

Estimating the Policy Positions of Canadian Political Parties from Legislative Election Manifestos 1968-2008¹

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1. Introduction

This paper gives an overview of the Canadian party manifestos archived at Laval University under the auspices of the Poltext project, and illustrates how the content of these documents can be used in order to estimate the policy positions of the major political parties from the 1968 federal elections up to and including the 2008 federal elections. The paper has two main objectives: To show that the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) coding method enables a reliable and plausible estimation of Canadian party policy positions, and to compare our results with previous findings about Canadian party positions using similar CMP data from 1945 to 1980 (Irvine 1987). We conclude that, in spite of several methodological weaknesses, the possibility of comparison over time of substantive party positions gives CMP data an important advantage over alternative sources on party policy positions.

2. CMP Coding Procedure and Selection of Documents

The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), formerly the Manifesto Research Project (MRP), endeavors to record the policy content of party manifestos on the basis of a common coding scheme which consists of 56 pre-established categories (see Volkens, 2001 for an overview and definitions of categories). The main goal of the CMP is to provide comparable estimates of party policy positions across many countries for each post-war election year in which democratic elections were held. For this reason, the classification scheme is developed in order to accommodate the content of manifestos in a comparative as well as a longitudinal perspective.

A coding handbook has been developed that explains the identification of quasi-sentences, the choice of categories and how to cope with difficult coding decisions (Volkens, 2002). New coders fill in a reliability test before production coding is permitted. On average, coders deviate 10 percentage points in terms of the number of identified quasi-sentences and the 'correct' coding solution. The average Pearson correlation is above 0.70 between all pairs of coders taking the test and between individual coding decisions and the 'correct' solution. However, this correlation probably underestimates the quality of the coding because the training and correction procedures that follow the test further improve the accuracy of coding. Then, each text is coded separately by two researchers who, at the

end, compare their respective coding and try to reach agreement when they disagree. When agreement cannot be reached, the assistants ask a referee to settle the issue. Successive waves of coding and arbitration are undertaken until perfect agreement is reached. The intercoder agreement, the percentage of agreement between the coders when they first compare their results, is a measure of uniformity of comprehension and the only measure of uncertainty available. Disagreement can have many causes: cognitive differences between coders, ambiguity in the meaning of the manifesto or the categories, and random errors of coding. A low level of agreement threatens the validity of the coding process.

The CMP method postulates that political parties during election compete with one another by selectively emphasizing (priming) policy issues that are important to their constituencies, while trying to ignore issues that are not (Budge and Farlie 1983). Unlike Downs' (1957) model of party competition, which assumes that political parties directly confront each other on every issue, the selective emphasis model assumes that parties talk past each other focusing only on issues that are favourable to them while ignoring issues that could be electoral liabilities. The CMP method measures the location of political parties in a multi-issue space by computing the relative salience of issues in their election manifestos. A strongly positive correlation between two parties indicates that they are close to one another on the multi-issue space. At the opposite, the strong negative correlation between two parties means that they are far apart from one another on the multi-issue space.

The strengths and weaknesses of the CMP method have been widely discussed. Here is a short list of some strengths and weaknesses based on Laver and Garry (2000), Benoit and Laver (2007), and Marks et al. (2007). The main strengths of the method are that it relies on objective data; it allows cumulative research over time; it permits researchers to separate party preferences and behaviour; and finally, the party manifestos that are used as textual sources provide direct evidence of declared salience. Several weaknesses have been identified (see Laver and Garry 2000): The method underestimates so called "silent issues", that is issues that enjoy limited policy coverage as well as issues that arise only during the campaign; there is no information about intra-party dissent on issues; there is ambiguity in the interpretation of manifesto and coding categories; and

finally, the interpretation of findings is made a posteriori, there is no objective standards for deciding whether a particular spatial interpretation is more correct than another.

Another difficulty with the CMP method is to assess the extent to which the codings generate results that make sense within and across countries. Independent researchers have compared the positions that resulted from the coding with those measured by expert judgments. They conclude that the validity of the CMP data is good and sometimes even better (McDonald and Mendes, 2001). The main advantage of the CMP data compared to expert judgments is that the former are comparative over time whereas the latter are not. Some argue that it is hard to know whether the party movements over time are the results of 'real' changes in policy positions or the outcome of inconsistencies in the coding due to replacement of coders by new ones (Laver, 2001). In this respect we have to rely on the reliability test (described above) and on the face and predictive validity of the coding results since in many cases we know where parties stand on the main policy dimensions.

3. Research hypotheses

The Liberals controlled the federal government from 1968 to 1984 with a nine-month Conservative interregnum in 1979 (in fact they were in power since 1963 but the 1963-1968 period is not covered here because our analysis starts with the first government of P.E. Trudeau in 1968). The Liberal rule was put to an end in 1984 when the Progressive-Conservatives won the second largest parliamentary majority in Canadian history. The Progressive-Conservatives kept control of the government in the 1988 election albeit with a much smaller majority. The Progressive-Conservative victories in 1984 and 1988 did not change significantly the Canadian party system. The change in the party system occurred in the 1993 election. The Liberals regained control of the government while the Progressive-Conservatives went from being the governing party to winning only two seats in Parliament. Another important event in the 1993 election was the emergence of two new parties, the Bloc québécois and Reform. The formation of these two new parties transformed the party system from a two-and-a-half party system into a multiparty system. Recent elections have reinforced the new multiparty system with the Bloc consistently winning a majority of Quebec seats in all subsequent elections, and Reform-Alliance

merging with the Progressive-Conservatives to form a new Conservative party that won the election in 2006 (albeit with a minority of seats).

As stated in introduction, one of our objectives is to show that the CMP methodology can provide reliable and plausible estimation of party positions in Canada. By plausible we mean that we expect that our analysis will produce results that resonate well with (and possibly expand upon) recent empirical and theoretical findings in the literature on the Canadian party system.

In his 2008 presidential address to the CPSA, Richard Johnston (2008) argued that the Canadian party system must now be viewed as an example of polarized pluralism, an ideal type first described by Giovanni Sartori (1976) which combines in an unhealthy fashion elements of multipartism and dominance by a party of the centre (the Liberal party in our case). From his hypothesis, Johnston derives and tests several propositions that have to do primarily with electoral behaviour.² In this paper, we are primarily interested in the implications of the Sartori-Johnston polarized pluralism hypothesis for party positioning in an ideological space. More specifically, two predictions emerge from the hypothesis. As with other polarized pluralist systems (e.g., French Fourth Republic, present-day Italy, Weimar Republic, Chile before Pinochet,) the partisan space of party systems that resemble the polarized pluralist ideal type tend to feature two key dimensions: a left-right ideological axis, and a pro-anti system axis, the pro-anti system element being sometimes mixed with a national unity issue. Second, polarized pluralism always features a dominant centre party, its domination following from the fact that it commands the centre of the two main ideological dimensions.

