In the Eye of the Beholder: Leader Images in Canada*

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Observers of Canadian politics have long recognized that voters' reactions to party leaders are central to an understanding of Canadian voting behaviour. In analyses of the Diefenbaker-Pearson and Trudeau eras from 1957 to 1984, voters' images of the leaders have been invoked with regularity to explain the ebb and flow of party fortunes.[1] Given this, it is surprising that the precise character of the leader factor has

1 See for example Peter Regenstreif, *The Diefenbaker Interlude: Parties and Voting in Canada* (Toronto: Longman, 1965); Gilbert R. Winham and Robert B. Cunningham, "Party Leader Images in the 1968 Federal Election," this JOURNAL 3 (1970), 37-55; John Meisel, *Working Papers On Canadian Politics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972); Harold D. Clarke, Lawrence LeDuc, Jane Jenson and Jon H. Pammett, *Political Choice in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979); Harold D. Clarke, Lawrence LeDuc, Jane Jenson and Jon H. Pammett, *Absent Mandate: The Politics of Discontent* (Toronto: Gage, 1984); Barry J. Kay, Ronald D. Lambert, Steven D. Brown and James E. Curtis, "The Character of Electoral Change: A Preliminary Report from the National Election Study," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, 1985; and Steven D. Brown, Ronald D. Lambert, Barry J. Kay and James E. Curtis, "The 1984 Election: Explaining the Vote," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Winnipeg, 1986.

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attracted so little research attention. A review of the literature on voting in Canada reveals few, if any, systematic attempts to investigate the origins of leadership evaluations beyond those traceable to the partisanship of the perceiver.

What accounts for this neglect? Clearly it is not something uniquely Canadian. Rather, it seems to derive at least in part from the theoretical approaches which inform most comparative voting research. As Miller and his colleagues have pointed out in the United States,[2] the two dominant approaches during the past several decades—the *American Voter* model and the rational choice model—have encouraged investigators to treat the candidate factor as a short-term force that is either perceiver-determined or idiosyncratic in nature.

In the case of the *American Voter* model,[3] for example, voters' reactions to the leaders, candidates and other campaign stimuli are thought to be shaped in large part by enduring political attitudes such as partisanship. However, the model provides no theoretical principle to guide investigation of the content of candidate image that is not apparently a product of this partisan screening process. As a consequence, such "personal" image content tends to be treated as unexplained variation, the product of a myriad of factors that are idiosyncratic to the candidate and the election.[4]

Those adopting the rational choice model, on the other hand, view voters' reactions to campaign stimuli as products of a deliberative process governed by calculations of voter self-interest.[5] While such an approach suggests a strategy for investigating all dimensions of candidate assessment, rational choice theorists have shown little inclination to go beyond its narrow application to the candidate's political positions. In part, this emphasis on issues has been a matter of convenience: as measured in election surveys, candidate and voter policy preferences lend themselves more easily to the spatial analysis aspect of this approach than do candidate attributes and other voter preferences. In part, however, the emphasis simply reflects an underlying assumption that assessment of candidates in terms of their

2   See Arthur H. Miller, Martin P. Wattenberg and Oksana Malanchuk, "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates," *American Political Science Review* 80 (1986), 521-40.

3   Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960).

4   In this regard, see especially Donald E. Stokes, "Some Dynamic Elements of Contests for the Presidency," *American Political Science Review* 60 (1966), 19-28; or Herbert F. Weisberg and Jerrold G. Rusk, "Dimensions of Candidate Image," *American Political Science Review* 64 (1970), 1167-85.

5   For a brief overview of the rational choice approach as it has been applied in the field of voting, see Nicholas R. Miller, "Public Choice and the Theory of Voting: A Survey," in Samuel Long (ed.), *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 1 (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1986), 1-36.

Abstract. The "leader factor" in Canadian voting has received surprisingly little research attention. In this article, the authors employ data from the 1974, 1979, 1980 and 1984 Canadian National Election Studies to examine the organization of respondents' images of the major political party leaders. The central thesis developed here is that respondents' images of the leaders are not typically idiosyncratic to the leader or to the election in question. The images are shaped by a prototypical leader schema that affects the information about leaders that is processed and recalled. The authors test several implications of this thesis. They demonstrate that there is considerable commonality in the content of a citizen's images of leaders in any one election, and that there is evidence of both aggregate and individual-level stability in the structure of images across elections. The authors test an additional hypothesis from schema theory concerning individual differences in image content. In this regard, they demonstrate, contrary to some of the literature, that better-educated respondents are more likely than less-educated respondents to cite task-relevant dispositional attributes of the leaders.

Résumé. Le phénomène de « leader » dans le vote au Canada n'a pas beaucoup retenu l'attention des chercheurs en la matière. Cet article, en se basant sur les données des études électorales nationales canadiennes de 1974, 1979, 1980 et 1984, examine comment est organisée l'image que se font les répondants des leaders des principaux partis politiques. Le thème central qui est ici développé est que les images que se font les répondants des leaders ou de l'élection en question ne sont pas typiquement idiosyncrasiques. Les images sont façonnées par un schéma prototype de leader qui affecte l'information qui est fabriquée et rappelée au sujet des leaders. Diverses implications de cette thèse sont vérifiées et entre autres qu'il y a une satisfaction commune des citoyens au sujet des images de leaders dans toute élection, et que la stabilité dans la structure des images à travers les diverses élections est evidente à la fois au niveau individuel et de la masse. Une hypothèse additionnelle de la théorie schématique concernant les différences individuelles dans la satisfaction de l'image est aussi verifiée. À cet égard, les auteurs démontrent, contrairement à une certaine littérature, que les répondants mieux éduqués sont plus suceptibles de tenir compte de dispositions relatives aux tâches comme étant plus pertinentes dans leur appréciation des leaders.

personal qualities is a less rational exercise, and thus not as appropriate to investigate from the rational choice perspective.[6]

In recent years, two developments have led voting researchers to seek out theoretical frameworks that address more adequately the "personality" factor in elections. One has been the longitudinal growth in "unexplained variation," apparently due to this factor, that has been documented in temporal analyses of United States presidential elections.[7] The other has been a growing acceptance of the argument that character assessment of leadership candidates may well be a rational or patterned exercise after all, albeit one undertaken in

6 This point is well illustrated by Shabad and Andersen in their review of the literature concerning gender differences in "candidate orientation." See Goldie Shabad and Kristi Andersen, "Candidate Evaluations by Men and Women," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43 (1979), 19-35.

7 See Samuel A. Kirkpatrick, W. Lyons and Michael R. Fitzgerald, "Candidates, Parties and Issues in the American Electorate: Two Decades of Change," *American Politics Quarterly* 3 (1975), 247-83; Samuel Popkin, John W. Gorman, Charles Phillips and Jeffrey A. Smith, "Comment: What Have You Done for Me Lately? Toward an Investment Theory of Voting," *American Political Science Review* 70 (1976), 779-805.

circumstances of great uncertainty.[8] The net result of these trends has been some new thinking on the subject, and the mapping of some promising research directions.

Drawing on several of these recent contributions, we attempt in this article to provide a theoretical framework with which to explore the structure and content of Canadian leader images. Our central thesis is that citizens' images of the major political party leaders are not typically idiosyncratic either to the leader or to the electoral circumstances. Rather, they are informed by a common cognitive structure—a common leader schema or prototype—which shapes the kinds of information about leaders that are stored and retrieved from memory. Using data collected after four different federal elections, we examine several implications of this thesis. We demonstrate that there is indeed a commonality in citizens' images of the various party leaders in any one election, that respondents display both aggregate and individual-level stability in the content of their images over elections, and that differences among individuals in the use of different image content conforms with at least some of the expectations from schema theory.

