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Estimating party policy positions: Comparing expert surveys and hand-coded content analysis

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Estimating party policy positions: Comparing expert surveys and hand-coded content analysis

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Abstract

In this paper we compare estimates of the left-right positions of political parties derived from an expert survey recently completed by the authors with those derived by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) from the content analysis of party manifestos. Having briefly described the expert survey, we first explore the substantive policy content of left and right in the expert survey estimates. We then compare the expert survey to the CMP method on methodological grounds. Third, we directly compare the expert survey results to the CMP results for the most recent time period available, revealing some agreement but also numerous inconsistencies in both cross-national and within-country party placements. We conclude by investigating the CMP scores in more detail, focusing on the series of British left-right placements and the components of these scores.

Keywords: Left-right; Political parties; Expert survey; Comparative manifestos project; Content analysis

1. Introduction: measuring left-right

Both theoretical models and substantive descriptions of party competition very often use the notion of a left-right dimension as a fundamental part of their conceptual toolkit. For this reason, estimating the positions of political parties in different countries on a left-right dimension has become an important empirical task. This task can be accomplished in a range of different ways. These include mass surveys of party voters, elite surveys of party politicians, dimensional analysis of the roll call votes of party legislators and, of particular concern in this paper, the content analysis of party manifestoes and "expert surveys" of country specialists. Reviewing the current state of this entire enterprise would be a mammoth task. Our objective in this paper is more modest. It is to compare estimates of the left-right positions of political parties derived from expert surveys—or

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more precisely an expert survey of party positions in 47 countries recently completed by the authors—with estimates of the same parties, left-right positions derived from the content analysis of party manifestos by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). In each case we are concerned not only to compare parties, left-right positions in and for themselves, but also to explore the substantive policy content of each of the estimated left-right scales. We do this because it seems likely that differences between scales in the estimated left-right positions of the same parties arise, over an above the effects of measurement error, because the different scales have different substantive policy content.

We proceed as follows. First, we briefly describe our expert survey. Second we explore the substantive policy content of left and right in our expert survey estimates, by looking what country specialists appear to have had in mind when they placed parties on left-right scales. Third, we compare our expert survey and the CMP content analysis scale estimates on methodological grounds. Fourth, we directly compare the expert survey results of left-right party positions the CMP results for the same parties at the most recent time point available. This reveals some agreement but also many inconsistencies in both cross-national and within-country party placements. Finally, we explore the substantive policy content of the CMP left-right scale in more detail, focusing in particular on the time series of British party placements and the substantive policy components of these.

2. A new expert survey of party positions in 47 countries

In 2002–2003, the authors conducted expert surveys of party positions on policy in 47 different countries, including all of Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, and Israel; this expert survey also incorporated new policy dimensions, especially those thought to be relevant to post-communist political competition (e.g. Kitschelt et al., 1999). This survey, reported in Benoit and Laver (in press), extended the methodology of an earlier expert survey by Laver and Hunt (1992) to more countries and included new substantive policy dimensions. Largely deployed via the World Wide Web using the native language of the country under investigation, this survey reached more respondents than any previous expert survey of party policy positions.

Substantive policy dimensions covered in the survey included for every country a hard core of four substantive policy dimensions. These were:

- economic policy (interpreted in terms of the trade-off between lower taxes and higher public spending);
- social policy (interpreted in terms of policies on matters such as abortion and gay rights);
- the decentralization of decision making;
- environmental policy (interpreted in terms of the trade-off between environmental protection and economic growth).[1]

Additional substantive policy dimensions were deployed in each country, depending upon the advice of local specialists. These dealt, according to local circumstance, with policy on matters such as: immigration, deregulation, privatization, religion, treatment of former communists, media freedom, EU policy, security policy, health care, and foreign ownership of land.[2] For each substantive policy dimension, each party was placed on a scale describing its *position* (using the Laver–Hunt metric of 1 to 20, with 1 generally corresponding the "left" position), but also on a scale (also 1 to 20) describing the *importance* of the policy dimension to the party in question.

In addition to estimating a set of substantive policy scales, our survey also moved beyond the Laver–Hunt method by including a direct measure of party positions on a general left-right scale. Leaving the precise interpretation of left and right to the respondent, and coming at the end of all of the specific policy questions, the general left right question asked, "Please locate each party on a general left-right dimension, taking all aspects of party policy into

[1] The precise text wording was as follows. Economic: "Promotes raising taxes to increase public services (1). Promotes cutting public services to cut taxes (20). Social: "Favours (1)/Opposes (20) liberal policies on matters such as abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia." Decentralization: "Promotes (1)/Opposes (20) decentralisation of all administration and decision-making." Environment: "Supports protection of the environment, even at the cost of economic growth (1). Supports economic growth, even at the cost of damage to the environment (20)." The full list of all dimension wording may be found at http://www.politics.tcd.ie/ppmd/ and in Benoit and Laver (in press).

