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The concept of party identification is widely thought to be of limited utility outside the United States, where partisan attachments are regarded as unstable. The authors argue that estimating the stability of party identification outside the United States requires attention to problems of dimensionality and measurement error. The authors develop a model for estimating the stability of partisanship that addresses these problems, and they apply the model to eight panel surveys drawn from Great Britain, Canada, and Germany. The results suggest that partisanship has been extremely stable in each country, with the exception of recent developments in Canada. The model and findings presented here suggest the need for refinement in the way partisanship is measured, and partisan stability assessed, in multiparty systems.

THE STABILITY OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

Results From Eight Panel Surveys

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Party identification (ID) is arguably one of the most successful constructs in the study of American politics. For more than four decades since its introduction into political science (Belknap & Campbell, 1952; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960), the notion that voters develop a stable degree of identification with one of the two parties has weathered an

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assortment of empirical challenges. Critics have charged that individuals adjust their partisanship in response to their evaluations of presidential performance in office (Brody & Rothenberg, 1988; Fiorina, 1981), the relative attractiveness of the party platforms (Franklin & Jackson, 1983), affinity for presidential candidates (Page & Jones, 1979), and past voting behavior (Markus & Converse, 1979). These charges are echoed by several recent time-series analyses of the aggregate distribution of party ID (Allsop & Weisberg, 1988; MacKuen, Erikson, & Stimson, 1989, 1992; Weisberg & Smith, 1991). These studies suggest a macro-level relationship between party ID and short-term factors such as presidential approval and consumer sentiment. Although these widely cited findings have become part of the conventional wisdom in electoral studies, prompting reconceptualization of the partisanship construct itself (Achen, 1992; Fiorina, 1981), there are strong reasons to believe that these results stem from methodological artifacts of various kinds.

Most revisionist accounts that analyze partisan change at the individual level rely on statistical techniques that take no account of error in the measurement of party ID. That approximately one ninth of the variance in party ID is meaningless response fluctuation can be demonstrated by examining survey responses at successive points in time (Green & Palmquist, 1990, 1994; Palmquist & Green, 1992) or within the confines of a given interview (Green & Schickler, 1993). When measurement error is made an explicit part of the statistical models used to assess partisan change, short-term forces fail to show any appreciable effect on party IDs (Green, 1990; Green & Palmquist, 1990).¹

At the aggregate level, claims that partisan attachments switch in response to fluctuations in presidential approval and consumer confidence seem to be exaggerated. Abramson and Ostrom's (1991) analysis of the 1952-1988 American National Election Studies provides no support for the hypothesis that partisanship swings in response to changing political and economic conditions. The divergent conclusions of Abramson and Ostrom and of MacKuen et al. (1989, 1992) are not reducible simply to the use of data gathered by different survey organizations. Replicating MacKuen et al.'s analysis of Gallup and CBS/New York Times data, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (1996) find much weaker links between partisanship and short-

1. The one analysis that is not subject to this critique is Franklin and Jackson (1983). Reanalysis of their data, however, shows that their results collapse when any of several minor changes are made to the specification of their model (Schickler & Green, 1993-1994). For example, the data no longer suggest that partisanship responds to the issue stances of the parties when the key coefficients of the model are constrained to have intuitively appropriate signs.

term forces than originally reported. Party ID, much as its original proponents had suggested, responds in a limited and gradual fashion to changes in party fortunes.

In short, the empirical record to date favors the original claim made on behalf of party ID: Americans possess varying degrees of partisan attachment that tend to remain stable over time. Although those who hew a revisionist line suggest that party ID is assigned too much credit in causal models, partisanship by all accounts remains one of the central constructs used to explain American electoral choice, candidate and policy evaluation, and voter turnout.

Nevertheless, doubts remain about whether the concept of party ID is equally fruitful when applied outside the United States. The doubts stem from an interrelated set of qualms about the degree of partisan stability. Kaase (1976, pp. 99-100) expresses concern that partisanship "travels" with the vote, as party attachments change to coincide with vote intentions. This charge has been echoed by several scholars who have studied partisanship outside the American context (see, for example, Budge & Farlie, 1976; Kaase, 1976; LeDuc, 1981; LeDuc, Clarke, Jenson, & Pammett, 1984; Shiveley, 1972; Thomassen, 1976; for defenses of the applicability of party ID, see Cain & Ferejohn, 1981; Heath & McDonald, 1988; Heath & Pierce, 1992; Johnston, 1992). Clarke and Stewart (1984, 1985) argue that partisanship changes in response to evaluations of party leaders and perceptions of parties' issue positions. LeDuc (1981) points out that the frequency with which voters switch parties in Great Britain and the Netherlands is far greater than we would be led to expect by the notion that voters maintain a stable attachment to party. Tellingly, however, none of the individual-level studies have allowed for the distorting influence of measurement error,² and seldom have aggregate-level analyses allowed for cohort replacement and period effects among the young.

This article argues that party ID in the United States has much more in common with partisanship in other countries than is frequently assumed. But to appreciate these parallels, one must first overcome a series of methodological problems that create superficial cross-national differences. To this end, we start with a general discussion of the measurement problems that arise as one moves outside the unusual circumstances of the American party system. These problems may be traced to the limitations of the conventional

2. The sole exceptions are the Clarke and Stewart (1984, 1985) two-stage probit analyses of partisanship in Great Britain and Canada. However, the Clarke and Stewart model is nearly identical to the Franklin and Jackson (1983) specification, which has been critiqued elsewhere (Schickler & Green, 1993-1994).

Michigan Party ID Scale as conventionally applied outside the American context, and we suggest ways in which this measure may be improved. Still, there remains the task of making the most of the panel data that do exist. In contrast to many scholars who have assessed the degree of partisan stability outside the United States, we place little stock in party switching as an index of change. We suggest that a better way to examine partisan stability in a multiparty context may be to analyze responses to the partisanship item one party at a time, studying patterns of change in dummy variables indicating whether a respondent does or does not identify with a particular party. We apply this technique to the analysis of eight panel studies, dating back to the early 1960s, conducted in Britain, Germany, and Canada.

The levels of partisan stability found in these three countries prove to be on par with that observed in the United States. On the whole, partisanship changes quite slowly, the interesting exception being Canadian partisanship. Once as stable as partisanship in the United States, Canadian partisanship since the mid-1980s has become more labile with the advent of regionally based parties. Consistent with the arguments of Converse and Pierce (1986), this finding suggests that partisan attachments weaken when new parties emerge that appeal to preexisting group loyalties, be they regional, linguistic, or ethnic. Apart from this illuminating counterexample, party ID fares well outside the confines of the United States and has more value in cross-national analyses of political behavior than is currently appreciated.³

THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN PARTY ID

It is sometimes quipped that one advantage of studying electoral politics in the United States is that federal elections are timed to coincide with the administration of the National Election Study. In fact, social scientists who study American electoral politics enjoy a number of advantages that only become apparent as one looks at the United States in comparative perspective. Some have to do with the mechanics of measuring party ID in surveys. The collection of survey data is easier in the United States than it is in countries such as Italy, where respondents are for various reasons reluctant

3. It is not our purpose to defend all of the claims made on behalf of the traditional conceptualization of partisanship but only the most central: that party ID is in general a long-term stable attachment. Therefore, such questions as the extent to which party ties are transmitted from parent to child, the role of issue orientations in shaping partisanship in young adulthood, and the ways in which these processes change over time are beyond the scope of this study (see Jennings & Niemi, 1981; Rose & McAllister, 1986).

to disclose their party affiliations (LaPalombara, 1987). Similarly, the concept of party ID—the sense that one thinks of oneself as belonging to a social group composed of fellow partisans—is easier to translate into a survey question in the American case. For example, the German partisanship question asks respondents which party they lean toward in the long run, in place of the Michigan item's direct focus on personal identity. This alternative wording was adopted because literal translation of the Michigan item was thought to confuse party membership and subjective identity (Norpoth, 1978).