Theoretical Orientation

The approach that informs our investigation of Canadian leader images owes much to recent theoretical developments in the fields of cognitive and social psychology, and to recent applications of these ideas by political scientists.[9] We adopt here the notion of a "schema" to describe the cognitive structures people may employ to organize their knowledge about a subject, and schematic thinking to describe how people process information about that subject.[10]

8　See for example Benjamin I. Page, *Choices and Echoes in Presidential Elections* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), chap. 8; Eugene Declercq, Thomas L. Hurley and Norman R. Luttbeg, "Voting in American Presidential Elections, 1956-1972," *American Politics Quarterly* 3 (1975), 222-46; or Popkin et al., "Comment."

9　For a brief overview of this literature, see Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates" as well as Richard R. Lau and David O. Sears (eds.), *Political Cognition* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986).

10　In its relatively short history, the term "schema" has been used to identify a number of different theoretical structures, depending on the theorist. Those applying the concept to political cognition have been somewhat more consensual in this respect than their colleagues in social and cognitive psychology. Political scientists have used the term to refer to a perceiver's knowledge structure with regard to a subject. As such, its meaning is captured in part by the more established concepts of "implicit personality theory" and "stereotype," but it is intended to have more general application than either of these concepts. For a discussion of the concept's development and use in social psychology, see Shelly E. Taylor and Jennifer Crocker, "Schematic Bases of Social Information Processing," in E. Tory Higgins, C. Peter Herman and Mark P. Zanna (eds.), *Social Cognition: The Ontario Symposium* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981), 89-134. For a

Basic to this approach is the assumption that human beings have limited energy and mental capacity with which to process information about the world. Consequently, they develop perceptual short-cuts in order to cope with the wealth of data to which they are exposed, and to allow an appropriate response. The concept of schema refers to one of these short-cuts. A schema is a cognitive structure of stored prior knowledge about a subject that is signalled for the perceiver by a label. The subject in question may be a role (politician), a person (John Turner), or a state of mind (pensive), to name only three possibilities. The cognitive structure may be largely undeveloped, containing only one or two isolated belief elements or it may be highly developed with a large number of general attributes or features of the concept, specific instances of the concept and the interrelationships among these various elements.

"Thinking schematically" involves a number of processes that provide economies for the perceiver. First, information stored as schemata is organized for rapid recall when activated by the appropriate cue or label. Second, as Hastie points out, a schema once activated serves as "a scaffold for the orderly encoding of incoming information. Relationships among disparate elements of the experienced event are provided by the schema. The perceiver is motivated to seek missing information that has not been experienced, but which is anticipated by the provision of slots in the schema. And sometimes, when information is missing, it is inferred as a default value to fill an empty slot in the schema."[11]

Adoption of the schema approach for the investigation of leader images represents a departure from established practice. Most prior research on the subject has been based on the assumption that the perceiver processes each new datum about a leader in a "piecemeal" fashion. That is, each new piece of information elicits an affective response, and one's overall evaluation of the leader is an additive function of these discrete responses. The additive models of voting developed by Kelley and Mirer[12] and by Fishbein, Ajzen and Hinkle[13] typify this approach; indeed, they provide impressive support for it in terms of predicting behaviour. Despite this track record, however, some

review of its use in the political cognition literature see Richard R. Lau and David O. Sears, "Social Cognition and Political Cognition: The Past, the Present and the Future," in Lau and Sears, *Political Cognition*, 247-66.

11 Reid Hastie, "A Primer of Information-Processing Theory for the Political Scientist," in Lau and Sears, *Political Cognition*, 11-39.

12 Stanley Kelley, Jr., and Thad W. Mirer, "The Simple Act of Voting," *American Political Science Review* 68 (1974), 572-91.

13 Martin Fishbein, Icek Ajzen and Ron Hinkle, "Predicting and Understanding Voting in American Elections," in Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein (eds.), *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 173-95.

political psychologists are skeptical about the potential of this approach, arguing that such models involve heuristics of decision-making that seem generally unrealistic given human capacities.[14]

Fiske argues that both piecemeal and schematic processing models may help us to understand political perception and evaluation—that "each process applies under circumstances that favour it."[15] She proposes a "dual-mode" approach according to which perceivers attempt to process information schematically when confronted with an interpretive situation. However, if the individual's existing schemata do not seem to apply to the situation, then piecemeal processing and evaluation will be adopted.

It is Fiske's discussion of the circumstances favouring schematic thinking that persuades us to adopt this approach in exploring the perception of Canadian political leaders. She argues that schema-based processing is most likely when, first, the individual has had an opportunity to develop a schema or category with an affect-laden label; second, available information about the situation strongly cues that category label; and third, the individual is required to make a global judgment, or, a global judgment has already been made about the object.[16]

For processing information about political leaders, all three conditions would seem to be well-satisfied. In the Canadian political context, the evaluation of political leaders is far from a novel task for most people. It is likely that we have a number of schemata that might be relevant to such a situation—for example, schemata for "political leaders," "prime ministers," or "Liberal leaders" to name only three. Secondly, the circumstances through which we acquire information about political leaders in Canada would normally cue these political schemata without ambiguity. There is seldom confusion about the role context in which leaders are acting or speaking. Finally, our purpose in processing information about a political actor is normally to form an overall assessment of the leader, or to integrate that information into our existing global assessment of that leader.

Theoretical Hypotheses

Adoption of the schema approach in our investigation of Canadian leader images carries with it a number of expectations about those

14 See for example John A. Herstein, "Keeping the Voter's Limits in Mind: A Cognitive Process Analysis of Decision Making in Voting," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 40 (1981), 843-61.
15 Susan T. Fiske, "Schema-Based versus Piecemeal Politics: A Patchwork Quilt, but not a Blanket of Evidence," in Lau and Sears, *Political Cognition*, 44.
16 Fiske, "Schema-Based versus Piecemeal Politics," 50-51.

images. First, it leads us to expect common patterns in the structure and content of the images that the citizen has formed of the various leaders. Certainly, the average citizen will have a separate image or schema for some and perhaps each of the major party leaders. However, given the level of ambiguity normally surrounding the leaders' actions and motivations, the leaders' remoteness from direct personal experience, and the need for information relevant to comparative evaluation, it seems likely that most perceivers will draw on a prototypical role schema when developing their images of the leaders.[17] As noted above, the role schema might serve as a basis for direct inferences about the leader (like all politicians, the leader is opportunistic, selfless and so forth); as well, it might serve as an "agenda" for image formation or candidate assessment, and as a frame of reference for separating relevant from irrelevant information and for detecting gaps in the citizen's knowledge of the leader (is the leader honest, trustworthy, smooth and so forth?). In either case, the effect would be to impose a common structure on citizens' various images in that they would tend to cite the same kinds of attributes when describing leaders.

Our second expectation also draws on the cost-saving function of the schema: we expect that the common prototypical structure exhibited by the citizen will remain quite stable over time despite the emergence of new circumstances and new leaders. Indeed, it may be most useful to citizens when they are confronted with new leaders on the political landscape.