[2] This list is not exhaustive, as a total of 40 distinct dimensions were queried, averaging 12 dimensions per country. A full description is available in Benoit and Laver (in press).

account." (For a full description of this survey, see Benoit and Laver, in press.)

3. The substantive meaning of left-right in comparative context

The fact that our survey asked respondents to locate each party on a general left-right scale, in addition to a set of substantive policy scales, allows us to explore what the country specialists had in mind in substantive terms when they placed parties on the left-right scale, and thereby to infer the substantive meaning of left and right for any given country. Thus, for each of the 47 countries we investigated, we can analyze the relationship between party placements by experts on the left-right dimension and placements by the same experts of the same parties on the four substantive policy dimensions listed above. The results of doing this are shown in the large table in Appendix A, which has a panel for each set of country experts. Each row in the table reports standardized coefficients for weighted OLS regressions where a case is a placement of a party by a country expert and the dependent variable is the expert placement of the party on the left-right scale. The independent variables are the placements of the same expert of the same party on the scales identified in the column headings. Cases are weighted by the party share of the vote in the most recent election. The first row for each country shows how well this set of country experts, placements of parties on the left-right scale can be predicted from their placements of parties on the four core policy dimensions.[3]

To take the case of Austria, for example, we see that about 75% of the variation in the placements by Austrian country specialists of Austrian parties on the left-right dimension can be explained by their placements of these parties on the four core dimensions, and that effectively all of this is attributable to their placement of parties on the social policy dimension. From this we may infer that the judgements of country specialists about parties, social policy positions are the best way to explain left-right party placements in Austria. Staying in western Europe and moving to Norway, we see that about 85% of the variation in the placements by Norwegian country specialists of Norwegian parties on the left-right dimension can be explained by their placements of these parties on the four core dimensions but that, in stark contrast to the situation in Austria, effectively all of this is attributable to their placement of parties on the economic policy dimension. A very similar pattern can be observed in Iceland, indicating that the economic policies of parties are the best predictors of their left-right placement by experts. In Switzerland and Greece, in contrast, both economic and social policy are needed for the best prediction of expert party placements on the left-right scale, with economic policy nonetheless being the more important of the two.

In most other western European countries, party positions on either or both of environmental policy and decentralization add significantly to our ability to predict the left-right placement of parties by country specialists. In Ireland, for example, environmental policy is a significant predictor of left-right position—in a substantive situation where the Irish Greens are judged to be at the left end of the party spectrum on the left-right scale, but not to be especially left-wing on economic policy. A similar pattern can be seen in Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands—the latter with a substantial Green Left party. Overall, the evidence on this matter is that environmental policy is now a substantial independent component of expert judgements on left-right placements in a number of western European countries.

In contrast, policy on decentralization typically adds rather little to our ability to explain expert judgements about left and right. The strongest relationship can be found, unsurprisingly, in Belgium, where the negative regression coefficient implies that pro-decentralization policies, if anything, contribute to more right wing party placements. Similar, though rather weaker, patterns can be seen in Finland and Germany.

Overall in western Europe, party placements on the four core policy dimensions explain a large part (75–90%) of the variation in their placements on the left right dimension.[4] Parties', left-right

[3] We note here that these regressions are intended primarily as exploratory analyses designed to show the effects of restricting the components of political left and right to a common set of dimensions in every country. We recognize that there are complex methodological issues involved in any causal model of left and right, and that we are not addressing those issues in Appendix A.

[4] The exception is Malta, although low response rates (7 total) and only 3 parties meant that the regressions for Malta were difficult to fit.

positions seem to be least reflecting their positions on the four substantive policy dimensions in Ireland and Finland, and most so in Switzerland, Spain and Norway.

The contrast between this and the situation in eastern Europe is striking. Here, expert party placements on the four core dimensions typically explain only about 50% of their placements of the same parties on the left-right dimension. Eastern European countries can be sorted quite cleanly into those for which country specialists see social policy, and those seeing economic policy, as the key component of left and right. Thus economic policy best predicts left right party placements in Albania, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Macedonia, Russia and the Ukraine, for example. In contrast social policy best predicts left-right party placements in Hungary, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia.

