors of the data and the SSHRCC bear no responsibility for the analyses and interpretations presented here.

(2) It is important to note here that we do not use the "independence" hypothesis to address the question of the nature of party identification in Canada. What we seek to test through this hypothesis is whether an identity exists between the party identification and vote variables, not whether party identification defines a long-term force or a short-term preference in the minds of the electorate.

variable. In a fashion quite like multiple regression analysis (OLS), logit allows the researcher to make statistical inferences and test whether the impact of various independent variables on the dependent variable are statistically significant.

Moreover, the fundamental assumptions that underlie logit are virtually identical to those made in OLS. As in OLS regression, we assume that: (1) the exogenous variables account for the variation in the mean, or expectation, of the dependent variable; (2) the data are generated from a random sample of size N; and (3) the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other -- a problem of multicollinearity. However, unlike OLS regression, the dependent variable in the logit model is assumed to be binary, taking on but two values (that is, the outcomes on the dependent variable are assumed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive). As a consequence of the discrete nature of the dependent variable, logit assumes a nonlinear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Since the probabilities associated with the dependent variable must fall between 0 and 1, such a specification manifests itself as a sigmoid or S-shaped curve in which one approaches the values of 0 and 1 at slower and slower rates as the value of the independent

variable becomes extreme.(1)

Given the three-party system found in Canada, three separate analyses -- one for each pairing of the three federal parties -- will be conducted to test the "independence" hypothesis. The property of independence, it will be recalled, suggests that the difference between vote and party identification is caused by both systematic short-term factors and measurement error. Thus the "independence" hypothesis is:

$$Vt - PIDt = STFt + e$$

where,

Vt is an individual's vote at time t

PIDt is an individual's party identification at time t

STFt are short-term forces

e is the random error or disturbance term

This gives us a test of independence. By estimating the probability of defection as a function of short-term forces, it can be determined whether the divergence between party identification and the vote (i.e. defection) is caused by short-term forces or by measurement error alone (Cain and

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(1) Speaking to this assumption of a nonlinear specification, Aldrich and Nelson (1984) note that, though such a specification may seem "arbitrary", it is no more arbitrary than the linearity assumption that underlies OLS. Indeed, given a qualitative dependent variable, they argue that the relationship between dependent and independent variables must be nonlinear (p. 26).

Ferejohn, 1981: 36). Formally, the equation is:

$$Y = B1 + B2\ STFt + e$$

where,

Y is the probability of voting for a party other than the one the respondent identifies with (i.e. Vt - PIDt)

B1 is the constant or intercept

B2 represents the effect of a change in the short-term forces on Y

e is the random error or disturbance term

To determine if party identification and vote are independent, a hypothesis test of the coefficient B2 is conducted. If the coefficient associated with short-term forces (STFt) is significantly different from zero, we can conclude that current vote varies from party identification as the result of short-term forces.(1) If, on the other hand, the coefficient does not differ significantly from zero, then the probability of defection is a function of the disturbance term alone, and party identification and vote are substantially the same thing.

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(1) There is little disagreement about the measurement of short-term forces (although perhaps there should be). Short-term forces -- such as local candidate evaluations, national party leadership evaluations, and specific policy evaluations -- are by their nature peculiar to each election. Such forces are nearly always constructed on the basis of direct survey questions about preferences on and/or salience of issues and candidates (Budge et al., 1976: 18). For a complete discussion on the nature and role of short-term forces see Campbell et al. (1966); particularly Chapter 2.

The independent variables for the three analyses are derived from responses to a set of questions asking individuals to indicate what they like and dislike about the three federal political parties.(1) Using only references to the personal qualities and competence of the three national party leaders and to policy evaluations of the three federal parties, measures of short-term forces in the form of variables for "national leadership evaluation" and "specific policy evaluation" are developed.(2) Past research in the United States indicates that, though a variety of coding procedures have been explored, the one presented here is "commonly used, plausible, and

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(1) The standard "likes/dislikes" questions are worded as follows: "Is there anything in particular that you LIKE about the federal Liberal Party? Anything else? Is there anything in particular that you DISLIKE about the federal Liberal Party? Anything else? The same question sequence was asked about each of the other two parties in turn. Up to two responses to each question were recorded.

(2) This approach is identical to Cain and Ferejohn's (1981) treatment of the open-ended party likes and dislikes codes. However, these researchers include three short-term forces in their analysis: local candidate evaluations, policy evaluations, and national leadership evaluations. The local candidate evaluation variable is excluded from the present analysis. Examination of the 1984 open-ended party codes revealed that less than 1% of the respondents made reference to local candidates when asked what they liked and disliked about the parties.

representative" (Cain and Ferejohn, 1981: 37).(1) The creation of the variables first consists of developing separate variables for positive and negative "mentions" for each of the two independent variables (labelled leader evaluation and policy evaluation). This first step results in four variables being created -- the number of leader "likes", the number of leader "dislikes", the number of policy "likes", and the number of policy "dislikes" -- for both the party one identifies with and the other party in the pairing. This gives us eight variables in all, or four for each party. Next, for the party with which the respondent identifies, we subtract the number of "dislikes" from the number of "likes" within each of the leader and policy variables to obtain the net leader and net policy evaluations of one's own party. By repeating this procedure

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(1) A common objection to the use of open-ended data in this manner is that simpler measures, such as the leader "feeling" thermometer, are readily available from the data. We use the open-ended data on both practical and theoretical grounds. Our first concern was to replicate, as faithfully as possible, the Cain and Ferejohn (1981) study with Canadian data. Moreover, Laponce (1978) argues that the separate recording of the positive and negative elements of these evaluations enables the researcher to refine his analysis. To take the example of the leader thermometers, knowing that a respondent feels "warm" towards leader A, we do not know the intensity of his "coolness" towards the same leader. In such instances, Laponce states, we should use two separate questions measuring "separately the force and the counterforce, the positive and the negative, the like and the dislike that are very probably mixed in attitudes and opinions..." (p. 139).

for the other party, we obtain the net leader and net policy evaluations for the other party. Finally, the resulting four variables are used to create composite measures which represent the combined evaluation (i.e. "likes" minus "dislikes") of the leader and the party's policy position. This is accomplished by taking the difference between each of net leader evaluations and net policy evaluations (i.e. net leader evaluation of one's own party minus net leader evaluation of other party; and net policy evaluation of one's own party minus net policy evaluation of other party). Thus, both the leader and policy evaluation variables signify whether, on balance -- between positive and negative "mentions" -- the individual prefers his or her party or the other party.(1)

The dependent variable in each analysis -- defection -- is simply the divergence between vote and party identification (Vt - PIDt). A score of "0" on the defection variable indicates that vote and party identification are consistent. Conversely, a score of "1" indicates that the

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(1) Take for example the policy evaluation variable for which we have positive and negative mentions for the party identified with and the other two parties. Within each pairing of parties, the difference between positive and negative mentions is the net for the party identified with and the other party. That is, (Positive - Negative) = Net for party identified with; and (Positive - Negative) = Net for the other party. The difference between the two scores produces the combined evaluation: (Net party identified with - Net for other party) = Combined Evaluation.

individual's party identification deviates from his or her vote.

To test the second hypothesis that party images are associated with the transformation of party identifications, we will examine the relationship between party images and patterns of stability and change of party identification. Using a similar procedure, Matthews and Prothro (1966) reported that patterns of stability and change in party identifications from 1960 to 1964 were strongly related to the party images of Southerners. By classifying individuals according to pattern of party identification (past-present), these researchers demonstrated that individuals who reported a change of party identification had party images which favoured the party of their new identification. But, Matthews and Prothro relied on recall data for their measurements of switchers in party identification. In consequence, their data leave unanswered the question about the temporal order of change in party identification and development of party images. Thus, for some individuals, it is possible that images are rationalizations of change in identification (Pomper, 1975; Trilling, 1976). That is, individuals may have rationalized present party identifications by adopting images of the parties consistent with present identifications.

Given that comparisons of recall data leave open the

possibility that changes in identification may cause individuals to change their party images as part of a process of rationalization, more conclusive evidence on the association between party images and stability or change in identifications could be offered if we were able to demonstrate that party images had, in fact been developed before present party identifications were acquired. The 1974-1979-1980 Panel Study, is ideally suited for such a purpose as it permits us to measure party identification and party images at three different points in time. The use of these data, rather than data on recalled party identification, sheds considerably more light on the time. order sequence of the acquisition of the attitudes in question.