Third, viewing leader images as schemata suggests a number of hypotheses concerning differences in the nature and structure of individuals' profiles. Until recently much of our thinking on this subject has been informed by Converse's "cognitive capacity" model.[18] Converse argued that differences in sophistication could be understood largely as differences in citizens' capacities to organize political evaluations around a small number of abstract programmatic or ideological dimensions. Converse's research showed that highly sophisticated observers exhibited a broad contextual grasp of political events understood in abstract ideological terms, while less sophisticated observers organized their understanding around narrower and more concrete policy concerns. At the least sophisticated end of the continuum were those "whose evaluations of the political scene had no shred of policy significance . . . had no idea what the party stood for . . . [or] . . . devoted their attention to personal qualities of the candidates."[19]

17 For a discussion of the prototype notion as it might be applied to the cognition of political figures, see Donald R. Kinder, Mark D. Peters, Robert P. Abelson and Susan T. Fiske, "Presidential Prototypes," *Political Behavior* 2 (1980), 315-37.
18 Philip E. Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press, 1964), 206-61.
19 Ibid., 217.

Much of Converse's theory about the structure of mass belief systems has travelled well over the past two decades; however, Arthur Miller and others using the schema notion have questioned his preoccupation with the organizing role of *policy* concerns for sophisticated observers.[20] In dealing with sophistication, schema theorists tend to limit their attention to the breadth and depth of the knowledge structure—the number of related elements, the tightness of organization, and the level of abstraction at which inferences can be made.

This leads us, then, to take a second look at individual differences in the use of personal attributes with reference to leader profiles. Perhaps the use of such attributes ought not to be treated, as Sears suggests, as a "chronologically immature way of dealing with political stimuli,"[21] or as a body of undifferentiated "personal content." Rather, we might expect that politically sophisticated observers would focus as easily on character assessment as on policy concerns when describing political leaders; we might expect as well that when they do so, they would tend to go beyond the observable features of the leader to focus on the task-relevant dispositional attributes that might be inferred from those features.

Analysis

The Aggregate Structure of Canadian Leader Images

Is there a structure to the images that Canadians hold about their political leaders? To investigate this question we have chosen to employ the open-ended responses that four Canadian samples provided when asked specifically if there was anything they liked or disliked about the various federal party leaders. The samples in question were interviewed following the federal elections of 1974, 1979, 1980 and 1984.[22]

20 See Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates" as well as Richard R. Lau and Ralph Erber, "Political Sophistication: An Information-Processing Perspective," in Sidney Kraus and Richard M. Perloff (eds.), *Mass Media and Political Thought* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), 37-64; or Eric R. A. N. Smith, "The Levels of Conceptualization: False Measures of Ideological Sophistication," *American Political Science Review* 74 (1980), 685-96.

21 David O. Sears, "Political Behavior," in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol. 5 (2nd ed.; Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968), 315-458.

22 In each of these surveys, identical "like-dislike" questions were asked about each of the major party leaders contesting the election. The format of these questions was as follows: "Now we would like to ask you about your impressions of the various leaders of the federal political parties. (a) Is there anything in particular that you LIKE about (leader's name)?... Anything else? (b) Is there anything in particular that you DISLIKE about (leader's name)?... Anything else?" Use of these open-ended responses for our analyses has both advantages and disadvantages. One drawback is

To work with these open-ended responses requires a method of categorization. Each leader in each of the four elections elicited about 150 different responses as determined by the original coders. While some investigators in the United States have employed factor analysis to identify empirical dimensions of evaluation in such responses,[23] we have chosen to group responses into a number of categories that seem to capture on a priori grounds identifiable and meaningful distinctions. In part, we have selected categories that prior research suggests might be relevant; in other cases, we have created categories of responses that seem to fit together. In all, we have developed a typology comprised of 12 positive response categories and their 12 negative counterparts. The typology was used to categorize responses to all leaders in each of the four elections. The categories with positive and negative illustrations may be described briefly as follows:

(1) *Competence*: references to administrative competence, intelligence, knowledge, ability, experience or lack of these attributes.

(2) *Dynamism:* references to leadership qualities including strength, decisiveness, charisma or lack of these attributes.

(3) *Integrity*: references to honesty, trustworthiness, sincerity, commitment to principles or lack of these attributes.

(4) *Empathy*: references to understanding and sympathy for the "common person" or lack of these attributes.

(5) *Responsibility*: references to diligence, seriousness, maturity, self-control, pragmatism, realism or lack of these attributes.

(6) *Personal style:* references to more general personal attributes such as general likeability, manner, interpersonal demeanour—humble, warm, friendly—or their opposites—arrogant, aloof, unfriendly or pushy.

(7) *Political skills*: references to skills at communicating, handling party colleagues, opponents and the press; or lack of such skills.

(8) *Episodic judgments*: references to specific instances of the leader's behaviour of which the respondent approved or disapproved.

that they provide an incomplete picture of most respondents' cognitive images because they represent only the most salient positive and negative features of each image. More than offsetting this limitation, however, is the fact that open-ended responses are much less contaminated by the demand characteristics of the interview situation. Given that we are concerned largely with exploring the respondent's frame of reference, requiring respondents to define their own context of evaluation is a critical feature. For descriptions of the sampling designs used in these studies see Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Canada*, 397-400, regarding 1974; and Ronald D. Lambert, Steven D. Brown, James E. Curtis, Barry J. Kay and John M. Wilson, *1984 Canadian National Election Study Codebook* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1986) regarding 1984.

23 See, for example, Arthur H. Miller and Warren E. Miller, "Ideology in the 1972 Election: Myth or Reality—A Rejoinder," *American Political Science Review* 70 (1976), 832-49; or Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates."

(9) *Social background attributes*: positive and negative references to such background attributes as religion, region, race, family wealth, humble beginnings or profession.

(10) *Party references*: positive or negative references to the leader's party as a reason for liking or disliking him.

(11) *Political positions*: references to positive and negative political stances attributed to the leader including both group interests (for example, "too much for labour"), ideological orientations or specific issue positions.

(12) *Unclassified*: references that do not fit into any of the other categories; these include uninterpretable responses as well as the few references respondents made to a leader's physical appearance.

Given the mass media's seeming preoccupation with the activities of party leaders in Canada and the leaders' relative longevity in this media limelight, we might be tempted to assume that virtually all citizens have formed some impression of each leader. However, such an assumption is apparently unwarranted. Of the eight leaders on the federal political scene between 1974 and 1984, only Pierre Trudeau elicited even a 90 per cent response rate when respondents were invited to discuss their likes and dislikes. In the case of most other leaders this figure was in the 60 to 80 per cent range, and between 5 and 12 per cent of the respondents in each sample were unable to venture even one comment about any leader.[24]

To what extent is there evidence, among those who provided images of the leaders, of a common structure consistent with the use of a prototypical leadership schema? To provide an initial look at these data, Table 1 displays the relative frequency with which each of the 12 dimensions was mentioned by the 4 national samples.[25] Several features of this table bear upon our thesis.

First, it is clear that while the "popularity" of each dimension varies across time, the similarities in the four distributions are remarkable. In fact, the average rank-order coefficient (Spearman's Rho) across these four distributions is .92, and between the 1974 and 1984 samples (which involved entirely different leaders) it was .97. While aggregate patterns can mask much individual variation across

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24 To compare these leadership "visibility" rates with those found in the United States, see Donald R. Kinder and David O. Sears, "Public Opinion and Political Action," in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol. 2 (3rd ed.; New York: Knopf, 1985), 659-741.