If, as argued by Johnston, the Canadian party system resembles the polarized pluralist ideal type, we should be able to see this through an analysis of party manifestos, unless of course the content of party manifestos is unrelated to party and voters' behavior.³ Our measures of party manifestos will be used to test three hypotheses:

H1: The two main factors (dimensions) that are extracted from our measures of party manifestos are a left-right ideological axis, and a pro-anti system axis.

H2: Its manifestos place the Liberal party at the centre of the dimensions represented by the two main factors.

H3: The emergence of a multiparty system after the 1993 election has exacerbated the polarization of the Canadian party system. The distance between the parties on each axis has increased in recent years.

4. Descriptive Analyses of Canadian Party Positions

Forty-eight manifesto documents were collected and analyzed over 13 legislative elections, starting in 1968 and ending in 2008. The raw data, in the form of frequency percentages, have been published on cd-rom by Budge *et al.* (2001). Several manifestos, including those of the recent elections were coded and added to the initial data. The documents are analyzed following the standard CMP coding procedure — first coding sentences within one of 55 categories of the general coding scheme, then studying salient aspects of the distribution of references over them, and finally using factor analysis to find out which overarching dimensions underlie party competition and to ultimately calculate the respective positions of political parties on these dimensions. The coding unit is the paragraph, which means that each and every paragraph in a text is coded in one and only one category. If no category or if more than one category is applicable, the paragraph is coded with the residual category, 000. A final score is then calculated to reflect the relative percentage (emphasis) of each category in each party manifesto.

The general coding scheme fitted the Canadian party documents well for most parties. There was a need to create a special category for the Bloc québécois, a regional and independentist party. This category was necessary due to the specific nature of the Bloc québécois which is to defend, above all, Quebec's interests and promote the independence of Quebec, not to win elections and form the government. Since no existing code was able to cover these matters, a new category had to be created. The new category was given the code 306 and named 'Defense of Quebec'. Since the Bloc's first election in 1993, the average frequency of code 306 in the Bloc manifestos is 21.5%, proving its relevance.

The average percentage of sentences left un-coded was 5.2 percent (with a range from 0 to 18.1 percent). This is a first indication that the saliency approach to coding party documents fits well the Canadian case. The approach assumes that political parties compete by selectively emphasizing (priming) 'valence' issues that reflect support for broad

policy ideas (free enterprise, welfare for the poor, environmental protection) that cannot accommodate polar opposites.

Table 1 about here

Table 1 reports the means for each coding category remaining after exclusion of the 'white noise' from the data. Specifically, all the categories with an overall mean smaller than 1 percent were omitted from the analysis. The excluded categories are listed at the bottom of the table. Note that a large proportion of excluded variables are negative elements of bipolar categories. Only one bipolar pair — Protectionism Positive vs. Protectionism Negative — remain intact in the list of categories included in the analysis. This is another indication of how well the saliency approach fits in the case of Canada. Although we cannot ignore the somewhat subjective nature of the coding process, it is clear from the list of categories that were eliminated from the analysis at the bottom of Table 1 that Canadian parties are inclined to frame their manifestos in terms of valence issues rather than in terms of bipolar issues. They rarely make negative mentions of issues in their manifestos.

Let us turn our attention to the variables included in the analysis. These have been classified into seven domains: International Relations; Freedom & Democracy; Government Administration; Economy; Social Welfare; Fabric of Society; Social Groups. From Table 1, it appears that Canadian manifestos are primarily concerned by issues in the Economy (30.4 percent of mentions on average) and Social Welfare (20.9 percent) domains. Canadian manifestos also share in common concerns about International Relations (11.7 percent) and Social Groups (11.5 percent). The least salient domains are Fabric of Society (9.4 percent), Government Administration (7.8 percent on average), and Freedom & Democracy (7.3 percent).

Table 1 reports the mean values for two successive periods: before and after the 1993 elections which coincided with the emergence of two new parties, the Reform Party and the Bloc québécois, and the collapse of the ruling Progressive-Conservative party, that went from 151 seats to only 2 after the elections. We chose the 1993 elections because they almost occupy the half-way mark between 1968 and 2008 and because they mark a turning point in Canadian party system (Carty, Cross and Young 2000). The rise of the Western-based Reform Party divided the right-wing vote between it and the Progressive-

Conservative party until the two parties reunited in 2004. The Bloc gained enough seats (54) in 1993 to form the Official Opposition and is still the party that has won the most seats in Quebec. The split is justified, at least in the exploratory analysis. In view of the recent transformation undergone by the Canadian party system, one cannot assume that the pattern of party manifesto emphases has remained stable throughout the entire period.

We see from Table 1 that in the first-half of the period, up to and including the 1988 elections, about 40 percent of the mentions in the typical manifesto were devoted to the Economy. Since 1993, this number has decreased from 40.7 to 20.1 percent on average. Government Administration decreased by less than 2 percent during the same period. Social Welfare (17.2 to 24.5) is the domain in which manifestos increased the most their attention, followed by Freedom & Democracy (4.6 to 10 percent), while Fabric of Society, International Relations and Social Groups increased by a lesser percentage.

Inside these domains, the distribution of attention between categories also changed during the period. In Economy, Economic Goal decreased from 7.7 to 2 percent, while three categories, Controlled Economy, Keynesian Demands Management, and Protectionism Positive, decreased by more than 2 percent each, to less than 1 percent. Only Economic Orthodoxy and Incentives increased their relative share of attention. The increased share of these two categories reflects a change of economic priorities since 1993, shifting from unemployment and free-trade debate to deficit reduction and tax cuts.

In Government Administration, Centralization decreased from 2.3 to 0.1 percent while Political Corruption increased from 0.3 to 2.2 percent. This is a direct effect of the Gomery Commission held in 2004, concerning alleged corruption in the administration of the Sponsorship Program. Before 2004, Political Corruption was almost absent in Canadian manifestos, with an average of less than 1 percent. The average frequency increased to 3.4 percent in 2004 and 6.6 percent in 2006, before decreasing to 1.2 percent in 2008. Defense of Quebec, absent in the first-half period, has a relative frequency of 4.8 percent since 1993. This high percentage is caused by disproportionate attention for the Defense of Quebec in the Bloc manifestos. In 1993 more than 40 percent of the total attention was directed to Defense of Quebec, and remained above 15 percent for subsequent elections, with the exception of 2000, where Defense of Quebec has a relative frequency of 6.1 percent.

In Freedom & Democracy, the Human Rights & Freedom category increased from 2.1 to 4.1 percent. This is caused by the emphasis put on this category in the Reform and Canadian Alliance manifestos that averaged 6.5 percent between 1993 and 2008, compared to an average of 1.6 percent for the other four parties. Since the fusion with the Progressive-Conservative party, Human Rights & Freedom decreased to an average of 1.3 percent.

