Parties and Partisans:
The Nature(s) of Partisanship in Canada's Fourth Party System

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Abstract

Early studies of Canadian partisanship argued that the concept of partisan identification, as understood in the U.S., does not apply to the study of Canada. This began a debate about whether partisan identification in Canada was similar to the type of attachment held by Americans. Throughout this debate, the role of political parties in influencing the nature of their partisans has been only modestly studied. Other than arguing that weak partisanship is the result of institutional arrangements or the brokerage style of the parties, studies of partisanship have not considered whether the nature of the identification varies *between* the parties. In other words, do some parties encourage American-style partisanship and others something else? The connection between parties and partisans is of particular interest given the changes that occurred in the Canadian party system between 1993 and 2006. Not only do the current parties vary in age, reputation and focus, but they also differ in terms of their ideological intensity.

This paper addresses the characteristics of partisanship in the various parties of the Canadian party system since 1993. Is Canadian partisanship uniform, or does it vary by party? Are certain partisans more loyal, more intense, and more stable? Do these characteristics vary systematically by party? This paper tackles these questions using data from the Canadian Election Studies of 1993-2006.

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The topic of partisan identification in Canada has occupied the minds of researchers for decades. One of the main issues that have occupied scholars is the nature of Canadian partisanship. In the United States, partisanship is seen as "a psychological identification, which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support;" the concept is central to studies of voting, as "the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior" (Campbell et al. 1960:121). Work on Canadian partisanship, however, provides conflicting accounts of how well the concept travels north of the border. Early studies argued that the concept of partisanship acknowledged in the U.S. does not apply to the study of Canada. Meisel (1973) stated: "The concept of Party Identification, as used by scholars associated with the Michigan Survey Research Center…may be almost inapplicable in Canada…we have found that party identification seems to be as volatile in Canada as the vote itself."(p.67) This strong statement spurred much research, and began a debate about whether partisan identification in Canada was similar to the type of attachment held by Americans (for two sides of the debate, see Sniderman et al. 1974 and Jenson 1975). Later studies refined the understanding of Canadian partisanship, arguing that it is both similar *and* different. Clarke et al. (1980) develop the concept of *flexible partisanship* to characterize the differences in the Canadian context. Still, the debate continues regarding *how* different, or similar, Canadian partisanship is to the ideal of the American model (for one of the most recent statements, see Gidengil et al. 2006).

Throughout this debate, the role of political parties in influencing the nature of their partisans has been only modestly studied. This question is of particular interest given the changes that occurred in the Canadian party system between 1993 and 2006. Prior to 1993, the party system was sometimes characterized as "two and a half" parties, recognizing the long-standing dominance of the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, and the minor, though stable, role of the NDP. Since that time, regional parties emerged (BQ, Reform), old parties disappeared (Progressive Conservatives), and a merger united right-wing voters into a new national party (the Conservatives). Not only do the current parties vary in age, reputation and focus, but they also differ in terms of their ideological intensity.

This paper will specifically address the characteristics of partisanship in the various parties of the Canadian party system since 1993. Is Canadian partisanship uniform, or does it vary by party? Are certain partisans more loyal, more intense, and more stable? Do these characteristics vary systematically by party? This paper tackles these questions using data from the Canadian Election Studies of 1993-2006.

The History of Canadian Partisanship

Prior to the work of Harold Clarke and his colleagues, the applicability of the partisanship concept in Canada was agreed, by many, to be weak. Meisel's pronouncement about the inappropriateness of the concept for use in Canada was taken seriously, with the notable of exception of Sniderman et al. (1974). Sniderman and his colleagues were the most vocal in arguing that the concept was the same – that Canadian partisans received their partisanship through parental transfer, that it was stable throughout differing vote commitments, and that it was as long-standing as the Michigan school originally theorized. They also found that supporters of both majority and minority parties were equally loyal, despite the significant

differences in the clarity of their positions. They wrote, "Evidently, it is possible to have strong loyalties to political parties even though these parties are not clearly differentiated in economic policy or ideology." (Sniderman et al. 1974: 286) However, their work was not uniformly well-received (for one of the immediate responses, see Jenson 1975).

Much of this debate was quelled with the work of Clarke and his colleagues. In their book *Political Choice in Canada* (1980), they make the case for distinguishing between flexible and durable partisans on the basis of their volatility between elections, the intensity of the attachment, and consistency across levels of government. In several articles and books (such as LeDuc et al. 1984; Clarke et al. 1984, 1991, 1996), the concept was shown to differentiate between those Canadian partisans who acted like American ones (the durable partisans) and the Canadian partisans who were, indeed, much more flexible and therefore increasingly swayed by short-term forces. In essence, Clarke and his colleagues argue that the Michigan model of voting, which highlights the role of partisanship, needs to be differentially applied in Canada. The importance of issues and candidates in vote choice varies considerably according to the nature of one's partisanship.

Numerous explanations have been offered for why partisanship is generally considered to be weaker in Canada (but see Gidengil et al. (2006) and Schickler and Green (1997) for a different opinion). One explanation is that the electoral institutions in Canada do not reinforce partisanship and thus strengthen the attachment. Unlike in the American system, where voters are faced with partisan candidates for almost every office they elect (of which there are many), and where candidates for president are chosen through a primary process that involves citizens rather than a party convention with member delegates, Canadians are asked to vote only periodically, and partisan labels are generally only relevant at the federal and provincial levels[1] (Wattenberg 1982; Gidengil 1992; Johnston et al. 1992). In addition, the parties are not consistent themselves across levels of government; a Liberal Party at the provincial level need not necessarily be related, ideologically or otherwise, to the federal Liberal Party. Thus, voters can hold different partisan identifications at different levels of government, which makes partisanship a much less useful cue for voters, and therefore a less significant attachment for Canadians (Clarke and Stewart 1987; Stewart and Clarke 1997).

A second explanation implicates the parties themselves. It is based on the understanding that Canadian political parties have traditionally followed a brokerage model, in that they developed policies according to what would attract the most support, and what would be attractive to the various regions and regional interests in the country (Clarke et al. 1991). In its first incarnation, at the time of Confederation in 1867, the brokerage parties concentrated on bridging the linguistic and religious cleavages between Ontario and Quebec (Johnston et al. 1992); since then, the brokerage parties have expanded to encompass Western alienation and the regional interests of the Atlantic provinces, as well as the interests of central Canada and the specific nationalist claims of Quebec. The very nature of brokerage parties prevents them from establishing a strong ideological program, which a party label could represent.

[1] There are a few cities where partisan labels are used at the municipal level (such as Vancouver) but the majority of cities do not.