25 It should be noted that in all but the 1984 survey only a random half of each sample was asked the leader "like-dislike" sequence of questions. For a description of the individual images of leaders in the 1974 survey, see Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Canada*, chap. 7; and for the 1979 and 1980 surveys, see Clarke et al., *Absent Mandate*, chap. 5.

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY OF CITING SUBSTANTIVE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES, 1974-1984 (in percentages)[a]

	1974	1979	1980	1984
A. *Personal attributes*				
Competence	6	12	12	7
Dynamism	12	12	14	12
Integrity	14	11	12	18
Empathy	4	4	3	6
Responsibility	8	8	8	5
Personal style	14	14	13	10
Political style	14	15	14	11
Episodic judgments	4	5	4	6
B. *Socio-political attributes*				
Social background	4	4	3	4
Party reference	2	2	2	3
Political positions	15	12	11	13
C. *Unclassified*	4	3	3	6
(N)	(1,201)	(1,353)	(845)	(3,380)

a Cell entries are the percentages of all likes and dislikes cited by the sample that fit the stated category. Due to rounding, columns may not total 100 per cent.

election periods, the striking parallels in these aggregate profiles provide strong prima facie evidence that leader images are not idiosyncratic to a specific election.

Second, consistent with what others have found both in Canada and elsewhere, respondents are generally preoccupied with the personal attributes of political leaders at the expense of the leaders' socio-political attributes. While no two investigators in the literature employ the same means of classifying responses, it seems that voters in the United States normally devote somewhat more than one-half of their comments to these personal dimensions.[26] Similarly, Clarke and his colleagues, examining evidence from 1968 and 1974 Canadian data, indicate that "personality," "style" and "leadership" references far

26 For an analysis of earlier American studies on this point see Michael R. Kagay and Greg A. Caldeira, "I Like the Looks of his Face: Elements of Electoral Choice, 1952-1972," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1975; for a recent update, see Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates."

outnumber all others.[27] In Table 1, it can be seen that the pattern identified by Clarke et al. for the 1968 and 1974 elections persists through the subsequent decade as well. Only about 20 per cent of classifiable comments by respondents in each of the four studies pertain to the leaders' social and political backgrounds or their political positions. All others are comments about the personal characteristics of individual leaders.

What is interesting about this "personal" content, however, is its predominantly task-relevant *dispositional* character. Much of the rationale for discounting the significance of cognitive image content in conventional voting studies stems from a characterization of that content as superficial, ephemeral and largely shaped by media presentations of campaign style. While the aggregate profiles in Table 1 feature a number of categories that might correspond to this description (personal style, political skills and episodic judgments), these categories are in no way typical of the personal image content offered by respondents on the four different occasions. The typical responses are both dispositional in nature and seemingly relevant to an assessment of a leaders' fitness for holding national office. Indeed, the traits most frequently cited as task-relevant in the literature—competence, integrity, dynamism, empathy and responsibility—constitute here just less than half of *all* cognitive references.

Since such dispositional traits must be inferred indirectly, their prevalence in public images of the leaders suggests the prevalence of appropriate inference structures. Moreover, the consistency with which they appear in each of the four studies hints at the presence of a stable inference structure similar to the notion of a prototype for the evaluation of political figures.

Individual-Level Analyses of Image Structure

The analysis to this point has been based on aggregate distributions of trait use. Is there evidence at the individual level that respondents employ a common frame of reference or prototypical leader schema when assessing the three major party leaders in Canada? Determining the existence of a "common frame of reference" is more problematic than it may at first appear. Given the limited opportunities that respondents were given to sketch their images of each leader (up to three likes and three dislikes), it is not expected that respondents will necessarily cite exactly the same traits when describing each of the three figures. Rather, even with a common cognitive structure, they are more likely to cite those features of the prototypical role schema which, for the leader in question, are both salient and distinguishing. How are we to test for use of a common frame of reference?

27 See Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Canada*, 224.

One solution to this problem—and the one adopted here—is to specify on a priori grounds the probable composition of several different frames of reference or schematic organizations, and to examine the fit of the data to such a model. Simply stated, do respondents who employ one cluster of attributes when describing a leader tend to use the same cluster when describing the other leaders?

Research reported by Lau provides an initial basis for identifying appropriate attribute clusters. Lau suggests that while individuals may organize their understanding of politics around a number of different substantive dimensions, most individuals tend to rely on one or two organizing themes when thinking about politics.[28] Some people may rely on a structure dominated by personality concerns, while others may focus on a specific issue concern such as abortion, on issues in general, or on a particular group orientation such as party or labour. Kinder argues, however, that personality concerns have traditionally involved two separate dimensions—competence and sociability—and that the political personality schema, at least with regard to the US presidency, tends to be organized around the former of these.[29] As Kinder uses the term, competence with reference to presidential character involves the component traits of administrative competence, integrity, leadership and perhaps empathy.

These findings provide a rationale for collapsing the 11 substantive response categories of our typology into 4 broad groupings. The first involves the five task-relevant traits of competence, dynamism, integrity, responsibility and empathy that most closely approximate the attributes found in Kinder's prototypical presidential character. The second describes the group of "nonpolitical" personality traits (labelled personal style attributes in our typology) that approximate Kinder's second personality dimension of sociability. Third, the categories of social background, party references and political positions combine to approximate Lau's three nonpersonal dimensions organized around issue, group and partisan concerns. We propose to treat them here as one cluster primarily because of the difficulty of distinguishing group-oriented responses from personal ascriptive responses (for example, "He is French Canadian") and the difficulty of distinguishing group from issue concerns (for example, "He is too much for the

28 Richard R. Lau, "Political Schemata, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting Behavior," in Lau and Sears, *Political Cognition*, 95-126. In this discussion Lau defines the substantive orientations or dimensions that organize political thought in terms of the various political schemata that the citizen may possess. While the schema notion may well apply to categories or dimensional thinking in this way, we will avoid confusion by reserving usage in this study to "person" and "role schemata."

29 Donald R. Kinder, "Presidential Character Revisited," paper presented to the nineteenth annual Carnegie Symposium on Cognition, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, May 1984.

West"). Partisan references might be treated as a separate organizing category in our analysis, but the paucity of such references by our respondents makes it more convenient to treat them as another instance of group orientation.

The remaining two categories of our typology, political skills and episodic judgments, fall into none of the organizing categories discussed to this point. While personal and political in content, these attributes are not dispositional in nature and thus seem out of place on the political trait dimension. Indeed, references in these categories do not go beyond the surface features of a leader's performance—effectiveness in communication or the appropriateness of specific instances of personal behaviour. Given the ambiguity surrounding interpretation of political events and media preoccupation with these kinds of concerns in election campaign coverage, we suspect that such concerns may constitute a separate schema orientation (hereafter labelled political style) in that some people may choose to organize their images of the leaders around these easily verifiable features of the landscape.

To test the hypothesis that respondents tend to draw from the same attribute cluster when describing Canadian political party leaders, we employed a principal components factor analysis. In each election, and for each of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic party leaders, four variables were generated reflecting the number of coded responses for that leader (positive or negative) that fit the political trait, personal style, issue/group and political style clusters, respectively.[30] Thus the analysis for each year involved 12 variables, 4 for each of the 3 major leaders. Table 2 provides a summary of the rotated factor structure for each year; it indicates the number of factors yielded in each solution and the variables which loaded most heavily (>.40) on each factor.