The party image variables designed to tap voter evaluations of the parties are based on responses culled from the set of open-ended questions asking individuals what they like and dislike about the three political parties.(1) By subtracting the number of negative comments from the

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(1) The standard questions asking respondents what they like and dislike about the parties are worded as follows: "Now I would like to ask you what you personally think are the good and bad points about political parties at the federal level in Canada. Is there anything in particular that you LIKE about the federal Liberal Party? Anything else? Is there anything in particular that you DISLIKE about the federal Liberal Party? Anything else?" The same question sequence was asked about each of the three parties in turn.

number of positive ones, respondents can be classified as either positive, neutral, or negative towards each of the political parties, depending on whether the number of "likes" exceed, equal, or are fewer than the number of "dislikes".(1)

Using these party image variables, we will examine the relationship between images of the parties and change and stability of party identification in two ways. First we compare stability and change in party identification to the party image individuals hold of their own party. If the image of one's own party is associated with patterns of stability and change in party identification, we would expect that where party image and past party identification are in conflict, identifications are relatively more unstable than when party image and past party identification are in harmony (i.e. reinforcing). Second, we compare stability and change in party identification to the overall party images individuals hold of all three parties. Again, we would expect identification to be relatively more unstable when images and past party identifications are in conflict than when images and past identifications are reinforcing.

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(1) Rather than creating an interval measure based on the actual number of likes minus dislikes, past research indicates that the use of a categoric measure "considerably reduces the reliability problems associated with coding open-ended responses" (Wattenberg, 1982: 29).

While this second analysis should shed considerably more light on the process of stability and change in identifications, it also raises methodological difficulties in transforming actual responses into meaningful data. For most American researchers, indexes of party images have been computed on the number of "likes" and "dislikes" for each of the two parties. First, the number of favourable Republican and unfavourable Democratic responses are added together; then the number of unfavourable Republican and favourable Democratic responses are subtracted. The resulting score, or measure of "net partisan attitudes", indicates both the direction and intensity of party-related attitudes -- a positive score indicating a pro-Republican disposition, a negative score pro-Democratic. Traditionally, such scores are then collapsed into five categories ranging from "strongly pro-Republican" to "strongly pro-Democratic".

In Canada, however, the existence of three political parties renders the American model for the construction of party images inappropriate.(1) Therefore, to investigate the association between combined party images and stability and change in party identification, an alternate approach to

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(1) In Wattenberg's (1982) investigation of party images in Canada, the author overcomes this problem by classifying Canada as a two-party system. By arguing that the party system in Canada revolves primarily around two major parties, Wattenberg is able to construct a single image variable based on what respondents liked and disliked about the Conservatives and Liberals:

constructing image variables is required for our second analysis. While few empirical treatments of party images in multi-party systems can be found in the literature, an interesting approach to assessing partisan attitudes is suggested by Clarke et al. (1980). Using thermometer questions regarding levels of affect for leaders, candidates, and parties, these authors were able to classify respondents according to their relative affect for each factor. In a similar procedure, partisans can be classified according to their relative disposition toward each of the three parties. That is, by using the party image variables developed for the first analysis, above, party identifiers can be categorized as either positive, neutral, or negative towards their own party relative to their assessment of the other two parties. Take, for example, those respondents who identify with the Liberal Party. Among Liberal identifiers, if the respondent's image of the Liberals was more favourable than the other two parties, he or she was placed in the "positive" category. Conversely, if the respondent's image of the Liberals was less favourable than either of the other two parties, he or she was placed in the "negative" category. Finally, if the respondent's image of the Liberals was the same as his or her images of one or both of the other parties, he or she was placed in the "neutral"

category.(1) By repeating this procedure for respondents who identify with the Conservatives and the NDP, three separate party image variables are constructed. Each image variable represents, therefore, the partisan identifier's relative assessment of the three parties.

In keeping with the approach developed for our first analysis, we are again interested in determining whether party image at time 1 is associated with change in party identification between times 1 and 2. Our second analysis thus utilizes the combined party image variables to examine more precisely the relationship between these images and stability and change in party identification. To this end, we again examine the proposition that where party image and past party identification are in conflict, identifications are relatively more unstable, but where party image and past

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(1) It is important to note that there are, in fact, 27 different possible party image categories. Therefore, the terms "more favourable" and "less favourable" encompass a number of different combinations of respondents' images of the three parties. The term "more favourable", as used here, refers to individuals whose combined image of the three parties consists of a "positive" image of their own party and "neutral" or "negative" images of the other two parties, or a "neutral" image of their own party and "negative" images of the other two parties. Similarly, "less favourable" refers to individuals whose combined image of the parties consists of a "negative" image of their own party and "neutral" or "positive" images of either of the other two parties, or a "neutral" image of their own party and a "positive" image of either of the other two parties. Those individuals falling into the "neutral" category have an image of their own party that is the same as one or both of the other two parties.

party identification are reinforcing, identifications are relatively more stable.(1) If the data are consistent with the argument that party images are associated with change in party identification, we would expect that when image of one's own party is "negative" at time 1, such partisans are more likely to change their identifications than when image of one's own party is "positive" at time 1. For instance, among Liberal identifiers, our expectation is that "negative" image holders in time period 1 will alter their identifications, as measured at time 2, to a greater degree than "positive" image holders.

In this chapter, we have attempted to provide a description of the hypotheses, and the methods and statistical techniques designed to test these hypotheses, that serve to organize this thesis. Two major areas of interest concern us here. The first of these, long central in discussions and analyses of voting behaviour in Canada, concerns Canadians' sense of attachment to political parties -- their party identifications. As we have seen, some students of politics have argued that, for the Canadian

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(1) We operationalize "conflicting" party image and past party identification as identifiers whose image of their own party, relative to the other two parties, is "negative". Party image and past party identification is "reinforcing" when image of one's own party, relative to the other two parties, is "positive". "Neutral" image holders, by the nature in which they are classified, have neither a conflicting nor a reinforcing party image/past party identification structure.

electorate, party identification and the vote represent substantially the same thing. Thus, for many of these scholars, the tendency has been to de-emphasize or even abandon party identification as an important variable in the understanding of Canadian voting behaviour. However, as Jenson (1975a) points out, party identification has become a useful concept in the analysis of voting behaviour precisely because it has proven to be clearly distinct from vote preference. This confusion about the usefulness of the concept seems to us an unsatisfactory state of affairs. We propose therefore to reexamine this question of the distinction between party identification and vote by testing the "independence" hypothesis outlined above. If the "independence" hypothesis holds, then party identification and the vote are not the same, but differ by the impact of short-term forces.

Our second area of interest concerns the property of stability of party identification. Analysts of Canadian voting have frequently pointed to the instability of party identification among Canadian voters. Recognition of this instability in identification also provides the basic impetus for this thesis. Why do Canadians change their party identifications? To address this question, we will examine the relationship between the party images of Canadian partisans and change and stability in their party

identifications. If, as many analysts of Canadian voting argue, voters' links with political parties play a significant role in understanding the actions of the electorate, an appreciation of Canadians' perceptions and evaluations of these crucial elements of electoral politics seems vital for a clearer understanding of changes in identification. Yet little is known about the subjective party evaluations of Canadian identifiers. By probing how individuals perceive and evaluate the political parties, and how these party images relate to changes in party identification, we should be able to expand our knowledge of the conditions under which party loyalties are changed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

THE INDEPENDENCE OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION

As noted in previous chapters, the decision to use party identification as an independent variable in most American voting studies is derived from its observed distinctiveness from current vote intention. However, use of the concept in studies of societies other than the United States, where the concept was developed, has raised the question of whether party identification effectively discriminates between the respondent's current party preference and his or her more enduring partisan attachment. In Great Britain, it is alleged that voters "are less able to distinguish their general partisan inclinations from their decision to support a particular party at a particular point in time" (Cain and Ferejohn, 1981: 31-32). Analyses of Norwegian, Dutch, and German voting behaviour have also led some to observe that party identification might be redundant in the face of the strong class-based voting found there.

Adopting the same line of argument, Budge and Farlie (1976) assert that their analyses of nine democracies render

the independence of party identification suspect. Comparing the impact of "issue preferences"(1) with party identification on voting choice, these authors found that the predictive ability of party identification consistently outranked all other variables in their analysis. Budge and Farlie cite examples of the variables party identification outranks -- in France and Australia, the intended vote; in Canada, Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, and Norway, past voting behaviour. To Budge and Farlie, this strong predictive success "serves only to increase suspicion that it [party identification] is not independent, for what better predictor of voting choice could there be than voting choice itself . . ." (p. 122). Based on this evidence, the authors conclude that the empirical independence of party identification and voting choice is suspect in societies other than the United States.

Among students of Canadian politics, the possibility that party identification and voting choice represent substantially the same thing was raised first by Meisel (1973). Meisel's conclusion that party identifications seem as volatile as the vote itself raises suspicion that an identity does exist -- that respondents reference as their

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(1) For the United States, the authors list as examples of "issue preferences" such variables as which congressmen respondents voted for, intended vote, senate vote, feelings towards presidential candidates, etc. (Budge and Farlie, 1976: 121).

party identification the party for which they intend to vote. For this reason, Meisel argues that the concept of party identification may be of little use for Canadian voting studies.

