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Eric M. Uslaner

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*Splitting Image: Partisan Affiliations in Canada's "Two Political Worlds" **

Eric M. Uslaner, *University of Maryland—College Park*

Over 20% of Canadians have different political party identifications at the federal and provincial levels. This pattern of split-level identification has been assumed to be part of the general weakness of partisanship in Canada but, outside of a study of British Columbians, has not been examined itself. Two explanations for split-level identification are posited, an institutionalist thesis that argues that partisanship is weaker in Canada than it is in the United States and the differences are ultimately traceable to the structure of political institutions. The second maintains that partisanship plays largely the same role in the two countries, but what differences there are can be traced to historical patterns of Canadian cultural (and party) development. Tests of the two explanations indicate some support for each, but much more for the historical/cultural thesis. This in turn suggests that reforming Canadian political institutions will not in itself lead to a rejuvenation of partisanship and a decline in split-level identification.

Party identification has been the workhorse variable in studies of U.S. electoral behavior for more than three decades. It is the major determinant of vote choice and displays considerable stability over time in both direction and intensity (Converse and Markus 1979). While the concept has been widely used outside the U.S. context, its transferability remains a subject of controversy (Budge, Crewe, and Farlie 1976). In some contexts there are real questions as to whether citizens of other nations "identify" with parties in the same manner as U.S. citizens; in others, such as Canada, people may adhere to parties but with less intensity or stability (LeDuc et al. 1984).

Is enduring and stable partisanship just one more manifestation of "American exceptionalism"? Certainly among federal states, the United States seems distinctive. It is marked by two-party competition, and the same two parties dominate both national politics and the electoral institutions of every state. Most other federal states have more than two parties. At times small parties rule state

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or provincial governments, even as they remain peripheral to federal politics. Usually, federal and state/provincial parties of the same name are at best reluctant bedfellows, each maintaining a great degree of autonomy from the other. Some or all of these traits characterize the party systems of Switzerland, West Germany, Australia, and Canada (Kerr 1979; Conradt 1986; Kemp 1978; Clarke et al. 1979).

Federations in which national and subnational parties are most strongly aligned (such as the contemporary United States) should have the most durable and consistent partisan affiliations. Where party systems diverge between levels of government, attachments might be weaker. This appears to be the case in Canada, where voter attachments to parties are less durable over time than in the United States, are less intense, and may not coincide from federal to provincial levels. These three dimensions of partisanship constitute a syndrome of relatively weak partisanship in Canada (Clarke et al. 1979, 155–61). Canadians are also less likely than Americans to have maintained the same party affiliation over long periods of time—or to “inherit” their partisanship from their parents (cf. Sniderman, Forbes, and Melzer 1974; Jenson 1975; LeDuc et al. 1984).

The dimension of partisanship that most clearly separates Canada from the United States is split-level partisanship. To be sure, there is some evidence of dual partisanship in the United States that is said to represent a “dealigning” party system (Hadley 1985; Niemi, Katz, and Newman 1987); however, national and state surveys in the late 1980s show that the level of split-level identification has barely increased since the 1950s.¹ In contrast, Canadian politics is marked by “stable dealignment” (LeDuc 1984) in which dual partisanship has long been accepted as a fact of life. Although we know much about why voters change partisanship over time (Clarke and Stewart 1987; Stevenson 1987), the basis of split-level partisanship is less well understood.² I shall examine why voters select different parties at the federal and provincial levels in Canada and consider two alternative explanations for this phenomenon.

In one sense the Canadian party system, with its loose ties between organizations at the federal and provincial levels and the presence of “minor” parties at the provincial level with no straightforward counterparts in federal politics, resembles other federations more than it does the United States. On the other hand, many Canadian political movements (outside Quebec) have counterparts in the United States (Engelmann and Schwartz 1975, 28–39). As such, the basis of partisanship might not be all that different in the two countries. The United

¹The 1987 pilot study of the National Election Studies found that 3% of the electorate had dual partisanship, while state studies in New Jersey (4%) and Louisiana (5%) reported similar results. These data were provided by Harold D. Clarke and Marianne Stewart.

²Blake (1982) has studied multiple-party identification in British Columbia. No previous study has examined this for all of Canada.

States serves as a reference point for yet another reason: it was the U.S. context that gave rise to the concept of party identification.

Party Identification in Canada

In Canada, as in the United States, there is disagreement as to what shapes partisan attachments. Two alternative accounts of the role of partisanship in Canada are what I shall call the institutionalist and historical/cultural theses. The former, briefly, asserts that partisanship is weaker in Canada than in the United States and that this can be traced largely to Canadian electoral and governmental institutions. The latter maintains that party ties play largely the same role in the two countries, but what differences there are can be traced not to institutional design but to historical patterns of Canadian culture.³

The traditional U.S. model of partisanship views party attachments as long-term forces. Canadian party ties, instead, reflect citizens' evaluations of issue positions and voter evaluations of party leaders as rational responses to an environment of changing party fortunes (Jenson 1975; Stevenson 1987). While the latter perspective is now the received view in the United States as well (see Fiorina 1981),⁴ almost all students of Canadian politics stress that Canadians have faced a very different environment of vote choice. The lack of clear-cut cleavages between the two large "brokerage" parties limits the development of strong voter ties to Canadian parties, even compared to the weak parties of the United States (Clarke et al. 1984, 10–16).

While parties do maintain remarkable cohesion in the House of Commons, institutionalists argue that the Westminster model of government *demand*s united parties. Canada also employs the single-member-district plurality electoral system that penalizes small parties such as the social democratic New Democratic party (NDP) or the "right populist" Social Credit party. Parties that secure only small proportions of the popular vote are likely to capture at best only a minuscule percentage of seats (cf. Rae 1967). These two institutional factors combine to create a rather striking anomaly in a regionally polarized country. Parties that are already weak in a particular region—such as the Liberals in the Prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba)—are placed in an untenable position.