These problems limit the supply of cross-national survey data that can speak adequately to the issue of partisan stability. Practical difficulties become more acute as one grapples with the problem of representing party attachments along something other than a unidimensional continuum. Multiparty systems, such as those found in Britain, Germany, and Canada, potentially give rise to complex partisan identities. These systems feature three and sometimes four or five significant parties. Although these parties can in some cases be arranged along a Left-Right spectrum, it is unclear whether identification with the various parties can be depicted accurately along a single dimension. It is conceivable that voters may be attracted to different parties for different reasons and identify with more than one party simultaneously. Liberal Party adherents from British Columbia may also identify with the Reform Party, whereas those from Quebec may harbor a degree of psychological attachment to the Bloc Québécois. Because of this possibility, assessing partisan stability outside the United States requires that we address special methodological problems.

MODELS OF THE MEASUREMENT PROCESS

Intuitively, one senses that a survey question that asks respondents to state the one party with which they identify misses these important nuances and potentially distorts the assessment of partisan stability in a multiparty context. This intuition can be supported by a more formal representation of the process by which partisanship is measured. Before generalizing the model to encompass multiparty systems, let us first consider a relatively simple case: the two-party system found in the United States.

Since the publication of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960), it has been conventional to envision American partisanship as a single dimension, ranging from Democratic to Republican identification. Implicitly, Democratic identification was assumed to coincide with the absence of Republican identification, and vice versa. Similarly, Independents were assumed to harbor an equal (and relatively weak) degree of identification

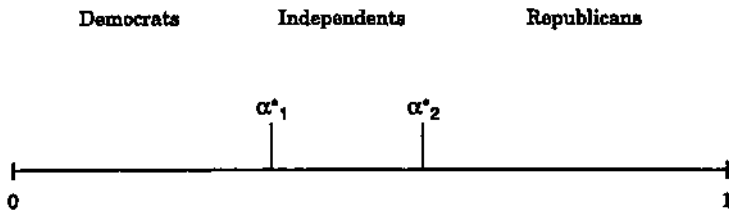


Figure 1. One-dimensional representation of party identification

with both parties. By this interpretation, responses to the stem question of the Survey Research Center (SRC) Party ID Scale follow an ordinal measurement process.⁴ Let p represent an individual's underlying degree of Republican identification (or, equivalently, lack of Democratic identification). For purposes of exposition, let p range from 0 to 1, where 1 represents maximal Republicanism. The process by which underlying partisanship is translated into one of the three survey response categories may be modeled as follows:

Model 1:

Democrat if $p < \alpha^*1$.
 Republican if $p > \alpha^*2$.
 Independent otherwise, $0 < \alpha^*1 < \alpha^*2 < 1$.

The resulting 3-point scale transforms the continuous variable p into a series of ordered categories, as depicted in Figure 1. This depiction changes as we relax the assumption that Democratic partisanship is equivalent to the lack of Republican partisanship. Denote the degree of Democratic identification δ (ranging from 0 to 1) and relax the requirement that $p = 1 - \delta$. One's survey response now hinges on the relative strengths of the two attachments.

Model 2:

Democrat if $\delta > p + \alpha 1$.
 Republican if $p > \delta + \alpha 2$.
 Independent otherwise, $0 < \alpha 1, \alpha 2 < 1$.

4. The stem question is as follows: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" This stem question creates a 3-point party ID classification. Miller (1991) defends the validity of this 3-point categorization as against a more articulated scale that uses strength of partisanship and the leaning tendencies of independents. Franklin (1992) and Green and Palmquist (1994) show that the use of ordinal as opposed to interval measures does not significantly affect the estimated stability of partisanship.

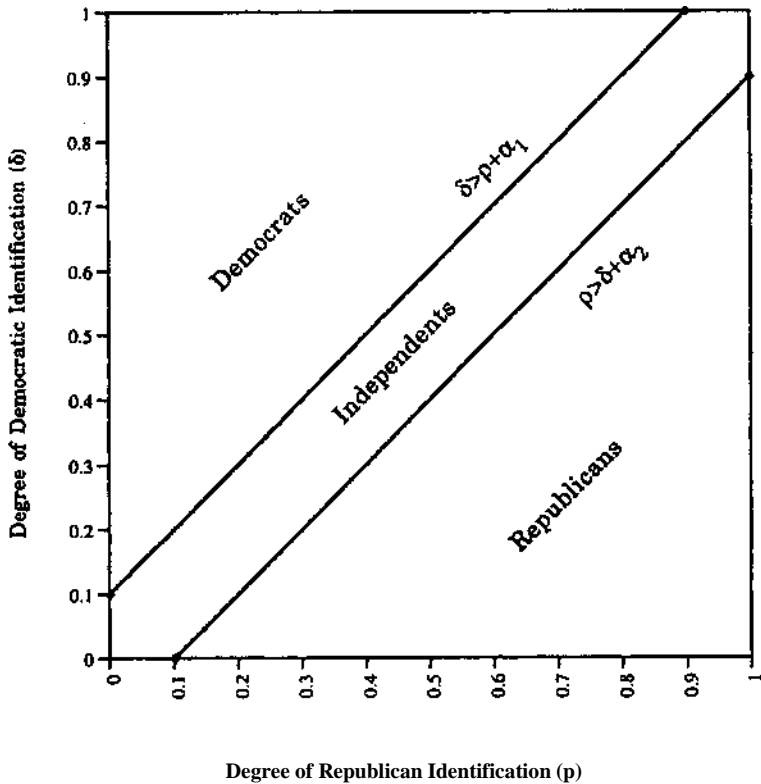


Figure 2. Two-dimensional representation of party identification

Figure 2 presents a graphical depiction of the measurement process. The upper triangle consists of Democrats; the lower triangle, Republicans. Independents comprise the strip that divides the two triangles. Model 2 is simply a generalization of Model 1, allowing for two different dimensions of political party identification. Figure 2 highlights one of the important shortcomings of the party ID measure—namely, that it captures only certain kinds of northwest \leftrightarrow southeast change. Denote the location of voter i (R_i, D_i). The Democrat located at $(0, .3)$ is dubbed a Republican when this underlying location shifts to $(.3, 0)$. But the Democrat whose location moves the same distance from southeast to northwest (e.g., $[0, .7]$ to $[\cdot 3, 1]$) continues to be

dubbed a Democrat. Similarly, the Independent whose underlying location shifts from (0,0) to (.5,.5) remains an Independent in the eyes of the SRC measure (see Weisberg, 1980).

Two potentially important implications arise from Model 2. First, measured partisanship that appears stable over time can mask underlying partisan change. Second, the three categories of partisanship may each be more heterogeneous than anticipated by Model 1. Conceivably, Democrats consist of both Republican-haters located at (0,.7) and more conciliatory partisans located at (.3,1). Model 2, in other words, makes allowance for the possibility that individuals identify to some degree with more than one party simultaneously.

Before generalizing this model further to incorporate more than two parties, we should say a few words about the applicability of Model 2 to partisanship in the United States. Seldom has party ID been measured on a party-by-party basis, the exception being a 1990 Times-Mirror national survey of American adults (Green & Schickler, 1993). Respondents were asked how well the terms *Democrat*, *Republican*, and various other group labels described them. The response options were offered in the form of a scale ranging from 1 to 10.⁵ A number of statistical tests point to the conclusion that Democratic identification is the opposite of Republican identification. For example, when one regresses the two self-description items on a list of regressors (1988 presidential vote, ideology, education, age, and dummy variables for gender, race, the South, and Catholics), the predicted self-description scores correlate at -.972. In the United States, party-by-party measures of identification behave very much as a unidimensional representation would predict (Green & Schickler, 1993).