Table 2 provides impressive support for the hypothesis. In all four years, a similar structure of four or five orthogonal factors emerges. With only two exceptions, the variables loading on any single factor are associated with the same kind of attribute cluster. This suggests that respondents do not tend to choose indiscriminately from the four attribute clusters when articulating their likes and dislikes about the leaders; rather, they tend to adopt one of four attribute frames of

30   In this analysis each of the four "cluster" variables for each leader has a potential range of zero to six reflecting the possibility that respondents could use attributes from that cluster for each of their three "likes" and each of their three "dislikes." For this and all subsequent analyses, findings are based on and reported for the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic party leaders only. The Créditiste leaders, Caouette (1974) and Roy (1979 and 1980), have been excluded primarily because of their low public visibility resulting in little variation in each of the dependent measures. Caouette's name elicited comments from 46 per cent of the 1974 sample while Roy's name elicited comments from 11 per cent of the 1979 sample and 14 per cent of the 1980 sample.

TABLE 2

ROTATED FACTOR STRUCTURE OF FOUR ATTRIBUTE CLUSTERS[a]

	1	2	3	4	5
1974	Trudeau Pol trait	Trudeau Pers style	Trudeau Iss/group	Trudeau Pol style	Lewis Pers style
	Lewis Pol trait	Stanfield Pers style	Stanfield Iss/group	Stanfield Pol style	
	Stanfield Pol trait		Lewis Iss/group		
	Lewis Pol style				
1979	Clark Pol trait	Trudeau Pol style	Clark Iss/group	Clark Pers style	
	Trudeau Pol trait	Clark Pol style	Trudeau Iss/group	Trudeau Pers style	
	Broadbent Pol trait	Broadbent Pol style	Broadbent Iss/group	Broadbent Pers style	
1980	Clark Pol trait	Trudeau Iss/group	Trudeau Pers style	Clark Pol style	Broadbent Pol style
	Broadbent Pol trait	Clark Iss/group	Broadbent Pers style	Trudeau Pol style	Clark Pers style
	Trudeau Pol trait	Broadbent Iss/group			
1984	Turner Pol trait	Broadbent Pol style	Mulroney Iss/group	Mulroney Pers style	
	Broadbent Pol trait	Turner Pol style	Turner Iss/group	Turner Pers style	
	Mulroney Pol trait	Mulroney Pol style	Broadbent Iss/group	Broadbent Pers style	

a   Attribute clusters are listed on a factor if their loading in principal components analysis exceeds .40. Pol trait = Political trait cluster; Pers style = Personal style cluster; Pol style = Political style cluster; and Iss/group = Issue/group cluster.

reference and to select repeatedly from that frame of reference when describing all three leaders.[31]

31   In strict methodological terms, factor analysis is not the proper technique for this task in that the four attribute cluster variables for any one leader are not independent of each other. Nevertheless, we employ it here because it summarizes the latent patterns very effectively and the bias introduced by their modest interdependence acts to inhibit rather than to facilitate emergence of the hypothesized and obtained factor structure (that is, factors defined in terms of attribute clusters).

Stability of Individual's Structure Across Elections

We noted above that task-relevant political traits comprise almost one-half of all respondents' cognitive references. From Table 2, we can see that the political trait cluster is clearly the dominant frame of reference employed in all four election years to describe all three leaders. The ranking of the other clusters varies considerably across the four years, indicating that the style of the campaign and the attributes of the leaders involved affect the importance for the public of different frames of reference. Are these stable frames of reference for the respondent, or does the nature of the campaign, salient strengths or weaknesses of one particular leader or media opinion of the leaders impose or suggest a frame within which to view the leaders in each election period? In short, is the role schema stable over time?

The panel of respondents interviewed in 1974, 1979 and again in 1980 provides an opportunity to examine the stability of these judgmental frames of reference across time.[32] If, as we have argued, respondents use schema-based processing to form their images of political leaders, then we would expect to find evidence of cross-time consistency in the kinds of judgments that are made. Cross-time continuity has been well-documented in the general schema literature,[33] but it has not been as thoroughly explored in the domain of political perception. Among the few such studies reported, Lau has demonstrated highly significant relationships in the use of his four political categories by panel respondents in the United States in 1972 and 1976.[34] While Lau employed only one "personality" category to represent personal attributes, Miller and his associates distinguished five personal attribute dimensions and found substantial cross-time consistency for only the dimensions subsumed by our political trait category.[35] They suggested that use of their other two personal dimensions (captured, albeit imperfectly, by our remaining three categories) appeared to reflect unique features of specific candidates.

In testing for these patterns with the Canadian panel data, we must be mindful of the fact that little change in party leadership took place during the seven years under study. Indeed, of the six same-party comparisons over the two sets of contiguous elections, only two—those of the Conservative and New Democratic parties between 1974 and 1979—are comparable to the United States in that they involved a

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32 A subset of the 1974 sample was reinterviewed in 1979 and 1980 as part of the election studies of those years. With half-sampling for the leader "like-dislike" questions at each point in time, the effective weighted sample size of the 1974-1979 panel was 616, and for the 1979-1980 panel it was 817.

33 For an overview of this body of literature see Reid Hastie, "Schematic Principles in Human Memory," in Higgins et al., *Social Cognition*, 39-88.

34 Lau, "Political Schemata, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting Behavior," 104-07.

35 Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates," 528-29.

turnover of leadership between elections. The Liberals were led by Pierre Trudeau in all three elections, and none of the parties made leadership changes between 1979 and 1980. Extrapolating from the findings of Miller et al., then, we would expect cross-time correspondence for all four attribute clusters in cases where the party did not change leaders between elections, but significant correspondence only with regard to the political trait cluster in the two cases where party leaders did change.

We employed multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between respondents' category usage in two consecutive elections. As before, all of the "category" variables on both sides of the equations were coded from zero to six to reflect the number of comments of the respondent which fit the respective attribute clusters for each leader. One additional independent variable has been specified to control for common variance across the two years that might be due to respondents' differing but stable levels of verbosity. "Verbosity" reflects the number of comments coded for the cognate party like-dislike questions used in the 1974 and 1979 surveys.[36] Table 3 displays a summary of the cross-time regression analyses for the leader images associated with each party. Each of the four panels in the table pertains to one of the four attribute clusters, and summarizes through beta weights the impact of respondents' usage of each cluster in one election on their description of the leader of the same party in the next election.

The patterns in Table 3 provide qualified support for our hypotheses from the literature. On the one hand, there is certainly evidence of cross-time consistency in respondents' use of the attribute categories. On the other hand, the continuity appears to be more widespread than the research by Miller et al. had led us to expect. In 20 of the 24 equations, the strongest predictor of cluster usage — verbosity aside — is usage of the same cluster at the time of the previous election survey. Understandably, the effects tend to be strongest when 1979 usage is used to predict 1980 usage, but they are clearly in evidence as well over the longer five-year interval from 1974 to 1979. Moreover, for all but the personal style cluster, the effects are almost equally in evidence for each party's leader whether or not the leader had changed since the last election. This suggests that three of the four attribute clusters may well serve as stable frames of reference for respondents, at least with respect to the leaders of a particular party if not more

36 The 1974 and 1979 surveys included a sequence of open-ended questions regarding respondents' likes and dislikes toward each political party. The format of these questions was identical to that used for the leader "like-dislike" sequence (see note 22, above). The "verbosity" measure employed here is the total number of comments offered by each respondent about all three parties. In the 1974-1979 comparisons, the 1974 party "like-dislike" sequence has been used; in the 1979-1980 comparisons, the 1979 sequence has been used.