The array presented in Table 4.1 suggests why some Canadian scholars have argued that little distinction exists between party identification and vote. Certainly, the table reveals that, in 1984, the vast majority of respondents voted for the party with which they identified: 59%, 86%, and 74% of the Liberal, PC, and NDP identifiers respectively cast ballots for "their" party (Cramer's V = .58).(1) Given the nature of most social science data, "a relationship of such similarity and intensity suggests the inference that an identity exists" (Jenson, 1975b: 545).(2)

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(1) With the exception of Liberals in Table 4.1, these figures are similar to those reported by Jenson (1975a) for the 1965 election and the Clarke et al. (1980) analysis of the 1974 election. In 1965, 82.5%, 79.4%, and 81.1% of Liberal, PC, and NDP partisans cast ballots for "their" parties (Cramer's V = .80), while in 1974 90%, 92%, and 86% of Liberal, PC, and NDP partisans cast ballots for "their" own party (Cramer's V = .83). What is clear from the 1984 data, then, is that a much greater proportion of Liberal identifiers abandoned their party identification and voted for one of the other parties. See Kay et al. (1985).

(2) As Cain and Ferejohn (1981) note, it is not necessary to show that the association between party identification and vote is perfect to argue that an identity exists. Given the possibility of misclassification, coding errors, etc., a perfect correlation between the two survey items seems very unlikely. Thus, one could find that the correlation between party identification and vote is less than perfect, yet still conclude that the two variables represent substantially the same thing.

TABLE 4.1

PARTY IDENTIFICATION BY VOTE IN 1984

PARTY IDENTIFICATION	VOTE: LIBERAL	PC	NDP	ABSTAINED	N=
LIBERAL	59.1%	21.4	3.7	15.8	(964)
PC	1.5%	86.3	1.2	10.9	(1197)
NDP	1.6%	8.8	74.2	15.5	(397)
NO PARTY	10.8%	54.7	12.6	22.0	(238)

CRAMER'S V = .58
Significant at .01 Level

Despite this strong association between party identification and vote, it seems unwise to conclude that the concept of party identification is meaningful only to the extent that it is not strongly correlated with the vote.(1) To resolve the question of whether the two measures are distinct, we therefore use a more direct approach which examines the impact of short-term forces that may cause voters to deviate from their party identifications. Specifically, we employ a logit procedure to test the null hypothesis that differences between a respondent's voting preference and his or her party identification are unrelated to such short-term factors as leader evaluations or policy evaluations -- that is, that such differences are plausibly a function of measurement error. Using this test of independence, we will present evidence which indicates that party identification and vote are not the same thing.

The results of the test of independence appear in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. In Table 4.2, only Liberal and Conservative identifiers are considered; in Table 4.3, only Liberal and NDP identifiers; and in Table 4.4, only Conservative and NDP identifiers. It will be recalled, from above, that the independence of party identification and the vote is determined by the hypothesis test of the logit

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(1) For a more detailed discussion, see Jenson, 1975a (Chapter II); Jenson, 1975b. See also Elkins, 1978.

TABLE 4.2

PROBABILITY OF PARTISAN DEFECTION AMONG CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL IDENTIFIERS, 1984

	LOGIT COEFFICIENT	T-TEST
Party Leader Evaluation	- .673 (.026)	25.88 *
Policy Evaluation	- .426 (.043)	9.91 *
Intercept	- .998 (.042)	23.76 *

N = 1828

*-Significant at .01 Level

TABLE 4.3

PROBABILITY OF PARTISAN DEFECTION AMONG LIBERAL AND NDP IDENTIFIERS, 1984

	LOGIT COEFFICIENT	T-TEST
Party Leader Evaluation	- .290 (.048)	6.04 *
Policy Evaluation	- .427 (.082)	5.21 *
Intercept	-1.547 (.087)	17.78 *

N = 906

*-Significant at .01 Level

TABLE 4.4

PROBABILITY OF PARTISAN DEFECTION AMONG CONSERVATIVE AND NDP IDENTIFIERS, 1984

	LOGIT COEFFICIENT	T-STATISTIC
Party Leader Evaluation	- .141 (.053)	2.66 *
Policy Evaluation	- .132 (.087)	1.52
Intercept	-1.601 (.076)	21.07 *

N = 1377

*-Significant at .01 Level

coefficients. If these coefficients are significanly different from zero, then differences between vote and party identification can be understood, at least in part, as a function of short-term forces (i.e. leader evaluations and policy evaluations). Conversely, if the coefficients do not differ significantly from zero, then deviations of the vote from party identification result from measurement error or from factors not identified in the model.

The data presented in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 indicate that party identification and the vote are not the same thing. In all three equations involving the three pairs of party identifiers, at least one of the short-term factors is significantly related to partisan defection. In accounting for partisan defections among Liberal and Conservative identifiers (Table 4.2), the parameter estimates for both short-term forces appear to be statistically significant with the correct signs.(1) Similarly, the parameter estimates for Liberal and NDP identifiers (Table 4.3) yield

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(1) Given that the short-term variables are composite measures derived from the evaluations of the party identified with minus that of the other party, the expected sign of the coefficients appearing in Tables 4.2 to 4.4 is negative. That is to say, "the probability of defecting should increase as the evaluation variable is less than zero and decrease as it is greater than zero" (Cain and Ferejohn, 1981: 37). A positive sign would therefore indicate that the probability of defecting increases as one's net evaluations of the party identified with become more favourable.

comparable results. Again, both the party leader evaluation and policy evaluation parameters are statistically significant and have the correct sign. However, the findings presented in Table 4.4, when only Conservative and NDP identifiers are considered, indicate that only the parameter estimate for party leader evaluation is significant with the expected sign. The policy evaluation variable fails to meet the test of statistical significance.(1)

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(1) Several observations regarding this finding warrant further attention. First, fewer respondents in Table 4.4 were classified as defectors than in either Tables 4.2 or 4.3. For example, whereas 12.6% of the respondents in Table 4.2 defected from their party identification and voted for the other party, only 3.6% of the respondents in Table 4.4 voted against the party they identified with. Further, examination of the distribution of the policy evaluation variable for the three partisan groupings revealed that fewer Conservative/NDP identifiers indicated a preference for the other party's policy positions than was the case in either of the Liberal/Conservative or the Liberal/NDP groupings. For the latter two pairings, approximately 12% of the partisans in each group crossed party lines and indicated a preference for the policies of the party not identified with. For Conservative/NDP identifiers, however, less than 9% indicated a preference for the other party's policies. A similar pattern emerged for the party leader evaluation variable, with fewer Conservative/NDP identifiers willing to profess a preference for the leader of the other party. What these observations seem to affirm is the importance of ideological orientations to party politics in Canada, or, as Stevenson (1987) puts it, the importance of an "enduring ideological character" to the Canadian party system. Clearly, when only Conservative and NDP identifiers are considered, fewer partisans indicate a willingness to cross party lines when evaluating the party leaders or the parties' policy positions. A more extended treatment of the left/right factor in party identifications in Canada may be found in Lambert et al. (1988).

We are not concerned in this thesis with the magnitude of the parameter estimates presented above, but with the finding that at least one of the estimates is statistically different from zero. For our purposes, then, it is clear that the null hypothesis of no effect can be rejected on the evidence found in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. Partisan defections in Canada can be explained by statistically significant behavioural parameters (i.e. short-term forces that contradict partisan attachments will cause partisans to defect from their traditional party loyalties).

PARTY IMAGE AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Having shown that party identification in Canada satisfies the criterion of independence, we turn now to the question of the (in)stability of party identification. Why do some Canadians change their party identifications while others maintain existing party attachments? In the remainder of this chapter we will attempt to answer this question by examining the proposition that party images -- the "mental pictures" which individuals hold of political parties -- can contribute significantly to our ability to understand both stability and change in the party identifications of Canadians. To this end, we employ two approaches. First, we consider evidence that the image of

one's own party -- as measured by the individual's likes and dislikes about the party -- is related to both stability and change in party identification. In the second analysis, we broaden the scope of our investigation by examining the relationship between combined party images -- the individual's relative assessment of all three parties -- and patterns of stability and change in identification. For each approach, we consider two kinds of evidence. The first of these examines the relationship between past party images and the direction of present party identifications. The second focuses on differences in the cross-time durability of attachments between those with positive and those with negative images of their own party at time 1.

We begin our examination by following the distribution of partisans' images of each of the parties over the 6-year period of our study. Table 4.5 presents these distributions. In general, the data reveal the responsiveness of party images to short-term forces.(1) Unlike the distribution of party images in the United States, which indicates "great stability over time"

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(1) In their analysis of the 1974 election, Clarke et al. (1980) suggest that party images are geared to short-term, more ephemeral political phenomena and are therefore sensitive to changes in a party's policies, leadership, or governing position (p. 131). Similarly, LeDuc et al. (1984) find that party images in Canada "tend to change easily in response to new issue concerns or changes in party programs or leaders" (pp. 481-482).

TABLE 4.5

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY IMAGES OF THE FEDERAL PARTIES, BY YEAR [a]

	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974			
LIBERAL	25.1%	38.6%	36.3%
PC	28.6%	51.0%	20.4%
NDP	21.5%	57.5%	21.0%
	N = 1873		
1979			
LIBERAL	27.7%	41.8%	30.5%
PC	27.8%	45.3%	26.9%
NDP	18.0%	52.7%	29.3%
	N = 2048		
1980 [b]			
LIBERAL	31.1%	33.5%	35.4%
PC	36.2%	38.7%	25.1%
NDP	20.1%	47.0%	32.9%
	N = 768		

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[a] Figures in the table are based on data from the 1974, 1979 and 1980 National Election Studies. Percentages based on major party identifiers only.