The SRC measure of party ID may perform adequately in the United States, where partisanship falls largely along a single underlying dimension, but its potential deficiencies become apparent as we consider other political systems. Questions that follow the SRC format ask respondents to name *the* party with which they identify. As we suggested earlier, respondents may identify (to some extent) with more than one party simultaneously. The manner in which respondents are assigned to partisan categories may, therefore, produce a distorted image of partisan change and stability.

To see why the SRC measure produces distortions, consider a three-party system in which individuals have some level of identification with each party,

5. The question wording for the self-description item was as follows: "Now I'd like to ask you a question about how you regard yourself. On a scale from 1 to 10, where '10' represents a description that is perfect for you, and '1' a description that is totally wrong for you, how well do each of the following describe you? ... A Republican . . . A Democrat."

again ranging from 0 to 1. The process by which these levels of identification are translated into a survey response may be depicted as follows (Model 3):

- Party 1 if $A > B + \alpha_1$ and $A > C + \alpha_1$.
- Party 2 if $B > A + \alpha_2$ and $B > C + \alpha_2$.
- Party 3 if $C > A + \alpha_3$ and $C > B + \alpha_3$.
- Independent, otherwise.

Suppose a respondent's partisanship changes from (.70,.65,.10) to (.60,.65,.10). If $\alpha_k = 0$, the SRC measure detects a switch from Party 1 to Party 2. On the other hand, a more substantial change from (.70,.15,.10) to (.20,.15,.10) produces no corresponding change in survey response. Nor, for that matter, does a change from (.70,.65,.10) to (.70,.10,.65). It should be clear from these examples that the rate of party switching—the most frequently used index by which partisan stability is gauged (Clarke & Kornberg, 1992; Clarke, Stewart, & Whiteley, 1994; LeDuc et al, 1984; Mughan, 1981; Richardson, 1991)—offers a crude and possibly misleading picture of underlying partisan change (see also Converse & Pierce, 1992; Schickler & Green, 1996). Converse and Pierce (1992) point out additional shortcomings of party-switching rates: Among other things, these indices will tend to underestimate the stability of attachments to small parties, such as the Liberals in Great Britain and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany, that take up a relatively narrow portion of the underlying partisan space.

If Model 3 is correct, the SRC measure assesses changes only in party ranking, and even then, it focuses exclusively on which party achieves top ranking. To make matters worse, the SRC question, like all survey measures, contains some degree of measurement error. Whether due to interviewer biases, misread or misunderstood questions, incomplete translation of the partisan continuum into a discrete categorization, coding mistakes, or an inability on the part of respondents to gauge their own partisan sentiment, reported partisanship fluctuates randomly from one moment to the next (Green & Schickler, 1993). Error in the measurement of party ID is a tractable problem when underlying partisanship falls along a single dimension, as in the United States. Indeed, a sizable literature has grown out of attempts to apply measurement models to interval and ordinal scales of American party ID (Fiorina, 1981; Franklin, 1992; Green & Palmquist, 1994). But the problem of assessing the degree of response error becomes much more complex when the partisanship measure consists of a series of unordered categories. Currently, no accepted method exists for differentiating true partisan change from change due to measurement error among data of this kind.

This methodological roadblock could be circumvented if we had survey measures of partisanship akin to those found in the Times-Mirror study discussed above. If Canadian respondents, for example, were asked about the extent to which they identify with the Liberal Party (making no mention of other parties), the resulting survey response could be treated as an interval or ordinal variable and analyzed accordingly. The analysis could then be repeated with a comparable assessment of identification with other parties, rendering a dimension-by-dimension picture of partisan change. To our knowledge, however, no such party-by-party measures of identification have ever appeared in panel studies.⁶ We hope that this article will encourage survey researchers to include such measures in future studies, but for now, the task is to make the most out of existing measures patterned on the SRC item.

A METHOD FOR STUDYING PARTISAN STABILITY IN A MULTIPARTY CONTEXT

The SRC measure of partisanship provides an incomplete but still informative account of orientations toward each political party. The way we propose to use the SRC measure is to treat it as though it were a series of dichotomous variables: Does respondent *i* most strongly identify with Party *J* or not? The dichotomous indicator of identification with a given party (e.g., Social Democratic Party [SPD]) can be analyzed across successive waves of a panel survey. Using techniques first elaborated by Heise (1969) and since adapted to the analysis of ordinal data (Babakus, Ferguson, & Joreskog, 1987; Rigdon & Ferguson, 1991; Sharma, Durvasula, & Dillon, 1989), the pattern of correlations over time can then be used to assess the degree of partisan stability as well as the reliability of the dichotomous indicator of partisanship (DIP).

The key feature of the Heise (1969) model of measurement error in panel data is that latent party ID follows an AR(1) process. In other words, latent partisanship this period is a function of partisanship last period, plus a random disturbance. These disturbances are assumed to be independent from one period to the next. Moreover, the disturbances are assumed to be independent of measurement errors that enter into the translation of latent partisanship into survey responses. To be sure, models that allow for nonrandom error or

6. Measures of party-by-party affect have been used. For example, the German 1990 panel asks respondents how warmly they feel toward each party. Measures of party affect, however, are not suitable as indicators of party ID (see Converse & Pierce, 1985).

more complex autoregressive processes are available, but previous research suggests the appropriateness of the simple Heise model as against these alternatives (Palmquist & Green, 1992).

Because the Heise method analyzes correlation matrices (as opposed to covariance matrices, which have meaningful diagonal elements), many waves of panel data are required before interesting parameters may be estimated. With three waves of data, the Heise method of analyzing over-time correlations can estimate only the reliability of the measure administered during the second wave; to estimate trait stability requires the restrictive assumption that the measurement reliabilities remain constant over time (Wiley & Wiley, 1970). On the other hand, with four waves of data, the Heise model can estimate the R^2 net of measurement error, from a regression in which the third wave response is regressed on the second wave response.⁷ For this reason, the analyses that follow involve panels that have at least three waves of interviews, with emphasis on four-wave panels that require less restrictive statistical assumptions.

Whether this strategy of analyzing dichotomous indicators through the Heise model generates accurate results is an open question. It is possible to construct pathological examples that would cause this method of analysis to yield misleading estimates.⁸ We cannot, therefore, claim that the dummy variable approach produces an unbiased assessment of partisan stability. As a practical matter, however, few difficulties are likely to arise when dummy variables are used to assess partisan stability. A series of Monte Carlo simulations, discussed in Schickler and Green (1996), indicates that the DIP analysis performs quite well: Across an array of different assumptions about the degree of polarization in the party system, the reliability of partisanship measures, and the underlying stability of party ID, it gives an accurate rendering of partisan stability in a three-party system. This stands in sharp contrast to the poor performance of party-switching indices, which fluctuate due to a host of factors unrelated to the underlying stability of partisanship (Schickler & Green, 1996).

7. In effect, the Heise model uses estimates of measurement reliability for Waves 2 and 3 to disattenuate the raw correlation between these two measures. It can be shown that (r_{13r24}/r_{12r34}) is a consistent estimator of this R^2 .