The party cohesion demanded by the Westminster system means that individual legislators cannot respond to constituency demands that might conflict with party policy. Parties are thus constrained from broadening their appeals to regions in which they have historically been weak. The electoral system further "punishes" such parties by compounding their minority status as described above. So the federal Liberal party, normally the party of government since

³For the debate on the role of party identification in the two countries, cf. Sniderman, Forbes, and Melzer (1974) and Blake (1982) with Jenson (1975) and LeDuc et al. (1984).

⁴And, of course, more recent Canadian scholarship recognizes this (see Clarke and Stewart 1987).

World War II, forms governments without substantial Western representation—further isolating itself from this potential base of support. Thus, institutional design inhibits strong and consistent party identification by creating the perception of strong party divisions even as there is little ideological difference between the two largest parties (cf. Cairns 1968). Voters become frustrated with what they perceive as an unresponsive party system and hence do not identify as strongly with any party as Americans do. Voters are bound to parties by leaders, not by issues or long-standing loyalties.

This perspective is as much part of the conventional wisdom of Canadian politics as the role of party identification itself in U.S. voting behavior was in the 1950s and 1960s. But it does have its critics. Sniderman, Forbes, and Melzer (1974) challenge the view that the basis of partisanship in Canada differs from that in the United States. Many differences have been overstated, and those that remain are matters of degree rather than of the nature of underlying causal relationships.⁵ Blake's (1982) analysis of British Columbia, the province with a party system least like that found in the federal Parliament, finds no general "syndrome" of weak partisanship. Unstable voting patterns are not related to dual partisanship. Most of the dissimilarities can be explained by historical and cultural factors, almost all of which are not themselves at issue among scholars of Canadian politics. If party ties are weaker, this reflects the bifurcated party systems in Canada. Indeed Blake (1985) refers to Canada's "two political worlds" that endure alongside each other in some sort of peaceful coexistence.

Historically, federal and provincial politics have been divorced from each other because each level of government developed separately, in contrast to the American experience. The American Revolution established a sense of national identity that Canadians, who obtained self-government when the British walked away in 1867, lack. The Western provinces and Newfoundland did not gain full status until the twentieth century and had to fight the federal government for control of their resources (a battle that still has not been resolved). Unlike the United States, where the fundamental conflict between states' rights and the power of the federal government has largely been decided in favor of the latter, the issue of which level of government controls key resources still dominates the Canadian agenda.⁶

The West developed largely in isolation from the rest of the country, in part

⁵Too much has been made of the alleged instability of party identification in Canada; furthermore, the stability of party identification is greater across the panel than is that of vote choice. LeDuc et al. (1984, 474, Table 1) report that 65% of the respondents in the 1974–79 panel had stable federal party identifications while 75% maintained the same affiliations from 1979 to 1980. This compares favorably to the 74.2% stability rate observed across the 1972–76 American panel reported by Niemi, Katz, and Newman (1980, 640). Furthermore, the relationship between party identification change and the vote appears similar in the two nations, even admitting the somewhat greater instability of both variables in Canada (LeDuc et al. 1984, 475, n. 1).

⁶Provinces, unlike American states, can and do impose tariffs upon each other (see Esman 1984).

because of great distances and sparse populations (Blake 1985, 51), but also because there was no national identity for it to adopt. As a result, the issues that mark federal and provincial politics are often distinct. In only one province—Ontario—do the three parties that compete nationally (the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, and the NDP) find considerable support in both federal and provincial politics. In British Columbia provincial politics is a fight between two parties, one of which (Social Credit) has almost completely disappeared from both federal and provincial politics in every other province and a second (the NDP) that consistently finishes a distant third in federal elections.⁷

Nor is this a recent development. From 1921 to 1957 the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives failed to capture even a simple majority of the Prairie seats in the House of Commons and from 1911 to 1979 (and again from 1980 to 1984) the region never elected a provincial government of the same party that controlled the federal Commons (Smith 1981, 41–42). Most Canadians thus live in “two political worlds.” Of whose making are these worlds? Institutionalists argue that voters, with their weaker partisanship than U.S. voters, are the culprits. The historical/cultural perspective views the role of partisanship as much the same in two cultures that are, after all, rather similar to each other. It is simply that more is demanded of Canadians.

Which explanation garners more support has implications for the transferability of the U.S. model of partisanship to other contexts and to the role of institutional design in shaping partisan affiliations. If the historical/cultural thesis is correct, then the underlying sociopsychological basis of political thinking does not necessarily vary across cultures (at least those of Canada and the United States). It also would resolve the problem of why complex party structures develop in some federations and not in others (the United States), even as electoral systems vary all over the map.⁸ On the other hand, if the institutionalist thesis is more powerful, then the applicability of the U.S. model of partisanship to other countries must be called into question and the hard work of specifying precisely what institutional forms lead to different types of party systems must pick up where Rae (1967) left off.

The Bases of Split-Level Identification

The data I shall analyze, the 1979 wave of the 1974–79–80 panel of the Canadian National Election Studies,⁹ suggest that Canadians who identify with

⁷To be sure, the NDP competes at both the federal and provincial levels in British Columbia. However, Blake (1985, 140) reports that federal and provincial vote shares in the province for the NDP from 1949 to 1974 are correlated at only .33.

⁸Here one is reminded that many of Rae's (1967) “similarity” propositions received stronger support than his “difference” propositions.