[b] Party image data for 1980 are based on a random half-sampling of the relavant party "LIKE" and "DISLIKE" questions.

(Trilling, 1976: 21), the party images of Canadian identifiers fluctuate considerably over time. However, two essential characteristics of these party image data warrant further mention. First, the data in Table 4.5 reveal a general decrease in the proportion of neutral image-holders, both in the aggregate and within each of the parties. For example, the proportion of partisans holding a neutral image of the Conservatives decreases monotonically from a high of 51% in 1974 to 39% in 1980. The percentages with neutral images of the NDP and the Liberals also decrease over the period of the study. If, as the data seem to suggest, the images projected by the parties are becoming less neutral, it may well indicate increasing clarity and polarization of attitudes toward the political parties. It should be emphasized, however, that the data are drawn from only three points in time. Therefore, any generalizations should be made with caution.

A second characteristic that stands out in the party image data presented in Table 4.5 is the trend towards a more positive image of the NDP. While the proportion of positive and negative image-holders of the other two parties fluctuates, possibly reflecting the changing leadership, issue, policy and performance evaluations of the Liberal and Conservative parties, the percentage of partisans holding a positive image of the NDP increases markedly, from only 21%

in 1974 to 33% in 1980. Conversely, the proportion of partisans holding a negative image of the NDP remains fairly stable over time, fluctuating within a range of less than 4%.

This trend may reflect the dividends of the NDP's "continued efforts to remodel itself as a national and moderate . . . alternative in the federal party system" (Brodie and Jenson, 1980: 298).(1) It might be, therefore, that the increase in the percentage of partisans holding a positive image of the NDP is an indication of the growing acceptance of the NDP as a viable alternative in the party system.(2)

While the party image data presented in Table 4.5 provide an overview of the images partisans hold of each of the parties, Table 4.6 offers a more detailed picture of the

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(1) Brodie and Jenson (1980) argue that, in the years following 1974, "the NDP attempted indiscriminately to broaden its appeal to encompass all voters . . ." (p. 289). Continuing moderation and "omnibus tendencies", the authors conclude, have led to the NDP's diminished distinctiveness in the federal party system. An argument that the political parties differ significantly in the images they sustain is made by Lambert et al. (1988).

(2) These observations on the different images projected by the NDP and the two traditional parties also link up with the proposition that party images may fade or be re-shaped rapidly once the party is out of power (Clarke et al., 1980). Clearly, the images of both the Liberals and Conservatives -- the two parties to hold office over the period of the study -- exhibit the surge and decline pattern about which the authors speculate.

TABLE 4.6

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY IMAGES OF SPECIFIC PARTISANS, BY YEAR[a]

PANEL A: LIBERAL IDENTIFIERS

	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974			
LIBERAL	12.2%	37.0%	50.9%
PC	34.1%	54.2%	11.6%
NDP	21.5%	63.7%	14.8%
	N = 1114		
1979			
LIBERAL	11.5%	41.3%	47.2%
PC	36.5%	50.9%	12.6%
NDP	16.5%	61.0%	23.4%
	N = 1047		
1980[b]			
LIBERAL	11.6%	32.9%	55.5%
PC	45.6%	42.2%	12.3%
NDP	17.7%	54.1%	28.2%
	N = 404		

TABLE 4.6
(Cont'd)

PANEL B: CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFIERS

	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974			
LIBERAL	42.4%	42.7%	14.9%
PC	11.4%	45.7%	43.0%
NDP	28.8%	58.0%	13.2%
	N = 525		
1979			
LIBERAL	47.8%	41.7%	10.5%
PC	9.1%	37.4%	53.5%
NDP	28.1%	53.1%	18.7%
	N = 692		
1980[b]			
LIBERAL	55.3%	33.2%	11.5%
PC	12.5%	35.2%	52.3%
NDP	33.9%	46.1%	20.0%
	N = 235		

TABLE 4.6
(Cont'd)

PANEL C: NDP IDENTIFIERS

	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974			
LIBERAL	47.6%	37.2%	15.2%
PC	41.3%	47.1%	11.6%
NDP	5.2%	26.6%	68.2%
	N = 234		
1979			
LIBERAL	37.7%	43.6%	18.7%
PC	40.0%	44.1%	15.9%
NDP	3.4%	23.7%	72.9%
	N = 309		
1980[b]			
LIBERAL	48.2%	36.1%	15.7%
PC	50.4%	34.0%	15.6%
NDP	2.0%	26.1%	71.9%
	N = 128		

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[a] Figures in the table are based on data from the 1974, 1979 and 1980 National Election Studies. Percentages based on major party identifiers only.

[b] Party image data for 1980 are based on a random half-sampling of the relavant party "LIKE" and "DISLIKE" questions.

party images of specific partisans over time. Not unexpectedly, the data reveal that partisans are more likely to hold positive images of their own party.(1) However, it is only among NDP identifiers that we observe anything close to the idealized version of party identifiers having extreme perceptions of their own party. Among New Democrats (Panel C), approximately 70% or higher hold a positive image of the NDP. By contrast, the proportion of Liberal and Conservative party identifiers holding a positive image of their own party is considerably lower, ranging between 47% and 56% for Liberal identifiers (Panel A) and 43% to 54% for Conservative identifiers (Panel B). Similarly, NDP identifiers are more likely to hold negative images of the other parties than are Liberal or Conservative identifiers. For Liberal and Conservative partisans, images of one or both of the other parties tend to be more neutral than negative.

It is apparent from Table 4.6 that the party images of NDP partisans differ from those of Liberal and Conservative identifiers in one further respect. Clearly, the proportion of "negative identifiers" -- individuals who express more dislikes than likes about their own party -- is higher among

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(1) For ease of presentation, we use the term "own" party throughout this thesis to refer to the party with whom the respondent identifies. The term "other" parties refers to the parties with whom the respondent does not identify.

Liberals and Conservatives than among NDP partisans. The fact that there are "negative identifiers" in the Canadian party system might not be thought surprising.(1) For example, Wattenberg's (1982) examination of party images in seven western democracies indicates the presence of a substantial number of identifiers expressing more dislikes than likes about their own party (Table 1). In Canada, Clarke et al. (1980) also found that a significant proportion of partisans had "one or more positive images of parties other than one's own and/or negative images of one's own party" (p. 120). However, the finding that the percentage of "negative identifiers" differs substantially

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(1) A number of past studies have documented the existence of "negative" party identifiers. For the most part, however, such analyses have been based upon an examination of the reasons for identifying with a party. According to Crewe (1976), negative identifications take two forms: "identification with a party for negative reasons . . . and the absence of identification with any party combined with identification <u>against</u> a particular party . . ." (p. 52; emphasis in the original). Crewe's analysis of the 1974 British data suggests that the incidence of the former is quite substantial: 30% of Conservative identifiers and 23% of Labour identifiers gave negative reasons for identifying. In an exploration of the reasons for identification within the Canadian electorate, Brown et al. (1987) find that about 13% of all major party identifiers cite negative reasons for identifying. Unfortunately, these authors do not provide a breakdown on the proportion of negative identifiers among Liberal, Conservative and NDP partisans. We would expect, however, given our findings in Table 4.6, that NDP identifiers would be less likely to cite negative reasons for identifying than either Liberals or Conservatives.

between the traditional "old" parties, on the one hand, and the NDP, on the other, is of interest. As can be seen from Table 4.6, while an average of about 11% of both Liberal and Conservative partisans have more negative than positive things to say about their own parties, an average of only about 3% of NDP partisans are coded as "negative identifiers". In addition, unlike the more stable proportion of negative identifiers found within the ranks of the Liberals and Conservatives, the percentage of New Democrats expressing more dislikes than likes about their own party decreases over time. Apparently, NDP identifiers have greater difficulty in identifying characteristics of their own party that they tend to dislike.

In summary, then, several significant characteristics stand out in our examination of the distributions of party images. Certainly, the party images of Canadian identifiers are changeable. However, the data are also suggestive of a number of qualities heretofore ignored. Overall, the party image data indicate that the proportion of partisans holding neutral images of the parties has decreased over time.(1) If, as a number of scholars have suggested, party images

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(1) It is important to note, however, that while the image of the NDP among Liberals and Conservatives is relatively less neutral by 1980, on the whole this image is still decidedly neutral. This can be contrasted to the much lower proportions, among all partisans, who hold neutral images of either the Liberals or the Conservatives.

reveal the relative meaningfulness of parties (Trilling, 1976; Wattenberg, 1984), this trend may indicate the increasing success with which the parties have been able to project meaningful images to the electorate. In addition, the party image data reveal that while partisans are more likely to hold a positive image of the party with which they identify, a rather large proportion of partisans do not conform to the pattern of images that might be associated with stable party attachments. For identifications to endure, we would expect partisans to hold predominantly positive images of their own party and negative images of the competing parties (Clarke et al., 1980: 120). However, only among NDP identifiers do we observe such a pattern.