This argument is made most forcefully about the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives (PCs). Scarrow (1965:76) writes that the brokerage style is one of the unique features of Canadian politics: "What distinguishes Canada is that there is no "cause" to which either of the parties is pledged, and that each party is potentially capable of recruiting to its side the successful vote-getting intermediary."(Scarrow 1965: 76) This argument is substantiated in the findings of Engelmann and Schwartz (1975) and Zipp (1978). It is also evident in the more recent studies of Nevitte et al. (2000), Blais et al. (2002), and Scotto et al. (2004), in which analyses of voter attitudes led to the conclusion that the Liberals and PCs were largely indistinguishable, both occupying the centre of the spectrum and often alternating being closer to one end (left or right). Thus, it is possible that the nature of brokerage parties discourages the type of voter commitment that ideological clarity would attract (Stevenson 1987; Clarke et al. 1991; Johnston et al. 1992).

Despite these explanations, the debate has not ended, and is in need of updating. When Clarke and his colleagues first began theorizing about Canadian voters as flexible and durable, the party system could reasonably be characterized as "two-plus party" (Epstein 1964:49). Much has changed since the third party system ended (for a review, see Carty, Cross and Young 2000; Clarke, Kornberg and Wearing 2000). The dramatic events of the 1993 federal election saw the decline of two established parties (PC and NDP) and the emergence of two new parties (BQ and Reform). The study of Canadian parties since that time is particularly interesting because the newer parties (the BQ and Reform/Alliance) do not conform to the traditional brokerage model. In the fourth party system, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives have been confronted with competitors who were "essentially ideological parties."(Carty, Cross and Young 2000:36) These parties were neither national nor brokerage in nature, but each had enough voter support to become the Official Opposition once in the 1990s.

From the perspective of partisanship, the current party system is interesting because one of the explanations for weak partisanship in Canada depends on brokerage parties being the ones competing for votes. As noted above, because brokerage parties are less ideological than standard political party theories (such as Downs 1957) would expect, they provide little incentive (or programmatic reasons) for voters to develop attachments. Do the new parties, then, have more committed partisans? Given the new configuration of the party system, it is time to update our understanding of partisanship in Canada.

Has the nature of Canadian partisanship changed since 1993? More specifically, is there variation in the types of partisans that belong to each party? One might expect to find that the brokerage parties still attract/encourage weaker partisan attachments, while the BQ and Reform/Alliance, because they provide strong ideological statements for voters to become attached to, encourage stronger partisans, more in keeping with the Michigan model's conception of partisan identification. The study of partisanship by party has not, to date, been the focus of the extant literature. While many authors have disaggregated their analyses by party, most have not considered the importance of any variation between the parties[2]; furthermore, no work has been done on partisanship in the fourth party system. Thus, this paper will attempt to fill this gap by evaluating the types of nature of the partisanship of supporters of each of the main parties between 1993 and 2006.

[2] For partial exceptions, see Sniderman et al. 1974 and Stephenson et al. 2004.

Hypotheses

In order to evaluate the partisans of each party, three different elements of attachment are considered: stability, intensity, and loyalty. Stephenson, Scotto and Kornberg (2004) found that Canadian partisans differed from American partisans between 1984 and 2000 in terms of loyalty (they were weaker), and that intensity mattered for the loyalty shown by partisans of the Liberal, PC and NDP parties. These categories are similar to those used by Clarke and his colleagues in their various studies. One difference in this paper is that the issue of consistency across levels of government is not addressed. In keeping with the work of others, such as Gidengil (1992), Blake (1982) and Blais et al. (2002), the strength of one's partisanship is not evaluated on the basis of whether or not he/she is consistent at the federal and provincial level, as there are provinces in which this is not even an option. As mentioned earlier, not only do provincial parties often differ from their federal counterparts (consider the Harris Progressive Conservatives in Ontario, as compared to the Joe Clark PCs of 2000), but some systems do not even have parties of the same name. Furthermore, there are very different jurisdictions of responsibility for each government, and so the issues on which they campaign, and on which voters judge them, are very different. Therefore, it can be a rational response of a voter to hold two different partisan identities

Each of the dimensions of partisanship (stability, intensity and loyalty) analyzed in this paper contribute to holding a "type" of partisanship – defined here as either "weak" or "strong" partisanship. If someone is a weak partisan, they are more likely to switch their preference over the course of an election campaign, and certainly over time; are less likely to state a strong preference; and are less likely vote according to their partisanship. Strong partisans, on the other hand, are expected to maintain their partisanship longer and be more intense in that feeling. Their loyalty, while expected to be higher, may alter with the circumstances of an election, as issues and/or candidates lead them to prefer voting a different way. The key difference between weak and strong partisans is that strong partisans, even if they do vote for a different party, should be less likely to change their partisanship at the same time.

In the following sections, these characteristics of partisanship are investigated by party. The expectations for each group of partisans are based in an understanding of the nature of the party itself. The two major traditional parties (Liberal and Progressive Conservative) are considered brokerage parties because they are known for adapting their own positions and policies in order to attract the maximum number of votes from across the country - at times, even alternating on policy stances (Carty, Cross and Young 2000). Given this history, partisans of these parties are expected to be among the weakest in Canada. Both of the explanations discussed above for weak partisanship clearly apply to these parties. The NDP, on the other hand, in keeping with the tradition of smaller Canadian parties, has maintained a clearer ideological basis (Clarke, Kornberg and Wearing 2000). It adopted a brokerage format to create national appeal during the third party system (Carty, Cross and Young 2000: 106), but is significantly different than the Liberals and PCs. It has always been considered a minor party (the "plus" in the "two-party-plus" system), has never controlled the government, and has espoused a fairly clear ideological vision throughout its history (likely due to its union and socialist ties). Thus, it is expected that the NDP party should encourage stronger partisanship from its supporters than the older parties.

Turning to the new parties, the BQ and Reform/Alliance parties are clearly not brokerage parties and do have a strong ideological component. Instead of trying to straddle cleavages and include as many groups as possible, both parties opted for focused appeals based on strong ideological stances. Their partisans are expected to be the strongest of all.

Last, the analyses also include the new Conservative Party. The expectations for this party are much less obvious, in that the party is a merger of both strong ideological (Alliance) and brokerage (PC) elements. The party has contested both the 2004 and 2006 elections as a national party, which sets it apart from the BQ and Reform. However, the party's identification with the ideas of the former Alliance Party are still strong (especially with Stephen Harper as leader), and so the expectation is that its followers are likely to be stronger partisans that those of the older brokerage parties. However, the expectation of how Conservative supporters will compare to NDP supporters is uncertain.