⁹Only the 1979 survey had some of the predictor variables to be employed. Respondents who had moved out of their home province since 1974 were excluded from the analysis, since their provincial ties might be affected by their former province of residence. The data to be analyzed were

one of the four major political parties at the federal level and one of the five major parties at the provincial level (including the Parti Quebecois) generally do have stable identifications: 74.5% of the 1987 respondents had consistent affiliations at the two levels (eliminating respondents identifying with a party at only one level or who identify with no party at either level).¹⁰ Of the 582 cases with complete data on all variables to be analyzed below employing the 1974–79 panel weights (see note 9 above), 78.9% had consistent identifications at both levels. However, 60.1% of all multiple identifiers live in British Columbia and Quebec, the two provinces with patterns of party competition in which a party that is not competitive at the federal level is a major player in provincial politics. An additional 14.4% of all multiple identifiers in the restricted sample come from Ontario, the largest province, even though the overall level of consistency in Ontario is extremely high (cf. Table 3).¹¹

What, then, shapes split-level partisanship? The institutionalist account is not readily testable as it stands. The federal system is a constant across all Canadians. Indeed, the structure of government and electoral systems is the same throughout the provinces. I thus concentrate on the observable consequences of the institutionalist thesis. Recall that the principal effect of the Canadian system of federalism is to produce what I called above a “syndrome of weak partisanship.” An institutionalist explanation of the determinants of dual partisanship would focus on the other dimensions of weak party ties, all of which contribute to this syndrome—in contrast to the U.S. case in which partisan stability anchors the electoral system even as vote choice varies from one contest to another. Clarke and Stewart (1987), arguing from such a perspective, show that stability of federal partisanship over time is determined by such factors as the strength of affiliation, the party preferred on the most important issue, party leadership preference, and political interest.¹²

While the stability and consistency of partisanship are not the same phenomenon, the institutionalist thesis would lead us to expect that they are jointly determined. Preliminary analyses indicated that no demographic variables had

weighted by the 1974–79 panel weight, since measures of stability over time could only be derived from responses to the 1974 survey.

¹⁰Clarke and Stewart (1987, 391) report that 61% of Canadians identified with the same party at both the federal and provincial party levels in 1979; 23% were split identifiers; and the remainder selected parties at only one level (10%) or not at all (6%). However, these figures do *not* exclude respondents who do not identify with a party at either level.

¹¹There were 974 panel respondents using the 1974–79 weights, of whom 74.6% had consistent identifications. The 1979 cross-section (weighted accordingly) had 74.5% consistent identifiers ($N = 1,987$), virtually identical to the results reported herein. Five of the provinces differed by less than 5% in the two estimates; only one (Newfoundland) by as much as 10%.

¹²Additionally, the consistency of federal and provincial identification was strongly related to partisan stability.

any measurable impact on split-level identification. Political interest, as alluded to above, also was uncorrelated with split-level identification. So was, somewhat more surprisingly, the party preferred on the two most important issues.¹³ I thus include five institutionalist variables in a probit analysis in which partisan consistency serves as the dependent variable. The former include four measures of partisanship: (1) whether the respondent claims always to vote the same way at the federal level;¹⁴ (2) the stability of partisanship from 1974 to 1979 at the provincial level;¹⁵ (3) strength of federal party identification;¹⁶ and (4) strength of provincial party identification. Except for provincial party stability, the signs of each of the variables is expected to be negative. Each of these variables constitutes part of the "syndrome of weak partisanship." If structural factors weaken voters' ties to parties, then we would expect Canadians to identify less strongly with parties, to shift affect more over time, and to be more fickle in their voting behavior.

The final variable suggested by the institutionalist perspective is called "party leadership congruence." If there is a general syndrome of weak partisanship, orientations toward leaders should affect split-level partisanship as well as temporal stability (Clarke and Stewart 1987). Party leadership congruence is a dummy variable based upon differences in thermometer scores for party leaders at each level.¹⁷

¹³The variable was coded as two if the respondent agreed with his or her party on both of the two most important issues; one, on either of them; and zero, on none.

¹⁴Blake (1985, 167) argues that throughout Canada the relationship between multiple identification and switching of votes between successive elections is spurious, reflecting instead the relationship between switching and the strength of partisanship. Note, however, that I propose the reverse dynamic: always voting for the same party is a potential determinant of split-level partisanship. The strength of partisanship is also included in the equation to be estimated below. In any event, the overall relationship is likely to be reciprocal.

¹⁵Using data over time reduces the sample size considerably (although this is hardly the only culprit). However, the time component is critical. Niemi, Katz, and Newman (1980) have argued convincingly that recall data on previous party identification are unreliable. The only recall data available in the panel are those asking whether the respondent ever identified with a different party at either level. These measures do not tap the central concept of interest, and indeed they do not even load on the same dimension as party identification strength (Uslaner 1989a). Stability at the federal level was insignificant even when stability at the provincial level was excluded.

¹⁶Unlike the U.S. data, party strength in Canada is a trichotomy: very strong, strong, not very strong.

¹⁷If the minimum difference between thermometer scores of all sets of federal and provincial leaders corresponded to the respondent's partisanship at each level, the variable was coded as one. Otherwise it was coded as zero. An example will clarify this discussion. A Quebec respondent would rank four federal party leaders (Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, the NDP, and Social Credit) and four provincial party leaders (Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, the NDP, and the Parti Quebecois). If that respondent's federal party identification was Liberal and provincial party identification was Parti Quebecois, then we would expect that the difference between these two leadership scores would be a minimum among all possible federal-provincial comparisons. If this held, the "party leadership congruence" variable was scored one; otherwise, it was scored zero. Less cumbersome measures

The historical/cultural explanation focuses on more long-term factors. This approach takes the social-psychological determinants of partisanship as exogenous. It focuses instead on situational factors, especially those operative over the longer haul and treats each set of identifications as a political alignment in its own right. Voters are confronted with a collective action problem over which they have limited control. Voters cannot readily alter the party systems, so they determine which party at each level best expresses their world view about what Canada ought to be; they also consider the strategic consequences of adopting any particular dual identification. The voter, then, is not merely a consumer, but a shopper at a rather complex supermarket.