TABLE 3

REGRESSION OF ATTRIBUTE CLUSTER USAGE ON CLUSTER USAGE FOR
THE SAME PARTY IN PREVIOUS ELECTION[a]

Dependent variables	Attribute cluster variables at $t-1$					
	Political trait	Personal style	Political style	Issue/ group	Verbosity	Multiple R
Political trait usage						
A. 1979						
Trudeau	.08	.09[c]	.07	−.08	.07	.18[b]
Clark	.18[b]	.04	.04	−.02	.19[b]	.32[b]
Broadbent	.22[b]	.03	.11[b]	.08[c]	.19[b]	.41[b]
B. 1980						
Trudeau	.25[b]	−.03	.10[b]	−.01	.17[b]	.35[b]
Clark	.30[b]	.02	.03	.10[b]	.18[b]	.42[b]
Broadbent	.27[b]	.04	.05	.07[c]	.20[b]	.44[b]
Personal style Usage						
A. 1979						
Trudeau	.09[b]	.17[b]	.10[b]	.02	.14[b]	.30[b]
Clark	−.03	.04	.06	−.03	.12[b]	.15[c]
Broadbent	.03	−.01	−.01	.04	.12[b]	.15[c]
B. 1980						
Trudeau	.01	.35[b]	−.01	−.06	.14[b]	.41[b]
Clark	.05	.06	−.05	−.01	.03	.10
Broadbent	.07[c]	.08[c]	.01	.04	.03	.14[b]
Political style usage						
A. 1979						
Trudeau	.08[c]	.06	.14[b]	−.03	.17[b]	.27[b]
Clark	.05	−.03	.10[c]	−.04	.21[b]	.27[b]
Broadbent	−.03	−.01	.15[b]	−.02	.11[c]	.19[b]
B. 1980						
Trudeau	.08[c]	.01	.26[b]	.01	.11[b]	.33[b]
Clark	.03	.11[b]	.16[b]	.02	.10[b]	.25[b]
Broadbent	.13[b]	−.02	.13[b]	.00	.08[c]	.24[b]
Issue/group usage						
A. 1979						
Trudeau	−.06	.00	−.06	.09[c]	.08[c]	.15[c]
Clark	.17[b]	.10[b]	.01	.07	.06	.25[b]
Broadbent	.06	−.04	−.04	.14[b]	.20[b]	.29[b]
B. 1980						
Trudeau	.04	−.05	.02	.26[b]	−.03	.28[b]
Clark	−.02	.02	.00	.13[b]	.03	.14[b]
Broadbent	.06	.01	−.04	.31[b]	.17[b]	.42[b]

a   Cell entries represent beta weights; previous election is $t-1$.

b $p \leqslant .01$.

c $p \leqslant .05$.

generally. As we might expect, use of the personal style category
exhibits some stability over time in descriptions of the same leader, but
such comments do not appear to be part of the prototypical leader
schema.

Analyses of Individual Differences in Structure

We have argued that citizens tend to use stable prototypical schemata in developing images of national political figures. The evidence we have presented to this point suggests that perceivers tend to use the same schematic frame of reference in evaluating the three national party leaders in any one election, and that use of a specific frame of reference in one election is clearly related to its use in subsequent ones. However, our adoption of the schema notion may help as well to understand how and why individuals differ in the nature, extent and stability of their judgments.

As noted above, individual differences with regard to leader profiles have been investigated largely in terms of varying degrees of sophistication. In the schema literature, most of the relevant research centres on differences in schema development between "novices" and "experts." Expertise in a domain of activity is seen to be primarily a function of practice and experience expressing itself in the amount of information stored and recalled, the level of organization and abstraction exhibited and the perceiver's ability to focus on relevant central features of the evaluation process.[37] In the political science literature, interest and involvement have also been acknowledged as important determinants of sophistication, but education has more frequently been used as the critical social variable in the process.[38]

The research reported by Miller and associates attempts to combine these two theoretical traditions. Miller et al. demonstrate that in the United States both education and political interest are related to image content in ways consistent with the schema thesis.[39] That is, the roles of interest and education as predictors of category usage are seen to vary with the category in question. Neither variable is related significantly to the use of image dimensions that address observable characteristics or what we have labelled "personal" or "political style." Interest alone is related to citing candidates' issue positions, but both interest and education are related to the use of task-relevant dispositional attributes—that is, inferences that go beyond the relatively superficial or observable.

The finding that interest and education have independent effects on attributing task-relevant dispositions to leaders is intriguing. Implicit in Converse's argument is the assumption that education affects sophistication largely through the intervening motivational variable of

37 Susan T. Fiske, Donald R. Kinder and W. Michael Larter, "The Novice and the Expert: Knowledge-Based Strategies in Political Cognition," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 19 (1983), 381-400.
38 See Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," and Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates."
39 Miller et al., "Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates," 530-33.

"interest."[40] However, Miller's findings suggest that regardless of political interest, better-educated respondents are more likely to evidence a developed schema with regard to political figures.

To explore these relationships further in another setting, we replicated Miller's analyses for each of the four Canadian election studies conducted during the 1974-1984 period. Specifically, use of each attribute cluster in each election was regressed on the five independent variables used by Miller et al. In addition to respondent's interest in politics and education level, we included a measure of partisan intensity (strength of party identification), a measure of media usage to reflect familiarity with campaign coverage and the previously described measure of verbosity.[41] Table 4 displays summary beta weights for these independent variables in the four equations for each attribute cluster.

In Table 4, a comparison of the beta weights across elections for any one cluster reveals considerable stability in the way these variables affect cluster usage. First, while there are minor variations in the importance of a variable over the four elections, for the most part variable rankings are sufficiently constant to permit useful generalizations. Second, while verbosity is clearly the most important predictor in all equations, there is some support for the central thesis of Miller et al. that education is a better predictor of political trait usage than it is of issue/group mentions. In each of the political trait equations, the beta weight for the education variable is statistically significant and ranks second in importance only to verbosity. In the issue/group equations, however, the education beta weight is generally smaller in magnitude, achieves statistical significance in only one case and actually assumes a negative value in the 1974 equation.

Third, Table 4 provides less support for our expectations with regard to the personal and political style clusters. Although the

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40	See Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics."
41	With one exception the variables for each election period have been constructed in a manner consistent with the practice of Miller and his associates: the *education* variable is trichotomized so that 1=less than high school diploma, 2=high school diploma, and 3=at least some post-secondary education; *political interest* reflects the respondent's answer (1=not much at all, 2=fairly, 3=very) to the question, "Do you pay much attention to politics generally—that is, from day to day, when there isn't a big election campaign going on? Would you say that you follow politics very closely, fairly closely or not much at all?"; *partisan intensity* reflects the respondent's answer (1=not very, 2=fairly, 3=very) to the question, "How strongly (*party named*) do you feel, very strongly, fairly strongly, or not very strongly," with nonidentifiers coded 1; *media usage* reflects an average of the responses (1=never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often) to the questions: How often do you "read about politics in the newspapers and magazines?," and "watch programmes about politics on TV?"; finally, with the exception of 1980, *verbosity* is measured as described in note 36. Since the leader and party "like-dislike" sequences were asked of opposite half-samples in 1980, the 1980 "verbosity" measure has been constructed from respondents' 1979 party evaluations.

dimensions used here are not entirely comparable to those used by Miller and his associates, we expected from their findings that education would be unrelated or perhaps even negatively related to respondents' usage of these nonpolitical or surface attributes. The table reveals, however, that in most elections education remains an important predictor of cluster usage in these cases as well.