8. For instance, suppose we were considering the case of two parties, as in Model 2. Let $\alpha_1 = \alpha_2 = .02$, and place the Democrats at $(.05, .10)$ and Republicans at $(.75, .70)$. This perverse illustration suggests a negative correlation between a dummy variable scored 1 if the SRC measure dubs one a Democrat and the underlying degree of Democratic identification in this sample. It is not surprising, given this inverse correlation between the dummy variable and the criterion variable it purports to measure, that the pattern of over-time correlations can also be thrown off. Were the Democrats to shift to $(.70, .75)$ and the Republicans to $(.10, .05)$, no change would be registered in our DIP measures.

DATA

We use data from four four-wave panel surveys to reassess the evidence on the stability of partisanship in Great Britain, Canada, and Germany. We selected these three countries because they are the only places outside the United States for which we were able to find panel surveys with four waves of partisanship data (see Guchteneire, LeDuc, & Niemi, 1985, 1991). We also analyzed four three-wave panel surveys from Great Britain, Canada, and Germany.⁹ The results from the three-wave panels are substantively the same as the results from the four-wave surveys. Nonetheless, as noted above, estimating the stability of partisanship in the three-wave studies requires stronger assumptions than is the case in the four-wave studies, and as a result we focus our attention on the latter.

The British data are drawn from a 1963-1964-1966-1970 panel survey, and a 1974-1974-1975-1979 panel.¹⁰ Each survey employed nationally representative samples of adult citizens. The first wave of the 1963-1970 panel interviewed 2,009 respondents in the summer of 1963, nearly 1½ years before the October 1964 general election. Nearly 1,500 respondents were reinterviewed following that election, and 1,163 of these respondents were interviewed immediately following the March 1966 election. After the June 1970 election, 718 of the respondents from the first three waves were interviewed for a final time. The 1963-1970 period saw a Labour government, led by Harold Wilson, take charge after defeating the incumbent Tories in the 1964 election. Labour gained only a narrow majority in 1964, but Wilson called a new election for March 1966, and Labour won a substantial majority. Labour's popularity eroded after 1966, due in part to difficult economic times, although the party recovered in time to make the June 1970 election competitive. Nonetheless, the Conservatives triumphed in 1970, and thus the 1963-1970 panel spans a period in which the fortunes of the parties were twice reversed.

The first wave of the 1974-1974-1975-1979 survey interviewed respondents in February 1974, following the first general election of that year. The

9. These surveys are the British Election Study, 1969-1974 (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [ICPSR] number 7869), the German Election Panel Study, 1987 (ICPSR number 9078), the 1974-1979-1980 Canadian National Election and Quebec Referendum Panel Study (ICPSR number 8079), and the 1992-1993 Canadian Election Study, Incorporating the 1992 Referendum Survey on the Charlottetown Accord (ICPSR number 6571).

10. These surveys are the Study of Political Change in Britain, 1963-1970, and the British Election Panel Study of 1974-1979. The principal investigators for the first panel were David Butler and Donald Stokes. Ivor Crewe, Bo Sarlvik, and James Alt were the principal investigators for the later panel.

Tory government of Edward Heath, elected in 1970, was by 1974 plagued by the international oil crisis and labor unrest. Nonetheless, Labour gained only a narrow plurality in the February 1974 election and formed a single-party minority government under Wilson. Labour called a new election in October and made sufficient gains to enjoy a bare majority in Parliament. The second wave was conducted following the October 1974 election. A third wave of interviews was administered following the referendum on entry into the European Common Market in June 1975. The 1975 survey was administered through a mail-back questionnaire, whereas the other interviews were done in person. The Labour government's popularity fell considerably during its term—in part due to continuing economic troubles—and the party was defeated in May 1979 by Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher. The final wave of interviews was conducted following the May 1979 election. Thus, the 1974-1979 survey spans one change in the governing party and a significant reversal of party fortunes.

The Canadian data are from a 1983-1984-1988-1988 panel study employing a nationally representative sample of adult citizens.¹¹ Interviews were conducted in 1983, following the September 1984 federal elections, and before and after the November 1988 federal election. This survey brackets a period marked by dramatic swings in the popularity of the Progressive Conservative Party. The panel's first wave was conducted in 1983 while the Liberals were still the governing party, as they had been for most of the previous 20 years. The Conservatives convincingly defeated the Liberals in the 1984 elections but then suffered a severe drop in popularity once in power. The Conservatives rebounded strongly in the months leading up to their victory in the 1988 election. The Conservative revival was in part due to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's use of the issue of free trade with the United States (Clarke & Kornberg, 1992). Therefore, the Canada panel spans one change in government, as well as marked shifts in the Conservatives' popularity.

Our German data are from a 1989-1990-1990-1990 panel survey.¹² Interviews were conducted in November/December 1989, May/June 1990, October/November 1990, and December 1990. The final wave followed the December 1990 election. The German data are from a stratified multistage random sample of voting-age West German citizens. The 1990 elections were a setback for the SPD and Green Parties and a significant victory for the

11. The Political Support in Canada, 1983-1988, survey was conducted by Harold D. Clarke and Allen Kornberg.

12. This survey is the German Election Panel Study, 1990. The principal investigators were Max Kaase, H. D. Klingemann, M. Kuechler, F. U. Pappi, and H. A. Semetko.

governing Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) Parties and their coalition partner, the FDP. The SPD appeared to have a reasonable chance to win the election in 1989, based on its gains in several *Länder* (which are analogous to states in the American context). But the combination of economic prosperity and the government's successful negotiation of unification with East Germany made the 1990 election a difficult one for the opposition SPD and Greens.

These surveys use different kinds of questions to measure partisanship (see the appendix for full question wording). The German survey asks respondents whether they "lean toward a particular party over the long term," even if they might occasionally vote for a different party. The German item does not list the parties and does offer the option of not identifying with any of the parties. By contrast, the British and Canadian items list the major parties within the question text. In these surveys, the partisanship item parallels the American question wording, except that "independence" is not offered as an option.¹³ Indeed, the British and Canadian items do not prompt for nonpartisanship at all, with the exception of providing the option of "or what" for respondents. On the other hand, the three-wave 1992-1993 Canadian panel study replaces the "or what" prompt with a more explicit appeal to nonidentifiers, by offering the option of "none of these." Considerable controversy has focused on which question wording is more appropriate (see Converse & Pierce, 1985; Johnston, 1992) and on the effects of question order (Heath & Pierce, 1992). Such differences make it important to avoid using the marginal distributions of responses to the partisanship items to draw conclusions about the relative extent of partisan attachment across countries. We report the distribution of partisanship for the four-wave panels but are cognizant of the sensitivity of the results to question wording. Indeed, variations in question wording and survey context make our task more challenging in a way: Does partisanship prove stable from country to country and across different survey formats?

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTISANSHIP

Parties in Britain, Germany, and Canada share several important features. In each case, two major parties have long attracted a substantial majority of identifiers (see Tables 1a-1d). In Britain, roughly 80% of the respondents identified with Labour or the Tories in each wave of the 1963-1970 panel, whereas 75% did so in the 1974-1979 panel. This relatively slight decline,

13. A potentially important difference is that Canadian surveys include separate items to tap partisanship at the federal and provincial levels (cf. Clarke & Kornberg, 1993, pp. 301-302).

along with evidence of a substantial reduction in the mean strength of partisanship for identifiers, is often cited as evidence of the demise of partisanship in Britain (Clarke & Stewart, 1984; Crewe, 1983; Schmitt, 1989). The SPD and CDU/CSU together account for approximately 70% of the German respondents, with nearly another 20% going to “no party” or “don't know.” The two main parties in Canada—the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives—account for roughly 65% of the Canadian respondents in the 1983-1988 data, with an additional 15% to 20% responding with “independent,” “none,” or “don't know.”