Whereas institutionalists maintain that partisanship is shaped by the issues (and leaders) in a particular election, the historical/cultural thesis focuses on more durable determinants of party affiliations (cf. Downs 1957). Instead of issues, it emphasizes ideology. There are no measures of ideological agreement at the provincial level, so we are forced to presume that proximity at the federal level guides citizens in their decisions on partisan choice at the provincial tier as well.¹⁸ The "spatial distance/ideology" measure is a straightforward proximity measure based upon Euclidean distance (on a left-right scale) of the respondent and the federal party with which he or she identifies (cf. Enelow and Hinich 1984). The greater the distance from the individual's own ideal point on the ideology scale, the more likely that the respondent should have an inconsistent identification.

Ideology is hardly the only aspect of a citizen's world view. At least as important is an orientation toward Canada. If federal and provincial identifications have equal standing, what leads some people to adopt differing affiliations? A cultural approach focuses on what federal and provincial systems mean to people. For many Canadians, the province has been the Maginot Line against a centralizing trend that would remake their "community of communities" (in the words of former Prime Minister Joe Clark) into a "melting pot" like the U.S. model. For Western Canada, the dominant force is the "Toronto-Montreal" axis, which historically has controlled most of the wealth and political power in Canada. Quebec has felt that the other provinces have not respected its special status as the only predominantly French-speaking province in the confederation.

were also computed and analyzed, but all proved *weaker* predictors of partisan consistency. It is also likely that any relationship between leadership evaluations and dual partisanship should be reciprocal. However, the weak relationships in Tables 1, 2, and 4 suggest that no real harm is done in estimating a single-equation model.

¹⁸The lack of an ideology measure at the provincial level should not be fatal if my argument below on alienation is correct. Just as citizens may be alienated from the federal system, so might they also be from federal parties that do not represent them as well as provincial parties. Voters who are farthest spatially from the federal party with which they identify should be more likely to adopt a different provincial partisanship.

Protest parties, especially in Quebec and to a lesser extent in the West, have demanded separation from Canada or at least a fundamental realignment of the federal system.

The quest for national unity is fundamental to Canadian politics—as well as literature and virtually everything else. At the heart of the political debate has been the centralizing role of Ottawa and, at least since the 1960s, the federal Liberal party. The other major federal party, the Progressive Conservatives, favors a greater role for the provinces, but when in power still gets “tainted” as the defender of Ottawa.¹⁹ Split identification is most likely to occur between a major party and a regional (or, less accurately, minor) party. Such parties are at best not fully competitive at the federal level. To varying degrees they represent protest movements against not only the two big parties but also against the federal political system itself.²⁰

To measure alienation, I construct a variable, pro-Canada sentiments, that is the difference in thermometer ratings for Canada versus the respondent's home province. Most Canadians identify more with their home province than with the country, but provincial identification is highest where the party systems are most distinct (Clarke et al. 1984, 41).²¹ “Pro-Canada” sentiments should go hand-in-hand with support for a strengthened federalism, which would include an alignment of the federal and provincial party systems.²² The relationship should be stronger in provinces where federal and provincial party systems overlap least, for these are the provinces where protest is strongest, and considerably weaker where there is greater convergence.

In addition to these individual-level variables,²³ two other predictors place the voter in a contextual—and thereby historical—perspective. One, called the “contextual seat ratio,” is an index of the relative strengths of the two major federal parties at the federal and provincial levels for each province. When the index approaches unity, the two major parties gain the same percentages of seats (over the three most recent elections) at each tier. When it approaches zero, the two parties obtain very different vote shares at each level. Seat rather than vote

¹⁹The New Democrats, like the Liberals, are strong federalists.

²⁰The clearest cases are Social Credit and the two Quebec parties (Union Nationale and Parti Québécois). To some degree one can make the same argument even with respect to the New Democrats, who propose fairly radical changes in the national political economy.

²¹While affect for the two levels tends to correlate *positively* (Johnston 1986, 43), this may well reflect a positivity bias—the tendency for people to give favorable responses to many stimuli.

²²I expected that there might be some interaction effect between pro-Canada sentiments and several other variables, including: (1) Liberal party affiliation at the federal level; (2) Quebec residence; (3) Anglophone status in Quebec; and (4) Francophone status outside Quebec. In none of these cases were there significant relationships between partisan consistency and these variables either by themselves or in interaction with pro-Canada sentiments.

²³For analogues, see the analysis of split-level identification in British Columbia in Blake (1982, 1985).

proportions were employed following Cairns's (1968) argument that some parties' failure to secure representation based upon their electoral support is what engenders alienation.²⁴ When the contextual seat ratio is high, federal and provincial partisanship is more likely to coincide. Voters' choices at the provincial level will be similar to those in federal politics, thus making identification with the two larger parties at both levels easier for citizens.

The "individual seat ratio" is a more complex measure. Like the "contextual seat ratio," it takes the seat proportions for the three most recent elections but does so for every party. For each respondent, an index was constructed based upon the ratios for his or her party affiliation at each level. A citizen who identified with parties that secured roughly equal proportions of seats at each level would have a score approaching one, whereas a respondent whose two parties fared very differently would have a score approaching zero.²⁵ The "contextual seat ratio" is a measure of the likelihood that a citizen will identify with either the Liberal or Progressive Conservative parties (or, conversely, with one of the minor or regional parties). The "individual seat ratio," on the other hand, reflects more of the strategic decision making with respect to partisanship that an individual might make.

