Estimating the Policy Positions of Political Parties
From Legislative Election Manifestos 1958-2002

François Petry

Department of Political Science

Université Laval, Quebec, Canada G1K 7P4.

E-mail: Francois.petry@pol.ulaval.ca

and

Paul Pennings

Department of Political Science

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

E-mail: pjm.pennings@fsw.vu.nl

This article gives an overview of the French party manifestos archived at the Berlin Science Center under the auspices of the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), formerly the Manifesto Research Project (MRP), 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 start of the Fifth Republic (1958) up to and including the legislative elections of 2002. We show that the CMP coding method enables a reliable and plausible estimation of party policy positions. The possibility of comparisons over time gives this data source an important advantage over alternative sources on party policy positions.

The 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 25 established and the new Eastern European democracies 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. The raw data, in the form of frequency percentages, have been published on CD-ROM by Budge et al. 2001 and will be updated and expanded in 2006.

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 .70 between all pairs of coders taking the test and between individual codings decisions and the 'correct' solution. However, this correlation probably underestimates

the quality of the codings because the training and correction procedures that follow the test further improve the accuracy of coding.

More difficult to assess is the extent to which the codings generate results that make sense within and across countries. Independent researchers have compared the positions which resulted from the coding with those measured by expert judgements. 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 judgements 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.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Researchers in the CMP assume that parties position themselves in a political space not so much by offering opposite policies to the voters on the same issues (e.g., larger vs. smaller defense budget for example) but rather by stressing particular issues that they 'own' at election time (e.g., one party emphasizes the need for national defense while another emphasizes the importance of Peace). In other words, parties talk past one another rather than engaging in direct confrontation. The method used by the CMP, called selective emphasis, analyzes inter-party policy distance on the basis of the relative saliency in party manifestos of predetermined issue categories (Klingemann et al. 1994). Inter-party policy distance is calculated by correlating shares of party manifestos devoted to particular issue categories: the higher the correlation across parties, the lower the distance between them. Also, the selective emphasis method uses (quasi)sentences in party manifestos as its unit of analysis, rather than substantive pledges (Volkens 2001: 96).

The selective emphasis approach presumes that parties disagree more on the relative importance of issues than on substantive policies. As a consequence, they make positive references to issues that they care to mention and simply ignore the other issues in their manifestos. The method therefore only reports the salience of an issue (that is the frequency of mention of that issue as a percentage of total) not its substance. Thus the method is open to the criticism that it does not differentiate positive from negative references to an issue. This is addressed in part by adding variables for the negative mention of certain issues thus creating so-called bi-polar categories (e.g., Military Positive vs. Military Negative) aside of 'valence' issue categories (e.g., the importance of Peace) which are supposed to reflect only positive references in the CMP coding scheme. To the extent that the selective emphasis approach is correct in assuming that parties emphasize primarily 'valence' issues, we should find evidence of this in the distribution of coding categories, that is, we expect emphasis of the positive side of bi-polar issues and of valence issues to be the rule and negative emphases to be the exception. Furthermore, to the extent that the selective emphasis approach is correct in assuming that parties talk past one another, in France as elsewhere we expect to find categories within one party's manifestos which are not present in the other parties' manifestos, and each party is expected to have its own set of (more or less) exclusive issues.

Our research questions and hypotheses are not limited to the CMP methodology. The measure of party manifesto emphases is also used to test some hypotheses about the evolution of the French party system during the past decades. Experts agree that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a 'rationalization' of the French party system, resulting in party convergence on a "*quadrille bipolaire*," that is, an apparently stable bipolar cleavage separating the Socialists and the Communists on the left side from the Gaullists and the Center-Right on the right side (Evans, 2003). This was the situation in the late 1970s and early 1980s. But the subsequent period was quite different. The French party system has undergone a growing fragmentation in the second half of the 1980s and in the 1990s, with higher electoral volatility levels compared to the earlier period and the emergence of two new parties, the *Front national* to the right, and the Greens to the left of the political spectrum. This raises the question of whether the pattern of party manifesto emphases has remained stable or whether it has shifted over time as part of the transformation of the

party system and, in the affirmative, what policy categories and what parties have been affected most.

It is possible that the changes in the French party system have not affected the evolution of party manifestos. But it seems likely that the rationalization and subsequent fragmentation of the party system have had contrary impacts on the spatial distribution of party manifestos. More specifically, it is hypothesized that the period of rationalization of the party system (1958-1978) coincided with a convergence of party manifesto emphases, whereas the subsequent period of fragmentation of the party system (1981-2002) has witnessed a dispersion of party manifesto emphases due to the emergence of new parties at both ends of the political spectrum and to the centripetal attraction they exert on the manifestos of "traditional" parties.

Descriptive Analyses of French Party Positions

In spite of the difficulties encountered in collecting some party manifesto documents - those for the parties of the Center-Right especially - 53 manifestos were collected and analyzed for the 12 legislative elections of the Fifth Republic, starting in 1958 and ending in 2002. The period of study is approximately double (and so is the number of electoral manifestos analyzed) of what it was in a previous spatial analysis of French party manifestos (Petry 1987). As in the previous analysis, the documents are analyzed following the standard CMP coding procedure - first grouping sentences within one of 56 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 general coding scheme fitted the French party documents surprisingly well. The normal coding unit was the (quasi)sentence, with the exception of book-length party documents in which the paragraph was the coding unit. There was no need to create special sub-categories. The average percentage of sentences left uncoded was 7.1 per cent (with a range from 0.1 percent to 17.3 per cent). This is a first indication that the saliency approach to coding party documents is justified in the case of France.

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 per cent 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 two bipolar pairs - Military Positive vs. Military Negative and Constitution Positive vs. Constitution 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 France. The approach assumes that political parties compete by selectively emphasizing "valence" issues that reflect support for broad policy ideas (free enterprise, welfare for the poor, environmental protection) that cannot accommodate polar opposites. 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 French 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's 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 French manifestos are primarily concerned by issues in the Economy (22 per cent of mentions on average) and Social Welfare (21 per cent) domains. French manifestos also share in common concerns about Social Groups (12.5 per cent), Freedom & Democracy (12 per cent), and International Relations (10.5 per cent). The least salient domains are Fabric of Society (7.5 per cent) and Government Administration (6 per cent on average).