Looking at the regressions using the four core policy dimensions to predict left-right party placements in eastern Europe, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that something is missing. Eastern European country specialists were also asked to locate parties on a number of policy dimensions specific to eastern Europe. These included policy on the treatment of former communists, and policy on the privatization of state assets. The second and third rows of each country panel in Appendix A report the effect of adding these variables to the weighted OLS regressions in each country predicting expert placements of parties on the left-right scale. The results of doing this are dramatic, and can been seen most clearly in the cases of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Ukraine. In the case of the Czech Republic, for example, policy positions on former communists and privatization not only radically increases predictive power, but completely changes the structure of the regression coefficients. The impact of party positions on the economic policy dimension declines dramatically while the independent impact of party positions on former communists and privatization are highly significant. An effectively identical pattern can be seen in Slovakia and the Ukraine. In Hungary, Poland and Slovenia in contrast, it is the impact of party positions on the social policy dimension that is replaced by positions on former communists and privatization. In most cases, having added these two region-specific policy dimensions, the ability to predict expert left-right placement is now as high in eastern as it is in western Europe.

We might similarly argue that the four core policy dimensions do not pick up all important component parts of left and right in western Europe. Party positions on additional policy dimensions were estimated in many western European countries. The two most generally applicable additional dimensions related to party policy positions on immigration and economic deregulation. The former may well be a quite distinct aspect of the ''social'' component of socio-economic left-right policy positions; the latter may well be a quite distinct aspect of the ''economic'' component. The results of adding these variables to regressions predicting western European experts, party placements on the left-right scale can be seen in the lower rows of each panel of the table in Appendix A. Again the results are quite striking.

Looking first at the effect of adding party policies on immigration to the set of independent variables, we see a pattern in Austria that is repeated in a number of countries. Bearing in mind that social policy positions were the main predictor of left and right in Austria, adding immigration policy both increases our ability to predict left-right party positions and strikingly reduces the impact on these of the Austrian parties' social policy positions. Austrian left-right party placements are best explained by a combination of parties' social and immigration policy positions. Similar, though less striking, patterns can be seen in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and Switzerland. In each of these countries, immigration policy seems to be adding something substantial to our ability to predict the left-right positions of parties.

We observe similar results when adding party policy positions on deregulation. Indeed, we have a very clear indication in these results that deregulation is a more important predictor of left-right placement than the more traditional tax/spend dimension of economic policy. Finland (where immigration policy does not affect left-right placements), provides a very clear example. Adding policy on deregulation dramatically increases our ability to predict Finnish experts' left-right placements of the political parties, at the same time dramatically reducing the predictive power of the tax/spend dimension in doing this. Indeed left and right in Finland seem now to be more about deregulation than anything else we have measured. An even stronger pattern can be seen in Norway, and similar ones in the Netherlands and Sweden.

4. Methodological issues in CMP left-right scale estimates

Our expert survey estimates are derived by asking country specialists to locate parties on a left-right

dimension. In this sense they capture what country specialists have in mind when they talk about left and right and write about this in the literature. As we have just seen, it seems that what experts do have in mind when they talk about left and right, in terms of substantive policy dimensions, varies in intuitively plausible ways from country to country. It is obviously important to explore the extent to which our expert-survey based estimates of party positions on left-right scales correspond to other independent estimates of the same thing. In what follows, we compare the country specialists' left-right party placements to those derived from an extensive hand-coding of party manifestos by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). These left-right scores are taken directly from the dataset issued with their book, *Mapping Policy Preferences* (Budge et al., 2001; hereafter MPP). Measured as the difference in percentages of Right-associated text mentions from the percentages of Left-associated text mentions, this scale ranges from −100 to +100. The precise definition of ''right''- and ''left''-associated text mentions is described in Laver and Budge (1992), and reproduced in Table 1. Essentially the identity of the ''left'' and ''right'' manifesto coding categories was determined by Laver and Budge, using a series of within-country exploratory factor analyses of a wide range of coding categories. The categories retained for building the left-right scale were those always loading highly on either the left or the right of the main left-right scale that emerged across a range of different countries. The left and right ends of the scale were built by collapsing these coding categories into two variables, ''left'' and ''right'', and the final scale was built by subtracting ''left'' from ''right''.

Table 1
The components of the CMP left-right scale

Left categories	Right categories
103 Anti-imperialism	104 Military: positive
105 Military: negative	201 Freedom and human rights
106 Peace	203 Constitutionalism: positive
107 Internationalism: positive	305 Political authority
202 Democracy	401 Free enterprise
403 Market regulation	402 Incentives
404 Economic planning	407 Protectionism: negative
406 Protectionism: positive	414 Economic orthodoxy
412 Controlled economy	505 Welfare state limitation
413 Nationalisation	601 National way of life: positive
504 Welfare state expansion	603 Traditional morality: positive
506 Education expansion	605 Law and order
701 Labour groups: positive	606 Social harmony

Source: Budge et al. (2001), Mapping Policy Preferences, Appendix III. Left-right score = proportion (right − left) × 100.