Turning our attention to the association between party images and the direction of party identification, the data presented in Tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 seem to offer striking evidence of such a relationship. Considering all partisans without regard to past party identifications, the correlation between past images of the parties and current identification is considerable. Across all three waves of the panel (1974-1979, 1979-1980, 1974-1980), partisans who held a positive image of the Liberal Party at time 1 are much more likely to identify with the Liberals at time 2 than are partisans who held a negative image of the party. Among 1974-1979 panel members, for instance, individuals who

TABLE 4.7

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AMONG 1974-1979-1980 PANEL MEMBERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY[a] NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	22.1%	52.7%	73.8%
PC	55.7	35.4	19.0
NDP	22.3	11.9	7.2
(N)	(236)	(338)	(311)
CRAMER'S V = .29 Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	23.0%	50.1%	77.9%
PC	54.9	31.0	13.4
NDP	22.2	18.9	8.7
(N)	(366)	(529)	(383)
CRAMER'S V = .30 Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	23.0%	54.2%	75.8%
PC	49.4	33.1	15.8
NDP	27.6	12.7	8.4
(N)	(156)	(228)	(212)
CRAMER'S V = .29 Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.8

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY AMONG 1974-1979-1980 PANEL MEMBERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY[a] NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	66.2%	54.5%	25.4%
PC	18.9	34.4	60.0
NDP	14.9	11.0	14.6
(N)	(276)	(419)	(190)
CRAMER'S V = .23			
Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	65.3%	54.8%	29.2%
PC	12.8	27.4	60.8
NDP	21.9	17.8	10.1
(N)	(369)	(549)	(360)
CRAMER'S V = .28			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	66.6%	57.5%	21.7%
PC	16.7	29.6	60.9
NDP	16.6	12.9	17.4
(N)	(207)	(272)	(116)
CRAMER'S V = .26			
Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.9

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE NDP AMONG 1974-1979-1980 PANEL MEMBERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE NDP PARTY[a]		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	48.5%	55.8%	45.9%
PC	47.1	36.0	18.8
NDP	4.4	8.2	35.3
(N)	(214)	(485)	(187)
CRAMER'S V = .26			
Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	45.4%	58.7%	41.3%
PC	51.0	32.3	20.8
NDP	3.7	9.0	37.9
(N)	(260)	(626)	(392)
CRAMER'S V = .29			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	45.5%	63.0%	41.2%
PC	49.0	28.9	16.1
NDP	5.5	8.1	42.6
(N)	(152)	(312)	(132)
CRAMER'S V = .32			
Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

held a positive image of the Liberals are more than three times as likely to identify with the Liberals in 1979 than were negative image-holders -- 73.8% versus 22.1% (Table 4.7). Alternatively, negative image-holders are more likely to report a Conservative or NDP identification in 1979. This same pattern holds for images of the Conservative Party -- partisans holding a positive image of the Conservatives at time 1 are much more likely to report a Conservative identification at time 2 while partisans with a negative image are more likely to identify with one of the other parties (Table 4.8).

As can be seen in Table 4.9, however, interpretation of the relationship between images of the NDP and the direction of party identification is somewhat more problematic. While we again see that partisans who hold a positive image of the NDP at time 1 are more likely than negative image-holders to report an identification with the NDP, the percentage of positive image-holders claiming an NDP identification at time 2 is significantly lower than the comparable figures obtained for Liberal and Conservative identifiers above. Of individuals who held a positive image of the NDP at time 1, only slightly more than one in three identify with the NDP at time 2. Indeed, even among 1974-1980 panel members, when the proportion of positive image-holders declaring a time 2 NDP identification is the greatest, individuals holding a

positive image of the NDP in 1974 are split almost equally between the Liberals and the NDP in their 1980 attachments. Nevertheless, these data do not contradict the relationship discussed above. Partisans holding a positive image of the NDP at time 1 are still more likely to report an NDP identification at time 2 while partisans with a negative image are more likely to identify with one of the other parties.(1)

While such correlations between party images and the direction of party identification are not unexpected, relationships between party images and stability and change in party identification are less familiar. The crucial test for investigating these relationships focuses on differences

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(1) The fact that there are variations in the relationships between images of the three parties and direction of identification does not lessen the significance of the above finding. In fact, such differences are familiar to students of the brokerage-model of political analysis. Sniderman et al. (1974), for example, emphasize that where the Liberal and Conservative parties are regarded as parties of accommodation, the NDP is thought of as a party of principle. Accordingly, the NDP plays the role of advocate rather than broker. In contrast, the Liberals and Conservatives "preserve their strength federally by adopting as their own the most popular of the policies" advocated by the NDP (p. 272). Thus the fact that a substantial proportion of positive NDP image-holders are found to identify with the Liberals at the next measurement point should not be surprising. Rather, the finding may reflect nothing more than the ability of the Liberal Party to respond to change in interests and demands and, thereby, broaden its electoral coalition. However, for a critical assessment of the brokerage-model, see Brodie and Jenson (1980).

in the cross-time durability of attachments between those with positive and those with negative images of their own party at time 1.

Tables 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 show these party image data for Liberal, Conservative and NDP identifiers, respectively. For any given wave of the panel, the tables present the percentage of individuals with a given past party identification and given image of that party who changed their identification by time 2.

The findings in these tables provide qualified support for our argument. Within our samples, partisans whose images of their own party conflicted with their identifications at time 1 were generally more likely to change their identification by time 2 than were partisans whose images reinforced their identifications. For example, among 1974 Liberal identifiers, 34.5% of those with a negative image of the Liberal Party in 1974 changed their identifications by 1979. By comparison, only 15.2% of 1974 Liberals with a positive image of the party changed their identifications by 1979 (Table 4.10). Similarly, among Conservative and NDP identifiers in Tables 4.11 and 4.12, respectively, identifications were more likely to be changed when images of "own" party and identification at time 1 conflicted than when they did not. Certainly, the consistency of these patterns among all partisans suggests

TABLE 4.10

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AMONG LIBERAL IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	65.5%	80.2%	84.8%
NOT STABLE	34.5	19.8	15.2
(N)	(63)	(205)	(262)
TAU C = - .11 Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	78.0%	89.6%	94.2%
NOT STABLE	22.0	10.4	5.8
(N)	(86)	(263)	(303)
TAU C = - .10 Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	77.2%	84.0%	84.8%
NOT STABLE	22.8	16.0	15.2
(N)	(40)	(134)	(188)
TAU C = - .03 Not Significant			

[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

TABLE 4.11

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY AMONG CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	96.0%	88.4%	87.9%
NOT STABLE	4.0	11.6	12.1
(N)	(29)	(104)	(114)
TAU C = .04 Not Significant			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	84.4%	80.9%	87.3%
NOT STABLE	15.6	19.1	12.7
(N)	(48)	(150)	(236)
TAU C = - .05 Not Significant			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	83.7%	84.4%	89.2%
NOT STABLE	16.3	15.6	10.8
(N)	(28)	(70)	(72)
TAU C = - .05 Not Significant			

[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

TABLE 4.12

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE NDP AMONG NDP IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE NDP		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	63.8%	60.4%	75.6%
NOT STABLE	36.2	39.6	24.3
(N)	(7)	(27)	(70)
TAU C = - .13			
Not Significant			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	100%	88.4%	86.4%
NOT STABLE	0	11.6	13.6
(N)	(7)	(38)	(147)
TAU C = .03			
Not Significant			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	54.8%	57.7%	87.2%
NOT STABLE	45.2	42.3	12.8
(N)	(3)	(15)	(46)
TAU C = - .24			
Significant at .01 Level			

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[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

the existence of party image effects.

These general observations are subject to two qualifications. First, the expected pattern of positive image/stable identification and negative image/unstable identification is not found without exception. Among 1974-1979 Conservatives and 1979-1980 New Democrats, the data indicate that negative image-holders are actually more likely to remain stable in their identifications than are positive image-holders.(1) Second, even where the expected pattern is observed, the differences are often insufficiently large, given sub-sample sizes, to attain statistical significance. Once again, these differences are largely confined to the ranks of the Conservatives and New Democrats. In fact, only one of the four directionally consistent patterns in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 was significant beyond the conventional .05 level. Clearly, these findings would seem to suggest that the destabilizing effects of negative images of one's own party are less prevalent among Conservatives and New Democrats than among Liberals.

While these qualifications should be kept in mind, the

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(1) This finding, in itself, might not be thought surprising. Trilling's (1976) investigation of the role of party images in "inducing" change in party identification documents similar results. His analyses of party images in the United States indicate that the "apparent ability of party image to induce change in party identification is restricted to past Republican identifiers" (p. 194). However, the author provides no explanation for this finding.

data contained in Tables 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 strongly suggest a previously unobserved linkage between stability of party identification and image of one's own party. As anticipated, there is a greater tendency for those partisans who have a conflicting party image/identification structure to change their identifications than partisans with a reinforcing image/identification structure. Conversely, where images and identifications reinforce each other, identifications are more likely to be stable.