Table 1 reports the mean values for two successive periods: before and after the 1981 elections which coincided with the election of the Socialists in power (in coalition with the Communists) after more than twenty years of domination by the Gaullists and Center-Right in power. We chose the 1981 elections because they occupy the half-way

mark between 1958 and 2002, although we could have chosen 1986, which were the first legislative elections in which the *Front national* competed for seats in the National Assembly. Although its precise date could be debated, the split is justified, at least in the exploratory analysis. In view of the recent transformation undergone by the French 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 1978 elections, only 18 per cent of the mentions in the typical manifesto were devoted to Social Welfare. Attention to Social Welfare rose to more then 23 per cent in the second half of the period, since the 1981 elections. Another domain in which attention has increased over time is the Fabric of Society, from less than 6 percent to approximately 10 per cent. Note that in both domains, manifestos have increased their attention to all the categories, although the increase is much more dramatic in Law & Order (from 1.9 to 3.4 per cent) and Traditional Morality (from .71 to 2.0 per cent) than in Welfare State Expansion (from 4.5 to 5.9 per cent) and Education Expansion (from 3.9 to 4.3 per cent).

The large increases in the numbers for Law & Order and for Traditional Morality positive suggest that these categories have become more salient over time in the manifestos of all the parties. The change in the party system, most notably the addition of the *Front national* to the existing party families in 1986 also played a part in the increased saliency of Law & Order and Traditional Morality. The box-plots of figure 1 give a visual depiction of the role that the manifestos of the *Front national* played in the increased attention devoted to Law & Order over time. The height of each box represents the interquartile 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. We can see that the *Front national* was an outlier at all elections from 1986 to 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 show that the saliency of law and order increased in the manifestos of other parties as well, so it seems that the *Front national* is not a completely isolated case. This appears clearly in 2002 when the *Front national* is no longer an outlier. Note also that Law & Order is not an entirely new theme in French

7

electoral campaigns. The category was rather heavily emphasized by the Gaullists in earlier periods as the outliers in 1962 and 1973 show. In a similar fashion, the addition of the Greens in 1993 contributed to a rise in the average mention of Environmental Protection (box plots not shown). The Greens clearly stand as outliers on Environmental Protection but then again, they are not a completely isolated case. Other parties emphasize Environmental Protection more today than they did in earlier periods as the very large increase from one period to the next in table 1 suggests.

Figures 1 and 2 about here

The overall increases in emphases of Law & Order and Environmental Protection in recent elections were triggered in large part by the emergence of new parties specialized in advocating these themes and by the subsequent adoption by traditional parties of 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 Peace for example, the emphasis of which has declined over time in roughly the same proportion for all parties, as the box plots of figure 2 demonstrate. Another example of gradual change—an increase this time--in the manifestos of all the parties is Education Expansion (box plots not shown).

Returning to table 1, we see that increased salience over time of the categories in the social welfare and the fabric of society domains has occurred at the expense of a decrease of importance of all other domains, especially International Relations (from 12.9 to 8.2 per cent) and Freedom and Democracy (from 14 to 9.4 per cent). Note again that with one notable exception (Military Positive) attention decreased or remained stable in all categories within International Relations and Freedom and Democracy. The decrease in attention is much smaller in the remaining domains (Government Administration, Economy, and Social Groups), although there have been some notable changes affecting several categories within them. In the economic domain, Economic

Orthodoxy and Keynesian Demands Management have become significantly more salient while Economic Goals, Market Regulation, and Economic Planning have become significantly less salient over time. Finally, Political Authority (in the Government Administration domain) and Professional Groups (in the Social Groups domain) have seen their importance significantly reduced over the years.

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 reports the five most salient categories (with their means and standard deviations) in the manifestos of each party before and after 1981 (starting in 1986 for the *Front national* and in 1993 for the Greens). The reason for splitting the data of table 2 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 *Front national* and the Greens is so much shorter than for the other parties.

Tables 2 and 3 about here

From table 2 we see that all the French parties shared Democracy and Social Justice as leading categories in common during the period 1958-1978. Welfare State Expansion was also among the five top categories in the Communist and Socialist agendas during that period. Half the categories in table 2 are unique to one party. The unique categories are tabulated by party as follows: Communist: Labour, Demographic Groups; Socialist:, Education Expansion; Center-Right: Infrastructures, Economic Goals, Internationalism; Gaullist: Political Authority, Pro Constitution, Productivity.

Table 3 reports the leading categories by party for the period 1981-2002. From the table we see that at least half the parties share four leading categories in common. They are Welfare State Expansion (among the leading categories in the manifestos of five parties), Social Justice (four parties); Education Expansion (four parties) and Democracy (three parties). Pro-Europe is found among the top five categories in the manifestos of two parties (Socialist and Center-Right) and so are Environmental Protection (Greens and *Front national*) and Economic Orthodoxy (Gaullist and *Front*

national). This leaves eight leading categories that are unique to one party. They are Communist: Labour, Controlled Economy; Center Right: Freedom; Gaullist: Agriculture, Decentralization; *Front national*: Traditional Morality, Law & Order, Free Enterprise. Note that none of their top five categories are unique to the Greens and to the Socialists.

A comparison of the data in tables 2 and 3 shows that there was less dispersion in the most salient categories across parties during the 1981-2002 period than during the 1958-1978 period, in spite of the addition of two new parties during the latter period. The increased fragmentation of the French party system in the latter period has not been accompanied by an increase in the ideological dispersion across parties, as was hypothesized. The data from tables 2 and 3 suggest two explanations. First, the manifestos of the traditional parties have converged over time 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 Environmental Protection, the top categories in the manifestos of the Greens (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 of the left.

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 the parties at the right of the political spectrum. First, we see that the top five categories emphasized by the Gaullists and the Center Right in 1981-2002 bear little resemblance with their top five categories in 1958-1978 except for the high level of emphasis of Social Welfare by the Center-Right throughout the entire period. Second is the large number of categories (four out of five) that are uniquely emphasized by the *Front national*. Note however that the top five categories emphasized by the *Front national* are entirely different from those emphasized by the Centrer Right and the Gaullists. What this suggests is that the change in emphases by the Center Right and the Gaullists after 1986 did not go in the direction of the manifestos of the *Front national*. Quite to the contrary, the manifestos of the Center Right and the Gaullists now resemble more the manifestos of the parties of the left than they did before 1981. This suggests that if the policies proposed by the *Front national* in its manifestos have attracted the attention of the Center Right and the Gaullists during the late 1980s and the 1990s, this was not

sufficient to provoke a rapprochement between their manifestos and those of the *Front national*.

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 very strong correspondence between the top five categories emphasized by the PCF and the PS during the two periods (four out of five are the same). Third, when looking at the Greens' manifestos, we see that the top five categories the Greens have emphasized are identical with the top categories emphasized by the PCF or the PS except Environmental Protection. Thus, from the point of view of manifesto emphases, the convergence between the Greens, the Socialists and the Communists contrasts sharply with the divergence between the *Front national*, the Center-Right and the Gaullists.