The following advantages are typically claimed for the CMP left-right measure (Budge and Pennings, 2007).

- It generates a ''rich time series … covering the 50 year post-war period for many democracies'' (Budge and Pennings, 2007, p. 123);
- CMP measures ''directly reflect what the parties state as their *position*'' (Budge and Pennings, 2007, p. 125 emphasis added);
- ''Their own validity and reliability have been extensively examined'' (Budge and Pennings, 2007, p. 125);
- ''Their satisfactory use by a variety of other authors … has produced additional testimonials'' (Budge and Pennings, 2007, p. 125).

To set against these benefits, we see a number of shortcomings in the CMP estimates of party positions on a left-right scale:

- There is no indication of the uncertainty associated with any CMP estimate

Every piece of policy data in the CMP dataset is presented as a single point estimate with no indication of associated error. But there is surely error in these data—if there were not this would be a first in the history of science. We see the tip of the iceberg in MPP's discussion of Italy during the evaluation in Chapter 1 of the face validity of the CMP left-right scale. When the Italian manifestos were recoded by a different CMP coder, the net result was to assign significantly different left-right policy positions to the Italian Communist Party (Budge et al., 2001, 50 fn 2). This means that we do not know, for any two adjacent points in a time series, whether the difference between them is due to measurement error or movement in the underlying variable.

- The CMP left-right measure consists of pre-defined and fixed scale components.

Because the constituent elements of the CMP left-right scale are defined in the same way for all countries at all time periods, they do not—and indeed cannot—reflect local or temporal differences in the meanings of the ''left-right'' dimension of policy. Given the evidence we have already shown that the meaning of left-right varies according to context, this shortcoming means that in many contexts, the CMP left-right measure will fail to include important policy

variables (such as immigration in Austria or the environment in Germany), and will include other variables that may be unimportant (such as market regulation in Iceland).

- The published CMP left-right scale combines party positions with party-specific measures of the relative salience of the left-right scale, producing a measure of left and right that is directly affected by non-left-right issues mentioned in the party manifesto.

The CMP scale is constructed as the proportion of right-wing categories in each manifesto (listed in Chapter 1 of MPP), minus the proportion of left-wing categories. If the proportion of references to *both right and left wing categories* goes down, then the result, for the *same relative balance of left and right wing codings*, will be that a party position on the scale will move towards the centre. MPP is very clear about this and considers it a virtue: "… all variables, whether typed as explicitly Left-Right or not, feed into this measure" (Budge et al., 2001, 23) and "… parties may move closer in left-right terms simply because they choose to pay more attention, relatively speaking, to new issues such as the environment" (Budge et al., 2001, 88). Thus, very explicitly, positions the CMP left-right scale are in part determined by coding categories that are not in the scale. In part, this is a scale issue reflecting the (mis)use of the CMP coding scheme. In at least equal measure, however, it also reflects more fundamental problems of relying on text mentions from manifestos to locate dimensional policy positions.

Perhaps the easiest way to get a feel for the issues associated with comparing other independent scales to the CMP left-right scale is to look at some substantive CMP estimates. We focus here on estimates for Britain, since these are extensively discussed by Budge and Pennings (2007) when comparing the CMP estimates to some alternatives. Fig. 1 plots the published CMP scale positions for British parties, using data taken straight off the CD-ROM in MPP. These show very considerable variations over time in the left-right positions of the British parties. When the face validity of the CMP left-right scale is discussed in Chapter 1 of MPP, all of these movements over time are taken as substantively meaningful, and not the result of measurement error. Comfort might well be taken in terms of face validity in the Conservatives, move to the right after 1974, or

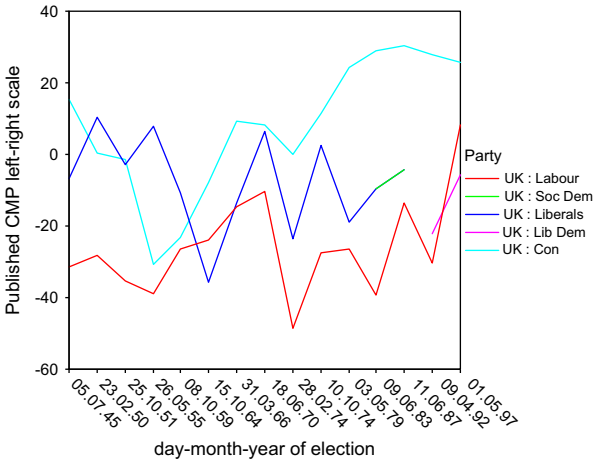

Fig. 1. Published CMP left-right scale positions for British parties.