By the time of the 1993 elections, the share of the Liberals and Conservatives had fallen substantially in Canada, to just below 50% of the respondents (see Table 1e). Although some of this change is probably attributable to the different question wording used in the 1992-1993 survey (Johnston, 1992), much of the movement is due to the growth of the Reform Party and Bloc Quebecois as viable alternative parties. These two parties represent regionally based movements rooted in dissatisfaction with the federal government. The Bloc Quebecois was formed in 1990 to pursue independence for the province of Quebec, after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. Bloc Quebecois won 49% of the vote in Quebec in the 1993 election and won 54 seats in Parliament—becoming the official opposition party to the victorious Liberals. The Reform Party, founded in 1987 and based in the west, captured the support of many Conservatives dissatisfied with the party's efforts to pacify Quebec and concerned about the dismal state of the economy. It draws on a long tradition of western dissatisfaction with perceived mistreatment from Ottawa. The party won 19% of the vote nationally and 52 seats in the Parliament. The growing regional fragmentation of the Canadian party system distinguishes it from the British and German cases.

In each country, there are serious, institutionalized alternatives to the two dominant parties. In the German case, the centrist FDP has often held the balance of power in coalition governments, allying with either the SPD or the CDU/CSU. More recently, the Green Party has emerged as an alternative for those disaffected by the established parties. The Greens won 5.6% of the vote in the 1983 election and 8.3% in 1987—just behind the 9.1% of the third-place FDP. The Greens, facing many internal fissures, fell to 3.9% of the vote in the 1990 all-German election. Meanwhile, the FDP gained ground, finishing with 11.0% of the vote. In Britain, the Liberals account for 9% to 14% of the respondents in the 1963-1970 and 1974-1979 periods. Like the FDP, the Liberals are regarded as a centrist alternative to the two dominant parties, but unlike the German case, the British electoral system does not afford the Liberals the same opportunities to become part of governing coalitions. The single-member district, plurality rule system in Britain makes

Table 1a

Frequency Distribution (in percentages) for Partisanship in Great Britain, 1963-1970 (N = 705)

	1963	1964	1966	1970
Conservative	36.7	37.7	35.7	42.6
Labour	44.1	42.4	43.3	40.1
Liberal	9.9	13.3	12.3	9.9
Other party	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.6
No party	7.0	5.1	6.5	6.0
Don't know	2.3	1.1	1.4	0.9

Table 1b

Frequency Distribution (in percentages) for Partisanship in Great Britain, 1974-1979 (N = 724)

	February 1974	October 1974	1975	1979
Conservative	34.3	33.3	35.5	37.7
Labour	40.6	40.9	38.5	39.1
Liberal	13.5	14.5	9.4	13.0
Other party	2.0	2.8	2.4	1.2
No party	6.6	6.6	13.5	7.0
Don't know	3.0	1.8	0.7	1.9

Table 1c

Frequency Distribution (in percentages) for Partisanship in Canada, 1983-1988 (N = 500)

	1983	1984	1988 Preelection	1988 Postelection
Liberal	31.8	32.2	31.2	33.0
Progressive Conservative	32.8	34.6	32.6	34.8
NDP	8.8	12.2	10.6	12.4
Social Credit	1.2	1.0	0.6	1.2
Other	2.0	1.8	2.6	2.8
Refused	4.4	2.2	2.4	2.0
Don't know	4.8	2.6	6.4	3.4
Independent	2.4	1.4	1.2	0.4
None	11.8	12.0	12.4	10.0

Note. NDP = New Democratic Party.

it more difficult for minor parties to win seats than is the case in the German system of modified proportional rule. The Canadian New Democratic Party

Table 1d
Frequency Distribution (in percentages) for Partisanship in Germany, 1989-1990 (N = 869)

	November 1989	May 1990	October 1990	December 1990
SPD	34.8	39.1	37.5	34.6
CDU/CSU	32.5	32.7	36.1	37.0
FDP	3.2	2.9	3.2	4.3
Green	5.4	4.1	4.5	4.0
Republican	2.0	0.9	1.3	0.7
Other	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
No party	17.0	16.3	14.2	18.5
Don't know	3.1	1.7	1.5	0.2
Refused	1.8	1.8	1.5	0.2
Not applicable	0	0	0	0.2

Note. SPD = Social Democratic Party; CDU = Christian Democratic Union; CSU = Christian Social Union; FDP = Free Democratic Party.

Table 1e
Frequency Distribution (in percentages) for Partisanship in Canada, 1992-1993 (N = 1,312)

	October 1992	September to October 1993	November 1993
Liberal	26.8	24.7	30.8
Progressive Conservative	18.4	20.6	15.7
NDP	10.9	7.6	7.9
Reform	3.7	4.6	7.2
Bloc Quebecois	8.2	11.4	14.0
Other	0	0.3	0.4
None	26.1	26.6	21.9
Don't know	4.5	3.3	0.7
Refused	1.4	0.9	1.4

Note. NDP = New Democratic Party.

(NDP)—the most significant third party in Canada prior to the emergence of the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois—is perceived to be situated to the left of the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives. Although the NDP lagged behind the Liberals and Conservatives in federal identification during our 1983-1988 panel, the party won 19% of the vote in 1984 and 20% of the vote in the 1988 election. The NDP fell to a mere 7% of the vote and eight seats in 1993.

Before turning to evidence of individual-level change, fluctuations at the aggregate level warrant attention. The 1963-1970 British data show a gain in Tory identification from the third to fourth waves of the survey. Conservatives trailed Labour 43% to 36% in 1966 (and by similar margins in the first two waves) but enjoyed a 42.6% to 40% advantage immediately after the 1970 election. The Liberal share held steady at roughly 10% throughout the four waves. This increase in Conservative identification—which actually began soon after the 1966 election and peaked over a year before the 1970 election (Butler & Stokes, 1974)—corresponds to troubled times for Wilson's Labour government and led up to the Tories' 1970 triumph. At the opening of the 1974-1979 panel, the Labour Party again enjoyed a 6-point edge in identification over the Conservatives. This advantage was cut in half by the time of the June 1975 Common Market referendum and was reduced to a mere 1.4 points by 1979.

The German data capture the CDU comeback that allowed it to hold onto power in the 1990 election, despite early indications of increased SPD strength. Over the course of 13 months, the CDU/CSU gained 4.5 points, whereas in December 1990, the SPD found itself in virtually the same place it was in November 1989. Finally, the Canada data show little evidence of aggregate instability in the share of identifiers for the Liberals, Conservatives, or NDP from 1983 to 1988. However, this masks a precipitous drop in Conservative identification not long after the party's 1984 election victory (Clarke & Kornberg, 1992). By the time of the 1988 preelection survey, the Conservatives had regained nearly all of the ground lost in the 1985-1987 period, whereas the Liberals had ceded all of their post-1984 gains. The magnitude of aggregate partisan change in between 1984 and 1988 provides an intriguing opportunity to investigate the relationship between aggregate- and individual-level stability. Our results show that partisan attachments were loosened significantly in the 1980s in Canada, paving the way for even greater change in the early 1990s, when identification with the Conservatives faltered and the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois emerged as important alternatives.

ANALYSES OF PARTISAN INSTABILITY

We analyzed the data in two different ways. In the first set of analyses, we created dummy variables for identification with each of the major parties, based on the partisanship question. For example, a West German respondent who in the first wave claimed to identify with the SPD would be coded as 1 for the SPD dummy variable in that wave, and all others would be coded as 0. To estimate the stability of SPD partisanship, we used weighted least

squares on the matrix of polychoric correlations of the SPD dummy variables from each wave. This analysis produces estimates for the effect of SPD partisanship in Wave 2 on SPD partisanship in Wave 3, for the measurement error variance in Waves 2 and 3, and for the R^2 in Wave 3.¹⁴ It is important to emphasize that this method does not assume that respondents harbor multiple identifications but merely allows for the possibility.