Although the emphases in the manifestos of the four 'traditional' French 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 Center Right and the Gaullists. The data also suggest that the manifestos of the *Front national* are more unique *vis à vis* the manifestos of the traditional parties of the right than are the manifestos of the Greens *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.

Factor Analyses

In order to identify the ideological dimensions separating French 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

Two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.25 were produced in the International Relations domain accounting for 29 percent and 23.4 per cent of the total variance respectively. After Varimax rotation, these factors are straightforward to interpret. The first factor, loading positively on Military Negative (.917) and Peace (.880) is labeled Pacifism. The second factor loads positively on Europe Positive (.742) and Internationalism (.640) and negatively on Military Positive (-.560). We will label this factor Internationalism.

One factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25 was produced in the Freedom & Democracy domain, accounting for 31.2 per cent of total variance. The factor is not readily interpreted, loading heavily on Constitution Negative (.801), one of the least frequently mentioned category, and Human Rights & Freedom (.669). High communalities between components are also a problem in this factor. It is labeled Freedom for lack of a better term.

In the Government Administration domain, one factor emerges that accounts for 48.4 per cent of total variance. The factor, which we call Government Decentralization vs. Authority, loads positively on Decentralization (.794) and Government Efficiency (.623), and negatively on Political Authority (-.658).

In the Economy domain, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1,25 emerge, accounting for 28.3 per cent and 16.3 per cent of total variance respectively. One factor, loading positively on Controlled Economy (.757), Market Regulation (.698) and Nationalization (.663), and negatively on Incentives (-.649) and Free Enterprise (-.582), is labeled Controlled vs. Market Economy. Three categories—Keynesian Demand Management (.847), Economic Orthodoxy (.816), and Protectionism (.650)—correlate positively with the second factor, suggesting a neo-mercantilist concern for the protection of the French economy against foreign competition in the name of good financial management. The factor is labeled accordingly.

In the Social Welfare domain, the first factor, explaining 32.6 per cent of total variance, loads heavily on Social Justice (.901) and Welfare State Expansion (.820), and is labeled, naturally enough, Social Justice. The other factor, explaining 29.6 of total

variance, is positively correlated with Education Expansion (.834) and Culture & Sport (.801). It will be called Quality of Life.

The Fabric of Society domain produces one factor with eigenvalue greater than 1.25. The factor, accounting for 53.7 per cent of variance, loads on to Traditional Morality (.936), National Way of Life Positive (.850) and Law & Order (.741) and is labeled Social Conservatism.

In the domain for Social Groups, two factors emerge, accounting for 37.9 per cent and 25.6 per cent of total variance respectively. One correlates positively with Labour (.741) and Underprivileged Minorities (.629), and negatively with Farmers (-.763). The factor is called Blue Collars vs. Farmers. The other factor, loading positively on Professional Groups (.873) and Demographic Groups (.780) evokes a concern for the middle class and is labeled accordingly.

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. We will first discuss the interpretation of the second order factors reported in table 5. To aid interpretation the table presents not only the loadings of each first order factor on the second order dimensions but also the correlations between original coding categories and the second order factors.

Table 5 about here

The analysis produces three factors with eigenvalues greater then 1.25. The first factor, accounting for 24.73 of the total variance, strongly contrasts the first-order dimensions of Controlled vs. Market Economy (.591) with that of Neo-mercantilism (-.651). The factor also correlates strongly with themes of Blue Collars vs. Farmers (.836), Pacifism (.653), and Social Justice and Social Services (.554). The factor therefore reflects a complex partly bipolar combination of first-order factors that are themselves bipolar in part, but is clearly interpreted as referring to a mostly economic left-right dichotomy with appeals to Military Negative, Controlled Economy for the sake of Social Justice, Labour, and

Underprivileged Minorities on one side, and support for Incentives, Free Enterprise, Economic Orthodoxy, Protectionism, and Farmers on the other.

The second factor, accounting for 18.35 of total variance, is also strongly contrasted but this time between the themes of Social Conservatism (-.747) and Quality of Life (.778). The factor is interpreted as a social liberalism-conservatism dimension with support for Education, Culture & Sports, Decentralization, and Government Efficiency on the liberal side, and appeals to Political Authority, Traditional Morality, Law & Order, and Military Positive on the conservative side. The third factor, accounting for 14.43 per cent of total variance, combines strongly contrasted loadings in the Economic and the International Relations domains. The dimension appears to reflect a neo-mercantilist appeal in support of state intervention to protect French producers against foreign (including European) competitors.

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 vertical dimension depicts the first factor. A positive score on this dimension indicates heavy emphasis of Controlled Economy, Blue-Collar Workers, Social Justice, Social Services, and Peace, all reminiscent of leftist values. A negative score on this dimension indicates an appeal to themes with a right-wing flavor: Economic Orthodoxy, Protectionism, Farmers, and Free Enterprise. The horizontal dimension (the second factor) contrasts support for Education Expansion, Culture & Sports, Decentralization, and Government Efficiency on the positive side, with appeals to Traditional Morality, Law & Order, National Way of Life, and Military Positive on the negative side.

Figure 3 about here

14

To avoid overcrowding only the points delineating the contour of each party space are reported in the figure. Note the overlap between the Communists and the Socialists on the positive side and between the Gaullists and Center-Right at the middle of the first dimension. The Greens and the *Front national* occupy the extremes on the first dimension. The Communists and the Socialists also overlap (with the Center-Right) on the positive side of the second dimension while the Gaullists now overlap with the Greens rather than the Center-Right on the negative side of the same dimension. The *Front national* is located at the extreme negatives of both dimensions. Dividing the space into four quadrants, we have the *Front national* occupying the negative-negative quadrant, the Socialists and the Communists at the opposite positive-positive quadrant, and the Greens in the positive-negative quadrant. The Gaullists and the Center-Right cannot be neatly nested in one quadrant because they straddle the first dimension.

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 positive scores on the left and negative 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. Further validation comes from a comparison of the mean location of party manifestos along the first factor with the average left-right party position generated from expert surveys (Huber and Inglehart, 1995). The comparative data are displayed in table 6. 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 5. 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 French policy experts. 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. 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 Greens at the extreme left of the CMP scale and at the median of the scale generated by the expert survey data. This

discrepancy is easily explained away when one considers that Hubert and Inglehart report the score given by experts to the now defunct center-right *Écologie* party, not the left-of-center Greens.