In addition to looking at the stability, intensity and loyalty of Canadian partisans, the role of ideology in shaping these characteristics is examined. Because one of the reasons given for weak partisans is that there is no ideological connection with the parties, whether ideological preferences influence the type of partisanship one holds is of great interest. In their study of political party members, Cross and Young (2002) find evidence of real differences between the new and old parties. Their analyses show that members of the BQ and Alliance, as well as NDP members, are more likely to consider agreement with the party's policies a "very important" reason for joining the party, significantly more than Liberal or PC members. Furthermore, they find that there are significant differences in the attitudes of the party members in terms of social tolerance, economics, provincial powers, and populism, although more so for the BQ and Alliance than the NDP or traditional brokerage parties. In terms of partisanship, then, it is logical to expect that there might be differences based in this ideological variation. The expectations for the analyses in this paper are that the influence of ideological preferences will be strongest on partisanship for the BQ and Reform/Alliance, almost negligible for brokerage parties, and moderate for the NDP. Again, given the mixed pedigree of the Conservative Party, the expectations for its partisans are uncertain.

Analyses

In the study of partisanship, there is a long-standing debate about how to measure partisanship. Much of the debate centres around the proper way to word the question so as to identify true supporters in a way that is comparable to measures used in other countries (see, for example, Johnston et al. 1992 and Blais et al. 2001 for perspectives on this issue). One of the ways that this has been dealt with is to specify that only those who respond that their partisanship is "very strong" or "fairly strong" be recognized as partisans (Blais et al. 2002). Given that the majority of analyses for which this is done relate to vote choice, and because there is evidence that less strong partisans behave differently than very strong partisans (Blais et al. 2001), this makes sense. However, those who respond with a partisan identification, and later classify it as "not very strong" should not be ignored. Acknowledging an identification, when first asked, should be taken as an indication that the identity does in fact mean something to the individual. Thus, in the following analyses, the measure of partisanship used is the most basic – those who responded to the first question about partisanship with an identity are considered to be partisans.

Stability

Many studies of partisanship, including the work of Clarke and his colleagues (1980, 1984, 1991, 1996; LeDuc et al. 1984) and Gidengil et al. 2006, have utilized panel survey data in order to track the stability of partisanship over time. No such panel exists for the period 1993-2006. Thus, in assessing stability, this paper focuses on shorter time spans, and self-reported measures of partisanship: whether or not an individual was swayed, over the course of the campaign, to change their partisanship. This operationalization of stability requires some explanation. First, only the weakest of partisans are expected to shift their partisanship from before to after the vote. If, as argued early in the study of Canadian partisanship, partisanship really does "travel with the vote", significant change would be observed. Any change at all is more likely during particularly heated election campaigns, as measuring stability this way looks for those who report one type of partisanship before voting and then report a different identification a month later. This measure does not take into account vote choice as an intervening variable. To be clear, this measure reports short term stability, which should be high; however, any partisans that do switch over such a short time span provide an indication of which parties have the very least committed partisans. Figure 1 shows, graphically, how many individuals maintained the same partisan identification with each party in each of the elections from 1993 to 2006.

In 1993, BQ partisans were the most stable over the course of the election (78%). Not surprisingly given the election results stripped the party of official party status, PC partisans abandoned their party the most, with only 56% of campaign period identifiers continuing to identify with the party after the election. Supporters of the other 3 parties, the Liberals, NDP and Reform, all had about 70% stability. In 1997, the Liberal, PC and Reform parties benefited from an increase in partisan stability, while the BQ and NDP supporters reported less stability than their 1993 level. The substantial stability of the Reform and BQ voters is in keeping with our expectations, as both parties are more ideological than brokerage. However, the stability of the Liberal supporters runs counter to expectations; in this case, it may reflect the fact that there was no other viable governing alternative in 1997, and thus there might not have been a party for Liberal supporters, accustomed to supporting a governing party, to defect to at the time. Regardless of any explanation, Liberal supporters were as stable as those of the most clearly defined, ideological parties, despite the brokerage nature of their own party, in 1993 and 1997.

In 2000 all of the parties' partisans were less stable in absolute terms, but the PC supporters again stand out as less stable than the others. Only 50% of those who said they identified with the PC Party before the vote also identified with it after. This suggests that, over the course of the election, the greatest number of PC supporters "jumped ship" to an alternative. In terms of our expectations, the stability of the BQ and Reform/Alliance partisans suggests that these parties' supporters held their partisanship strongly, as expected. The stability of NDP partisans, on the other hand, is lower than all others except PC supporters. In 2004, the stability of all supporters was around 60%. Particularly interesting is that supporters of the new Conservative Party were the most stable in 2004 and 2006. This pattern is more similar to the former Alliance Party's supporters than previous Progressive Conservative supporters. Also notable, again, is that the Liberal supporters are more stable than either BQ or NDP supporters. In 2006, this latter trend reversed itself, as BQ supporters showed much higher stability and the stability of Liberal

supporters fell. All parties, however, show an increase in the stability of their supporters in that election.

In two election years, 1997 and 2004, a follow-up question about partisanship was asked in the mailback survey, conducted in the several months after the election. In each year, the respondents were asked if there was a party that they felt a little closer to. This question provides an indication of whether the respondent's allegiance shifted once the election campaign was finished.[3] Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents in 1997 and 2004 who maintained the same allegiance through the campaign period, post-election, and mailback waves of the election study.

Because the people most likely to answer the mailback questionnaire are the ones who are likely to be the most interested and politically informed, and because those are also the ones most likely to be active partisans (see Gidengil et al. 2004), the relative percentages of stable partisans, across parties, is more important than the absolute percentage of stable partisans. As is clear in the figure, in 1997 almost all of the parties reported similar 3-wave stability except for the PC party, which held on to about 20% *fewer* partisans than the other parties. In 2004, the NDP and BQ both had fewer stable partisans than either the Liberal or Conservative Party, somewhat against expectations given that the parties were expected to attract more stable partisans than a brokerage party. The stability of the Conservative partisans is in keeping with the results shown in Figure 1, as is the stability of Liberal supporters. It appears that the Conservative Party's supporters do not follow the pattern expected of brokerage party supporters, and perhaps the party should not be classified as such.

These results, while including some suggestive evidence that the Reform, Alliance and Conservative supporters hold more stable partisanship, do not show strong support for the party-specific expectations outlined above. The stability of Liberal supporters is much higher than would be expected given the party's brokerage nature. The low stability of NDP supporters, as well, suggests that they ideological content of the party is not enough to encourage the type of stability found for the Reform, Alliance and Conservative parties. In particular, the almost uniform stability levels for all parties since 2000 (except the PCs) suggests that this is one dimension on which supporters vary little. What is even more striking, however, is that the stability levels were not higher, given the short time span of this measure. Since 2000, at least 30% of identifiers for each party reported a different partisanship after the election than before.