Welfare State Expansion in the Social Welfare domain remains the category with the highest percentage across the period, increasing from 8.2 to 8.7 percent. Education Expansion increased from 0.6 to 3.4 percent and Environmental Protection from 3 to 5.9 percent. The large increases in the numbers for Environmental Protection and for Education Expansion suggest that these categories have become more salient over time in the manifestos of all the parties. The change in the party system played a part in the increased saliency of Environmental Protection and Education Expansion. This increase is common to all parties. Before 1993, the Progressive-Conservative party emphasized the Environmental protection category 2.5 percent of the time, the Liberal party 2.2 percent and the NDP, 4.2 percent. Since 1993, The Bloc has an average of 5.6 percent, the Progressive-Conservative party 2.7 percent, the Liberal party 8.9 percent, the NDP 8.6 percent, and the Reform-Alliance 1.4 percent. If we compare the Conservatives before and after their fusion with the Alliance, the average decreased from 5.8 percent to 1.3 percent. On this particular category, the new Conservative Party is closer to the Reform-Alliance than the Progressive-Conservative. Another category with increased salience is Education Expansion. Between the 1968 and 1980 elections, Education Expansion was mentioned 0.1 percent of the time. Since then, it increased to 3.1 percent. The only exception to this general expansion is the Bloc with 1.5 percent. Since education is a provincial competence and the Bloc is against federal spending in education, this result is consistent with the Bloc nationalist stance.

Law & Order increased more than tenfold on average from the first to the second period. This is due mostly to the high number of mentions of Law and Order in the manifestos of the Reform party-Canadian Alliance (with an average of 9.3 percent between 1993 and 2000) and in the manifestos of the newly formed Conservative party (with 10.5 percent). After the fusion with the Progressive-Conservative party in 2004, the Conservative emphasis of Law & Order increased from 7.5 during the 1993-2000 period to 13.5 during the

2004-2008 period. The box-plots of Figure 1 give a visual depiction of the role that the manifestos of the Reform and Progressive-Conservative played in the increased attention devoted to Law & Order over time. The height of each box represents the inter-quartile range (Q1–Q3) and the vertical distances (whiskers) below Q1 and above Q3 coincide with the normal range of the distribution. Farther out values (outliers) are identified by the individual party label.

Figures 1 and 2 about here

We can see that the Reform and Progressive-Conservative were outliers in 1993 and 1997, suggesting that its heavy emphasis of Law & Order puts it in a category by itself. But the rise of the medians in the box plots for the elections at the end of the period shows that the saliency of Law & Order increased in the manifestos of other parties as well, so it seems that the Reform is not a completely isolated case. This appears clearly after 2000 when the party is no longer an outlier. Note also that Law & Order is an almost entirely new theme in Canadian electoral campaigns. The category was virtually absent from the parties' agenda between 1968 and 1984 and was not a major topic until the 1993 elections.

Returning to Table 1, we see that decreased salience over time of the categories in the Economy and the Government Administration domains has occurred at the expense of a increase of importance of all other domains. Note again that with one notable exception (Peace) attention increased or remained stable in all categories within International Relations and Freedom and Democracy. The increase in attention is much smaller in the remaining domains (Fabric of Society and Social Groups), although there have been some notable changes affecting several categories within them. In the Fabric of Society domain, Multiculturalism Positive and Negative have become significantly less salient while Laws & Order have become significantly more salient over time. Finally, Underprivileged Minorities in the Social Groups domain has seen its importance decrease over the years at the expense of Demographic Groups.

Overall, 19 categories over 32 increased or decreased by at least 1 percent between the two half-periods, with 10 categories by 2 percent or more. This reflects important change in emphasis in Canadian manifestos and highlights the impact on the party system

of the emergence of new parties. The overall increases in emphases Human Rights & Freedom, Law & Order and Defense of Quebec in recent elections were triggered in large part by the emergence of new parties specialized in advocating these themes in their manifestos. Other categories, however, have undergone increases or decreases in overall emphasis over time that cannot be associated with prior changes in the manifesto of one particular party or group of parties. This is the case of Environmental Protection for example, the emphasis of which has increased over time in roughly the same proportion for all parties, as the box plots of Figure 2 demonstrate. Another example of gradual increase in the manifestos of all the parties is Education Expansion (box plots not shown).

It is one thing to show the overall pattern of change and stability in party manifesto emphases over time. We must also assess how manifesto emphases have changed at the level of individual parties. Table 2 and 3 reports the five most salient categories (with their means and standard deviations) in the manifestos of each party before and after 1993. The reason for splitting the data between two periods is the same as before. An additional reason is that comparing party means only over the entire period might produce biased results because the base period for the Reform-Alliance and the Bloc is so much shorter than for the other parties.

From Table 2 we see that all the Canadian parties shared Economic Goals as one of the top three leading categories in common during the period 1968–1988. Incentives, Demographic Groups and Technology & Infrastructure was also among the five top categories in the Liberal and Progressive-Conservative agendas during that period, while Welfare State Expansion was the most important for the NDP and the second-most for the Liberals. 4 of the categories in Table 2 are unique to one party. NPD has three of them (Social Justice, Multiculturalism Positive, and Market Regulation) and the Progressive-Conservative the other one, Free Enterprise. The Liberals have no unique categories.

Comparing most frequent themes and categories during the 1945-1980 period and during the 1968-2008 period. The comparison displays both elements of stability and change. The clearest evidence of stability over time is that the four top categories (Welfare State Expansion; Technology & Infrastructure; Incentives; Economic Goals) remain unchanged in both periods (and in the same order). However, change manifests itself in the less frequently mentioned categories. Two additional categories (Demographic Groups;

Freedom & Human Rights appear in both lists although their rankings differ from one period to the other. Four new categories (Environmental Protection; Social Justice; Productivity; Underprivileged Minorities) that were not among the top ten in the 1945-1980 period appear among the top ten in the 1968-2008. And four categories that were previously among the top ten (Agriculture; Free Enterprise; Market Regulation; Internationalism Positive) no longer make it among the top ten in the 1968-2008 period.

Tables 2 & 3 about here

Table 3 reports the leading categories by party for the period 1993–2008. From the table we see that all but one party share at least three leading categories in common. They are Welfare State Expansion (among the leading categories in the manifestos of four parties), Incentives (three parties), Environmental Protection (three parties), and Technology & Infrastructure (three parties). Social Justice is found among the top five categories in the manifestos of two parties (Liberal and NPD) and so is Law & Order (Reform-Alliance and Progressive-Conservative). This leaves eight leading categories that are unique to one party. They are Bloc: Defense of Quebec; NPD: Underprivileged Minorities, Education Expansion; Progressive-Conservative: Democracy; Reform-Alliance: Freedom & Human Rights, Free Enterprise, Government Efficiency, Traditional Morality Positive. Note that none of their top five categories are unique to the Liberals in the second period, as was also observed in the first period.