Table 6 about here

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 5. 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 Quality of Life and the Decentralization first-order factors, and negatively with the Social Conservatism 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 *Front national*, the Greens and the Gaullists are located on the negative side of the scale, and the Center-Right, the Communists and the Socialists are located on the positive side. These results offer additional evidence to the current debate about the recent transformation of the French political landscape. Grunberg & Schweisguth (1997, 2003) argue that support for the *Front national* constitute a new separate bloc distinct from the traditional left-right cleavage. This claim is challenged by Andersen & Evans (2003) who argue that support for the *Front national* does not constitute a unique political bloc separate from the traditional left-right cleavage. Our findings do not speak directly to the debate about voters' behavior, however, by showing that its manifestos is consistently different from the manifestos of other French parties on more than one political dimensions, they suggest that the *Front national* is a distinct party both in terms of its popular support and the policies it advocates.[1]

Figure 4 plots the average position of the parties in the periods 1958-1978 and 1981-2002. Breaking the period of analysis into two shows how the Center-Right starts

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[1] It should be noted that the position of the *Front national* along the third factor (not shown) is also an outlier, quite a distance away from the positions of all the other parties.

16

in the positive-positive quadrant and ends up in the negative-positive quadrant. The Gaullists also shift to a more positive (or less negative) position along the second dimension but they don't move much on the first dimension. The Communists and the Socialists stay in the same quadrant over the entire period, although they both migrate toward a more negative position on the first dimension.

Figure 4 about here

Figure 5 reports the movements of French party manifestos over time on the first second-order factor which we have interpreted as a left-right economic dimension. Note that the Socialists are on the left side of the Communists for most of the period. This does not coincide with the accepted tradition of placing the Communist party to the left of the Socialists. The Communists and the Socialists shift into their normal expected positions only in the 1990s. Note also how the Gaullists and the Center-Right switch positions after 1981. Figure 4 puts in sharp relief once again the positions of the *Front national* and the Greens at opposite extremes on the axis.

Figure 5 about here

Conclusion

Our aim in this article was twofold. 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 French 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 more valid, more accurate and more reliable than existing estimates of French 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, 2001) 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 which enables

17

possibilities for computerized content analysis (Pennings and Keman 2002; Pennings and Keman et al. 2006).

Second, we wanted to assess whether and to what extent the positioning of party manifestos has been affected by the recent transformation of the French party system. The data suggest that the emergence of new "non-mainstream" parties--the Greens and, especially, the *Front national*--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.

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Table 1: Overall Frequencies

Included categories (mentioned 1% of the time or more overall)					
Domains & Original Categories	Before 1981	After 1978	Domains & Original Categories	Before 1981	After 1978
International Relations (1)	%	%	Economy (4)	%	%
Europe Positive	2.61	2.73	Incentives	2.49	3.45
Peace	3.03	1.23	Technology & Infrastructures	3.28	2.24
Special Relations Positive	2,62	1.09	Economic Orthodoxy	1.97	3.27
Internationalism Positive	2.02	1.60	Economic Goals	3.26	1.99
Military Negative	1.83	0.31	Productivity	2.14	2.13
Military Positive	0.83	1.20	Free Enterprise	1.63	2.47
Total International Relations	12.94	8.16	Market Regulation	2.46	1.29
			Controlled Economy	1.51	1.14
Freedom & Democracy (2)	%	%	Economic Planning	1.70	0.41
Democracy	5.33	4.73	Keynsian Demands Management.	0.32	1.73
Human Rights & Freedom	4.02	3.57	Nationalization	1.01	0.94
Constitution Positive	3.03	0.76	Protectionism Positive	0.63	1.28
Constitution Negative	1.68	0.37	Total Economy	22.40	22.34
Total Freedom & Democracy	14.06	9.43			
			Social Groups (7)	%	%
Government Administration (3)	%	%	Farmers	3.52	3.50
Decentralization Positive	3.26	3.15	Demographic Groups	3.76	2.85
Government Efficiency	1.05	2.24	Labour Positive	2.59	1.96
Political Authority	1.90	0.63	Underprivileged Minorities	1.86	2.02
Total Gov. Administration	6.21	6.02	Professional Groups	2.32	0.90
			Total Social Groups	14.05	11.23
Social Welfare (5)	%	%			
Social Justice	5.62	6.25	Eliminated Categories (mentioned less than 1% of the time overall)		
Welfare State Expansion	4.48	5.92			
Education Expansion	3.85	4.33	Special Relations Negative; Anti-Imperialism; *Internationalism* Negative; Europe Negative; Centralization; Political Corruption; National Way of Life Negative; Traditional Morality Negative; Multiculturalism Positive; Multiculturalism Negative; Corporatism; Protectionism Negative; Marxist Analysis; Anti-Growth; Welfare State Limitation; Education Limitation; Labour Negative.		
Environmental Protection	2.62	4.52			
Culture & Sports	1.70	2.35			
Total Social Welfare	18.27	23.37			
Fabric of Society (6)	%	%			
National Way of Life Positive	2.35	2.36			
Law & Order	1.95	3.42			
Traditional Morality Positive	0.71	2.04			
Social Harmony	0.64	1.92			
Total Fabric of Society	5.65	9.74			

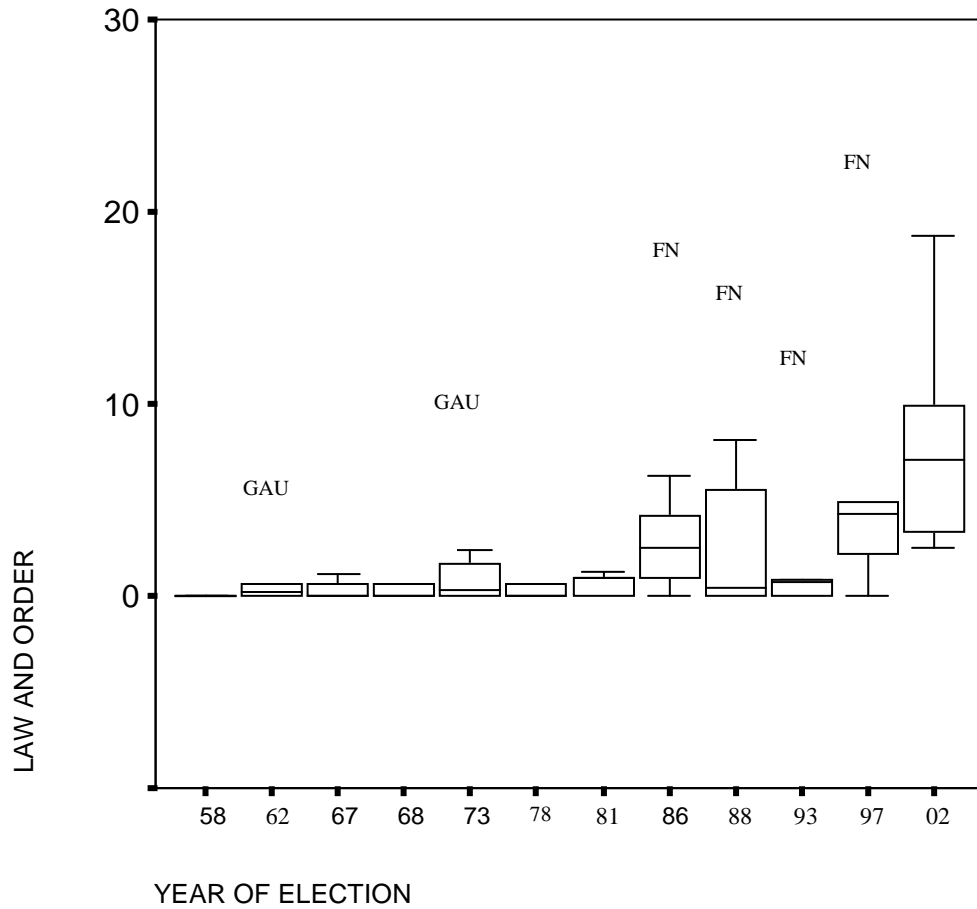**Figure 1. Change in Salience Distribution of Law and Order in French Manifestos**