People with values of the individual seat ratio close to one align their federal and provincial identifications with parties that obtain relatively equal shares of seats at the two levels. Citizens whose scores approach zero support parties that fare quite differently at the two tiers. The former may be viewed as more strategic in their voting decisions, the latter as more committed to a particular party or ideology even if that means "wasting an identification" at one level.²⁶

People who have high values on the index are expected to have consistent partisanship, since in most provinces the same parties dominate competition at both levels. Such strategic identifiers attempt to minimize imbalance in partisan

²⁴The index was constructed as follows. The average proportion of seats received by the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives over the three most recent elections was computed for each province at the federal and provincial level. (Elections held in 1979 were included, on the basis that preelection polls would influence voters' party identification choice.) Then the ratio of provincial to federal seat proportions was computed. If it was greater than one, then its reciprocal was employed. Should any denominator equal zero, the index value was set to zero. A similar index for vote proportions was computed and yielded virtually identical correlations with partisan consistency. Aside from the theoretical argument cited in the text, the seat measure was preferable because it was less collinear with the other predictors. The data employed in constructing this and the next index come from Feigert (1989).

²⁵An example of the former would be a citizen who identified with the Liberals at both levels in the Maritimes. An example of the latter would be a voter who identified with the Tories at both levels in British Columbia. For details of the computation of this index, see the discussion of the "contextual seat ratio" in note 22 above. As in that case, a similar variable was computed for votes, and it behaved almost identically to the seat ratio.

²⁶Blake (1982) employs a more direct question on strategic voting (see Farquharson 1969) in his study of split-level identification in British Columbia. His findings do not support the notion of partisanship as strategically determined.

strengths, mostly by identifying largely with competitive parties.²⁷ Net of evaluations of party positions on issues or leaders, such identifiers select their partisanship based upon the context of party competition in their provinces. Citizens who are willing to commit themselves at one level to a party that may not have much of a chance of winning will be more likely to have split-level identifications, since this generally implies identification with a minor party. The two seat ratios are clearly *not* mere substitutes for each other: Their zero-order correlation is only .06. To the extent that either (or both) is important, voters are constrained by party histories in their provinces that are largely beyond their personal control—and outside the purview of the social-psychological determinants of weak partisanship.²⁸

The predictor variables all tap orientations toward the party system. In any such undertaking, the direction of causality is open to question. Some cases are easy to defend. Strength of partisanship is theoretically prior to the consistency of identification. Others are more likely to involve reciprocal relationships that in a more complex analysis should be modeled simultaneously: whether one always votes for the same party in federal elections is an example of such a variable. Voters who have inconsistent partisanship appear more likely to change over time. A prior history of switching between parties may very well induce split-party identification. Similarly, the two ratios perforce reflect the voting patterns in the Canadian provinces. Since they are based on historical election data, they are causally prior to the consistency of partisanship.²⁹

Results of the Analysis

The results of the probit analysis are presented in Table 1. Overall, the fit of the equation is quite good. The estimated R^2 is .499 and 85.2% of the cases are predicted correctly as opposed to a null model (predicting all citizens having consistent identification) of 78.9% correct.³⁰ Six of the nine predictors achieve

²⁷Of course, if a party consistently gains a few seats at each level, it would have a high value of the "individual seat ratio." This is an unlikely scenario.

²⁸The "historical" time frame is limited here to about a decade (in the case of the contextual variables). I argue that this does not substantially weaken their historical import. First, most voters have a limited memory span in their own political history. Second, party systems in Canadian provinces shift relatively rapidly in terms of which parties dominate. What does *not* change so quickly is the distinctiveness of particular provincial political systems—regardless of which parties happen to dominate at any particular time.

²⁹Clearly, the two ratios are *not* merely surrogates for an aggregate measure of split-level identification. In some provinces, split-level identification will result in very low values on either measure (e.g., the Atlantic provinces), where in others consistent identification will yield the same result (e.g., British Columbia). If the two ratios were little more than such surrogates, we would expect them to be highly correlated with each other (and they are not).

³⁰This amounts to a proportionate reduction of error in predictions of 38%. The R^2 values reported by Blake (1982) for his British Columbia sample, albeit analyses based upon regression analysis, range from .086 to .152. Critically, the results in Table 1 indicate that the constant fails to reach statistical significance, indicating that the model is well specified.

Table 1. Probit Analysis of Split-Level Party Identification

| Predictor | Probit Coefficient | Standard Error | MLE/SE |
|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Contextual seat ratio | 1.840 | .241 | 7.626*** |
| Individual seat ratio | 1.219 | .261 | 4.676*** |
| Party leadership congruence | .021 | .156 | .136 |
| Spatial distance/ideology | -.022 | .016 | -1.362* |
| Pro-Canada sentiments | 1.169 | .375 | 3.115** |
| Always vote same/federal | -.494 | .155 | -3.194*** |
| Provincial party ID stability | .922 | .161 | 5.739*** |
| Federal party ID strength | -.317 | .121 | -2.628** |
| Provincial party ID strength | -.041 | .125 | -.327 |
| Constant | -.341 | .425 | -.801 |
| Estimated R^2 | .499 | | |
| <i>Percentage predicted correctly:</i> | | | |
| Probit | 85.2 | | |
| Null | 78.9 | | |

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (all tests are one-tailed).

statistical significance at the .01 level or greater, and a seventh is significant at .10. The remaining two both are drawn from the “institutionalist” list: party leadership congruence and provincial party identification strength. The variables with the largest ratios of the maximum likelihood estimates to their standard errors (t -ratios in regression analyses) are the contextual seat ratio and provincial party identification stability. Pro-Canada sentiments and always vote the same in federal elections are also strongly significant. Just meeting the .10 level is spatial distance/ideology.