Intensity

In each election study, respondents who indicate a partisan identification are asked how strongly they hold that identification. In this section, partisanship is examined in terms of the intensity of the attachment held by supporters of each party. Looking at Table 1, it is clear that the majority of partisan identifiers indicate they feel "fairly strongly" about their party. No less than 44% and no more than 65% of identifiers, for any party, in any year, responded as such. On the other hand, the percentage of individuals willing to respond "very strongly" is much lower and varies significantly by party. "Very strong" identifiers range from 18 to 27% of Liberal supporters, 12 to 23% of PC supporters, 33 to 36% of Reform/Alliance supporters, 28 to 31% of Conservative

[3] Clarke and Kornberg (1992) show that partisanship levels decline significantly between elections.

supporters, 20 to 32% of NDP supporters, and 12 to 38% of BQ supporters. Consistently, more Reform/Alliance and Conservative supporters indicated very strong allegiance. The pattern for the others parties is more variable. Liberal supporters in 2000 expressed more intensity (27%) than any other year, when the group was approximately 20% of the identifiers. The number of very strong PC supporters also fluctuated around 20%, except for in 1993 when only 12% identified strongly with the party. The NDP supporters and BQ supporters were less consistent, changing by 10% or more between some elections. In fact, BQ support varies the most in intensity – from a high of 38% "very strong" support in 2006 to a low of 12% in 1997.

These results suggest that the traditional brokerage parties attract fewer "very strong" partisans than the other parties, and that the Reform/Alliance and Conservative Parties are the best at consistently attracting such support. Given the ideological background of the Reform and Alliance parties, this is commensurate with expectations. The findings for the Conservative Party echo the results for stability found in the previous section in suggesting that it may be inappropriate to look at Conservative Party supporters as similar to supporters of the Liberal Party.

Somewhat surprisingly, BQ supporters, who are expected to be strong supporters because of the party's ideological nature, seem be mercurial in their intensity. It is possible that this could relate to the salience of the separatist sentiments in Quebec, but such an analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. It is interesting that NDP supporters also follow this pattern, although to less extremes. In some years the "very strong" NDP support is similar to the support of the other long-standing brokerage parties, while in other years the "very strong" supporters are more numerous. This may be an indication of the salience of the ideological elements in the party. Particularly interesting is the upswing in 2004 and 2006 of "very strong" support; in those two elections, the NDP not only came out as a strong (although perhaps unlikely) contender for office, but it also differentiated itself from the Liberals and Conservatives. It is possible that, in this context, the party's ideological position attracted more ardent supporters because of its difference from the other national parties.

As a whole, these results show that the partisans of the various parties differ in their propensity to strongly identify. This difference somewhat conforms to expectations, in that the Liberal and PC parties have weaker supporters and the Reform/Alliance has the strongest supporters, but also raises questions about the importance of election-specific events impacting the intensity of partisanship. The fluctuations in support for the NDP and BQ suggest that the type of electoral appeals made by each party may influence their partisans. In the larger context of partisanship studies, these findings suggest that there is a difference in patterns of intensity that relate to the ideological clarity of a party itself.

Loyalty

The last dimension on which to evaluate the partisans of each party is loyalty. If Canadian partisanship was, as early researchers believed, "as volatile as the vote itself" (Meisel 1973:67), voter loyalty would be nearly absolute. However, that has been proven not to be the case, and so the degree to which each party encourages loyalty from its partisans is of interest. Are all parties the same? One argument reviewed earlier, that brokerage partisans attract weak support,

suggests that this should not be the case; brokerage parties are likely to have less loyal partisans. Similarly, the ideological nature of the BQ and Reform/Alliance should encourage loyal partisans.

One difficulty in assessing loyalty is the complication of Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system and strategic voting. It has long been theorized, since the work of Duverger (1954), that a first-past-the-post system should support only 2 parties, as the "winner take all" format creates incentives for supporters of minor parties to vote strategically for a party that does have a chance of winning, in order to prevent the least-preferred party from winning a plurality of votes. The divide between major and minor parties has been found to be salient in Canadian politics, to the point of being more important for understanding support than left-right ideological placement (Zipp 1978). From this logic, it is expected that minor party supporters should be, ceteris parabis, less loyal to their parties than major party supporters. However, research about strategic voting in Canada suggests that the phenomenon is not very prominent in Canada (see Merolla and Stephenson 2007). Blais (2002) argues that one reason for this is that minor party supporters (in his study, of the NDP) do not have realistic perceptions of the electoral chances of their preferred party. Furthermore, the major/minor dichotomy refers to the national context, not specifically the local riding, which may be irrelevant for the voter. Another reason offered by Blais (2002) is that minor party supporters often feel more strongly toward their party, because of the ideological connection. Thus, while strategic voting would decrease the loyalty of minor party supporters, it has been shown to be less common than logically expected. In terms of this analysis, then, the expectation is that the minor parties will have relatively fewer loyal supporters than they would if they were major parties with the same degree of ideological coherence. This also means that the BQ and Reform/Alliance parties, who were each the Official Opposition at one point in the 1990s and had strong regional support, are expected to have stronger support than the NDP, which is national and has never had such success at the federal level.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of individuals who indicated a partisan identification and corresponding vote choice in the campaign period survey of each election study. In 1993, both the BQ and Reform parties had very loyal partisans (88% and 87%, respectively) while the PC and NDP supporters were much less loyal, 51% and 47%. The Liberal supporters were moderately loyal at 66%. In 1997, the pattern changed only in that the loyalty of BQ supporters fell and NDP supporters rose. The most variation in loyalty occurred in 2000, when the PC Party enjoyed vote support from only 40% of its partisans while the Alliance had the support of 86%. The Liberals, NDP and BQ all had between 60 and 70% partisan loyalty. In 2004, the loyalty of Liberal supporters fell sharply (possibly due to the Sponsorship Scandal), while the NDP, BQ and Conservative Party enjoyed the support of over 70% of their partisans. In 2006 the latter three groups of partisans slightly differentiated themselves from each other, as Conservative supporters were more loyal, BQ supporters stayed about the same, and NDP supporters were less loyal. However, all were still more loyal than the Liberal supporters, again possibly a consequence of the Sponsorship Scandal.