A comparison of the data in Tables 2 and 3 shows that there was more dispersion in the most salient categories across parties during the 1993–2008 period than during the 1968–1988 period, in spite of the addition of two new parties during the latter period. The increased fragmentation of the Canadian party system in the latter period has not been accompanied by an increase in the ideological dispersion across parties, at least for the old parties. The data from Tables 2 and 3 suggest two explanations. First, the manifestos of the traditional parties have converged over time in terms of leading categories so they appear more alike in the latter part of the period, at least in terms of the frequency of mentions of the most salient categories. Second, the data suggest that, aside of Defense of Quebec, the top categories in the manifestos of the Bloc (one of the two new parties that were not present in the first period) are not very different from the top categories in the manifestos of

the traditional parties, especially the Liberals and the NDP. The situation is different for the Reform-Alliance, with four of the top five categories of the Reform-Alliance that are unique to them in the 1993-2008 period and three of those across the whole period.

The data of Tables 2 and 3 also show a mixture of change and stability over time in manifesto emphases within each party. The evidence of change comes primarily from parties at the right of the political spectrum. First, we see that the top five categories emphasized by the Progressive-Conservative in 1993-2008 bear little resemblance with their top five categories in 1968–1988 except for the high level of emphasis of Incentives and Technology & Infrastructure throughout the entire period. Second is the large number of categories (four out of five) that are uniquely emphasized by the Reform/Alliance. That suggests the change in emphases by the Progressive-Conservative after 1993 did not go in the direction of the manifestos of the Reform/Alliance, except for Law & Order. Quite to the contrary, the Conservative manifestos are now as similar as the manifestos of the parties of the left as they did before 1993. This suggests that if the policies proposed by the Reform/Alliance in its manifestos have been included within the Progressive-Conservatives until the fusion in 2004, this was not sufficient to provoke a rapprochement between its manifestos and those of the Reform/Alliance.

The comparison of Tables 2 and 3 provides more evidence of stability than change in party manifestos of the parties of the left over time. There is a stronger correspondence between the top five categories emphasized by the NDP and the Liberals during the latter period (three out of five are the same), than in the first (two out of five). Third, when looking at the Bloc's manifestos, we see that four of the top five categories the Bloc have emphasized are identical with the top categories emphasized by the NDP or the Liberals except Defense of Quebec. Thus, from the point of view of manifesto emphases, the convergence between the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals contrasts sharply with the divergence between the Progressive-Conservative and the Reform-Alliance, despite the fusion.

Although the emphases in the manifestos of the three 'traditional' Canadian parties have changed over the years, we find that much of the change has been gradual rather than abrupt. Moreover, judging by the five most salient categories emphasized by each party, the changes have primarily affected the Progressive-Conservatives. The data also

suggest that the manifestos of the Reform-Alliance are more unique vis-à-vis the manifestos of the traditional parties of the right than are the manifestos of the Bloc vis-à-vis their ideological allies on the left. We do not think that the transformations undergone by the manifestos of the parties under study are important enough to justify splitting the remaining analysis in two distinct periods.

5. Factor Analyses

In order to identify the ideological dimensions separating Canadian party manifestos, a series of factor analyses were undertaken. In the first place, categories within the seven general domains previously identified were used as inputs in a principal component analysis. A maximum of two components were retained for each of the seven domains. The resulting factor scores for each party and each election were then used as input variables in a second-stage factor analysis. The results of the first stage analysis are reported in table 4.

Table 4 about here

No factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25 could be extracted from the International Relations domain; therefore, the extraction was skipped for this domain. One factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25 was produced in the Freedom & Democracy domain, accounting for 81 per cent of total variance. The factor can easily be interpreted with equally high loadings on Human Rights & Freedom (.90) and Democracy (.90). Accordingly it is labeled Freedom and Democracy.

In the Government Administration domain, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.25 were found. The first factor accounting for 30 percent of total variance loads negatively on Government Centralization, and positively on Defense of Quebec and Political Corruption. It is clearly a Pro-Periphery Against Centre factor. The second factor explains 23 percent of total variance. It is labeled according to the highly positively loaded category of Political Efficiency.

In the Economy domain, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.25 emerge, accounting for 26 per cent and 18 per cent of total variance, respectively. One factor, loading positively on Controlled Economy, Economic Goals, Keynesian Demands

Management, and Protectionism appears to capture a dimension of government economic intervention and will be labeled accordingly. Two categories, Economic orthodoxy and Free Enterprise, correlate positively with the second factor, whereas Market Regulation (and to a lesser extent Controlled Economy) correlate negatively, suggesting a pro private market tilt in the factor which is labeled private market.

Only one factor emerges in the Social Welfare domain, explaining 38 percent of total variance. The factor loads positively on all categories in this domain, and especially on Environmental Protection and Education Expansion. The Fabric of Society domain could not produce a factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25. The domain was therefore skipped. In the domain for Social Groups produced one factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25. The factor, accounting for 31 per cent of total variance correlates positively with Labour Groups and is therefore labeled Pro Labour.

The second-order factor analysis takes the factors produced by the first-order factor analysis as input variables. The dimensions emerging from this can then be used as summary indicators of the ideological space in which the parties compete. The analysis produced three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.25. Table 5 presents the loadings of each first order factor on the two second order dimensions with the highest eigenvalues. The first factor, accounting for 29 percent of the total variance, strongly contrasts the first-order dimensions of Free Market (.756) and Government Efficiency (.730) with those of Environment & Education (-.722) and Pro Labour (-.604). The factor is clearly interpreted as referring to a mostly pro-economic right and anti-social left dichotomy with appeals to government efficiency, free enterprise, and economic orthodoxy on one side, and rejection of environmental protection, spending on welfare and education and labour groups on the other.

The second factor, accounting for 25 percent of total variance strongly contrasts a positive attitude toward the periphery (.839) and a negative attitude toward more federal government intervention in the economy (-.872). The factor is clearly interpreted as a Periphery vs. Centre dimension with both political and economic overtones.

Table 5 about here

How do our findings compare with the results of the second stage analysis in Irvine (1987)? The first second-order factor emerging from Irvine's analyses was interpreted as an appeal to the New Left. It correlated strongly "with themes of peace, internationalism, social justice and the environment and with support for communal organization of social life—all themes which Inglehart has identified as themes appropriate to a party wishing to appeal to a post-materialist culture (Inglehart 1977). "The second factor was labeled Old Left by Irvine. It calls for "government regulation and nationalization in the economy, government support for social welfare and education and underplays discussion of government efficiency —often a mask for budget cutting." It is interesting to notice that the Left-Right dimension was already present in Irvine's analysis (and it was apparently even more dominant then than now) but the Centre-Periphery dimension is new.

6. Spatial Location of Party Positions

One advantage of factor analysis is the ability to map party competition over time by plotting scores for each party and each election along one factor, against its scores along another factor. Figure 3 displays the spatial positioning of the parties in the two dimensional spaces defined by the two principal second-order factors. The horizontal dimension depicts the first factor. A positive score on this dimension indicates an appeal to themes with a right-wing flavour: Economic Orthodoxy, Free Enterprise, Decentralization, and Government Efficiency. A Negative score on this dimension indicates heavy emphasis of Labour Groups Positive, Agriculture, Environmental Protection, Social Justice, Welfare and Education Expansion, and Culture, all reminiscent of leftist values. The vertical dimension (the second factor) contrasts support for Defence of Quebec and Political Corruption on the positive side, with appeals to Economic Goals, Productivity, Controlled Economy, and Keynesian Demands Management on the negative side.