Figure 2. Change in Salience Distribution of Peace in French Manifestos
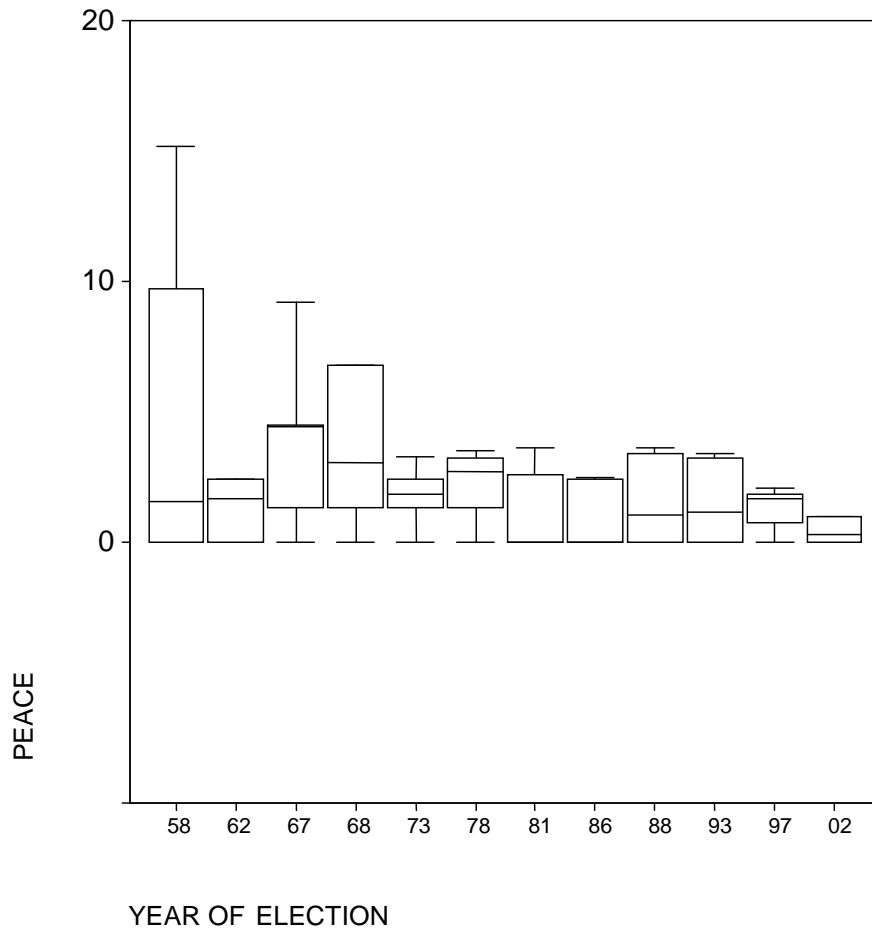
Table 2: Leading Categories by Party 1958-1978

Communist		Socialist		Center-Right		Gaullist	
Labour		Democracy		Democracy		Authority	
7.7	1.3	6.9	3.6	5.4	3.1	5.7	5.2
Social Justice		Peace		Infrastructures		Social Justice	
6.5	3.5	5.1	4.3	5.1	4.2	5.4	3.7
Social Welfare		Social Welfare		Social Justice		ProConstitution	
6.1	2.1	6.2	3.7	5.0	3.2	5.2	3.7
Democracy		Social Justice		Eco. Goals		Democracy	
5.6	5.9	5.9	5.4	3.1	2.9	4.8	1.8
Demo. Groups		Pro Education		International.		Productivity	
5.0	2.8	5.3	2.3	4.9	2.8	4.8	1.1

Note. The first number in each cell is the mean percentage of emphasis, the second number is the standard deviation

Table 3: Leading Categories by Party 1981-2002 (1986-2002 for the FN; 1993-2003 for the Greens)

Greens		Communist		Socialist		Center-Right		Gaullist		Front national	
Environment		Social Justice		Social Justice		Social Welfare		Eco. Orthodox.		Trad. Morality	
20.3	4.8	11.2	2.9	10.2	3.4	6.3	2.8	10.1	10.2	10.8	2.6
Social Justice		Social Welfare		Social Welfare		Eco. Orthodox		ProEducation		National Way	
10.1	3.4	7.3	3.5	6.4	3.0	6.0	7.4	7.4	1.5	10.5	4.6
Democracy		Labour		ProEducation		ProEducation		Agriculture		Law & Order	
8.3	3.2	6.1	2.0	5.9	2.5	5.3	2.8	6.6	4.9	7.5	2.9
Social Welfare		Democracy		Democracy		Social Justice		Social Welfare		Environment	
8.2	2.1	5.6	2.2	5.0	3.2	5.1	5.0	5.4	2.8	4.9	2.7
ProEurope		Control. Eco.		ProEurope		Indiv. Freedom		Decentralize		FreeEnterprise	
5.2	8.1	5.0	4.4	5.0	3.5	5.2	3.0	5.0	2.1	4.8	2.2

Note. The first number in each cell is the mean percentage of emphasis, the second number is the standard deviation