In addition, it is interesting to note that the findings presented in these tables are also consistent with the view that Canadians alter their party identifications more easily than do identifiers elsewhere. Thus, even among past partisans who hold a positive image of the party they identify with (i.e. a reinforcing party image/past party identification structure), we find that a significant percentage of all identifiers still change their identifications.

This interpretation of the linkage between party images and the stability of identification is buttressed by our analysis of the combined party images of partisans. Tables 4.13 to 4.15 replicate Tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 using the combined party image variables and provide further evidence of the association between party images and identification. As can be seen in these tables, partisans with a positive

TABLE 4.13

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY[a]		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	28.4%	56.5%	78.6%
PC	49.1	32.5	18.8
NDP	22.4	11.0	2.6
(N)	(324)	(334)	(228)
CRAMER'S V = .29 Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	25.7%	64.6%	86.5%
PC	49.0	22.2	11.4
NDP	25.3	13.2	2.1
(N)	(585)	(468)	(225)
CRAMER'S V = .34 Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	26.5%	62.1%	78.8%
PC	45.3	28.5	16.3
NDP	28.2	9.4	4.9
(N)	(219)	(207)	(169)
CRAMER'S V = .32 Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.14

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY[a]		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	67.2%	44.1%	20.2%
PC	18.6	42.2	72.4
NDP	14.2	13.8	7.4
(N)	(445)	(302)	(138)
CRAMER'S V = .29			
Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	63.4%	51.5%	17.4%
PC	13.5	34.0	77.2
NDP	23.1	14.5	5.4
(N)	(596)	(443)	(240)
CRAMER'S V = .35			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	66.6%	48.3%	16.3%
PC	15.9	37.5	75.8
NDP	17.4	14.3	7.8
(N)	(327)	(181)	(87)
CRAMER'S V = .32			
Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.15

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE NDP

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	RELATIVE IMAGE OF THE NDP[a]		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979			
LIBERAL	55.7%	50.8%	41.1%
PC	39.7	33.2	23.1
NDP	4.6	16.0	35.7
(N)	(433)	(337)	(116)
CRAMER'S V = .22			
Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980			
LIBERAL	52.8%	54.9%	35.7%
PC	43.2	28.0	17.3
NDP	3.9	17.1	47.0
(N)	(541)	(512)	(225)
CRAMER'S V = .30			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980			
LIBERAL	57.8%	54.5%	37.4%
PC	36.7	28.9	17.7
NDP	5.4	16.6	44.9
(N)	(295)	(217)	(84)
CRAMER'S V = .26			
Significant at .01 Level			

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party image is measured in 1974.

disposition toward a party are more likely to identify with that party at the next measurement point than are those who are negatively disposed. For instance, across all three panel waves, greater than 75% of those with a positive image of the Liberals in the past claim a Liberal identification in the present. This figure can be compared to the less than 30% who held a negative image of the Liberals and who reported identifying with the Liberals in 1979 (Table 4.13).

The combined party image data for Conservative and NDP identifiers manifest similar patterns -- that is, across the three waves of the panel, partisans holding a positive image of the party at time 1 were more likely to identify with that party by time 2 than were partisans who held a negative image.(1)

As noted previously, however, the crucial test in the investigation of the relationship between party images and partisan stability involves examining patterns of change and stability in identification when image and identification are inconsistent at time 1. Tables 4.16 to 4.18 display these patterns separately for Liberal, Conservative and NDP

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(1) It is immediately apparent from Tables 4.13 to 4.15 that the associations between combined party images and the direction of party identification are greater than the comparable correlations between image of one's own party and party identification found above in Tables 4.7 to 4.9. Though not unexpected, the relative increase in the strength of these correlations does serve to underscore the validity of the concept of combined party images as measured in this analysis.

TABLE 4.16

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AMONG LIBERAL IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	74.8%	79.1%	85.4%
NOT STABLE	25.2	20.9	14.6
(N)	(97)	(228)	(205)
TAU C = - .09			
Significant at .01 Level			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	77.8%	93.5%	94.7%
NOT STABLE	22.2	6.5	5.3
(N)	(151)	(303)	(199)
TAU C = - .12			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	74.2%	85.7%	85.9%
NOT STABLE	25.8	14.3	14.1
(N)	(67)	(142)	(154)
TAU C = - .07			
Significant at .05 Level			

[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

TABLE 4.17

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY AMONG CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE PC PARTY		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	83.3%	87.4%	93.5%
NOT STABLE	16.7	12.6	6.5
(N)	(46)	(104)	(100)
TAU C = - .08			
Significant at .05 Level			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	76.1%	80.8%	91.6%
NOT STABLE	23.9	19.2	8.4
(N)	(80)	(159)	(195)
TAU C = - .14			
Significant at .01 Level			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	75.0%	85.8%	94.2%
NOT STABLE	25.0	14.2	5.8
(N)	(42)	(62)	(66)
TAU C = - .16			
Significant at .01 Level			

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[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

TABLE 4.18

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IMAGE OF THE NDP AMONG NDP IDENTIFIERS

PRESENT PARTY IDENTIFICATION	IMAGE OF THE NDP		
	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
1974-1979[a]			
STABLE	64.7%	69.0%	73.5%
NOT STABLE	35.3	31.0	26.5
(N)	(12)	(39)	(53)
TAU C = - .06 Not Significant			
1979-1980[b]			
STABLE	84.4%	84.1%	90.1%
NOT STABLE	15.6	15.9	9.9
(N)	(12)	(79)	(100)
TAU C = - .06 Not Significant			
1974-1980[a]			
STABLE	100%	64.5%	87.3%
NOT STABLE	0	35.5	12.7
(N)	(4)	(25)	(34)
TAU C = - .14 Not Significant			

[a] Party images measured in 1974.

[b] Party images measured in 1979.

identifiers, respectively, for each of the three waves of the panel. For any given wave, each table presents rates of partisan stability for respondents with different combinations of party images. Across all three waves of the panel, the percentage of Liberal, Conservative and NDP identifiers reporting a change in their identification increases as their relative assessment of their own party becomes less favourable.(1) Among 1974 Liberal identifiers, for example, the percentage of respondents changing their identifications decreases from 25.2%, to 20.9%, to 14.6% (Table 4.16). In contrast, the percentage of 1979 Liberal identifiers who retain their Liberal identifications in 1980 increases from 77.8%, to 93.5%, to 94.7% as the combined image of the Liberals becomes more favourable. Similarly, among Conservative and NDP identifiers (Tables 4.17 and 4.18), negative image-holders are more likely to change their identifications by time 2 than are positive image-holders.

In sum, then, the data contained in Tables 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18 provide considerable support for our hypothesis

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(1) The sole exception to this pattern occurs among NDP identifiers in the 1974-1980 wave of the panel. For these partisans, a negative image of the NDP, relative to the other two parties, in time 1 does not lead to the expected change in party identification in time 2. It should be emphasized, however, that this segment of Table 4.18 is based on so few cases (N=63) that any interpretation one way or the other would be tenuous.

regarding the relationship between party images and the stability of party identifications.

A complementary analysis examines rates of stability and change in party identifications when combined images of the other parties are substituted for combined image of one's own party. According to the argument advanced thus far, changes in identification should be proportionately greater among partisans whose images of the other two parties are in conflict with their own identifications.(1) For this analysis, therefore, greater levels of stability of identification should be observed among partisans holding negative images of the other two parties. By the same token, positive image-holders should be more likely to report changing their identifications. Our expectations for

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(1) In dealing with images of the other parties, it is worth noting that interpretation of these data are confused somewhat by the existence of a three-party system in Canada. Unlike investigations of party images in the United States, where party images are represented by one continuous variable, three separate image variables are required to examine the Canadian data. Accordingly, a positive image of a party other than one's own does not indicate a negative image of the party identified with (as is the case in complementary American analyses). Thus, while it is clear that a positive image of another party does constitute a conflicting image/identification structure, this "conflict" is not so clearly apparent as when image of one's own party is utilized. Similarly, this lack of clarity is evident when negative images of the other parties are considered. Ideally, one would want to categorize partisans more precisely in this analysis to overcome this problem. However, to do so would result in a considerable reduction in the number of cases in many of the tables.

these data are therefore the reverse of those in Tables 4.16 to 4.18.

Tables 4.19 to 4.21 display these patterns of stability and change in identifications when images of the other parties are considered. For ease of comparison, each table also contains the image data for one's own party which has been reproduced from Tables 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18. As can be seen in Table 4.19, Liberal identifiers who hold a positive (i.e. conflicting) image of either the Conservatives or the NDP are more likely to report changing their Liberal identifications by the next measurement point in time than are Liberals who hold a negative (i.e. reinforcing) image of either party. For 1979 Liberal identifiers, for example, the percentage of individuals holding a positive image of the Conservatives who change their identifications by 1980 is 23.3%. This can be compared to the 7.5% of 1979 Liberals who changed their identifications by 1980 but who held a negative image of the Conservatives. Likewise, Liberal partisans were more likely to change their identifications when they had a positive image of the NDP than when they held a negative image of that party.