Labour's rightwards shift in 1997. But those using the CMP scale in its raw form would also be subscribing to the view that the Liberals shifted from the most right-wing British party in the 1950s, to the most left-wing British party in the first election of the 1960s, before shifting rapidly back to the right, or that the Conservative manifesto of 1955 was to the left of any British party manifesto published since 1983.

No doubt these points could be argued substantively, but we feel strongly that any scientist who has ever been involved in measuring anything would look at Fig. 1 and conclude that there is some noise arising from measurement error superimposed on the data signal in these "time series". Absent any standard errors, however, the signal-to-noise ratio is impossible to estimate. We simply do not know the extent to which a difference between two adjacent numbers in the series is measurement error, and the extent to which it is information. While attempts may be made to extract trends from these inevitably noisy data (McDonald et al., 2007), to the best of our knowledge all previous published third-party "testimonials" to the validity of the CMP have used the data in raw form as if they contained no measurement error.

The impact of combining party positions on the CMP left-right scale with the party-specific relative salience of this scale can also be seen easily in the British CMP data. "Position" on the CMP left-right scale is calculated by subtracting the proportion of manifesto references to "left" categories from the proportion of references to "right" categories. The relative "salience" of the left-right scale can be calculated by adding the proportion of manifesto

references to "left" categories to the proportion of references to "right" categories—this is the overall proportion of the manifesto devoted to matters of left and right as defined by the CMP scale. Fig. 2 plots the time series of party-specific saliences of the CMP scale for the British parties and shows that the CMP's estimated party-specific salience of left-right issues is extremely variable over time. The salience of the left-right dimension is estimated to have tripled for the Conservative party between 1951 and 1955, for example, before falling dramatically again between 1955 and 1966, then rising rapidly again. Similar, though somewhat less dramatic movements can be seen for the Labour party. According to the CMP data, therefore, the relative importance of the left-right scale is extremely volatile. Again, there are no estimates of measurement error in relation to this.

Whether or not this volatility is substantively meaningful, it is absolutely crucial to note that the relative salience of the left-right scale imposes strict arithmetic limits on the position scores that can be estimated for parties. Fig. 2 shows that these arithmetic limits on possible left-right scale positions change in a very volatile way from election to election. This means that, even if we assume zero measurement error in the CMP data, we have to be extraordinarily careful in interpreting movements in CMP scale positions between elections—and thus of attributing substantive meaning to the "time series" of CMP numbers. Fig. 3 plots the CMP left-right scale position of the British Labour Party, as well as the maximum and minimum scale

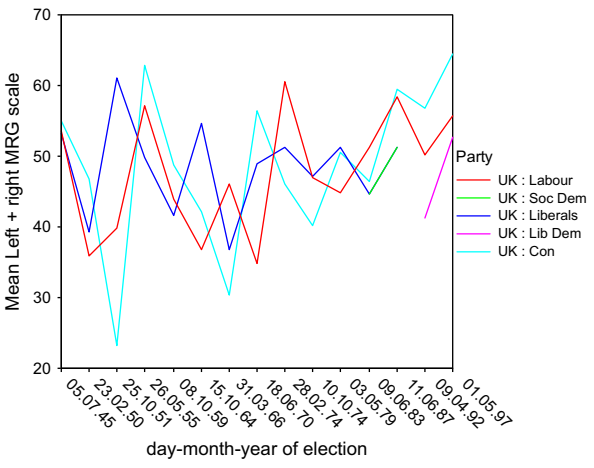

Fig. 2. Relative salience of the CMP left-right scale for British parties.