Table 4: First Stage Factor Analysis by Domain

Domains & Categories	Factors		Domains & Categories	Factors	
International Relations (1)	1. Pacifism	2 Interna-tionalism	Economy (4)	1. Controlled vs Market Economy	2. Neo-mercantilism
Europe Positive	-.171	.742	Incentives	-.649	.076
Peace	.880	-.048	Technology & Infrastructures	-.386	.087
Special Relations Positive	.101	.145	Economic Orthodoxy	-.316	.816
Internationalism Positive	.386	.640	Economic Goals	-.421	-.048
Military Negative	.917	.095	Productivity	-.310	.471
Military Positive	-.238	-.560	Free Enterprise	-.582	.067
Eigenvalue	2.0	1.6	Market Regulation	.698	-.357
% of Variance Explained	29	23.4	Controlled Economy	.757	.061
			Economic Planning	.441	-.350
Freedom & Democracy (2)	Freedom		Keynsian Demand Mngt.	.275	.547
Democracy	.379		Nationalization	.663	-.023
Rights & Freedom	.669		Protectionism Positive	.050	.650
Constitution Positive	-.216		Eigenvalue	3.4	1.96
Constitution Negative	.801		% of Variance Explained	28.3	16.3
Eigenvalue	1.3				
% of Variance Explained	31.2		Fabric of Society (6)	Social Conservatism	
			National Way of Life Positive	.850	
Gov. Administration (3)	Decentralization		Law & Order	.741	
Decentralization Positive	.794		Traditional Morality Positive	.936	
Government Efficiency	.623		Social Harmony	-.035	
Political Authority	-.658		Eigenvalue	2.15	
Eigenvalue	1.5		% of Variance Explained	53.7	
% of Variance Explained	48.4				
Welfare (5)	1. Social justice	2. Quality of life	Social Groups (7)	1. Blue Collars vs. Farmers	2. Middle Class
Social Justice	.901	-.141	Farmers	-.763	.233
Welfare State Expansion	.820	.390	Demographic Groups	.340	.780
Education Expansion	.127	.834	Labour Positive	.741	.196
Environmental Protection	.128	-.069	Underprivileged Minorities	.629	.241
Culture & Sports	-.286	.801	Professional Groups	-.096	.873
Eigenvalue	1.63	1.48	Eigenvalue	1.9	1.8
% of Variance Explained	32.6	29.6	% of Variance Explained	37.9	25.6

Table 5: Second Stage Factor Analysis. Correlations With First Stage Factors and Original Input Variables

First Stage Factors & Input Categories	Factor 2.1	Factor 2.2	Factor 2.3	First Stage Factors & Input Categories	Factor 2.1	Factor 2.2	Factor 2.3
(1.1)	.653	.113	.299	(4.1)	.591	.153	.649
(1.2)	-.002	.325	-.774	(4.2)	-.655	.287	.509
Europe Positive	.351[a]	.146	-.642[a]	Market Regulation	.325[a]	.115	.573[a]
Peace	.364[a]	.166	.526[a]	Incentives	-.141	-.063	-.656[a]
Special Re. Positive	.104	-.133	-.192	Infrastructures	-.078	.136	-.371[a]
Internationalism Pos.	.410[a]	.149	-.260[b]	Economic Orthodoxy	-.816[a]	.180	-.178
Military Negative	.340[a]	.268[b]	.461[a]	Economic Goals	.108	-.074	-.226[c]
Military Positive	-.111	-.610[a]	.099	Productivity	-.400[a]	-.077	-.116
				Free Enterprise	-.149	-.341[a]	-.414[a]
(2.1)	.411	-.122	-.118	Market Regulation	.325[a]	.115	.573[a]
Democracy	.385[a]	.032	.016	Controlled Economy	.155	.223[c]	.635[a]
Rights & Freedom	.363[a]	-.259[b]	-.161	Economic Planning	.333[a]	.036	.308[a]
Constitution Positive	.190	-.215[c]	-.098	Keynsian Demands	-.656[a]	.241[b]	.269[b]
Constitution Negative	.256[b]	.118	.263[b]	Nationalization	.248[b]	.198[c]	.649[a]
				Protectionism Positive	-.636[a]	-.302[a]	.157
(5.1)	.554	.266	-.303				
(5.2)	-.180	.778	.265	(3.1)	-.370	.628	-.189
Culture	-.534[a]	.475[a]	.179	Decentralization Pos.	-.174	.461[a]	-.433[a]
Social Justice	.594[a]	.294[b]	.054	Gov. Efficiency	-.574[a]	.180	-.276[b]
Welfare Expansion	.262[b]	.607[a]	.023	Political Authority	.065	-.471[a]	.026
Education Expansion	-.320[a]	.590[a]	.025				
Environ. Protection	-.095	-.056	-.143	(7.1)	.836	-.057	-.032
Culture & Sports	-.534[a]	.475[a]	.179	(7.2)	.235	.385	-.055
				Farmers	-.774[a]	.212[c]	-.038
(6.1)	-.344	-.747	.039	Labour Positive	.436[a]	.276[b]	.635[a]
Way of Life Positive	-.087	-.832[a]	-.158	Demographic Groups	.316[a]	.408[a]	.074
Law & Order	-.071	-.413[a]	-.055	Underprivileged	.397[a]	.306[a]	.191
Traditional Morality	-.159	-.769[a]	-.073	Professional Groups	.201[c]	.231[c]	-.026
Social Harmony	.167	-.045	-.337[a]				
Way of Life Positive	-.087	-.832[a]	-.158	Eigenvalue	2.72	2.02	1.58
				% of variance	24.73	18.35	14.43