Figure 3 about here

To avoid overcrowding only the points delineating the contour of each party space are reported in the figure. Note the overlap between the Reform/Alliance, Progressive-

Conservatives, and Liberals on the positive and between the NDP and Liberals on the negative side of the first dimension. The NDP and Reform/Alliance occupy the extremes on the first dimension. All parties overlap on the positive side of the second dimension while only the traditional parties occupy the negative side of the same dimension.

The Reform/Alliance is located at the extreme positives of both dimensions. Dividing the space into four quadrants, we have only the Reform-Alliance occupying one specific quadrant, the positive–positive quadrant. The Bloc occupies the positive side of the second dimension, straddling the first dimension, the NDP the negative side of the first category, the Progressive-Conservatives mostly the positive side of the first category, and the Liberals occupying all four quadrants.

So far we have interpreted the position of party manifestos only in terms of positive or negative values on a scale. But we can safely go one step further and interpret the scale corresponding to the first factor in terms of a left-right economic dimension, with negative scores on the left and positive scores on the right. This is intuitively obvious from the names and definitions of the components that are highly correlated (positively and negatively) with the factor.

Table 7 about here

Further validation comes from a comparison of the mean location of party manifestos along the first factor with the average left-right party positions generated from expert surveys. The comparative data are displayed in Table 7. The first column of numbers presents the mean party positions (and range) obtained from the scores for each party at each election on the first second-order factor of Table 6. The numbers reported on the right-hand side of the table are the left-right party scores obtained by Huber and Inglehart (1995) in their survey of Canadian policy experts and by Petry and Collette in their survey of Canadian political scientists during the 2008 election.⁴ Huber and Inglehart use ratio scores that vary from 1 (extreme left) and 10 (extreme right) whereas we use interval measures that give negative scores on the right and positive scores on the left and Petry and Collette, a 0-10 scale with the same labels. Therefore, the scales are not directly comparable. However, a comparison of the rank orderings of the parties along each scale shows remarkable similarities. The

only notable discrepancy is between the location of the Bloc close to the Liberals at the center of the CMP scale and close to the NDP at the left end of the scale generated by the expert survey data. The second column of numbers presents the mean party positions (and range) obtained from the scores for each party on the second factor of Table 6. Whereas the numbers in the first column of the table clearly underscore a left-right dimension, the numbers for the second dimension tell a slightly different story. The factor correlates positively with the Pro-periphery against centre first-order factor, and negatively with the Pro-economic intervention first-order factor. The type of cleavage is not entirely clear. But it does not seem to correspond to the traditional left-right cleavage, a conclusion that is corroborated by the rank ordering of parties along the scale. The NDP, the Liberals and the Progressive-Conservatives are located on the negative side of the scale, and the Bloc and Reform/Alliance are located on the positive side. These results offer additional evidence to the current debate about the recent transformation of the Canadian political landscape. We can interpret the second dimension in terms of pro- and anti-system cleavage. The positive side is the anti-system pole of the second dimension with its emphasis of Quebec vs. Canada and Ottawa corruption issues, while the negative side is pro-system, with its high salience of federal government interventions in the economy. These interpretations are consistent with the H1 hypothesis that predicted that the two main factors (dimensions) that are extracted from our measures of party manifestos are a left-right ideological axis, and a pro-anti system axis. The Bloc goes from one extreme to the other on the left-right dimension, meaning the irrelevance of this dimension to understand where the Bloc stands in the political space. The positioning of the Bloc is more coherent in the second dimension, where it stands as an anti-system party, as well as the Reform/Alliance, the two newcomers after 1988. As predicted by the H2 hypothesis, the Liberals stand at the centre of the left-right axis in both periods between the NDP on the left and the Progressive-Conservative and the Reform/Alliance on the right. The Bloc mean position, close to the centre, is misleading because it results of adding extreme polarized position on the right side and the left side.

Figure 4 about here

Figure 4 plots the average positions of the parties in the periods 1968–1988 and 1993–2008. Breaking the period of analysis into two shows how the NDP starts in the negative–negative quadrant and ends up in the negative–positive quadrant. The Liberals and the Progressive-Conservatives also shift to a more positive position along the second dimension but they don’t move much on the first dimension. The Bloc occupies the negative-positive quadrant, but close to the center on the first dimension. The Reform/Alliance is in the positive-positive quadrant, being the farthest on the first dimension and close to the others on the second one.

Note the migration of the traditional parties from the negative side of the vertical dimension to the positive side after the 1993 elections. This reflects the shift of emphasis away from economic interventions in the traditional parties’ manifestos. H3 hypothesis predicted that the emergence of a multiparty system after the 1993 election has exacerbated the polarization of the Canadian party system and that the distance between the parties on each axis has increased in recent years. On the left-right axis, the NDP is the only party that moves significantly, distancing itself from the center towards the extreme-left of the spectrum. Figure 4 puts in sharp relief once again the positions of the Reform/Alliance and the NDP at opposite extremes on the axis. H3 is thus valid for the left-right dimension. The same cannot be said about the pro- and anti-system axis, because the three traditional parties move from the negative side to the positive side after 1988. With all parties standing close to each other in the second period this axis lost its relevance, while the positions on the left-right axis are more distinct.

7. Conclusion

Our aim in this article was two-fold. First we wanted to provide an overview of the CMP data and to illustrate how these data can be used to estimate the policy positions of Canadian political parties over time. We have shown some examples of how the CMP data can be put to use and how this produces measures that are valid, accurate and reliable as estimates of Canadian party positions. The extensive use of the CMP data by researchers writing on a wide range of subjects (see for example Blais, Blake and Dion 1993; Warwick 2002) is testimony that this is one of the most useful political data sources on the positioning of

policy actors that we have. Its use will be further enhanced by the recent digitalization of the documents that enables possibilities for computerized content analysis (Pennings 2002).

Second, we wanted to assess whether and to what extent the positioning of party manifestos has been affected by the recent transformation of the Canadian party system. The data suggest that the emergence of new 'non-mainstream' parties — the Reform/Alliance and the Bloc — have altered somewhat the distribution of manifesto emphases, but the change in the partisan space has been limited and the traditional left-right cleavage remains dominant. . The short-lived Reform Party-Canadian Alliance emerged as a right-wing, anti-system party and since the fusion with the Progressive-Conservatives in 2004, it has been able to pass on the new Conservative Party some of its most salient issues. The only party that does not fit in the left-right cleavage is the the Bloc québécois. The Bloc cannot be easily interpreted in terms of left-right salience, because it is first and foremost an anti-system party.