In terms of expectations, the ideological BQ and Reform did have the most loyal supporters prior to 2004. Also as expected, the PC and Liberal parties had less loyal supporters. NDP supporters seem to vary in their loyalty, although in general the trend has been increasing except for in 2004, when its supporters were actually the most loyal. As expected, the party's followers were

generally less loyal than the ideological parties' supporters, but in 2000, they were even less loyal than Liberal supporters – who, although part of a major party, have fewer ideological reasons for supporting their party.

It is also interesting to consider loyalty across time. Each election study asks respondents which party they voted for in the previous election. Figure 4 shows the loyalty levels of partisans depending on their vote choice in the previous election. The data mostly confirm the loyalty pattern seen in Figure 3. The BQ and Reform partisans are the most loyal across elections, and the new Conservative partisans appear to be following the pattern as well (in 2004, the "previous vote" refers to Alliance or PC). The NDP partisans appear to have been more loyal recently, again as reflected in Figure 3 as well. The PC and Liberal supporters are less loyal, except for the high loyalty of previous Liberal supporters in 1993. All in all, then, the loyalty pattern we saw above (brokerage parties less, ideological parties more, NDP increasing) appears to hold over time as well as over a single election campaign.

Intensity and Loyalty

Given the striking variation in partisan intensity between the supporters of the various parties, it is interesting to consider whether loyalty is influenced by the intensity of partisanship. In other words, are all "very strong" partisans equally loyal? Or, is there party-specific variation among intense supporters that may further explain their expressed loyalty? To address this, simple vote choice logit models were run for each party. Dummy variables were created to indicate whether someone was a "very strong", "fairly strong", or "not very strong" partisan for each party. A dummy variable was also created for those who indicated that they were "a little closer to" the party – individuals who did not reveal a partisan identification in the initial question, but when probed, stated a preference. For the dependent variables, vote choice dummy variables were created for each party, with 1 indicating a vote for, and 0 indicating anything else. The results are shown in Table 2.

In 1993, the odds ratio for "very strong" Liberal and PC identifiers voting for their parties was about 60, but for the other three parties the odds of voting according to partisanship skyrocketed even higher with "very strong" identity. There was a significant drop in the odds ratios for "fairly strong" identifiers of each party, and a further drop for "not very strong" identifiers. For "a little closer to" voters, the pattern is interesting – the odds ratio is actually higher than that for "not very strong" Liberal and PC identifiers, but lower (as is logically expected) than those who at least identified with a party, although not very strongly, for the NDP, Reform and BQ parties. The pattern for the brokerage parties is in keeping with the results of Blais et al. (2001). "Fairly strong" NDP and Reform identifiers are more likely to vote for their party than the strongest Liberal and PC identifiers. Most of this pattern is repeated in 1997 – very strong Liberal and PC identifiers are far less likely to be loyal to their party than supporters of the NDP, Reform and BQ parties. However, the curious pattern for "not very strong" and "a little closer to" identifiers is only present for BQ supporters.

In 2000, the Liberal "very strong" identifiers were once again least likely to support their party, of all partisans of that intensity. They were even less likely to vote Liberal than the "not very strong" NDP identifiers were to vote NDP. Interestingly, the intensity of the "very strong" BQ

supporters appears to have waned, becoming the second least likely to support their party. The increased likelihood of PC supporters' loyalty is also notable, perhaps because by 2000, those who identified with the PCs "very strongly" were likely to be quite intense and aware of their party's uncertain future. In 2004, NDP supporters continued to be the most likely to be loyal voters for every level of identification other than "a little closer to". The pattern of leaners being more loyal than "not very strong identifiers" appears again for the Liberals and new Conservative Party. One possible explanation is that leaners are those who plan on voting for the party in that election specifically and whose partisanship is indeed traveling with their vote. In 2006, we see an increase in odds of loyalty for each identification level, for each party other than the NDP – perhaps because of the closeness of that particular election. Most interesting is the significant increase in the loyalty of very strong Liberals and Conservatives, as compared to the slight decline for the NDP.

The pattern of results shown above indicates a clear difference between parties in the loyalty of their identifiers. The majority of identifiers in Canada are "fairly strong" identifiers, and the relative percentages of "very strong" identifiers usually favour the ideological parties. NDP supporters are much more loyal to their party than either Liberal or PC identifiers, perhaps in recognition of the clearer ideological statement that it provides for voters. The new party identifiers (BQ and Reform/Alliance) are much more loyal overall, especially at the most intense level of partisanship. This implies that there are characteristics of those parties, possibly ideological intensity, that encourage a stronger attachment from their identifiers.

The Influence of Ideology: Testing the Roots of Interparty Variation

The above discussion has revealed that there are very real differences between the parties in terms of the intensity and loyalty of their supporters. In keeping with expectations, the most ideological parties (the BQ and Reform/Alliance) seem to have the most ardent supporters, although BQ supporters are weaker than Reform/Alliance supporters, NDP supporters are stronger than the other brokerage parties' supporters, and the new Conservative Party's supporters are similar to Reform/Alliance supporters. Clearly, Canadian partisanship is not uniform across parties. One of the obvious possible explanations for this variation is the difference in ideological consistency in each party. As argued above, the brokerage parties that existed prior to 1993 provided little in the way of a consistent program to attract loyal supporters, preferring to reconfigure their coalition of support for each election. In this section, this hypothesis is tested by looking at whether an ideological link between voters and a party can explain some of the variation in the intensity of partisanship held (which, as seen above, can lead to the most loyal supporters). Questions about ideology are asked in only 3 years of the Canadian Election Study (1997, 2000 and 2004) since 1993, and two different question formats were used. The results for each question are presented separately.

In 2000, respondents in the campaign period survey of the CES were asked to indicate whether they would place themselves on the left, right or in the centre of the ideological spectrum. They were then asked where they would place each of the parties. Dummy variables were created to indicate whether respondents placed themselves and a party at the same point on the spectrum. The variables were tested for correlation with accepting a partisan identification with that party and with expressing a greater intensity of identification. In other words, the analysis looks to see

the correlation between placing oneself at the same point on the spectrum as a party and identifying with that party, and between ideological similarity and partisan strength. Table 3 indicates the Pearson's r correlations.

Several things are interesting about the results. First, none of the relationships is terribly significant. Second, the strongest relationship with accepting an identification holds for Alliance identifiers who place themselves at the same position as the party ideologically. Because the party was quite ideological in nature, this is not surprising. What is more curious is that the relationship is not stronger. Turning to the strength of identity, of the very weak relationships with one's ideological placement with the party, the relationship is only significant for Liberal and BQ supporters. This indicates that partisan intensity was not strongly correlated with ideological similarity in 2000. Contrary to expectations derived from the findings about intensity and loyalty, ideology does not appear to be the basis of strong partisanship, nor does the relationship seem to differ in keeping with the ideological strength of the parties.