The probit coefficients, however, do not tell us very much. Unlike regression coefficients, they have no direct interpretation. We can transform the predicted values for each case into probabilities and thus assess the marginal impact of a particular predictor by (1) holding that variable “constant” at its highest and lowest values while permitting the other variables to vary freely; and (2) subtracting the probability of voting Liberal (Tory) at the lowest value of the predictor from the probability obtained at the highest value.³¹ The results are presented in Table 2.

³¹The predicted values for the dependent variable in a probit analysis are standardized scores. Each score can be placed on the cumulative normal distribution and associated with a probability value. The technique assigns to each predictor its minimum value and estimates a mean probability for the sample from an equation in which all other variables vary freely; the same procedure is followed for the maximum value. The marginal impact is the difference between these two probabilities. The procedure is discussed in Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1981), and the specific algorithm for computing the probabilities was graciously provided by Steven J. Rosenstone.

The difference in probabilities (or marginal impact) is greatest for three of the historical/cultural variables: the contextual seat ratio and pro-Canada sentiments each can raise the probability of having a consistent identification by more than .40. Citizens who live in the province (British Columbia) where the two federal parties do poorly in provincial elections are substantially less likely to have consistent party identification, particularly in comparison to Atlantic residents where the two major parties dominate competition at both levels. People who strongly identify with their province to the detriment of the country are no more likely than 50-50 to have consistent identification, while those who relate to Canada much more than their home province are virtually certain to identify with just one party. The impact of the individual seat ratio, net of that for the contextual ratio, is on the order of 25%.

Citizens do apparently adjust their identification according to the spatial positions of their federal parties. A citizen at the maximum distance from the spatial position of the federal party has just a .624 probability of identifying with it at the provincial level as well, while voters whose ideal points are identical to those of their federal parties are 18% more likely to do so. This impact is just two percentage points less than that for the strongest institutionalist variable: provincial party identification stability from 1974 to 1979. It is also five percentage points greater than the impact of federal party identification strength.

Canadians change parties at the federal level on the basis of their attitudes toward party leaders (Clarke and Stewart 1987; Clarke et al. 1979, chap. 10). Yet the party leadership congruence variable has virtually no impact whatsoever on the likelihood of split-level partisanship. This does *not* mean that leader evaluations and partisan affiliation are disjointed. Rather, dual party affiliation seems

Table 2. Estimated Probabilities from Probit Analysis of Split-Level Party Identification

| Predictor | Minimum ^a | Maximum | Difference |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------|------------|
| Contextual seat ratio | .472 | .883 | .411 |
| Individual seat ratio | .638 | .883 | .245 |
| Party leadership congruence | .790 | .794 | .004 |
| Spatial distance/ideology | .624 | .802 | .178 |
| Pro-Canada sentiments | .514 | .926 | .411 |
| Always vote same/federal | .747 | .842 | .095 |
| Provincial party ID stability | .639 | .848 | .208 |
| Federal party ID strength | .718 | .841 | .124 |
| Provincial party ID strength | .783 | .798 | .015 |

^aMinimum values have been reflected as if all probit coefficients were positive, so that the difference in probabilities will be positive if the results conform to theoretical expectations.

to be distinct from many of the other dimensions of partisanship.³² The effect of provincial party identification strength is also small. The spatial distance/ideology measure, orientations toward the federal system, and the context of politics in one's home province indicate that satisfaction with one's federal identification plays a greater role in shaping split-level identification than do orientations toward provincial politics. Yet the modest impact of always vote the same way in federal elections suggests that context and alienation from the federal system may be the most important factors overall.

Context and Choice in Partisanship

The probit analysis gives strong support to the contextual basis of partisanship. But what more can we say about the predictive success of the analysis? In Table 3 I report a "prediction analysis" by province (and region) for split-level partisanship. Consistent identifiers are predicted far more accurately than are split-level partisans: overall, 87.5% of the 459 consistent identifiers are correctly predicted, compared to just under half (49.6%) of the 123 multiple identifiers. The most accurate predictions are found for the provinces—those in the Atlantic region—with the highest percentages of single identifiers.

The pattern of predictive success varies by province. In Quebec and British Columbia, the two provinces with the greatest percentage of split-level identifiers, inconsistent partisans are well predicted (with a 70% success rate). Consistent identifiers in Quebec, where affiliation with the Liberals at both levels is still the norm, are also well predicted. On the other hand, all 19 split-level identifiers in Ontario were misclassified. Voters in this province face a most complicated strategic scenario. At the federal level, Ontario is the "swing" province that generally determines which party (usually the Liberals) controls the federal government. While the Liberals have usually won between 25% and 40% of the votes in provincial contests, they rarely have captured more than a quarter of the seats in the provincial Legislative Assembly. From 1943 until its victory in 1985, the party *never* controlled provincial politics and often fell behind the NDP in seat proportions.

Identification with parties that are weak at least at one level is less well predicted: the provincial Liberals in Ontario, the federal Social Credit party in British Columbia, federal New Democrats in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and Liberals at either level in Alberta. About 97% of people who identified with either the Liberals or Progressive Conservatives at both levels were correctly

³²In a study under way on the dimensionality of partisanship, split-level identification appears to be statistically distinct from other measures such as whether a respondent reported having switched parties ever, always voted the same way, and strength of identification (each measured at both the federal and provincial level). Also note that Clarke et al. (1979, 236) report that the intensity and stability of partisanship, but *not the consistency* of party ties affects respondents' leader images.