Table 1: Overall Frequencies

Included categories (mentioned 1% of the time or more overall)					
Domains & Original Categories	68-88	93-08	Domains & Original Categories	68-88	93-08
International Relations (1)	%	%	Economy (4)	%	%
Military Positive	0.8	1.4	Incentives	5.2	6.0
Peace	1.5	0.9	Technology & Infrastructures	6.1	5.3
Internationalism Positive	1.7	3.0	Economic Orthodoxy	1.5	2.1
Total International Relations	10.2	13.2	Economic Goals	7.7	2.0
			Productivity	3.2	1.4
Freedom & Democracy (2)	%	%	Free Enterprise	2.5	1.1
Democracy	2.3	2.3	Market Regulation	2.4	2.5
Human Rights & Freedom	2.1	4.1	Controlled Economy	2.5	0.2
Total Freedom & Democracy	4.6	10.0	Keynesian Demands Management	2.3	0.4
			Protectionism Positive	2.7	0.6
Government Administration (3)	%	%	Total Economy	40.7	20.1
Decentralization	2.1	1.6			
Centralization	2.3	0.1	Social Groups (7)	%	%
Government Efficiency	2.4	2.9	Farmers	2.1	3.0
Political Corruption	0.3	2.2	Demographic Groups	2.7	4.9
Defense of Quebec	0.0	4.8	Labour Positive	1.5	1.0
Total Gov. Administration	7.9	7.6	Underprivileged Minorities	3.4	2.2
			Total Social Groups	10.0	12.9
Social Welfare (5)	%	%			
Social Justice	4.0	3.6	Eliminated Categories (mentioned less than 1% of the time overall) Foreign Special Relations Positive & Negative; Anti-Imperialism; Military Negative; Internationalism Negative; Europe Positive & Negative; Constitution Positive & Negative; Economic Planning; Protectionism Negative; Nationalization; Political Authority; Corporatism; Welfare State Limitation; Education Limitation; National Way of Life Positive & Negative; Traditional Morality Positive & Negative; Social Harmony; Labour Negative; Middle Class.		
Welfare State Expansion	8.2	8.7			
Education Expansion	0.6	3.4			
Environmental Protection	3.0	5.9			
Culture & Sports	1.1	2.2			
Total Social Welfare	17.2	24.5			
Fabric of Society (6)	%	%			
Law & Order	0.4	5.3			
Multiculturalism Positive	3.7	0.9			
Multiculturalism Negative	2.0	0.1			
Total Fabric of Society	7.7	9.4			

Table 2: Leading Categories Overall 1945-1980 (Irvine) and 1968-2008

Overall Leading Categories Over 1945-1980 Period and Over 1968-2008 Period		
Categories	1945-1980 (Irvine)	1968-2008
Welfare State Expansion	11%	8%
Technology & Infrastructure	5%	6%
Incentives	6%	6%
Economic Goals	6%	5%
Environmental Protection	-	5%
Social Justice	-	4%
Demographic Groups	6%	4%
Productivity	-	3%
Underprivileged Minorities	-	3%
Freedom	2%	3%
Farmers	5%	-
Free Enterprise	3%	-
Market Regulation	2%	-
Internationalism	2%	-

Table 3: Leading Categories by Party 1968-1988

New Democratic		Liberal		Progressive-Conservative	
Welfare Expansion		Technology & Infrastructure		Economic Goals	
11.8	1.5	9.1	3.6	9.3	2.9
Economic Goals		Welfare Expansion		Incentives	
6.4	3.2	8.4	4.3	6.6	2.0
Social Justice		Economic Goals		Demographic Groups	
5.4	1.4	7.4	3.7	5.6	3.3
Multiculturalism Positive		Incentives		Free Enterprise	
5.2	5.6	6.4	5.4	5.1	1.4
Market Regulation		Demographic Groups		Technology & Infrastructure	
4.4	2.9	5.1	2.3	4.9	2.6

Table 4: Leading Categories by Party 1993-2008

Bloc	New Democratic	Liberal	Progressive-Conservative	Reform/Alliance
Defense of Quebec	Welfare Expansion	Welfare Expansion	Law & Order	Law & Order
21.5 7.9	14.2 5.6	11.8 4.1	10.4 9.9	9.3 2.1
Incentives	Environment Protection	Environment Protection	Incentives	Freedom & Human Rights
8.0 4.8	8.6 3.7	8.9 10.8	8.7 5.5	6.5 1.7
Technology & Infrastructure	Underprivileged Minorities	Technology & Infrastructure	Welfare Expansion	Free Enterprise
6.6 3.1	6.0 3.0	7.6 2.9	5.3 5.6	6.2 4.1
Environment Protection	Social Justice	Incentives	Democracy	Government Efficiency
5.6 2.5	5.5 2.7	6.9 3.3	5.7 5.1	5.7 2.6
Welfare Expansion	Education Expansion.	Social Justice	Technology & Infrastructure	Traditional Morality Positive
3.9 2.9	4.5 4.1	5.0 3.8	5.5 3.0	5.6 1.8

Table 5: First Stage Factor Analysis by Domain

Domains & Categories	Factors	
International Relations (1)	Extraction skipped	
Freedom & Democracy (2)	Pro-freedom & democracy	
Democracy	.901	
Freedom & Human Rights	.901	
Eigenvalue	1.6	
% of Variance Explained	81.2	
Gov. Administration (3)	Pro-periphery against centre	Pro -government efficiency
Decentralization	-.433	.762
Government Efficiency	.287	.860
Centralization	-.682	-.050
Political Corruption	.473	.103
Defense of Quebec	.715	.058
Eigenvalue	1.49	1.32
% of Variance Explained	29.8	26.3
Economy (4)	Pro-economic intervention	Pro-free market
Incentives	-.167	.153
Technology & Infrastructure	-.053	.337
Economic Orthodoxy	-.089	.728
Economic Goals	.813	.285
Productivity	.555	.171
Free Enterprise	.174	.683
Market Regulation	-.017	-.607
Controlled Economy	.667	-.396
Keynsian Demand Management	.759	-.002
Protectionism Positive	.712	-.347
Eigenvalue	2.60	1.85
% of Variance Explained	26.0	18.5
Welfare (5)	Pro-environment & education	
Social Justice	.580	
Welfare State Expansion	.508	
Education Expansion	.649	
Environmental Protection	.735	
Culture	.599	
Eigenvalue	1.92	
% of Variance Explained	38.3	
Fabric of Society (6)	Extraction skipped	
Social Groups (7)	Pro-labor	
Agriculture	.667	
Demographic Groups	.500	
Labour Groups Positive	.751	
Underprivileged Minorities	-.040	
Eigenvalue	1.3	
% of Variance Explained	31.5	

Table 6: Second Stage Factor Analysis

First Stage Input Categories	Factor 1	Factor 2
Pro-freedom & democracy	.018	.310
Pro-periphery against centre	.094	.839
Pro-government efficiency	.730	-.037
Pro economic intervention	.126	-.872
Pro free market	.756	.071
Pro environment & education	-.722	.329
Pro labour	-.604	-.297
Eigenvalue	2.03	1.75
% of variance explained	29.0	25.0

Table 7: Position of Canadian political parties from their manifestos compared to expert survey from Huber and Inglehart (1995) and Petry and Collette