In 1997 and 2004, ideology questions were asked in a different format. Respondents were asked to place themselves on a left-right scale, from 0 to 10. They were then asked to place each of the parties. These questions provide more information about citizens' ideological views, their intensity, and the nuances of the perceptions of the parties. To conduct an analysis similar to the one above, variables that indicate the absolute distance between one's self-placement and the placement of each party were created. If ideological similarity is part of the reason for identifying with a party, then there should be a negative relationship between stating an identification and the distance from that party ideologically. Similarly, ideological distance should be related to less intense partisanship.

The results confirm these expectations (see Table 4). Each correlation between identity and ideological distance from that party is significant and negative. Again, however, the strength of the relationship is not very high. Turning to strength of identity, in keeping with the results for 2000, there is no consistent relationship between the strength of one's partisanship and the ideological distance from a political party. In 1997, the relationship is only significant (and appropriate in direction) for Liberal and PC supporters. In 2004, no relationship is significant. Thus, understanding strength of partisanship in Downsian spatial terms is inappropriate for most Canadian parties, most of the time. Ideological similarity *does not* seem to lie at the root of intensity of partisanship, nor does it differ according to the ideological nature of the party in question.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results presented above provide a picture of the nature of partisanship for each Canadian party since 1993. Using CES data, partisanship has been analyzed in terms of stability, intensity, loyalty, and ideology. The results show that there are some real differences between supporters of each of the parties, mostly in terms of intensity and loyalty. Not unexpectedly, the traditional brokerage parties, the Liberals and PCs, have some of the least intense and least loyal supporters. The NDP, although also a national party, does not fit this mold – its supporters are more intense and have become increasingly loyal since 1993. The Reform/Alliance and BQ party supporters seem to be different than the other parties. As one might expect, given their ideological, non-

brokerage nature, their supporters are more intense and more loyal, although the BQ has recently seen a drop in loyalty and has experienced variation in partisan intensity. The new Conservative Party seems to be encouraging the same types of partisans that its Reform/Alliance parent did, although the loyalty of its most intense partisans is not as strong as the loyalty of "very strong" Reform/Alliance supporters.

Given these results, the understanding of Canadian parties as uniformly weaker than their American counterparts is problematic. Canadian partisans may in fact hold weaker attachments – this paper does not look at the results comparatively – but partisanship across the different parties is not uniform. The Reform/Alliance and Conservative Parties have the most loyal supporters, and they have some of the most intense partisans as well. The intensity and loyalty of BQ supporters seems to vary by election, despite its clear ideological nature. NDP supporters also have a variable relationship with their party. What seems clear, however, is that these parties are somehow different than the Liberals and PCs in the eyes of their supporters (at least until 2006). The ideological parties not only have more intense partisans, but those partisans are also more loyal. This suggests that the Liberals' success between 1993 and 2000 may have had a lot to do with the sheer number of their supporters at the time – moderate support from many outweighs intense supports from some – but this does not bode well for the future if the weakest Liberal partisans consider supporting other parties.

The variation in intensity and loyalty in accordance with ideology suggests that the ideological similarity to a party may be at the root of stronger partisanship. The results presented in this paper, however, provide no such evidence. Similar ideological self-placement is significantly related to identifying with a party, but *not* to the strength of the attachment. Thus, the "very strong" identifiers, who are considerably more loyal to their parties than less intense partisans, are not also more ideologically connected to their parties. This defies the logic of spatial voting, and hints to the need for a more complete investigation of Canadian partisanship, to define what it is and what it is not. The results presented in this paper, which show that there is variation in the intensity and loyalty of Canadian partisans by party, indicate a need for further study into the connection between parties and the types of partisans they attract.