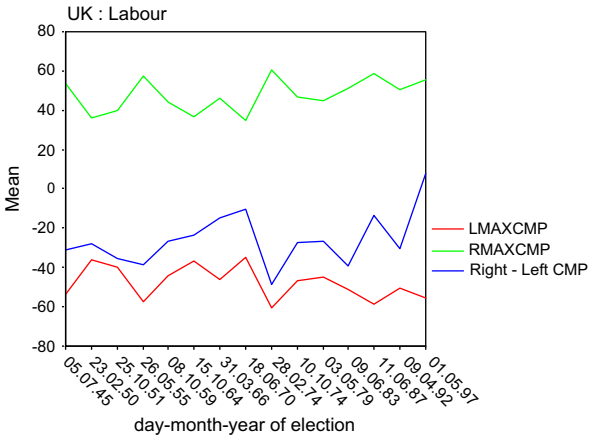

Fig. 3. British Labour Party positions on CMP left-right scale, and arithmetic bounds on possible scale positions, over time.

positions that were arithmetically possible, given the scale definition and the changing party-specific salience of the left-right dimension for Labour. Until the early 1980s, Labour's left-right position is strongly associated with the arithmetic limits imposed by the changing salience of the scale—a pattern that seems to have been broken after 1983. Prior to 1983, therefore, the CMP estimates of Labour's left-right position seem to be influenced as much by what the left-right scale omitted as by what it included. This problem would be obviated by using a Kim-Fording style ratio scale that controls for dimension salience (Right − Left)/(Right + Left), rather the CMP additive scale (Right − Left). (Kim and Fording, 1998).

5. Substantive comparison of expert and CMP left-right scales

We now turn to a substantive comparison of the estimates of parties, left-right positions generated by our survey of country specialists, on the one hand, and the CMP left-right scores from manifesto analysis, on the other. We conduct this comparison in two ways: first cross-nationally, then within each country.

5.1. Cross-national comparison

To compare party positions in the pooled cross-national sample, Fig. 4 plots the left-right scores derived from both measures, for every national party for which both CMP and Benoit–Laver expert survey estimates are available, using country-party abbreviations to

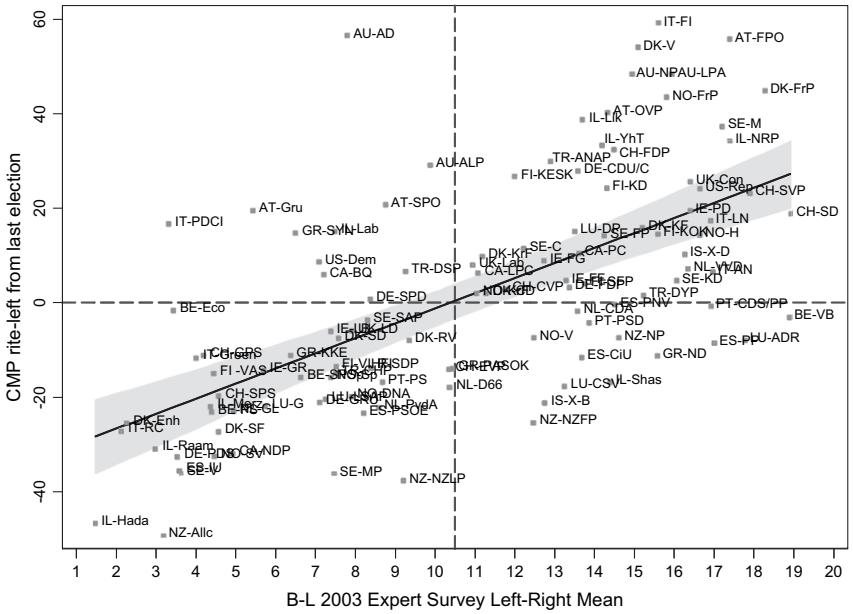

Fig. 4. Across-country scatterplot of CMP left-right scores versus expert survey left-right estimates.

identify each point. It also plots a fitted regression line along with a 95% confidence interval.[5] The large cross-hairs split the plot into four quadrants, intersecting at the mid-point of each scale—0 for CMP and 10.5 for Benoit–Laver.

The first general pattern of note in Fig. 4 is the apparent lack of bias in the two measures, indicated by relatively good linear fit[6] and by the nearly perfect intersection of the regression line through the (10.5, 0) midpoint of the scales. If one scale were to be biased relative to the other, we would not see this empirical origin correspond so neatly with the theoretical midpoint of the scales. The second interesting pattern is that, despite the good linear fit, there is a lot of apparently random noise: the placements by country specialists explain only 40% of the variance in the CMP left-right scores. Furthermore, no obvious pattern to this noise emerges from the scatterplot. Our approach is thus to select individual residual cases and try to ascertain why the expert survey estimates and CMP scores diverge.