Tables 2a-2c present the estimates for the British, German, and Canadian data. The estimates for the stability of partisanship are broadly consistent with expectations drawn from the American data. The R^2 for the Labour dummy variable in Britain is .957 over a 2-year period (1964-1966) and is .996 over an 8-month period (1974-1975), whereas the Tory dummy variable has an R^2 of .961 over the 2-year period and of .975 over the 8-month period. These results mean that once the partisanship item is purged of random measurement error, knowing that a respondent is a Tory in 1964 explains 96% of the variance in whether the respondent is a Tory or not in 1966. These results compare quite favorably with American data. Green and Palmquist (1994) find the typical R^2 over a 2-year period to be .94, and replicating their analyses using the DIP measures also yields a median R^2 of .94. Although some of the estimates presented here and by Green and Palmquist imply weaker 2-year stabilities than others, sampling error is sufficient to account for differences.

The 1984-1988 Canadian data suggest the presence of more instability, although the data cover a 4-year period. The Liberal dummy variables show relatively high stability; the R^2 of .836 over the 4-year period is only slightly lower than one would expect based on American data. It corresponds to an R^2 of .914 over the course of 2 years. The Conservative dummy variables, however, show considerably more instability. The R^2 of .736 is quite low, corresponding to an R^2 of .858 for a 2-year period. The results for the 1983-1988 panel contrast sharply with the results of the 1974-1980 Canadian panel survey but share much in common with the 1992-1993 Canadian results (see Table 3a). The 1974-1980 survey shows partisanship to have been quite stable from 1979 to 1980: The R^2 for the Liberal dummy variable is .980, and the R^2 for the Progressive Conservatives is 1.000. By contrast, the 1992-1993 panel shows considerable instability. The R^2 for the Liberals over the course of a single month (with an election intervening) was .881, whereas the R^2 for the Progressive Conservatives was .873. Taken together, these results suggest

14. The standard error for each R^2 was computed by bootstrapping the data with 500 replications and calculating the R^2 for each replication. The standard error reported is the standard deviation of the R^2 estimates across these replications. In estimating the stability of partisanship, we constrained the measurement error variance to be nonnegative and the R^2 for Wave 3 to be less than or equal to 1.0.

Table 2a

Partisan Stability in Great Britain, Canada, and West Germany: Analysis of Four-Wave Panel Studies Using Dummy Variables for Party

Panel	Party	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance	
				Wave 2	Wave 3
Great Britain, 1963-1964-1966-1970 ($n = 705$)					
	Labour	2 years	.957 (.020)	.036 (.056)	.033 (.057)
	Tory	2 years	.961 (.021)	.029 (.057)	.045 (.057)
	Liberal	2 years	.983 (.033)	.102 (.069)	.025 (.068)
Great Britain, 1974-1974-1975-1979 ($n = 724$)					
	Labour	8 months	.996 (.012)	.037 (.054)	.057 (.056)
	Tory	8 months	.975 (.015)	.052 (.055)	.036 (.055)
	Liberal	8 months	.957 (.038)	.084 (.066)	.095 (.073)
Germany, 1989-1990-1990-1990 ($n = 869$)					
	CDU	5 months	.956 (.023)	.031 (.053)	.097 (.055)
	SPD	5 months	.944 (.030)	.104 (.056)	.065 (.054)
Canada, 1983-1984-1988-1988 ($n = 500$)					
	Liberal	4 years	.836 (.045)	.041 (.074)	.075 (.071)
	PC	4 years	.736 (.052)	.005 (.076)	.078 (.073)
	NDP	4 years	.897 (.050)	.117 (.080)	.000 (.069)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses. CDU = Christian Democratic Union; SPD = Social Democratic Party; PC = Progressive Conservative Party; NDP = New Democratic Party.

that the Canadian party system was becoming destabilized in the mid-1980s and that individual-level partisan stability in Canada has fallen considerably from its prior levels. We believe the sharp differences between the Canadian evidence on one hand and the British and German data on the other offers the potential for many insights into the conditions under which partisanship changes.

Table 2b

Analysis of Four-Wave Panel Studies Using 3-Point Scales for Partisanship, With Nonidentifiers in the Middle and the Two Major Parties on the Extremes

Panel	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance	
			Wave 2	Wave 3
Great Britain, 1963-1964-1966- 1970 (<i>n</i> = 546)	2 years	.980 (.013)	.023 (.062)	.034 (.063)
Great Britain, 1974-1974-1975- (<i>n</i> = 523)	8 months	.986 (.008)	.024 (.063)	.021 (.063)
Germany, 1989-1990-1990-1990 (<i>n</i> = 678)	5 months	.963 (.018)	.074 (.058)	.069 (.058)
Canada, 1983-1984-1988-1988 <i>n</i> = 345)	4 years	.837 (.043)	.020 (.086)	.111 (.084)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

In a separate analysis, we extended our DIP measure to account for the strength of respondent partisanship. We turned the dummy variable for identification with each party into an ordinal scale in which very strong partisans, fairly strong partisans, and not very strong partisans were distinguished from nonidentifiers with that party. We also constructed scales of partisanship in which identifiers with a given party were scored 2, leaners toward that party were scored 1, and nonidentifiers with that party were scored 0. In each case, the results were essentially indistinguishable from results obtained using dichotomous indicators.

We also constructed scales of partisanship comparable in some respects to the American partisanship item. As noted above, this must be done with care in a multiparty system. We employed two different types of measures here. For the first measure, we put the two main parties on either end of a partisanship scale and coded respondents who did not identify with a party in the middle.¹⁵ For the second measure, we used an ordering that corresponds roughly to the ideological orientations of each party (see Converse & Pierce,

15. For Canada, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives were placed at the extremes, with respondents answering "don't know," "independent," or "none" in the middle. In Germany, the SPD and CDU/CSU were placed at the extremes, with those answering "don't know" or "none" in the middle. In Great Britain, Labour and Tory identifiers were placed at the extremes, with respondents answering "no party," "refused," and "don't know" in the middle.

Table 2c
Analysis of Four-Wave Panel Studies Using 3-Point Scales for Partisanship, With Three Major Parties Arranged Along an Ideological Continuum

Panel	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance	
			Wave 2	Wave 3
Great Britain, 1963-1964-1966-1970 ($n = 559$)	2 years	.968 (.015)	.016 (.061)	.023 (.062)
Great Britain, 1974-1974-1975- ($n = 525$)	8 months	.999 (.003)	.014 (.062)	.018 (.063)
Germany, 1989-1990-1990-1990 ($n = 426$)	5 months	.999 (.005)	.013 (.069)	.020 (.069)
Canada, 1983-1984-1988-1988 ($n = 273$)	4 years	.861 (.056)	.109 (.110)	.000 (.091)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

1992). Therefore, in Great Britain, we coded Labour and the Tories as occupying the extremes, with the Liberals in the middle. In Canada, the NDP and Progressive Conservatives are coded as 1 and 3 respectively, with Liberals in the middle.¹⁶ In Germany, we constructed a 3-point scale with the CDU/CSU and SPD on either end, with the FDP in the middle. The Greens were omitted from the German 3-point scale because it is not clear that they can be placed alongside the other major parties on a common single dimension.¹⁷

16. Placing the three Canadian parties along a single dimension is particularly difficult, because the NDP apparently draws support both for ideological reasons—as the left-wing party—and as a protest party against the two dominant parties. As a result, it is not clear that it is appropriate to place the Liberals in the middle between the Conservatives and NDP.