Party	Petry & Collette factor 1		Petry & Collette factor 2		Huber & Inglehart left-right scale (1995)		Petry & Collette left-right scale (2008)	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range ^a	Mean	Range ^b
Bloc	-0.16	Min -1.92 Max 1.70	1.17	Min 0.27 Max 1.72	3.5	Min 2 Max 5	3.65	Min 0 Max 10
Liberal	-0.04	Min -1.05 Max 1.26	-0.21	Min -2.10 Max 1.10	5.1	Min 3 Max 7	5.26	Min 1 Max 10
NDP	-0.88	Min -1.97 Max -0.04	-0.37	Min -1.34 Max 1.14	2.9	Min 1 Max 4	2.94	Min 0 Max 9
Prog.-Conservative*	0.73	Min -0.20 Max 1.73	-0.11	Min -2.05 Max 1.66	7.3	Min 5 Max 10	8.04	Min 3 Max 10
Reform/Alliance	1.17	Min 0.61 Max 1.75	0.97	Min 0.61 Max 1.32	9	Min 7 Max 10	n.a	n.a n.a

*Renamed Conservative Party in 2004

^a The Huber and Inglehart scale ranges from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)

^b The Petry and Collette scale ranges from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)

Figure 1: Change in salience distribution of Law & Order in Canadian manifestos

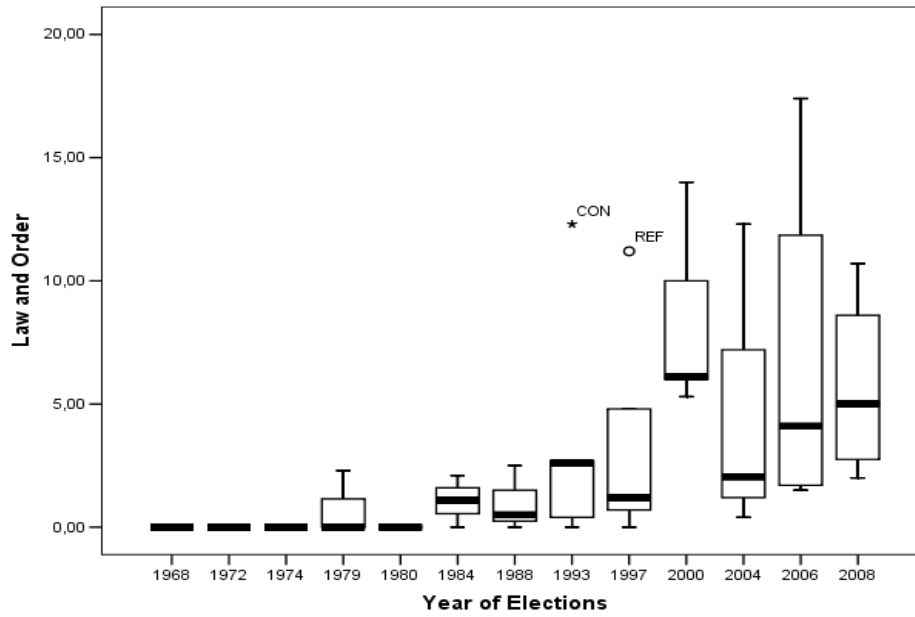


Figure 2: Change in salience distribution of Environmental Protection in Canadian manifestos