Table 4.20 displays the patterns of stability and change in identifications for Conservative identifiers. With one exception, these patterns conform with expectations. That is, Conservative identifiers tend to be

TABLE 4.19

RELATIVE IMAGES OF THE PARTIES BY STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AMONG LIBERAL IDENTIFIERS

PARTY IMAGES[a]	STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION								
	1974-1979			1979-1980			1974-1980		
	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)
LIBERAL									
Positive	85.4%	14.6	(205)	94.7%	5.3	(199)	85.9%	14.1	(154)
Negative	74.8%	25.2	(97)	77.8%	22.2	(151)	74.2%	25.8	(67)
PC									
Positive	74.1%	25.9	(29)	76.7%	23.2	(40)	73.2%	26.8	(19)
Negative	85.2%	14.2	(332)	92.5%	7.5	(382)	84.4%	15.2	(244)
NDP									
Positive	81.6%	18.4	(48)	82.0%	18.0	(81)	74.7%	25.3	(34)
Negative	83.9%	16.1	(273)	92.1%	7.9	(283)	83.9%	16.1	(201)

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.20

RELATIVE IMAGES OF THE PARTIES BY STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AMONG CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFIERS

PARTY IMAGES[a]	STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION								
	1974-1979			1979-1980			1974-1980		
	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)
PC									
Positive	93.5%	6.5	(100)	91.6%	8.4	(195)	94.2%	5.8	(66)
Negative	83.3%	16.7	(46)	76.1%	23.9	(80)	75.0%	25.0	(42)
LIBERAL									
Positive	78.8%	21.2	(21)	78.9%	21.1	(21)	81.9%	18.1	(14)
Negative	89.9%	10.1	(148)	86.8%	13.2	(303)	86.8%	13.2	(103)
NDP									
Positive	94.3%	5.7	(15)	71.5%	28.5	(44)	66.0%	34.0	(16)
Negative	90.7%	9.3	(148)	88.2%	11.8	(245)	93.0%	7.0	(90)

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974.

TABLE 4.21

RELATIVE IMAGES OF THE PARTIES BY STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION AMONG NDP IDENTIFIERS

PARTY IMAGES[a]	STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION								
	1974-1979			1979-1980			1974-1980		
	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)	STABLE	NOT STABLE	(N)
NDP									
Positive	73.5%	26.5	(53)	90.1%	9.9	(100)	83.7%	12.7	(34)
Negative	64.7%	35.3	(12)	84.4%	15.6	(12)	100%	0	(4)
LIBERAL									
Positive	32.6%	67.4	(3)	65.3%	34.7	(6)	100%	0	(2)
Negative	73.3%	26.7	(78)	87.3%	12.7	(131)	86.7%	13.3	(49)
PC									
Positive	71.3%	28.7	(9)	100%	0	(6)	100%	0	(2)
Negative	70.4%	29.6	(66)	89.0%	11.0	(133)	86.4%	13.6	(41)

[a] For the 1974-1979 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974; for the 1979-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1979; for the 1974-1980 party identification data, party images are measured in 1974.

less stable if they have a positive image of either of the other two parties than if their impression is negative. To illustrate, the average rate of change in identification among Conservative identifiers holding a positive image of the Liberals is approximately 20%. By comparison, change in identification among Conservatives with a negative image of the Liberals tends to be considerably lower (about 12%). The exception occurs in the case of image of the NDP. In the first wave of the panel, Conservative identifiers do not appear to be less stable if they have a positive image of the NDP.

Table 4.21 displays the distribution of stable and unstable NDP identifiers. On the surface, the findings here appear to be less supportive of our hypothesis. However, closer examination of the table reveals that too few cases are found in many of the cells to provide much evidence one way or the other about the possible effects of images of the Liberal and Conservative parties on the stability of NDP identifications. Among 1974-1980 NDP panel members, for example, only 2 individuals hold a positive (i.e. conflicting) image of either the Liberals or the Conservatives.

It is possible to overcome this problem of small numbers, somewhat, by combining the positive and neutral categories of the Liberal and Conservative party image

variables.(1) While not so clearly "conflicting" as are purely positive images, the use of such collapsed positive/neutral categories is helpful, if only to provide a point of comparison for negative images. This slight re-working of the data reveals findings which are consistent with our expectations (Table not shown). For example, among 1974 NDP identifiers, those holding a positive/neutral image of the Liberals are more likely to change their identification by 1980 than are negative image holders -- 47.5% (N=14) versus 13.3% (N=49). Similarly, NDP identifiers holding a positive/neutral image of the Conservatives are more likely to change their identifications than are those holding a negative image of the Conservatives -- 34.8% (N=22) versus 13.6% (N=41).

In summary, then, the evidence presented in Tables 4.13 to 4.21 generally support the hypothesis that when party images reinforce past party identifications, identifications are more likely to be stable than when party images and past party identifications are in conflict. This is not to argue that, when images contradict identifications, all partisans

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(1) In Trilling's (1976) examination of party images among 1956-1960 SRC panel members, the author adopts just such a strategy. Such a procedure, he states, is necessary to overcome the problem of instability caused by small Ns. Trilling thus combines adjacent cells, for his purposes defined as both horizontally and vertically contiguous cells, to "correct" for the low number of cases in given tables (p. 201).

are more likely to change their identifications, or, conversely, that when images reinforce identifications, all partisans are necessarily more stable in their identifications. Certainly, it is possible to find examples of partisans whose identifications endure in spite of their negative assessment of their own party. Nevertheless, the analysis has shown that combined party images are associated with patterns of partisan stability. In fact, the consistency of this set of relationships suggests that party images may play a crucial role in the transformation of party identifications.

CONCLUSION

We began this chapter by arguing that despite the strong association between party identification and vote in the Canadian electorate, it would be unwise to conclude that the two variables represent substantially the same thing. Using data for the 1984 Canadian National Election Study, we presented evidence indicating that party identification in Canada satisfies the statistical criterion of independence, and that on these grounds, we ought not to dismiss party identification as a valid concept in the analysis of Canadian voting behaviour.

The remainder of the chapter dealt with the hypothesis

that party images -- what partisans "like" and "dislike" about the political parties -- are related to stability and change in party identifications. The evidence presented here is largely consistent with our expectations. Clearly, consistency of attitudes are unambiguously associated with stability, for all types of partisans. Where images and identifications reinforce each other, identifications tend to endure. What is more interesting for our purposes is the finding that party images also seem to be related to changes in identification. For all types of identifiers, there appears to be a systematic pattern to change in identification: when party images conflict with identifications, identifications are likely to be altered. Admittedly, for NDP identifiers, interpretation is confounded somewhat by the low number of cases in many of the cells. However, when we adjust for these low number of cases by combining positive and neutral categories, the data fit the stated pattern consistently. These findings are consistent with the proposition that party images are related to both stability and change in party identifications. Thus, when party images reinforce identification, identifications tend to be stable. However, when party images conflict with identification, identifications are more likely to change.

If, as our data seem to suggest, party images are

associated with such diverse behaviour as stable and unstable party attachments, these mental pictures which individuals hold of political parties may have a crucial role to play in the transformation of party identifications in Canada.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings and seeks to place them within the wider context of voting research in Canada. We proceed here by presenting the highlights of the study and then by discussing some of the implications raised by the party image data.

We began in Chapter I by arguing that party images seem to have considerable relevance for the study of partisan stability in Canada. Before turning directly to an examination of this question, however, it was necessary to deal with a logically prior question. This is the question of whether party identification and the vote are independent in Canada. For some students of Canadian politics, the great strength of the relationship between these two variables has been interpreted as indicating that party identification and the vote represent substantially the same thing. Since almost all individuals vote for the party with which they identify, it has been suggested that the utility of party identification is severely impaired by the concept's inability to distinguish itself from particular voting decisions. However, evidence presented here indicates that party identification and the vote measure

different phenomena.

The independence of party identification and the vote was determined by estimating the probability of partisan defection as a function of short-term forces. Specifically, we tested the null hypothesis that differences between a respondent's voting preference and his or her party identification are unrelated to such short-term factors as leader evaluations or policy evaluations. If such differences are a function of measurement error, or the idiosyncratic traits of certain voters, then it is plausible to conclude that party identification is merely another measure of the vote. Our findings indicate that party identification satisfies the criterion of empirical independence in Canada. Thus, for all partisan groups, it was found that partisan defections in Canada could be explained, at least in part, by short-term forces. That is, leader evaluations and/or policy evaluations that contradict party identification are related to voters' deviations from their traditional party attachments. Thus it was concluded that party identification and the vote are not equivalent in Canada.

The remainder of our analysis dealt with the hypothesis that party images -- what partisans "like" and "dislike" about the political parties -- are related to stability and change in party identifications. Based on past research

findings, this hypothesis was that levels of stability and change in party identification are related to individual party images. Two approaches were undertaken to test the validity of this hypothesis. The first considered evidence that the image of one's own party is related to partisan stability. In the second approach, we broadened the scope of the investigation by examining the relationship between combined party images -- the measure of the individual's relative assessment of all three parties -- and patterns of stability and change in identification.