Note: [a] *p* <.01; [b] *p*<.05; [c] *p*<.10

Figure 3. Summary of French Party Positions 1958-2002

Factor 1 : economic left-right

Factor 2 : social liberalism-conservatism

Green

Communist

Socialist
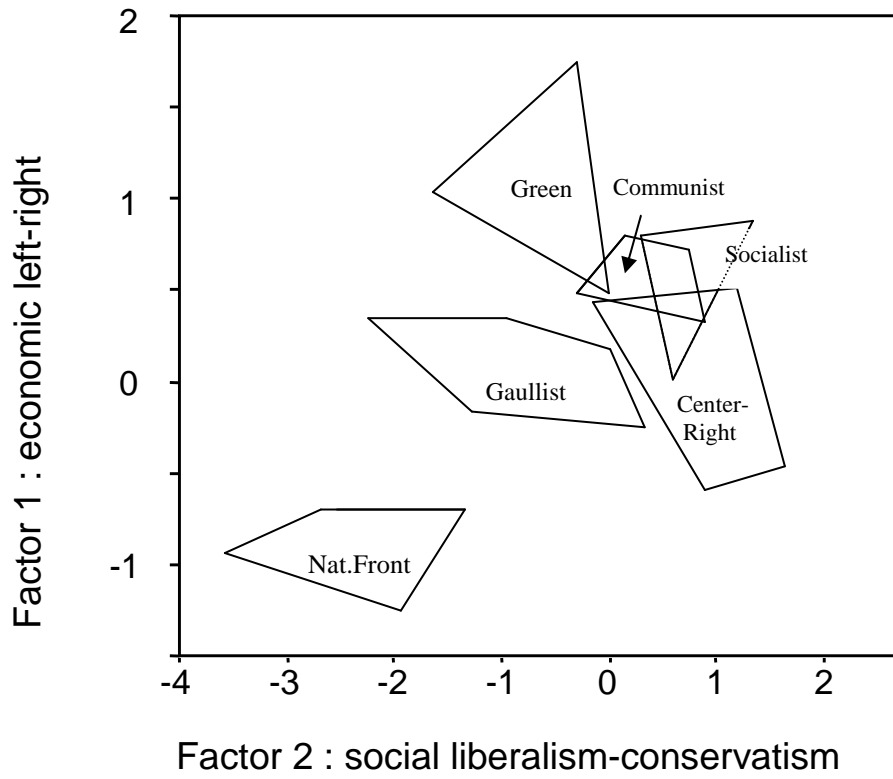
Gaullist

Center-Right

Nat.Front

Table 6: Position of French Political Parties from Their Manifestos Compared to Expert Survey Data from Huber & Inglehart (1995)

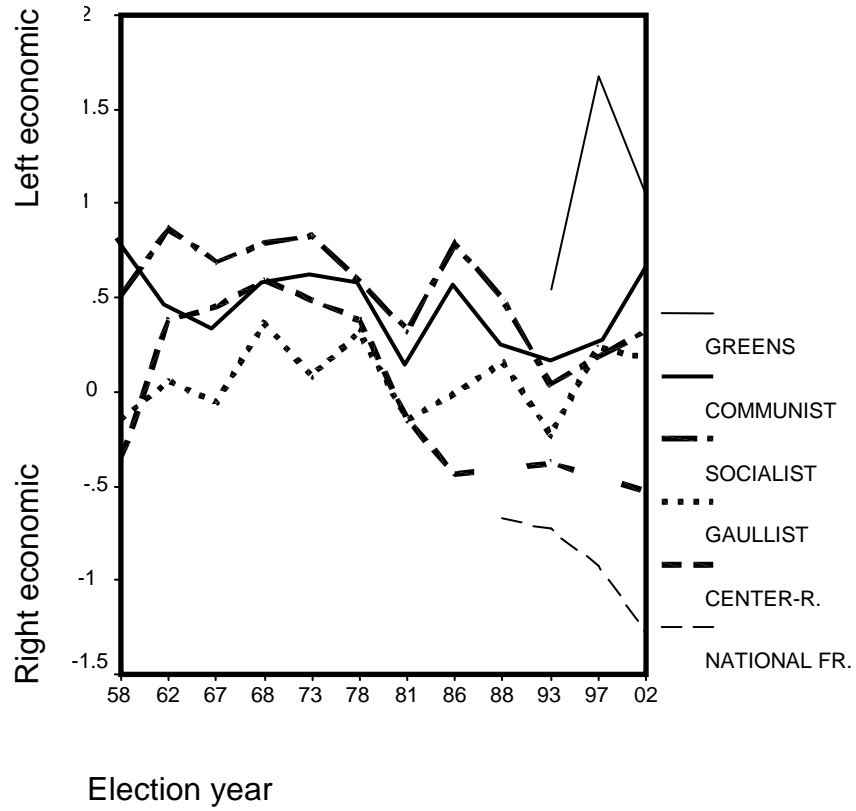| Party	Petry & Pennings Factor 1		Petry & Pennings Factor 2		Hubert & Inglehart Left-Right Scale	
	mean	range	mean	range	mean	range[a]
Greens	1.05	max1.69 min.55	-.53	max.08 min-1.62	4.44[b]	max 6 min 3
Communist	.53	max.65 min.17	.23	max1.05 min-.11	2.25	max 3 min 1
Socialist	.52	max.86 min.02	.71	max 1.46 min .21	4.13	max 5 min 3
Center-R.	.12	max.59 min.-.50	.78	max 1.71 min -.09	6.67	max 7.75 min 6
Gaullist	.03	max.37 min.-.28	-.47	max.50 min-2.09	7.88	max8.5 min 7
Front national	-.83	max-.1.34 min-.69	-2.3	Max -1.36 min-3.7	10	10

Note. [a] The Hubert & Inglehart scale ranges from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right); [b]This score is for the Ecologist party, not the Greens (les Verts).

Figure 4 Mean Party Positions Over the Periods 1958-1978 (1) and 1981-2002 (2)

Factor 2 social liberalism-conservatism
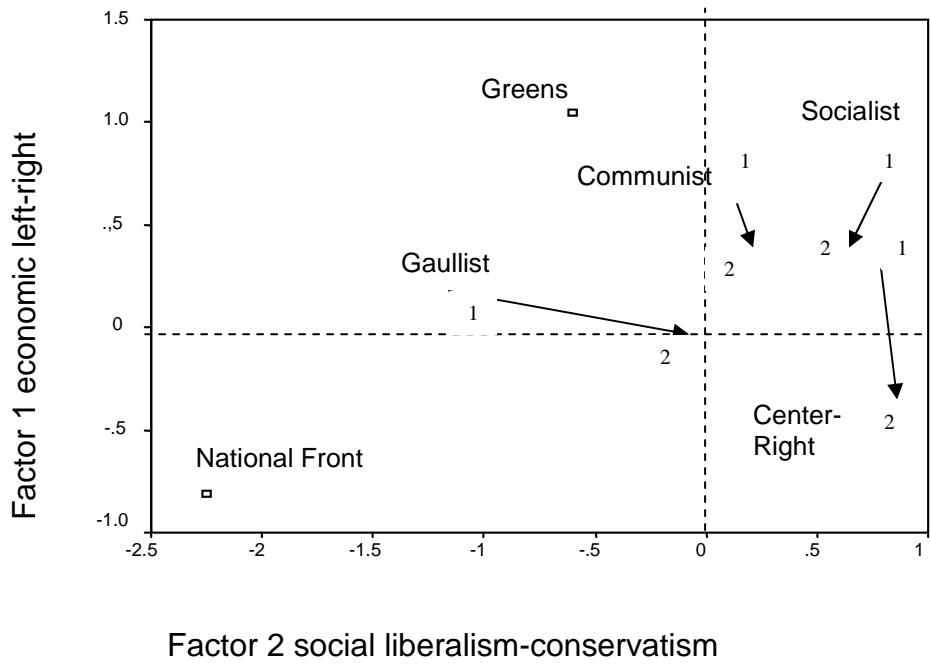
**Figure 5 Movements of Parties on the First Dimension
1958-2002**