17. We also experimented with 3-point scales for Germany in which FDP identifiers, along with respondents answering “don’t know” or “none,” were placed in the middle, with the CDU/CSU and the SPD at the extremes. The results were indistinguishable from the estimates when the 3-point scale with nonidentifiers alone in the middle was analyzed, although this alternative coding scheme increased the number of valid cases. We constructed the same scales for the British data (combining Liberals with nonidentifiers), and again the results were indistinguishable from the 3-point scales with nonidentifiers alone in the middle, although the sample sizes again increased. Such an analysis did not make substantive sense for Canada, because the Liberals are the middle party in the ideological spacing but are at one extreme in the other 3-point measure.

It is important to note that the 3-point scales have different substantive interpretations than do the dummy variable analyses. Whereas the dummy variables impose no dimensionality on patterns of change, the 3-point scales acknowledge only that change that occurs along a left-right axis. Furthermore, construction of the 3-point scales requires that the sample omit observations that cannot be placed on this dimension. The 3-point scales with nonidentifiers in the middle are analogous to the American partisanship scale: Each imposes a bipolar dimensionality, with nonidentification treated as a middle option. Analysis of this scale provides estimates for the stability of partisanship for respondents who do not identify with minor parties at any point in time. But omitting third-party identifiers clearly poses more serious problems outside the confines of the U.S. two-party electoral system. The 3-point scale with the "moderate" party in the middle imposes an "ideological" spacing on respondents and estimates the stability of respondent partisanship along this continuum. It provides estimates for the stability of partisanship for identifiers with these three parties only; it does not provide information about respondents who are nonidentifiers or who switch between having an identification and not having an identification. In effect, it limits the sample to what might be called "hard-core" identifiers.

Nonetheless, the results from the 3-point scales closely resemble our results using the dummy variables, particularly in Britain (see Tables 2b and 2c). The R^2 's in the British case are again in the .96 to .98 range over a 2-year period and in the .99 range for an 8-month period. The estimates for Germany increase slightly when the 3-point scales are used. In particular, the 3-point scale restricted to identifiers shows high stability. The estimates for Canada from 1984 to 1988 are also relatively high when the 3-point scales are used: The R^2 is .861 for the three-party item and is .837 when people who do not identify with a party are placed in the middle. These estimates correspond to R^2 's in the .96 range for a single year. These results suggest that instability in Canada might have been somewhat limited in the 1983-1988 period. The estimates for the 3-point partisanship item for the 1992-1993 Canada data, however, suggest that partisan stability later eroded (see Tables 3a-3c for the estimates for Canada in 1992-1993, along with the estimates for the other three-wave panels). The R^2 for the 3-point item with those who do not identify with a party in the middle is a scant .879 in the month spanning the 1993 elections. This is a far cry from the stability evident in the other panel surveys examined here and by Green and Palmquist (1994).

The higher stability in the German and Canadian four-wave panels when the 3-point scales are used in place of the dummy variables might be attributable either to the restricted sample used in the 3-point scales or to the 3-point scales' rigid dimensionality assumption. To evaluate these explana-

Table 3a
Partisan Stability in Great Britain, Canada, and West Germany: Analysis of Three-Wave Panel Studies Using Dummy Variables for Party

Panel	Party	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance
				Wave 2
Great Britain, 1969-70-74 ($n = 463$)				
	Labour	4 years	.837 (.063)	.034 (.074)
	Tory	4 years	.901 (.049)	.041 (.073)
	Liberal	4 years	1.000 (.080)	.191 (.137)
Germany, 1986-1987-1987 ($n = 1,311$)				
	CDU	1 month	.890 (.034)	.024 (.044)
	SPD	1 month	.939 (.037)	.048 (.045)
Canada, 1974-1979-1980 ($n = 822$)				
	Liberal	1 year	.980 (.038)	.090 (.058)
	PC	1 year	1.000 (.024)	.070 (.051)
	NDP	1 year	.845 (.075)	.008 (.065)
Canada, 1992-1993-1993 ($n = 1,312$)				
	Liberal	1 month	.881 (.057)	.059 (.051)
	PC	1 month	.873 (.058)	.078 (.053)
	NDP	1 month	1.000 (.027)	.053 (.048)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses. CDU = Christian Democratic Union; SPD = Social Democratic Party; PC = Progressive Conservative Party; NDP = New Democratic Party.

tions, we replicated the dummy variable analyses, this time restricting the sample to respondents with valid responses to the 3-point ideological partisanship scale in each wave. This reduces the sample size by roughly half in Canada and Germany, although by only 20% to 30% in Great Britain. The results demonstrate that the different samples explain the different results in

Table 3b
Analysis of Three-Wave Panel Studies Using 3-Point Scales for Partisanship, With Nonidentifiers in the Middle and the Two Major Parties on the Extremes

Panel	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance Wave 2
Great Britain, 1969-1970-1974 ($n = 370$)	4 years	.887 (.044)	.023 (.078)
Germany, 1986-1987-1987 ($n = 1,051$)	1 month	.948 (.028)	.063 (.048)
Canada, 1974-1979-1980 ($n = 619$)	1 year	1.000 (.010)	.071 (.062)
Canada, 1992-1993-1993 ($n = 402$)	1 month	.879 (.042)	.000 (.074)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 3c
Analysis of Three-Wave Panel Studies Using 3-Point Scales for Partisanship, With Three Major Parties Arranged Along an Ideological Continuum

Panel	Approx. Time Span Between Waves 2 and 3	R^2 Wave 2 to Wave 3	Measurement Error Variance Wave 2
Great Britain, 1969-1970-1974 ($n = 346$)	4 years	.940 (.036)	.025 (.079)
Germany, 1986-1987-1987 ($n = 677$)	1 month	.968 (.015)	.000 (.055)
Canada, 1974-1979-1980 ($n = 518$)	Does not satisfy assumptions for polychoric correlations.		
Canada, 1992-1993-1993 ($n = 475$)	Does not satisfy assumptions for polychoric correlations.		

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Germany and Canada. When one performs the dummy variable analyses on the sample of hard-core identifiers, the results are the same in all four surveys: Partisanship is extremely stable over time (see Schickler & Green, 1996). The changed sample has no effect on the British results, which show high stability regardless of the sample or measure used. But the increased estimates in Germany, and particularly in Canada, when the sample is restricted to identifiers show the superiority of the dummy variable approach for estimating the stability of partisanship. It shows that the higher estimates when the 3-point scales are used instead of dummy variables (compare Tables 2a and 2c) are attributable to the restricted sample used in the 3-point scale analyses, rather than to the measurement properties of the scales. The 3-point ordinal scale is appropriate if one wants to estimate the stability of identification for partisans only, but this glosses over changes between identification and nonidentification. The dummy variables include all respondents and, therefore, do not restrict attention to a particularly stable portion of the electorate.

In addition to estimating the stability of partisanship, our analyses also provide estimates for the measurement error in the partisanship item. Because the variance of each item is standardized to one (because the analysis is based on polychoric correlations), the reliability of each item is simply one minus the measurement error variance. The median reliability for the DIP in the four-wave surveys is .95, which is slightly higher than the median error estimate when Green and Palmquist's (1994) American data are reanalyzed using polychoric correlations. The consonant reliability estimates are encouraging: If we found there to be considerably more measurement error outside the United States than in American data, it would raise questions about the validity of our method for assessing and correcting for response error in survey data.