In terms of the relationship between image of one's own party and partisan stability, our findings provide qualified support for the hypothesis. It was found that the correlation between past images of the parties and current identifications was considerable. In addition, application of controls for past party identification revealed that, in general, when images conflicted with identifications at time 1, identifications were more likely to be changed by time 2 than when images reinforced identifications. This finding was consistent with our expectations.

This general observation is subject to two qualifications. First, the expected pattern of positive image/stable identification and negative image/unstable identification was not found without exception. Second, even where the expected pattern was observed, the percentage

differences were often insufficiently large, given sub-sample sizes, to attain statistical significance. In both cases it should be emphasized, however, that these limitations appear to be confined to Conservative and NDP identifiers. This finding suggests the possibility that adherents of parties on the extremes of the ideological dimension might be critical of their respective parties but have nowhere else to go. As a New Democrat, for example, an individual may find the NDP insufficiently "left" and may even speak negatively of it, but have no realistic alternative to turn to. Certainly, this dynamic could work to dampen the destabilizing effects of negative images among these partisans.

Alternatively, one wonders whether the impact of party images on identification is felt first in and through the strength of partisan attachments. Certainly the finding of Franklin and Jackson (1983) that strength of party identification responds to short-term political forces would suggest such a possibility. If this is the case, we would expect that for some partisans, the effects of party images are felt first through a weakening of party identifications. If this process continues for any length of time, the result may very well be a more substantial shift in identifications. Although we do not examine the relationship between strength of identification and party

images here, it is an issue that clearly warrants further investigation.

Stronger evidence that party images are related to stability and change in identifications was found in our analysis of the combined party images of partisans. When we examined the relationship between the relative assessment of all three parties and party identification, it was found that party images measured at time 1 were strongly associated with party identifications at time 2. Thus, across all three waves of the panel, partisans who held a positive image of the party at time 1 were more likely to identify with that party at time 2 than were partisans who held a negative image at time 1. It was also clear from these findings that the associations between combined party images and direction of identification were greater than the comparable correlations for images of one's own party. Certainly, the relative increase in the magnitude of these correlations reflects favourably on the validity of our procedure for coding partisans' combined party images.

Analyses of differences in the cross-time durability of party attachments also provided considerable support for our hypothesis. As predicted, we found that the percentages of Liberal, Conservative and NDP identifiers who changed their identifications by time 2 increased among those whose relative assessment of their own party at time 1 was less

favourable. The only deviation from this pattern occurred among NDP identifiers in the 1974-1980 wave of the panel. However, as suggested, this departure could plausibly be attributed to the small Ns.

More support for our hypothesis was provided by analysis of the impact of combined images of the other parties on partisan stability. If party images are related to stability and change in party identification, we would expect changes in identification to be proportionately greater among partisans whose images of the other parties are in conflict with their own identifications. In exploring this question, the data revealed patterns of stability and change in identifications that were generally consistent with our expectations. Thus, those partisans with positive images of the other parties were more likely to abandon their traditional party attachments. On the other hand, partisans who had negative images of the other parties tended to be less willing to abandon their identifications.

Taken together, then, the results of our analyses are largely consistent with the proposition that party images are related to partisan stability. Certainly, our findings reveal that consistency of attitudes are unambiguously associated with stability for all types of partisans. Where images reinforce identifications, identifications tend to

endure. In addition, party images also seem to be related to changes in identification. For all types of partisans, there appears to be a systematic pattern to change in party attachments: when party images conflict with identifications, identifications are likely to be altered.

To be clear, we are not proposing that, when images contradict identifications, all partisans are more likely to change their identifications, or, conversely, that when images reinforce identifications, all partisans are necessarily more stable in their identifications. However, our analyses in the preceding chapter would clearly suggest that these images or "mental pictures" of the political parties have a role to play in the transformation of party identifications in Canada.

Having claimed this much for the concept of party images within the context of our own immediate study, it is important to bear in mind that these same party image data also highlight a number of interesting findings that go beyond the scope of this thesis. In the section that follows we speculate about a number of the more significant of these which seem to us to be of particular relevance and importance.

In the course of the analysis, we have suggested the possibility that party images can contribute significantly to our understanding of how salient or meaningful the

political parties are for Canadians. That is, party image data provide information about the extent to which parties continue to have meaning for voters and continue to arouse interest and concern among them. If this is the case, our research, although limited to major party identifiers, suggests that the parties are more meaningful to Canadians than they once were. Thus, both in the aggregate and within each of the parties, attitudes towards the parties have shown increasing clarity and polarization. This could be true for a number of reasons, including: the success of the parties in taking polarized stands on those issues which have emerged in recent years; the emergence of the NDP as a viable alternative in the Canadian party system; the worsening economic conditions through the mid-1970s; the changes in party leadership; the replacement of the governing party in each of the 1979 and 1980 elections. Whatever the cause of this trend, if parties are more meaningful to voters, then presumably they may stimulate more enduring attachments.

These party image data also have relevance for the study of party decomposition. American researchers have long been concerned with the finding that perceptions of the Republicans and Democrats are less [illegible]d and increasingly more neutral than they once were (Pomper, 1975; Trilling, 1975a, 1976; Nie et al., 1979; and Wattenberg, 1982).

Accordingly, it has been argued that the impact of political parties has dropped as the two parties have undergone a sharp decline in salience as attitudinal objects. In short, the study of party images among Americans seems to suggest a continuing process in which parties have increasingly failed to link voters to the political process. Such a process of party decomposition, Trilling (1975a) suggests, "threatens to preclude the future ability of parties to structure politics and to influence policy" (p. 310). Yet, as we have already seen, this particular trend is not found within our panel of the Canadian electorate. Thus, it may well be that the "ongoing march of party decomposition", of which Burnham (1970) speaks, is not appropriate within the Canadian context. Certainly, our findings, as far as they go, do not reveal a trend in party images that could properly be associated with the process of party decomposition.

If this first trend reveals that the parties, in general, have become more meaningful attitudinal objects for Canadians, a second trend in the party image data suggests the potential for electoral change in Canada. In this regard, we note the significant improvement in the image of the NDP from 1974 to 1980 (compare Meisel, 1973: 114-116). If, as described above, party images are associated with changes in party identification, then the improvement registered by the NDP may have long-term implications for

the distribution of party identifications in Canada. Furthermore, in the short-term, these more favourable images of the NDP could have an impact on future voting choices. This latter possibility is consistent with past findings documenting the impact of party images on the vote (Declercq et al., 1976; Kirkpatrick et al., 1976; and Mackelprang et al., 1976).

The party image data also leave us with two interesting questions. Why do New Democrats -- as distinct from Liberals and Conservatives -- hold predominantly positive images of their own party and negative images of the competing parties? Our findings convincingly demonstrate that NDP identifiers are unique in holding "polarized" party images. And secondly, why is the proportion of "negative identifiers" lower among individuals who identify with the NDP?

While there are several reasons one might hypothesize that NDP identifiers would be different in this regard, the speculative answer to both questions is that these partisans make a fundamentally different type of partisan choice. This view is consistent with a number of analyses examining the importance of class to voting behaviour in Canada. Meisel (1973), for example, has found that the "class nature" of party perceptions in Canada is strongly supported by the data but is of particular importance to the NDP (p.

116). More recently, analysis of the left/right reasons for identifying with the political parties reveals that New Democrats are much more likely to offer "leftist" reasons for their identifications (Lambert et al. 1988). It may very well be, therefore, that the particular image profile registered by New Democrats is related to ideological considerations. That is, because the NDP is clearly differentiated as the party of the left by a substantial proportion of its own adherents, those who choose to identify with the party do so on entirely different grounds than Liberals or Conservatives. In such a situation, it seems reasonable to expect that New Democrats will hold images of their party that are distinctive from other partisan identifiers. Clearly, however, this question requires further refinement and empirical investigation.

Finally, our findings lead us to suggest that party images are relevant to the study of partisan stability in both two- and multi-party systems. While this suggestion may appear to be self-evident, it is worth recalling that past research on party images has been confined to two-party systems, most notably the United States. Indeed, Wattenberg (1982) goes so far as to claim that party images are more crucial in two-party systems. However, the fact that we encountered evidence to support the proposition that party images are related to partisan stability in Canada suggests

that it is important to assess the attitudes that underlie partisan attachments in both types of party systems.

The foregoing account of some of the more interesting findings that emerged from the data does not exhaust the inventory of implications and further research problems raised in this study. Entirely absent in our discussion are wider theoretical implications such as the causal role of party images in the more complex and longer process of partisan alignment or the ability of party images to bridge the theories of the "dependent" voter and the "responsive" voter (Pomper 1975). While we can do little more than list them here, it is hoped that other researchers will address themselves to these important questions. By responding to this challenge, we may further expand our understanding of how these images of the political parties relate to the wider field of Canadian electoral behaviour.

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