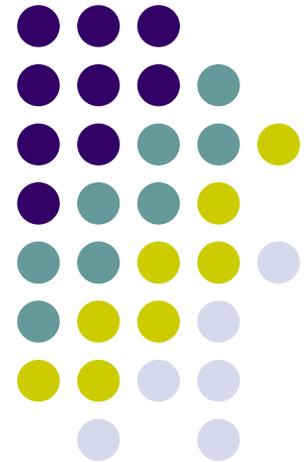


Applied Scaling & Classification Techniques in Political Science

Lecture 2: Party programmes and the CMP project (part 2)





Party programmes

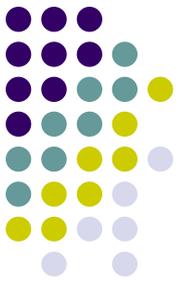
If we want to estimate the policy positions of politicians, one of the main source of information at our disposal is **political text**

There are of course many different types of political text as we have already seen, but one authoritative source of information about the stated electoral policy positions of political parties is the **official party manifesto**

Party programmes

It might be argued that very **few real voters** read any party manifesto at all, while almost no sane (!!!) voter checks all party manifestoes and conducts an in-depth comparative analysis of these, **basing her voting decision** on the results of this analysis

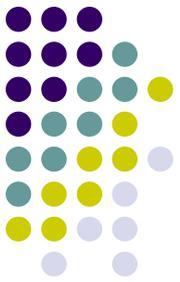
Nonetheless the party manifesto is the **official statement of party policy**, to which the party can be **held accountable** – by critics, journalists and expert observers of the political scene



Party programmes

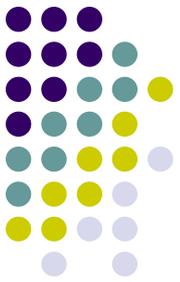
In this sense, positions outlined in the party manifesto can be taken as “**official**” **party policy**

Moreover, we can take party manifesto as an indicator of the party’s policy preferences at a **given point in time** (i.e., a perfect indicator to estimate something that happens **AFTER** that moment, i.e., the kind of cabinet that is going to be formed, its policy program, etc.)



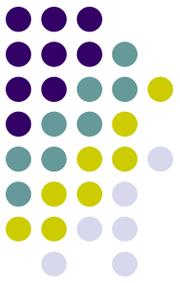
CMP's objective

The longstanding **Comparative Manifestos Project** (CMP) (<https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/>) has conducted a systematic analysis of party manifestos over a long period of time storing most of them (and you can get access to such documents via ManifestoR package)



CMP's objective

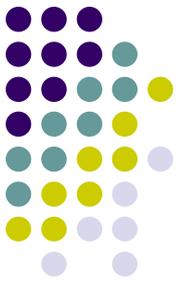
Coverage extends to almost every party manifesto issued at **every democratic election since World War 2** for **most parties in most democratic states** (OECD members, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and South-East Asia)



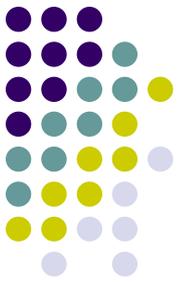
CMP's objective

CMP has also codified all the manifestos using trained **human readers** to code, into a **predefined 56-category coding scheme** (57 if we include the “uncoded” category), **every sentence** of every manifesto investigated

- ✓ The coding follows a two-step procedure



Two-step process



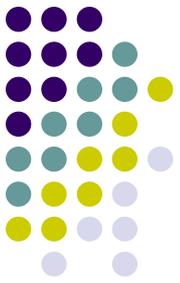
1. Unitising – cutting text in **quasi-sentence**

The coding unit is a quasi-sentence, that contains exactly one statement

e.g.: “We need to address our close ties with our neighbours (*1st quasi-sentence*) / as well as the unique challenges facing small business owner in this of economic hardship (*2nd quasi-sentence*)”

This is the **unit of analysis** of CMP: NOT a manifesto, but the quasi-sentences within it!

Two-step process



2. **Coding** – find the right code for a quasi- sentence:
attribute to each coding-unit **one, and only one**, category
CMP developed a category system composed of 56
categories, grouped in 7 policy areas, designed to be
comparable between parties, countries, elections and
across time

Table 1: 56 Standard Policy Preferences in Seven Policy Domains

Domain 1: External Relations

- 101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive
- 102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative
- 103 Anti-Imperialism: Positive
- 104 Military: Positive
- 105 Military: Negative
- 106 Peace: Positive
- 107 Internationalism: Positive
- 108 European Integration: Positive
- 109 Internationalism: Negative
- 110 European Integration: Negative

Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy

- 201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive
- 202 Democracy: Positive
- 203 Constitutionalism: Positive
- 204 Constitutionalism: Negative

Domain 3: Political System

- 301 Decentralisation: Positive
- 302 Centralisation: Positive
- 303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency: Positive
- 304 Political Corruption: Negative
- 305 Political Authority: Positive

Domain 4: Economy

- 401 Free Enterprise: Positive
- 402 Incentives: Positive
- 403 Market Regulation: Positive
- 404 Economic Planning: Positive
- 405 Corporatism: Positive
- 406 Protectionism: Positive
- 407 Protectionism: Negative
- 408 Economic Goals
- 409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive
- 410 Economic Growth

- 411 Technology and Infrastructure: Positive
- 412 Controlled Economy: Positive
- 413 Nationalisation: Positive
- 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive
- 415 Marxist Analysis: Positive
- 416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive

Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life

- 501 Environmental Protection: Positive
- 502 Culture: Positive
- 503 Equality: Positive
- 504 Welfare State Expansion
- 505 Welfare State Limitation
- 506 Education Expansion
- 507 Education Limitation

Domain 6: Fabric of Society

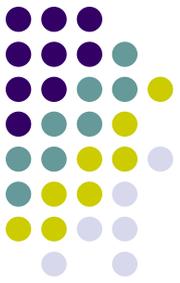
- 601 National Way of Life: Positive
- 602 National Way of Life: Negative
- 603 Traditional Morality: Positive
- 604 Traditional Morality: Negative
- 605 Law and Order: Positive
- 606 Civic Mindedness: Positive
- 607 Multiculturalism: Positive
- 608 Multiculturalism: Negative

Domain 7: Social Groups

- 701 Labour Groups: Positive
- 702 Labour Groups: Negative
- 703 Agriculture: Positive
- 704 Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive
- 705 Minority Groups: Positive
- 706 Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive

000 No meaningful category applies

Two-step process



e.g.: "We need to address our close ties with our neighbours (107) / as well as the unique challenges facing small business owner in this of economic hardship (402)"

https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/coding_schemes/mp_v5

Since 2015 some minor changes to the categories have been implemented, see:

https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/down/papers/Evolution_of_the_Manifesto_Coding_Instructions_and_the_Category_Scheme.pdf

Two-step process



From this coding procedures you can derive important insights on party politics and their ideology, but we won't have time to discuss about it

If you are interested:

- ✓ Lowe, W., Benoit, K., Mikhaylov, S., & Laver, M. (2011). Scaling Policy Preferences From Coded Political Texts. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 26(1), 123-155