To identify the observations for which there is the largest disagreement between measures, we focus on the parties that are coded most differently by the expert surveys and the CMP left-right measure (in graphical terms, the outliers in the off-diagonal quadrants). These are, first, the parties that are classified as being on the left by the country specialists, yet on the right by the CMP of party manifestos. They are also parties classified as being on the right by the country specialists, yet on the left by the CMP. Table 2 identifies these parties, listing the aggregate judgements of the country specialists and the CMP scores (along with the standardized residual). There are clearly some parties that have been located wrongly on the left-right scales. We have not identified any particular pattern that explains these differences, although several of the outliers in Table 2 seem to be parties for which immigration, nationalism, or the environment are important issues. Because none of these issues are components of the CMP left-right scale used it is possible that CMP scores for parties emphasizing these issues could differ from the corresponding placements by country specialists on the left-right scale.

This might explain why the CMP ranked as centrist the Austrian Greens and Belgian *Ecolo* parties, whereas the placements by country specialists of these same parties are considerably more left-wing. Likewise,

[5] CMP scale positions are taken for the most recent election in the CMP dataset published with MPP, and thus are somewhat earlier in time that the estimates from the 2003 Benoit–Laver expert survey (see Table 2 for a full list of CMP manifesto dates we used).

[6] The OLS regression produces the following results: $N = 114$, $R^2 = 0.40$, Root MSE = 18.763, Benoit–Laver coefficient (SE) 3.19 (0.372), constant −33.06 (4.378).

Table 2
Party placements where expert surveys and CMP diverge most

Country	Party	Party name	Left-right score		
			Expert survey	CMP	Standardized residual
Expert survey says left, CMP says right					
AU	AD	Australian Democrats	7.8	56.6	3.47
IT	PDCI	Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	3.3	16.8	2.13
AT	Gru	The Greens	5.4	19.7	1.90
AU	ALP	Australian Labor Party	9.9	29.3	1.65
GR	SYN	Synaspismos	6.5	14.8	1.46
AT	SPO	Austrian Social Democratic Party	8.8	20.8	1.39
IL	Lab	Labor	7.5	15.2	1.31
US	Dem	Democratic Party	7.1	8.8	1.03
CA	BQ	Bloc Québécois	7.2	6.1	0.87
TR	DSP	Demokratik Sol Partisi	9.2	6.7	0.55
Expert survey says right, CMP says left					
NL	CDA	Christen Democratisch Appe'l	13.6	−1.6	−0.64
NO	V	Venstre	12.5	−7.3	−0.75
NZ	NP	New Zealand National Party	14.6	−7.2	−1.11
PT	CDS/PP	People's Party	16.9	−0.7	−1.16
ES	CiU	Convergència i Unió de Catalunya	13.7	−11.5	−1.18
LU	CSV	Christian Social People's Party	13.2	−17.6	−1.44
GR	ND	Nea Dimokratia	15.6	−11.2	−1.49
IS	X-B	Framsóknarflokkurinn	12.8	−21.1	−1.54
IL	Shas	Shas	14.4	−16.7	−1.58
ES	PP	Partido Popular	17.0	−8.4	−1.60
BE	VB	Flemish Block	18.9	−3.0	−1.63
LU	ADR	Action Comitee for Democracy and Pensions Justice	17.8	−7.9	−1.70
NZ	NZFP	New Zealand First Party	12.5	−25.2	−1.71

CMP ranked as left-of-center several nationalist parties that were scored as right-wing by the country specialists, including the Belgian VB and the New Zealand First Party.

5.2. Within-country comparisons

In addition to comparing raw left-right scores for each party, we can also compare left-right scales within each country. Our method for this is deliberately simple. Within each country, we compare the rankings from left to right of every party for which both CMP and Benoit–Laver scores exist. By comparing only within countries, this method avoids the problem that scores in one country may not be directly comparable to scores in another. By using only ordinal information, furthermore, this method also bypasses issues about scale comparability.

Table 3 shows these within-country comparisons, listing the left-right orderings of parties produced by both the CMP and the country specialists and highlighting differences between these. The table also reports two measures of ordinal association summarizing the agreement between measures. Kendall's tau-a measures the relative likelihood of the ranks agreeing versus disagreeing, and ranges from −1.0 to 1.0. For instance, in Ireland where the only difference is between the measures, placement of FG and FF, the two ranks are 80% more likely to agree than to disagree. Spearman's rho is an ordinal measure of correlation analogous to Pearson's r but applied to ordinal data. The countries for which there was greatest disagreement between the CMP scales and the judgements of country specialists were Greece and Australia. In nine of the 23 countries compared, country specialists and the CMP left-right scale agreed perfectly on party rankings.