Table 3. Prediction Analysis for Split-Level Party Identification

| | Predicted Correctly % | Consistent Identifiers Predicted Correctly % | Multiple Identifiers Predicted Correctly % | Consistent Identifiers % | <i>N</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Canada</i> | 85.2 | 87.5 | 49.6 | 78.9 | 582 |
| Newfoundland | 85.7 | 100.0 | 66.7 | 78.6 | 28 |
| Prince Edward Island | 100.0 | 100.0 | — | 100.0 | 39 |
| Nova Scotia | 93.0 | 97.5 | 33.3 | 93.0 | 43 |
| New Brunswick | 95.1 | 100.0 | 33.3 | 92.7 | 41 |
| <i>Total: Atlantic Provinces</i> | <i>94.7</i> | <i>99.3</i> | <i>33.3</i> | <i>96.7</i> | <i>151</i> |
| <i>Quebec</i> | <i>88.3</i> | <i>96.5</i> | <i>67.6</i> | <i>71.7</i> | <i>120</i> |
| <i>Ontario</i> | <i>86.1</i> | <i>99.2</i> | <i>0.0</i> | <i>86.8</i> | <i>144</i> |
| Manitoba | 81.2 | 92.6 | 20.0 | 90.6 | 32 |
| Saskatchewan | 73.9 | 84.2 | 25.0 | 82.6 | 23 |
| Alberta | 82.4 | 88.1 | 44.4 | 80.3 | 51 |
| <i>Total: Prairie Provinces</i> | <i>79.2</i> | <i>88.6</i> | <i>33.3</i> | <i>83.0</i> | <i>106</i> |
| <i>British Columbia</i> | <i>65.6</i> | <i>57.1</i> | <i>70.0</i> | <i>34.4</i> | <i>61</i> |

predicted.³³ In contrast, just 72% who selected the NDP at either level, 66% who chose Social Credit at either level, and 61% of provincial PQ identifiers were correctly classified.

The probit analysis could have been "improved" by the addition of dummy variables for specific provinces (cf. Clarke and Stewart 1987). However, it is unclear what theoretical leverage this would give us in the present context. A more appropriate approach compares the two provinces in which split-level identification is highest (British Columbia and Quebec) with the rest of Canada. The same probit model described in Tables 1 and 2 was reestimated for the two subsamples and is presented in Table 4.

The equation for most of Canada has at best modest predictive success. The estimated R^2 is .352, but the model achieves no additional predictive success compared to a null one. This is largely attributable to the fact that almost 90% of respondents in these provinces have consistent identification. The measure of impact derived from difference in probabilities indicates that spatial distance has the greatest effect on consistency of partisanship, even though that variable does

³³This includes people who chose one party at one level and the other party at the second tier. Most NDP identifiers are consistent partisans, and this bloc was better predicted (78.8%) than any other group of minor party identifiers.

Table 4. Probit Coefficients and Probability Estimates for Sub-National Analyses

| Predictor | Quebec and British Columbia | | Other Provinces | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| | Probit Coefficient | Probability Difference | Probit Coefficient | Probability Difference |
| Contextual seat ratio | 1.683*** | .343 | .895** | .146 |
| Individual seat ratio | 1.822*** | .312 | 1.364* | .144 |
| Party leadership congruence | -.028 | -.006 | .045 | .007 |
| Spatial distance/ideology | .002 | -.015 | -.033 | .265 |
| Pro-Canada sentiments | 2.402*** | .822 | -.123 | -.011 |
| Always vote same/federal | -.259 | .055 | -.604** | .096 |
| Provincial party ID stability | .979** | .225 | .934*** | .188 |
| Federal party ID strength | -.611** | .270 | -.016 | .005 |
| Provincial party ID strength | .357 | -.145 | -.352* | .116 |
| Constant | -1.256* | — | .545 | — |
| Estimated R^2 | .670 | | .352 | |
| <i>Percentage Predicted Correctly:</i> | | | | |
| Probit | | | 82.9 | |
| Null | | | 59.1 | 87.8 |

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

not have a statistically significant probit coefficient.³⁴ The other variables that have impacts greater than 10% are provincial partisan stability, the two-seat ratios, and provincial party identification strength. For most of Canada, then, split-level partisanship does respond to both institutional and cultural/historical forces. We should not make too much of these results, for there is so little variation in partisan consistency outside British Columbia and Quebec.

The results for the latter provinces are more striking. The estimated R^2 is a strong .670; the 82.9% correctly predicted compares very favorably with the 59.1% in a null model. As in the analysis for all of Canada, the two-seat ratios have strong marginal impacts, as does provincial partisan stability over time. One institutional variable that is stronger in British Columbia and Quebec is federal partisanship strength. Perversely, the impact of provincial partisanship strength has the wrong sign! Respondents with strong provincial partisanship appear more likely to have split-level party identification. From a historical/cultural perspective, this should not be so surprising. Strong identifiers with the Parti Quebecois in Quebec or the British Columbia Social Credit party have

³⁴The impact is great because the range of values on spatial distance/ideology is very large. This is *not* completely artifactual, however, because this variable has virtually no impact (even with the same range) for the British Columbia and Quebec subsample.

nowhere else to go, whereas weak Liberal identifiers in both provinces do have the option of consistent identification.³⁵ Clearly context matters. There seems to be no measurable impact for spatial distance in these two provinces. Most critically, pro-Canada sentiments have little effect (indeed, a slightly negative one) outside of British Columbia and Quebec. But in these two provinces, attitudes toward the country overwhelm everything else. The difference in probabilities is .822, close to the theoretical maximum of 1.000. Citizens who are more favorable to the country are very likely to have consistent partisanship; those who are more provincially oriented are strong bets to split their identification. In British Columbia the most common "federalist" orientation is consistent New Democratic identification. In Quebec it is consistent Liberal affiliation. Every other prominent combination reflects some association with protest parties.