TABLE 4

REGRESSION OF FOUR ATTRIBUTE CLUSTERS ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES[a]

Dependent variables		Independent variables					
		Education level	Partisan intensity	Media usage	Political interest	Ver-bosity	Multiple R
Political	1974	.15[b]	−.01	.04	.11[b]	.36[b]	.47[b]
trait	1979	.13[b]	−.09[b]	.07[c]	.10[b]	.38[b]	.49[b]
clusters	1980	.16[b]	−.08[c]	.12[b]	.06	.35[b]	.48[b]
	1984	.10[b]	−.06[c]	.07[c]	.08[b]	.49[b]	.58[b]
Personal	1974	.09[c]	.03	−.05	.12[b]	.21[b]	.30[b]
style	1979	.11[b]	−.01	.03	.09[b]	.21[b]	.32[b]
clusters	1980	.07	.02	−.03	.10[b]	.17[b]	.23[b]
	1984	.01	−.01	.02	.02	.15[b]	.17[b]
Political	1974	.04	−.03	−.01	.01	.32[b]	.33[b]
Style	1979	.09[b]	−.01	.06	.06	.30[b]	.38[b]
clusters	1980	.10[b]	.06	.06	.10[b]	.22[b]	.33[b]
	1984	.06[c]	.02	.09[b]	.01	.27[b]	.34[b]
Issue/	1974	−.03	.01	.02	.06	.33[b]	.35[b]
group	1979	.03	.03	.06[c]	.03	.33[b]	.37[b]
clusters	1980	.03	.07	.02	.09[c]	.14[b]	.22[b]
	1984	.08[b]	.03	.02	.06[c]	.36[b]	.43[b]

a   Cell entries represent beta weights.
b $p \leqslant .01$.
c $p \leqslant .05$.

A possible explanation for these relationships rests in the rich and fulsome public image of Pierre Trudeau. It is a fact that respondents cited significantly more attributes when asked about Trudeau than they did about any other leader in these four elections. Whether this is due to his longevity as prime minister, strong personality, history of unorthodox behaviour or a combination of these factors, many respondents and disproportionately the better-educated of them were able to cite more than a single salient evaluation of the man. Given this situation, the importance of education in these "style" equations may simply reflect a more general education effect, augmented by the

extraordinary richness of Trudeau's image. We investigate this possibility below.

In many respects our analysis of the relationship of political interest to cluster usage parallels that of education. As expected, interest has a significant independent impact on use of the political trait cluster. Also consistent with Miller et al., it has an identifiable impact on use of the issue/group cluster. Not expected, but perhaps for the same reasons as we cited in the case of education, was the impact of political interest on use of the personal and political style clusters. In three of the four personal style equations and in two of the four political style equations, the impact of political interest approaches or attains the .05 level of statistical significance.

While we have sought for reasons of comparability to parallel the work of Miller and his associates, there is a potential measurement problem in these analyses that may be contributing to the pervasive effects of education and interest. That is, the construction of the dependent variable for each attribute cluster taps two quite different properties of the respondent's images of the leaders. Based as it is on the respondent's total number of comments in a cluster, each dependent variable will vary as a function of the number of leaders for whom the respondent has an image, and as a function of the respondent's proclivity to use the cluster in question rather than others. Both of these image properties are related to education and interest but only the latter, reflecting relative use of the cluster, bears on our theoretical hypothesis. As a consequence, the test as constructed may simply demonstrate that better-educated and more interested respondents are more likely to have images of Canadian party leaders.

To address these issues, we re-analyzed the data as reported below. We constructed separate sets of dependent variables for each of the three major party leaders, but excluded from each analysis those respondents who offered no comments at all about the leader in question. In addition, because we suspected that Trudeau's image may be a special case, we have reported the results of his regression analyses separately from those of the other leaders. Tables 5 and 6 present the summary beta weights from this second set of regression analyses. Table 5 reports the average beta weights from the set of individual leader equations excluding Trudeau, and Table 6 reports the beta weights for Trudeau's equations only.

The findings in these tables provide striking support for most of our hunches and hypotheses. First, eliminating those respondents who had no image of a leader dramatically diminishes the amount of variance explained by this set of predictors. As suspected, then, much of the variance explained in the original analysis was a function of differential familiarity with the leaders and not differential usage of the particular attribute clusters.

TABLE 5

REGRESSION OF FOUR ATTRIBUTE CLUSTERS ON SELECTED
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES, TRUDEAU'S IMAGE ONLY[a]

Dependent variables		Independent variables					
		Education level	Partisan intensity	Media usage	Political interest	Ver-bosity	Multiple R
Political	1974	.08[c]	−.05	.04	.08[c]	.12[b]	.22[b]
trait	1979	.08[c]	−.07	.03	.04	.20[b]	.26[b]
clusters	1980	.12[b]	−.05	.02	.04	.21[b]	.28[b]
	1984	.06[c]	−.06[c]	.03	.05	.25[b]	.30[b]
Personal	1974	.02	.05	−.02	.03	−.02	.09[c]
style	1979	−.01	.02	.02	.02	.05	.08[c]
clusters	1980	−.01	−.02	−.03	.01	.02	.04
	1984	.01	−.01	−.02	.03	.02	.05[c]
Political	1974	.03	.00	−.01	−.03	.12[b]	.14[b]
style	1979	.02	.00	.00	−.01	.12[b]	.12[b]
clusters	1980	−.03	−.01	.03	.09[c]	.06	.18[b]
	1984	.03	.02	.04	−.02	.09[c]	.12[b]
Issue/	1974	.00	−.03	.00	.02	.14[b]	.16[b]
group	1979	.02	.04	.04	−.03	.16[b]	.19[b]
clusters	1980	.01	.06	−.02	.04	.08[c]	.15[b]
	1984	.04	.03	.00	.01	.15[b]	.18[b]

a Cell entries represent average beta weights. Trudeau's image is excluded for 1974, 1979 and 1980. Analysis excludes respondents who reported no leader image.
b $p \leqslant .01$.
c $p \leqslant .05$.

Second, with Trudeau removed (Table 5), there is strong support for the hypothesis based on schema theory that education plays a role *only* with respect to making inferences beyond the observable — that is, only with respect to the political trait inferences. The education beta weights for the political trait equations are modest in magnitude, but they are statistically significant in all four elections and, after verbosity, they are the most important factor in each of the equations. In no other equation across the other three attribute clusters does the education beta achieve statistical significance.

Third, while a comparison of Tables 5 and 6 indicates that Trudeau's public image deserves to be distinguished in this analysis, the features that make it distinctive are not inconsistent with the schema construction. That is, with Trudeau as with the other leaders, better-educated respondents are more likely than less-educated respondents to cite the leader's task-relevant political dispositions. Unlike the other images, however, the better-educated are also more likely to comment on Trudeau's personal and political style, and to neglect Trudeau's group or issue associations. It appears, then, that

Trudeau's schema is distinguished primarily by its richness on the personal dimensions.