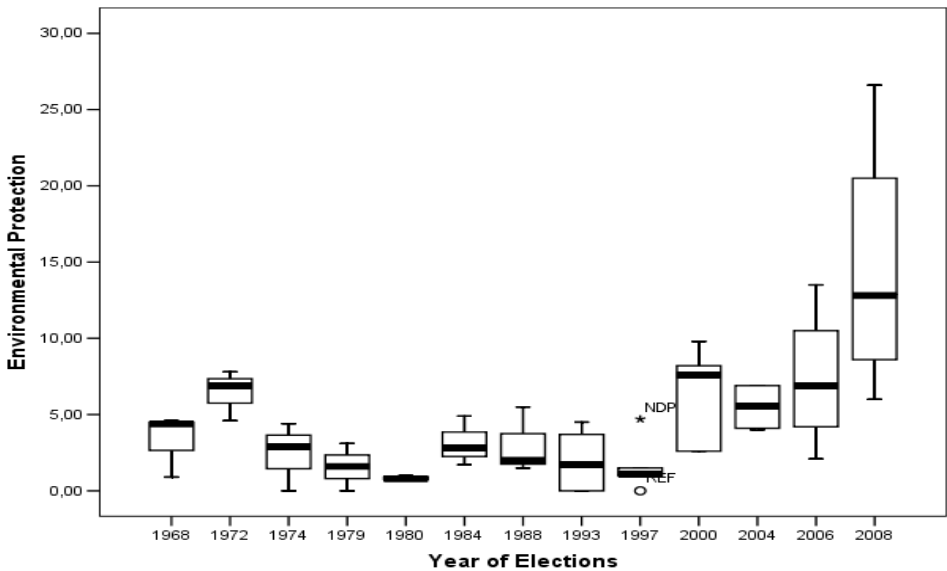


Figure 3: Summary of Canadian Party Positions, 1968-2008

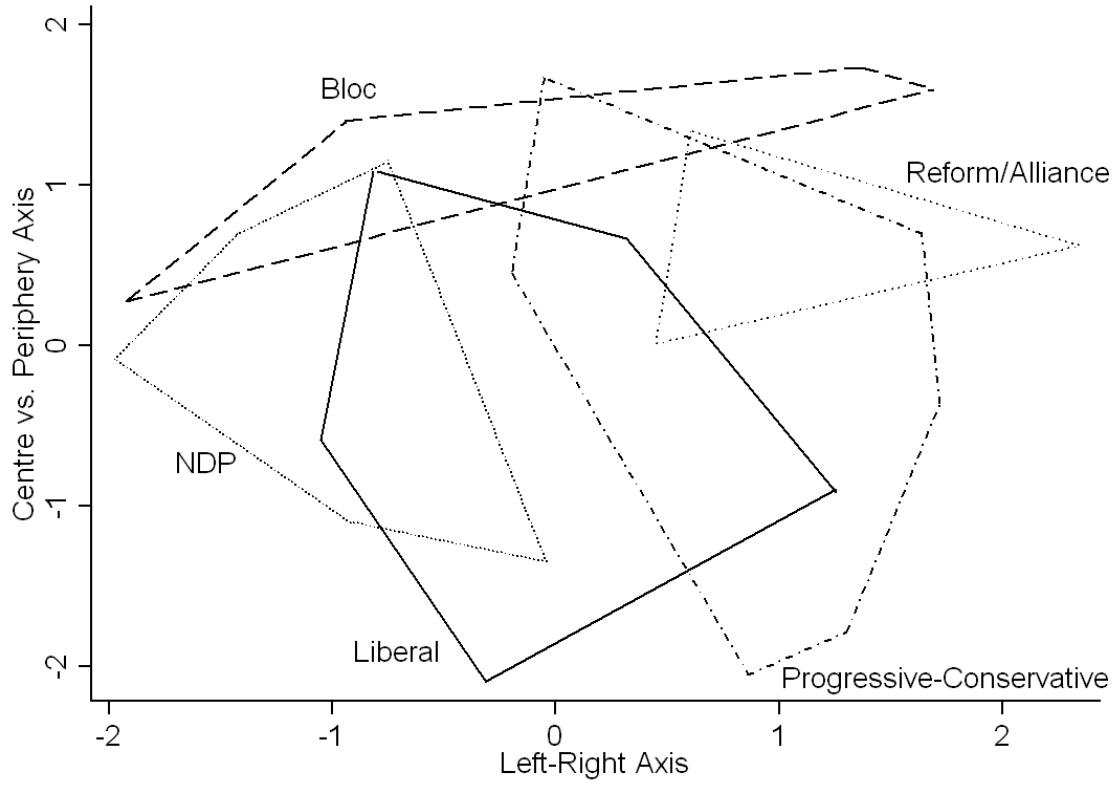
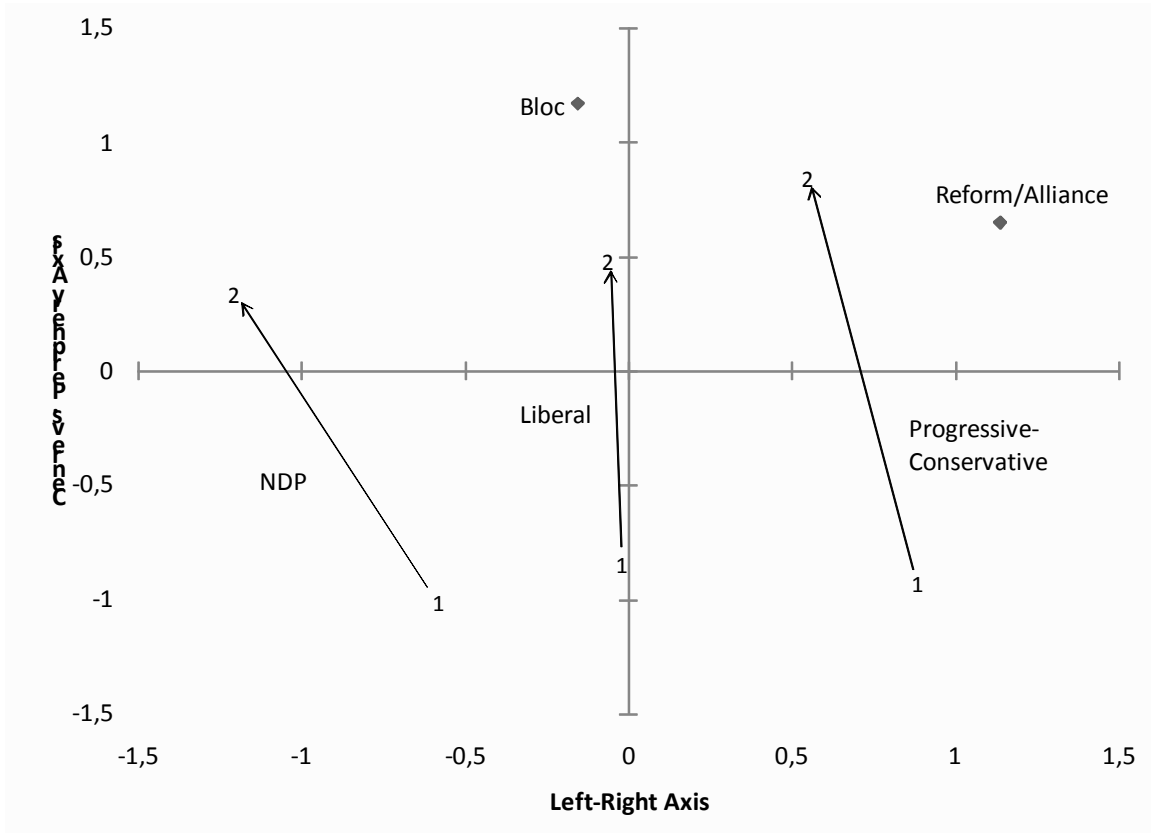


Figure 4: Mean party positions over the periods 1968-1993 (1) and 1993-2008 (2)



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List of documents analyzed

Bloc québécois

- 2008: Présent pour le Québec
- 2006: Pour la souveraineté, heureusement qu'ici c'est le Bloc
- 2004: Un parti propre au Québec
- 2000: Le Québec gagne à voter Bloc
- 1997: Election Platform
- 1993: Un nouveau parti pour l'étape décisive

Canadian Alliance

- 2000: A time for change

Conservative Party of Canada

- 2008: The True North Strong and Free
- 2006: Stand up for Canada
- 2004: Demanding better

Liberal Party of Canada

- 2008: The Green Shift
- 2006: Securing Canada's Success
- 2004: Moving Canada forward
- 2000: Opportunity for all
- 1997: Securing Our Future Together
- 1993: Creating Opportunity. The Liberal Plan for Canada
- 1988: This is more than an Election, it's your Future
- 1984: The Issues. John Turner Speaks Out
- 1980: New Decade. New Challenge. New Energy
- 1979: no title
- 1974: With you for Canada

1972: Together... The Land Is Strong

1968: no title

New Democratic Party of Canada

2008: A Prime Minister on your family's side for a change

2006: Getting results for people

2004: New energy. A positive choice

2000: Think how much Canada could be

1997: A Framework for Canada's Future

1993: Canada works when Canadians work

1988: Meeting the Challenge

1984: A New Democratic Future

1980: A Choice for Canadians

1979: no title

1974: People matter more

1972: Draft Mini-Program

1968: 1968 Speakers' Notes

Progressive-Conservative Party of Canada

2000: Change you can trust

1997: Let the Future Begin

1993: Making Government Work for Canada - A Taxpayer's Agenda

1988: Politiques en bref

1984: Guide de la campagne

1980: New Directions for Canada

1979: Let's get Canada working again

1974: Policies and Commitments

1972: no title

1968: Policy Handbook

Reform Party

1997: A Fresh Start for Canadians

1993: Building New Canada

Notes

¹ The digitized party platform documents analyzed in this paper can be downloaded from the Poltext Project Web site <http://www.poltext.capp.ulaval.ca>. The CMP data are available upon request from the main author. When the data are used in publications, please cite the following source: "Poltext project. Centre for the Analysis of Public Policy (CAPP). Laval University. The Poltext Project is funded by a grant from the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture."

² According to Johnston, polarized pluralism accounts for several features of the Canadian party system : three-party competition in individual ridings; the presence of sectional parties; boom and bust cycles in Conservative party electoral history; and large gaps between federal and provincial election outcomes in many provinces.

³ In spite of popular belief to the contrary, there is solid evidence to show that parties in government do keep most of their electoral promises (see Klingeman et al. 1994; Petry and Collette forthcoming).

⁴ The data from the 2008 expert survey can be obtained upon request from the authors.