The predictions of split-level identification and the pattern of forecast errors can largely be accounted for by the context of provincial and federal elections. Canadian party systems operate, as many have observed (see esp. Blake 1985), in "two political worlds." In American politics state legislatures often serve as the training ground for the best candidates for Congress (Jacobson and Kernell 1981). In Canada, on the other hand, there is very little of this type of elite circulation; federal and provincial party organizations do not generally work together and sometimes even see themselves as competitors (Smith 1975, 331-32; Whitaker 1985). Federal and provincial parties maintain separate fund-raising efforts, and candidates for the federal Parliament, at least in Ontario, overwhelmingly have neither served in the provincial Legislative Assembly nor even sought election to it (Johnston 1986, 153; Williams 1985, 312). Indeed, federal officials may actually prefer to deal with provincial governments controlled by opposition parties, since this reduces competition between the two tiers of each party for personnel and resources (Whitaker 1985, 155).

Multiple partisan identification in Canada signifies not so much a "de-aligned" system as one that never has been fully aligned, in the literal use of that word.³⁶ Provincial political cultures exert a strong pull on Canadians, much more so than state or even regional ones have in the United States (at least in the twentieth century). With neither a revolution to bond it together nor a Civil War to resolve many critical divisions, Canada remains what many call a "community of communities"; and this is reflected in its crazy-quilt party system. In the United States, on the other hand, the dealignment of the party system reflects a nationalization of politics: the breaking down of one-party dominance in the

³⁵I owe this interpretation to an anonymous reviewer.

³⁶The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the following as the definition for the verb "align": "to range, place, or lay in a line." Mathematically, a line may be represented in one-dimensional space. The separate political worlds of federal and provincial parties in Canada clearly cannot be so placed. Also note the similar usage of this term for the (now-defunct) merger of two Israeli social democratic parties, Labor and Mapam, which had formed the "Alignment."

South and in Yankee New England as well as the ability of incumbent representatives to retain their seats even in areas believed to be hostile to their parties (Jacobson 1987). Yet, dealignment does not seem to have produced an increase in the level of split-level identifiers. The explanation for such divergent patterns of partisan affiliation in the two countries must be based on other, more fundamental differences between the two countries.

To be sure, split-level identifiers in Canada do have generally weaker attachments to political parties than consistent identifiers. However, these relationships are not consistently as strong as historical and cultural factors in leading to multiple partisanship. To the extent that context drives split-level identification, it may well be incorrect to argue that party identification itself is weaker in Canada than it is in the United States. Partisanship in each country must be evaluated in the context of what such affiliations are expected to do. The stable context of party competition in the United States and the replication of national party system at the state level makes partisanship enduring and consistent across regions. In Canada voters confront provincial party systems that have long revolved around different issues than national politics and that developed largely in isolation from the federal agenda. Even so, split-level partisanship does not vary with any of a variety of measures of participation and affect in Canada; what few patterns there are suggest contextual explanations within Canada rather than fundamental differences in sociopsychological orientations compared to U.S. citizens (Uslaner 1989b).

The stability of provincial, but not federal, partisanship affects dual identification (cf. note 15): this reinforces the view that provincial partisan ties are as well formed as federal attachments. Indeed, to the extent that the two worlds are linked together, the provincial roots provide the ties that bind. Provincial party systems, after all, determine whether consistent identification is realistic (or rational). The divergences between federal and provincial party systems would also lead us to expect far more split-level partisanship outside British Columbia and Quebec. Yet this is emphatically *not* what we find. The isolation of widespread split-level partisanship outside these provinces, together with strong marginal impacts for pro-Canada sentiments and the two-seat ratios in British Columbia and Quebec, point to the central role of cultural and historical factors in shaping partisan consistency.

From a broader perspective, institutional explanations are not likely to take us very far in accounting for variations in federal party systems. The West German party system has become less localized as New Politics issues have become more salient (Dalton 1984). Australian politics is now more nationalized than either the United States or Great Britain because the federal parties have explicitly served as centralizing agents (Kemp 1978, 229, 355). The Swiss case is in one way too dissimilar to Canada for meaningful comparisons—more than 10 parties compete for votes—but in another way is rather similar: some of the most salient cleavages are based upon language. Yet there is no sign in any of the other

countries—as there is in Canada (Kemp 1978, 227–29)—toward decreasing nationalization. These federal party systems (including the United States) have a wide range of institutional arrangements, including proportional representation, single-member districts with plurality elections, and multimember districts with transferable votes.

There is a practical lesson to be learned: Canadians are almost preoccupied with proposing different institutional solutions to the dilemmas of national unity and the fragmented party system, including the adoption of proportional representation and reform of the country's nonelected Senate (see, *inter alia*, AuCoin 1985). If the problem is less one of a weak sense of partisanship than a historical/political context that encourages split-level identification, it is unlikely that institutional tinkering will be the savior of the party system. Even if such reforms do increase the seat shares of disadvantaged parties, they will not suffice to make parties competitive where they are not now major contenders (cf. Wilson 1983, 173–74). Parties must become competitive at the federal and provincial levels to bring partisanship more into alignment. In the short term, this might, as in the United States, lead to a temporary rise in split-level identification. However, the magic formula for increasing competition for parties such as the Liberals in the Prairies or the Progressive Conservatives in Quebec provincial politics remains elusive—largely because the resentment by voters toward these parties lies in historical and cultural factors far beyond the reach of institutional design.

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