Figure 1: Stability within Elections

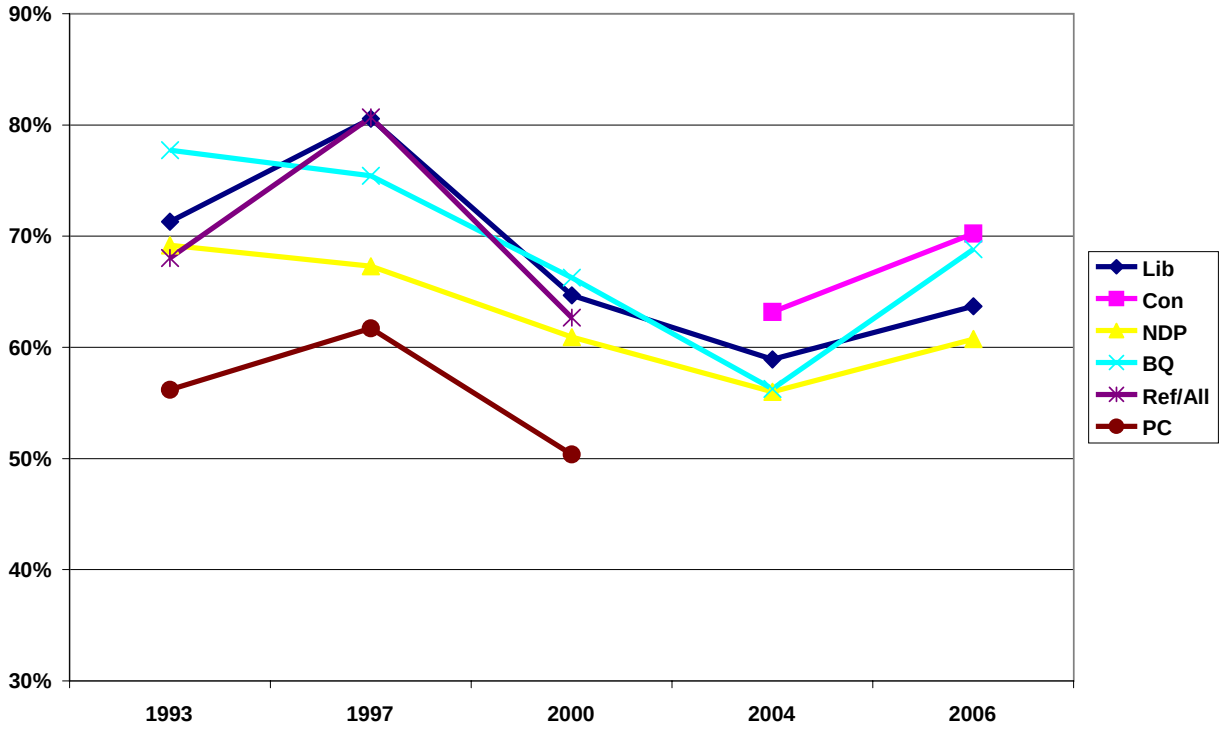

Figure 2: Stable PID Over 3 Waves of Election Study

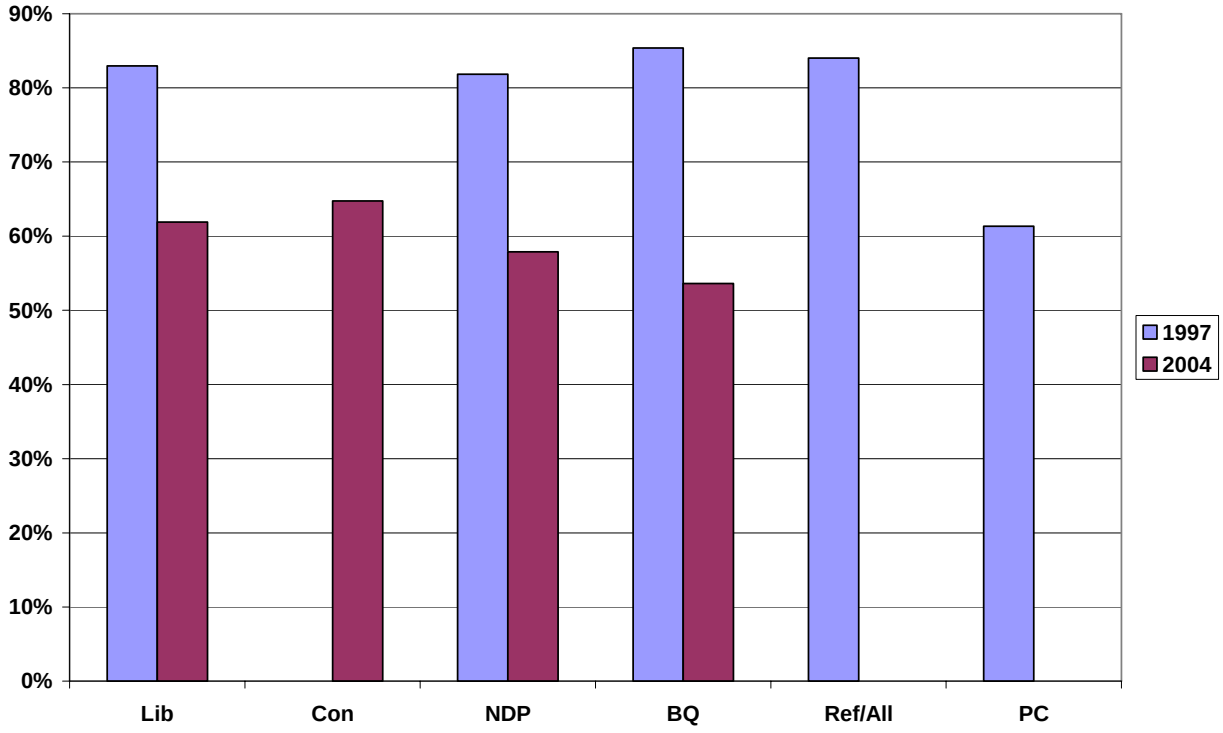

Figure 3: Vote Loyalty (Campaign-Period PID and Vote Choice)