PARTY ID AND SHORT-TERM FORCES

Our evidence that party ID in Britain, Germany, and Canada is relatively stable across both short and long time spans goes against the notion that citizens readily adjust their partisanship to changes in government popularity, candidate evaluations, or voting behavior. To this point, however, we have not gauged the impact of these short-term forces on party ID. We have examined this link between short-term forces and partisanship using a variety of data sets, but for the sake of brevity, we shall focus on the 1983-1988

Canadian panel study and the 1974-1979 British survey. The 1983-1988 panel is a good test case because partisanship appears to have been a bit less stable in this survey than in the other four-wave panels, raising the possibility that short-term forces were influential. The 1974-1979 panel is also a promising test case because it covers a period in which there is a major reversal of party fortunes: The Labour Party's 1974 victories are followed by the Tory sweep in 1979 that brought Margaret Thatcher to power.

We first examined how ratings of the Progressive Conservative and Liberal party leaders and evaluations of the performance of Brian Mulroney as Prime Minister affected party ID in Canada. We used the same model that Green and Palmquist (1990) use to estimate the effects of short-term forces on party ID in the United States, except that we used an estimation technique that treats the data as ordinal rather than continuous. In the model, lagged values of party ID and the test variable (party leader evaluations or Mulroney performance evaluations) are used as instruments for party ID and the test variable, respectively.

The results, presented in Table 4, provide little support for the view that party ID is responsive to short-term forces outside the U.S. context. None of the estimated coefficients are statistically significant, and the estimates tend to be substantively small. For example, a one standard deviation shift in evaluations of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative leaders in 1988 is estimated to result in a .085 ($SE = .562$) of a standard deviation change in identification with the Progressive Conservative Party. For the British panel, we assessed the effects of evaluations of the Labour Party's handling of inflation and unemployment, and attitudes toward the Labour Party's leader on party ID in 1979. Again, we found no evidence that short-term forces affect party ID (see Table 4).¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Our aim in this article has been to extend findings of partisan stability beyond the borders of the United States. The principal conclusion to emerge from our analysis of eight panel studies is that, once measurement error is taken into account, rates of partisan change in Britain, Germany, and pre-Mulroney Canada closely resemble those found in the United States. Of

18. We also assessed the effects of voting behavior on party ID for these two surveys (Schickler & Green, 1996). The results again turn up no statistically significant estimates for the effects of the vote on party ID.

Table 4
Weighted Least Squares Estimates for Effects of Short-Term Forces on Party Identification in Canada (1983-1988) and Britain (1974-1979)

Alternative Specifications	Time Span	Effect of PID_{t-1} on PID_t	Effect of Short-Term Forces _t on PID_t	<i>n</i>
Canada, Liberal identification				
Mulroney thermometer rating	4 years (Waves 2-4)	.858 (.096)	.100 (.207)	442
Difference in ratings for PC and Liberal leaders	4 years (Waves 2-4)	.827 (.142)	.137 (.238)	419
Approval of Mulroney performance	1 month (Waves 3-4)	.960 (.080)	-.046 (.114)	493
Canada, PC identification				
Mulroney thermometer rating	4 years (Waves 2-4)	.772 (.173)	.173 (.317)	442
Difference in ratings for PC and Liberal leaders	4 years (Waves 2-4)	.777 (.382)	.085 (.562)	419
Approval of Mulroney performance	1 month (Waves 3-4)	.949 (.130)	-.003 (.150)	493
Britain, Tory identification				
Callaghan evaluation	5 years (Waves 2-4)	.857 (.148)	.145 (.216)	717
Approval of Labour handling of inflation and unemployment	5 years (Waves 2-4)	.965 (.212)	-.049 (.351)	685
Britain, Labour identification				
Callaghan evaluation	5 years (Waves 2-4)	1.000 (.552)	-.222 (.796)	717
Approval of Labour handling of inflation and unemployment	5 years (Waves 2-4)	.997 (.281)	-.096 (.451)	685

Note. PID_t = party identification at time t ; PID_{t-1} = party identification at time $t-1$; Short-Term Forces _{t} = short-term forces at time t ; PC = Progressive Conservative Party. Standard errors are in parentheses. Each row represents a separate regression analysis. All coefficients are standardized. Variables have been recoded so that the short-term forces are expected to have a positive sign. The reliability of party ID is stipulated to be .975. This is a higher reliability than the typical estimate in Table 2a, thus providing a difficult test for the partisan stability thesis. When the reliability of the PID measure is stipulated to be 1.0, there still are no significant short-term forces effects. The reliability of the short-term forces measures has no effect on these estimates (see Green, 1990). Substantively identical results are obtained when different combinations of survey waves are analyzed.

course, partisanship is nowhere found to be perfectly stable; in any given year, roughly 2% to 4% of the variance in partisanship is newly introduced. To dub partisanship an exogenous predictor of the vote during a given election cycle represents a simplification. Yet, it is precisely the kind of empirical approximation that can be useful to students of voting behavior, who must inevitably grapple with specification problems much thornier than the exogeneity of party ID.

The partisan stability thesis is not without limits. As Converse and Pierce (1986) have argued, partisan attachments wither when parties die out or change names, an observation of special relevance to contemporary Italy. Similarly, Green and Schickler (1996) found evidence of partisan change among Whites in the American South immediately following the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which enfranchised Blacks and revitalized two-party politics. That race and regional identities can unseat partisan attachments within an environment in which new electoral rules or new parties are emerging is a thesis that comports well with our present findings concerning Canada since 1983. As separatist issues concerning region, language, and ethnicity grew in prominence and achieved institutional expression in the emergence of regional parties, partisan attachments to the major parties weakened. In effect, one set of group identifications rooted in nationality unseated another associated with party.

Our attempt to extend measurement models of party ID outside the American context has also alerted us to limitations in the way in which partisanship is measured in multiparty systems. Although we are relatively sanguine about the capacity of our data analysis to detect rates of partisan change in Britain, Germany, and Canada, we cannot assess directly the effectiveness of our approach until the SRC-style party ID question is augmented by questions tailored to the multiparty environment. In particular, this means asking about levels of identification one party at a time, much in the same way that party affect is currently measured by a succession of thermometer items. It is our hope that survey researchers—whether or not they are persuaded by our thesis concerning partisan stability—will begin to introduce party-by-party measures of identification into the panel studies they conduct.

APPENDIX

Partisanship Question Texts

Great Britain, 1963-1970

“Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal, or what?” The “or what” was not asked in 1963 but was asked in the remaining waves.

Great Britain, 1969-1974

The partisanship item in 1969 and in 1970 was identical to the 1964-1970 surveys, except that Scottish respondents were given the option of the Scottish Nationalist Party and respondents for Wales were given the option of Plaid Cymru. The item in 1974 was changed slightly to the following: “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal, or what?” Respondents in Scotland were also given the option of Nationalist, and respondents in Wales were given the option of Plaid Cymru.

Great Britain, 1974-1979

“Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal, or what?” Respondents in Scotland were also given the option of Nationalist, and respondents in Wales were given the option of Plaid Cymru.

The 1975 mail-back survey question text was as follows: “Generally speaking do you think of yourself as being closer to one political party than to any other?”

Germany, 1987

“Many people in the Federal Republic lean toward a particular party for a long time although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you: Do you in general lean toward a particular party? If so, which one?”

Appendix Continued

APPENDIX (Continued)

Germany, 1990

Same as in 1987.

Canada, 1974-1980

“Thinking of federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Social Credit, or what?”

Canada, 1983-1988

“Still thinking of federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Social Credit, or what?”

Canada, 1992-1993

“Thinking of federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Conservative, N.D.P., Reform Party, or none of these?” In Quebec, “Bloc Quebecois” replaces “Reform Party” in the question text.

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