The role of political interest is also noteworthy in this second analysis. While interest initially appeared to have a significant independent effect on the use of all four attribute clusters, in these tables the effects diminish to insignificance when respondents lacking a cognitive impression are removed from the analysis. In short, those with higher levels of political interest, other variables held constant, are not predisposed to draw on one attribute cluster rather than another.

TABLE 6

REGRESSION OF FOUR ATTRIBUTE CLUSTERS ON SELECTED
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES, TRUDEAU'S IMAGE ONLY[a]

Dependent variables		Independent variables					
		Education level	Partisan intensity	Media usage	Political interest	Ver-bosity	Multiple R
Trudeau's	1974	.10[c]	.01	.02	.02	.15[b]	.20[b]
political	1979	.03	−.10[b]	.02	.00	.14[b]	.18[b]
trait	1980	.08[c]	−.13[b]	.12[b]	−.03	.17[b]	.27[b]
clusters							
Trudeau's	1974	.08[c]	.02	−.07[c]	.10[b]	.16[b]	.24[b]
personal	1979	.14[b]	−.03	.02	.05	.13[b]	.23[b]
style	1980	.09[c]	.03	−.06	.09[c]	.13[b]	.20[b]
clusters							
Trudeau's	1974	.09[c]	−.07[c]	.03	.01	.12[b]	.19[b]
political	1979	.08[c]	−.02	.07[c]	.03	.16[b]	.23[b]
style	1980	.17[b]	.10[b]	.01	.00	.14[b]	.25[b]
clusters							
Trudeau's	1974	−.12[b]	.04	.01	.02	.15[b]	.18[b]
issue/	1979	−.03	.00	−.02	.00	.12[b]	.12[b]
group	1980	.00	.01	.02	.06	−.03	.06
clusters							

a   Cell entries represent beta weights. Analysis excludes respondents who reported no leader image.
b $p \leqslant .01$.
c $p \leqslant .05$.

While this last finding tends to support Converse's emphasis on education in explaining individual differences in political sophistication, it is less satisfying to those who have conceptualized individual differences in novice-expert terms. It suggests that, with education controlled, expertise (at least as measured by interest) counts for little in understanding schema development.[42]

42   It might be argued that this test is flawed in that there are actually three measures of expertise involved in the equation—partisan intensity and media exposure as well as

Conclusions

For the most part, our understanding of the "leader factor" in voting is poorly developed despite its apparent importance in recent Canadian elections. In this article we have begun to probe one dimension of this phenomenon, namely the citizen's organization of cognitive image content. We have used the loose conceptual framework surrounding the schema concept to suggest hypotheses concerning the nature and structure of the public's leader images.

The support we have found for these hypotheses is promising. Our analyses have demonstrated that respondents' images of the leaders are neither idiosyncratic to a specific leader, nor idiosyncratic to an election. Rather, respondents show evidence of possessing a prototypical leader role schema that informs their perceptions of the major party leaders in any one election period, and that remains stable from one election to another, despite turnovers in leadership personnel. While there is no single structure that describes the role schemata of all respondents, the dominant structure from our research is characterized by task-relevant features of the leaders that go beyond surface, observable or stylistic attributes.

Additional support for this approach was gained through tests of hypotheses concerning individual differences. In much of the extant literature, "personal" image content has been treated as an undifferentiated body of attributes, and has for the most part been regarded as a less sophisticated basis of evaluation. Schema theory, with its emphasis on the purposefulness of personality assessment and its view of the image as an inference structure, suggests that neither assumption is necessarily valid. From this theoretical perspective more sophisticated observers may well be seen to dwell on the personal attributes of the leaders in their assessments, but when they do so they will tend to cite attributes that are task-relevant and dispositional in nature. The results of our tests are generally consistent with these expectations. As a measure of sophistication, education consistently distinguishes the use of dispositional task-relevant traits by our samples, but plays no consistent role in predicting the use of other kinds of image content.

While these preliminary tests are encouraging, they also hint at the complexity of the phenomenon with the questions they leave unanswered. For example, the public's image of Pierre Trudeau is an intriguing anomaly in this analysis. His image is distinguished from

political interest—which have distorted the effects of any one or a combination of them. However, analyses not reported here which include only one of these three variables, or a previously unused behavioural measure of involvement, in each case fail to register significant "expertise" effects with education and verbosity controlled.

those of the other leaders not only in its richness but also in the emphasis which better-educated observers placed on his personal and political style attributes. Two possible explanations of this pattern suggest themselves.

The first focusses on Trudeau's history of unorthodox behaviour (his irreverence, outspokenness, choice of spouse and divorce) which could have two effects. On the one hand, the out-of-role behaviour may have provided the public with bases for making character inferences that are not normally available to them in the political domain.[43] On the other hand, such behaviour also may have made the conventional leader role schema less relevant for the public in their attempts to understand Trudeau.[44] In combination, then, the two factors would enhance the likelihood of respondents making inferences about Trudeau while promoting the task-relevant status of his personal and political style.

A second explanation centres more on the length of time Trudeau held national office and suggests that the prototypical features of the image may lose their hegemonic position in the schema as the public has more and varied opportunities to observe the leader in different settings.[45] Most of the research on schema formation is concerned with *first* impressions. As a consequence, we know little about the effects on schema development of prolonged observation and exposure. While our data do not allow us to address this question directly, they do hint at a developmental process along these lines. Specifically, in comparing the factor structures across the four elections, we note (from Table 3) that the structures are "cleanest" in 1979 and 1984—the elections in which there was substantial turnover of party leadership. Given that most Canadian political leaders serve for more than one election, the dynamics of schema development over time assume special importance in this context.

Another interesting finding from this research concerns the role of education as a predictor of cluster usage. As noted above, much of the schema literature has focussed on the role of practice and experience in the development of the schema structure. Our findings tend to challenge that thesis, at least with regard to the "depth" of the structure. While interest and involvement in politics affect the likelihood of forming a

43 The effect of out-of-role behaviour on the trait attribution process has been well-documented in the attribution literature of the past two decades. For a recent review of that research see Michael Ross and Garth J. O. Fletcher, "Attribution and Social Perception," in Lindzey and Aronson, *Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol. 2, 73-122.

44 This possibility is discussed in Fiske's analysis of piecemeal and schematic information processing. See Fiske, "Schema-based versus Piecemeal Politics."

45 The theoretical basis for this "enrichment" thesis is Harold H. Kelley, *Causal Schemata and the Attribution Process* (Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press, 1972), which develops the analogy between naive information-processing and n-way analysis of variance.

cognitive leader image and affect the breadth of the image, they appear to have no independent role in developing inferences at the dispositional level that go beyond the surface. Rather, the respondent's level of education appears to be more important in this regard. Whether this effect applies only to our data, to the larger domain of political perception or to person perception processes in general are matters that await further investigation.

The research reported here addresses only the cognitive aspect of leader images. Implicit in this undertaking is the assumption that these cognitions have motivational significance for the perceiver—that is, they are not simply existing cognitive rationalizations for leader affect. However, the validity of this assumption is not self-evident;[46] indeed, the entire question of the relationship between these cognitions and overall evaluation of leaders is deserving of attention as the next step in this programme of research.

46 See R. B. Zajonc, "Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences," *American Psychologist* 35 (1980), 151-75; and Kinder, "Presidential Character Revisited," 250-53.