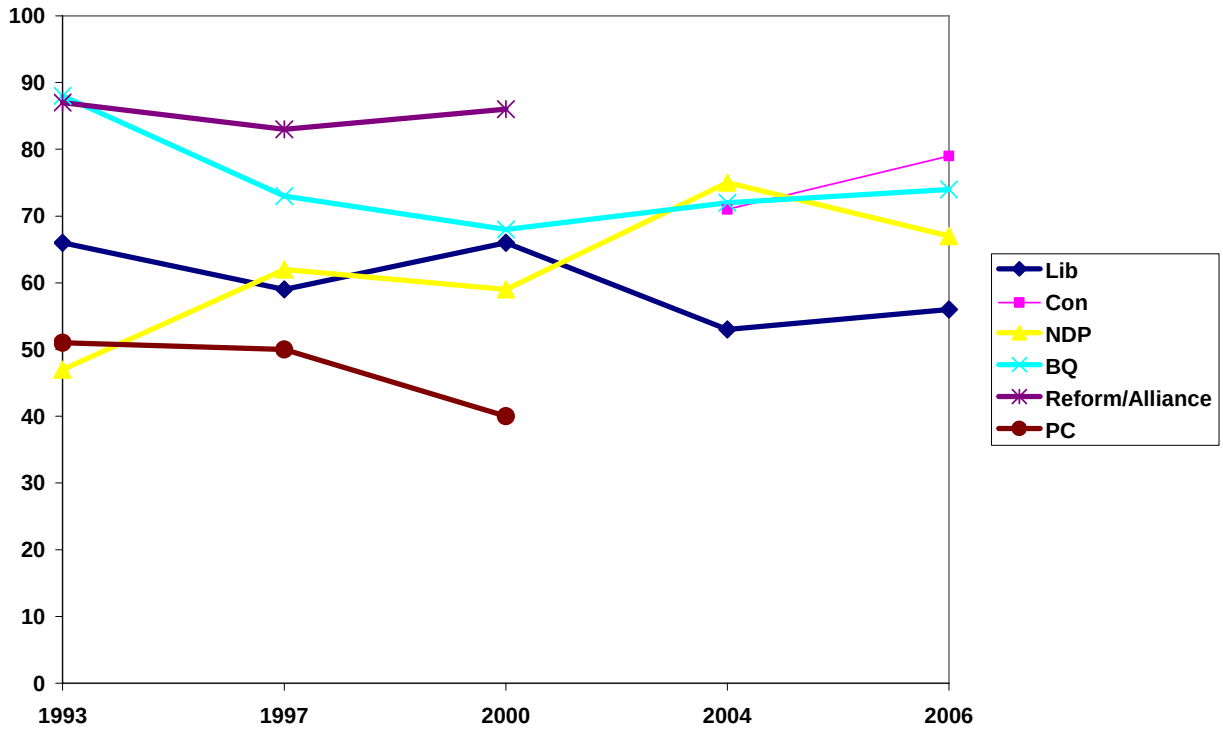

Figure 4: Loyalty to Party: Previous Vote, Partisanship and Current Vote Choice

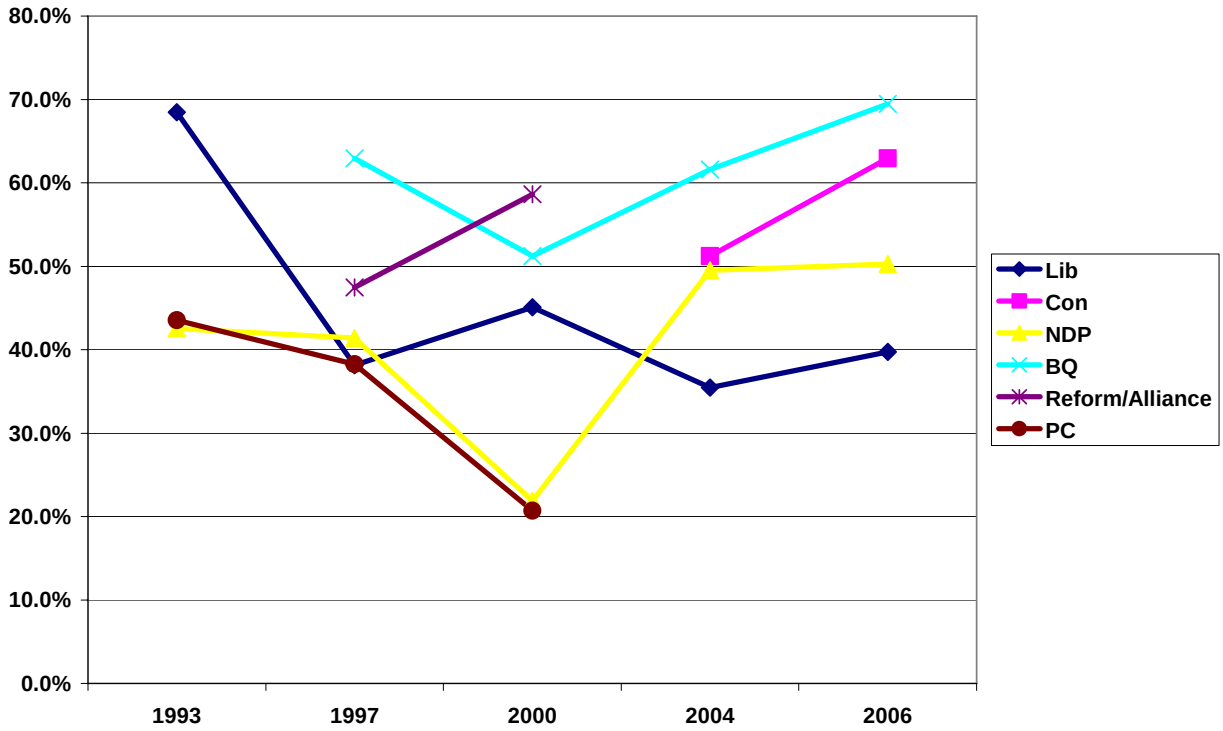

Table 1: Percentage of Identifiers Indicating Strength of Partisan Attachment

		1993	1997	2000	2004	2006
Liberal	Very strongly	19	18	27	19	22
	Fairly strongly	53	55	48	53	53
	Not very strongly	28	26	24	27	24
PC	Very strongly	12	23	18		
	Fairly strongly	52	56	53		
	Not very strongly	36	20	28		
Reform/Alliance	Very strongly	33	36	34		
	Fairly strongly	53	53	52		
	Not very strongly	13	11	9		
Conservative	Very strongly				28	31
	Fairly strongly				55	56
	Not very strongly				16	13
NDP	Very strongly	20	31	22	32	31
	Fairly strongly	50	51	59	58	58
	Not very strongly	30	17	18	10	11
BQ	Very strongly	25	12	29	13	38
	Fairly strongly	59	57	56	65	44
	Not very strongly	16	30	14	22	13

Table 2: Logit Results for Vote Models (Odds Ratios Reported)

	Lib	PC	NDP	Reform	BQ**	Con
1993						
Very Strong	61.62	60.63	222.85	223.78	462.71	
Fairly Strong	26.36	31.76	76.57	103.28	41.81	
Not Very Strong	8.37	9.24	21.57	28.18	37.18	
A Little Closer To	11.04	11.93	14.86	24.86	17.17	
N	3775	3775	3775	3775	1007	
Pseudo R2	0.32	0.31	0.40	0.29	0.42	
1997						
Very Strong	67.78	53.07	217.66	334.44	1030.35	
Fairly Strong	2.82	2.82	3.88	4.20	91.65	
Not Very Strong	1.48	1.49	2.00	2.02	39.08	
A Little Closer To	6.14	3.19	3.31	2.18	37.88	
N	3949	3949	3949	3949	1034	
Pseudo R2	0.31	0.28	0.42	0.39	0.51	
2000						
Very Strong	46.24	132.24	214.37	180.74	73.26	
Fairly Strong	24.19	39.84	82.44	96.06	26.52	
Not Very Strong	9.20	15.03	66.53	27.38	19.04	
A Little Closer To	7.51	15.82	14.26	27.38	*	
N	3651	3651	3651	3651	1250	
Pseudo R2	0.32	0.32	0.40	0.40	0.38	
2004						
Very Strong	56.34		107.41		52.89	72.62
Fairly Strong	22.78		51.76		35.00	31.31
Not Very Strong	6.81		44.20		13.26	8.09
A Little Closer To	7.59		16.52		9.58	17.76
N	4323		4323		1048	4323
Pseudo R2	0.30		0.35		0.36	0.35
2006						
Very Strong	107.28		95.35		115.22	121.58
Fairly Strong	29.57		42.18		108.58	52.28
Not Very Strong	6.77		17.24		30.50	15.86
A Little Closer To	11.11		19.62		7.63	18.61
N	4058		4058		1013	4058
Pseudo R2	0.37		0.35		0.51	0.43

Odds ratios reported. All are significant at p<0.001
*Dropped because predicted 0 outcome perfectly.
** Quebec regressions run on Quebec sample only.

Table 3: Correlations between Ideological Match with Party, PID, and Strength of Identity, 2000

	Liberal	PC	NDP	Alliance	BQ
Partisan Identity	0.2601***	0.1545***	0.3106***	0.4017***	0.2404***
Strength of Identity	0.0809*	-0.0187	0.1022	0.0539	0.1241*

* p<0.100 ** p<0.010 *** p<0.001

Table 4: Correlations between Ideological Distance from Party and PID, 1997 and 2004

	Liberal	PC	NDP	Alliance	BQ	Con
Partisan Identity						
1997	-0.2678***	-0.2417***	-0.2221***	-0.2514***	-0.3150***	
2004	-0.3052***		-0.2086***		-0.2387***	-0.3472***
Strength of Identity						
1997	-0.1141*	-0.1655*	-0.0994	-0.1452	-0.0610	
2004	-0.0433		-0.1257		0.0151	0.0068

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