Election year

Appendix: Documents Analyzed

Election year	Title	Source
Les verts (Greens)		
1993	'Le choix de la vie'	Les verts, Paris, 1993
1997	'Ensemble, donnons un sens à l'avenir'	www.les-verts.org
2002	'Un projet pour gagner'	www.les-verts.org
Parti communiste français (Communists)		
1958	'Que proposent les communistes?'	*Bulletin d'information et de propagande du PCF*. 19.10.58
1962	'Vers l'avenir, élections législatives, novembre 1962'	Parti communiste français, Paris, 1962
1967	'D'aujourd'hui à demain. Programme du Parti communiste français. Élections législatives de 1967'	*L'Humanité-dimanche*. 7.11. 66.
1968	'Programme du Parti communiste français'. Élections législatives de 1968	Parti communiste français, Paris, 1968
1973	*Changer de cap. Programme pour un gouvernement démocratique d'union populaire.*	Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1971
1978	*Programme commun de gouvernement actualisé. Parti communiste français.*	Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1978
1981	'Le rapport de Georges Marchais au Comité central'	*L'Humanité*.13.01.81
1986	'S'en sortir, c'est possible avec le Parti communiste'	Parti communiste français, Paris, 1986
1988	'Les axes de la campagne du parti'	*L'Humanité*. 19.05.88
1993	'Six propositions pour la France'	Parti communiste français, Paris, 1993
1997	'Cinq axes pour une autre politique'	www.pcf.fr/programme/
2002	'Dix objectifs prioritaires des communistes pour les cinq ans à venir'	www.pcf.fr/programme/
Section française de l'internationale ouvrière—Fédération de la gauche démocrate et socialiste--Parti Socialiste (Socialists)		
1958	'Décisions et compte-rendus du 50ème Congrès National SFIO'	*Le Populaire de Paris* 15.09.58
1962	'Programme d'action. Élections législatives de 1962'	*Dossier du Candidat SFIO*, Paris, 1962
1967	'Une politique des réalités pour la République des citoyens. Manifeste de la FGDS'	*Le Populaire de Paris*, 4.02.67
1968	'Programme de la FGDS. Élections législatives de 1968'	*Dossier du candidat FDGS*, Paris, 1968
1973	*Changer la vie. Programme de gouvernment du Parti socialiste*	Flammarion, Paris, 1972

1978	*Programme commun de gouvernement de la gauche. Propositions socialistes pour l'actualisation*	Flammarion, Paris, 1978
1981	'Cent dix propositions pour la France'	Parti socialiste, Paris, 1981
1986	'Plateforme du Parti socialste pour les élections du 16 mars 1986'	*PSinfo* 4.1.86
1988	'Propositions pour la France'	Parti socialiste, Paris, 1988
1993	'Le contrat pour la France 1993-1998	Parti socialiste, Paris, 1993
1997	'Changeons d'avenir'	www.parti-socialiste.fr
2002	`Programme pour les législatives 2002'	www.parti-socialiste.fr

Union pour la nouvelle République—Union pour la défense de la République--Rassemblement pour la République—Union pour la majorité présidentielle (Gaullists)

1958	'Fiche de documentation, élections législatives, 1958'	*Dossier du Candidate UNR*, Paris, 1958
1962	'Fiche de documentation, élections législatives, 1962'	*Dossier du Candidate UNR*, Paris, 1962
1967	'Pour le progrès, l'indépendance et la paix avec le Général De Gaulle. Manifeste du Comité d'action pour la Cinquième République, 1967'	Union des démocrates pour la Cinquième République, Paris, 1967
1968	'Manifeste de l'Union pour la Défense de la République. Élections législatives de Juin 1968'	*La Nation*, 19. 06.68
1973	'Programme de Provins' présenté par Pierre Messmer	*Le Démocrate*, 8. 01. 73
1978	*Propositions pour la France* présentées par Jérôme Monod	Stock, Paris, 1977
1981	'Avec Jacques Chirac, pour une nouvelle majorité'	Rassemblement pour la république, Paris, 1981
1986	'Le renouveau, le pact RPR pour la France'	Rassemblement pour la république, Paris, 1986
1988	Discours de Monsieur Jacques Chirac à Vincennes	Rassemblement pour la république, Paris, 1988
1993	'La France en mouvement. Rassembler pour changer'	Rassemblement pour la république, paris, 1993
1997	'Un nouvel élan pour la France'	Union pour la majorité présidentielle, Paris, 1997
2002	'25 engagements pour la France avec Jacques Chirac'	www.u-m-p.org

Mouvement républicain populaire—Centre démocrate--Union pour la démocratie française (CenterRight)

1958	'Fichier du Militant. Élections legislatives. Novembre 1958'	*Action Civique et Politique*, 11. 10. 58
1962	'Fiche de documentation. Élections législatives des 18 et 25 novembre 1962'	*Dossier du candidat MRP*, Paris, 1962
1967	'Manifeste électoral. Centre démocrate'	Courrier des Démocrates, 31. 02. 67

1968	Specimen de discours du candidat Progrès et démocratie moderne. Elections législatives de 1968'	*Dossier du Candidat progrès et démocratie moderne*, Paris, 1968
1973	*Le Projet Réformateur* de Lean Lecanuet et Jean Jacques Servan-Schreiber	Paris, Robert Laffont, 1972
1978	*Le programme de Blois. Objectifs d'action pour les libertés et la justice*, présenté par Raymond Barre	Fayard, Paris, 1978
1981	'Pacte pour l'Union de la Nouvelle Majorité'	*Le Monde*. Dossiers et Documents.2.06.81
1986	'Plateforme pour gouverner ensemble. Rassemblement pour la république et Union pour la démocratie française''	Union pour la démocratie française, Paris, 1986
1988	n.a	
1993	'Les 40 priorités de l'UDF pour l'alternance'	Union pour la démocratie française, Paris, 1993
1997	n.a.	
2002	'2002 – La relève des idées'	www.udf.org

Front national (Extreme Right)

1986	*Pour la France. Programme du Front national*	Éditions Albatros, Paris, 1985
1988	n.a.	
1993	*L'Alternative nationale. Trois cents mesures pour la renaissance de la France*	Éditions nationals, Paris, 1993
1997	'Un programme pour gouverner'	www.frontnational.com
2002	'Programme du Front national'	www.frontnational.com