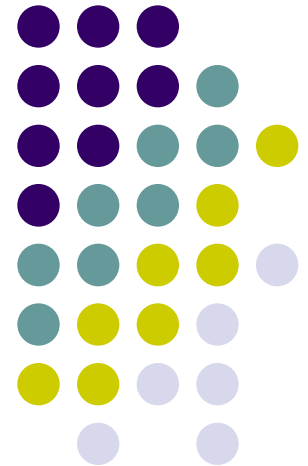


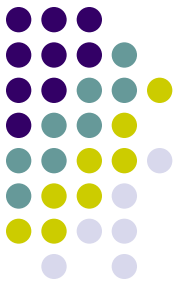
Applied Scaling & Classification Techniques in Political Science

The theory behind CMP codification



CMP theory

The comprehensive coverage of CMP dataset has made it a popular choice with researchers, despite the fact that, theoretically, the CMP actual coding scheme very explicitly refers to a particular “**saliency**” **theory of politics** rather than **spatial modeling**



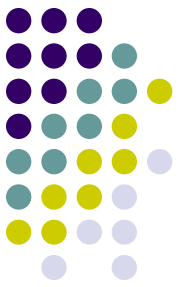
CMP theory

According to this theory, party strategists see electors as overwhelmingly **favouring one course of action** on most issues (i.e., who is the party that does not favour peace? Or corruption?)

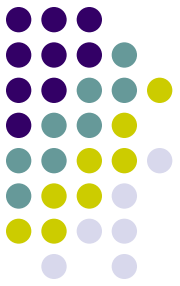
Hence all party programs endorse the **same position, with only minor exceptions** (Budge et al: 2001)

As a result, the CMP data should not be, according to the CMP, about **party positions** on particular policy dimensions; these party positions are all **assumed to be the same**

Rather, the CMP data are about the party-specific **saliency weights** of different policy dimensions.



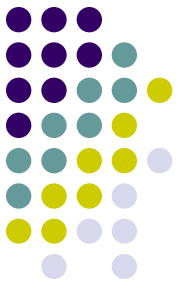
CMP theory



The good news for those who have used CMP data to operationalize theoretical models, assuming that these were about **party policy positions** as opposed to **saliency weights**, is that the CMP did not actually use saliency theory when designing its own coding scheme for party manifestos: about half of the CMP coding categories **are explicitly positional** and do not derive directly from saliency theory!!!

For example: *Military: Positive / Military: Negative; Welfare State expansion / Welfare State limitations, etc.*

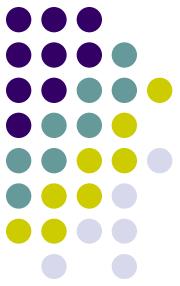
CMP theory



Moreover, by reading the actual definitions of the remaining CMP coding categories, it quickly becomes clear that most of the remaining “saliency” coding categories are also **explicitly positional** rather than saliency-driven

Most people, for example, would regard “*centralization*” and “*decentralization*” as opposite ends of the same policy continuum despite the fact that they do not have “pro” and “con” attached to their labels

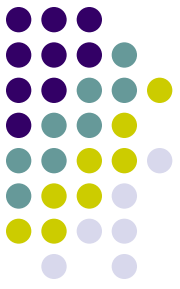
CMP theory



Or take the first coding category, “*anti-imperialism*”, defined as “*negative references to exerting strong influence (political, military or commercial) over other states; negative references to controlling other states as if they were part of an Empire; favourable mentions of decolonialization ...*” and so on

The **issue position content** in this definition could hardly be more explicit

This coding category is in fact one end of a **bipolar variable** for which the designers of the coding scheme have simply predicted that the other end is **unlikely** to be populated because imperialism is not very popular these days



CMP theory

There is thus actually just one of the 56 coding categories in the CMP coding scheme, “*economic goals*”, that does not undermine the assumptions of “saliency theory”

In short, the CMP coding scheme is not in practice a “pure salience” scheme

It is a **positional coding scheme** in which many of the potential positional categories have been censored in advance on the basis of the empirical expectations of the scheme’s designers

So we can use CMP data to estimate parties’ positions without any problems!!!