5.3. Explaining differences between CMP scale positions and the judgements of country specialists

In our view there are only three possible ways to explain these differences. The first is that party policies changed between the time of the election for which the CMP scored a party manifesto, and the

Table 3
Within-country comparisons of CMP left-right rankings v. expert survey left-right rankings

Country	CMP election year	Kendall's tau-a	Spear-man's rho	Party ordering from left to right	
				Expert survey	CMP
GR	1995	-0.33	-0.60	KKE SYN PASOK ND	**PASOK ND** KKE SYN
AU	1995	-0.17	-0.32	AD ALP NP LPA	ALP **LPA NP AD**
BE	1998	0.00	-0.20	Eco PS SPSp VB	PS SPSp VB **Eco**
IT	1995	0.33	0.49	RC PDCI Green FI LN AN	RC Green **AN PDCI** LN FI
TR	1998	0.33	0.40	CHP DSP ANAP DYP	CHP **DYP DSP** ANAP
CH	1997	0.52	0.75	GPS SPS EVP CVP FDP SVP SD	**SPS** EVP **GPS** CVP **SD** SVP **FDP**
FI	1996	0.52	0.71	VAS VIHR SDP KESK SFP KD KOK Hada Raam Merz Lab Lik YhT Shas	VAS **SDP** VIHR SFP **KOK** KD **KESK** Hada Raam Merz **Shas** Lab YhT NRP **Lik**
IL	1997	0.64	0.76	NRP	
NO	1998	0.71	0.89	SV Sp DNA KrF V FrP H	SV **DNA Sp V KrF H FrP**
SE	1995	0.71	0.86	V MP SAP C FP KD M	**MP V** SAP **KD C FP** M
DK	1998	0.72	0.90	Enh SF SD RV KrF CD V KF FrP	**SF Enh** RV **SD** CD **KrF KF FrP V**
ES	1998	0.80	0.90	IU PSOE CiU PNV PP	IU PSOE CiU **PP PNV**
IE	1996	0.80	0.90	GR LB FG FF PD	GR LB **FF FG** PD
LU	1996	0.80	0.90	G LSAP CSV DP ADR	G LSAP CSV **ADR DP**
AT	1998	1	1	Gru SPO OVP FPO	Gru SPO OVP FPO
CA	1995	1	1	NDP BQ LPC PC	NDP BQ LPC PC
DE	1995	1	1	PDS GRÜ SPD FDP CDU/C	PDS GRÜ SPD FDP CDU/C
IS	1996	–	1	X-B X-D	X-B X-D
NL	1994	1	1	GL PvdA D66 CDA VVD	GL PvdA D66 CDA VVD
NZ	1997	1	1	Allc NZLP NZFP NP	Allc NZLP NZFP NP
PT	1996	1	1	PS PSD CDS/PP	PS PSD CDS/PP
UK	1995	1	1	LD Lab Con	LD Lab Con
US	1997	–	1	Dem Rep	Dem Rep

time of 2003 expert survey. We might make this argument for the US Democratic Party, for example, which perhaps was indeed right-of-center in 1997 but had moved to the left-of-center by 2003. We would find such an argument much more difficult to sustain for parties such as the Italian Communists (PDCI) or New Democracy (ND) in Greece. The PDCI is located as a left-wing party by the country specialists and as being on the center-right by the CMP. In contrast ND is located as a right-wing party by the country specialists, but to the left of the Communists by the CMP. It does not seem likely that these discrepancies arise from movements in party policy between the two observation points.

The second possibility is that one of the two measures contains significant error for these cases on which measures do not agree. For any variable with a degree of measurement error, it is entirely consistent to observe overall patterns that appear unbiased—that is, right on average as indicated by Fig. 4—but mistaken in particular cases such as those listed in Table 2. In any particular case of these outliers—indicating substantial disagreement between the two scales—we contend that the measure containing less error is whichever appears to be more correct. Ultimately this will involve recourse to country experts who are able to judge between differing placements, although it is clearly our position that as a systematic summary of the collective wisdom of country experts, the survey of expert placements represents the more accurate measure. In any case, the outliers selected in Table 2 allow expert readers to draw their own conclusions regarding the accuracy in placement between the two scales.

There is yet a third possibility explaining diverging placements between CMP and expert surveys which is more fundamental. This is that the judgements of country specialists and the CMP manifesto estimates are measuring different quantities. There are many reasons why this might be the case. First, it may be that, even if coded without error, party manifestos do not contain a full characterization of a party's position on a left-right scale. In other words, parties may well have policy preferences that form important components of their "left-right" positions that are not expressed in their election manifestos, and hence cannot be captured by any manifesto coding scheme, no matter how perfectly constructed or error-free such a scheme may be. Second, our results strongly suggest that for any given country, there is no single pre-defined scale

that will perfectly correspond to the ''left-right'' dimension of politics in all countries. Indeed, the results we have shown above from correlations of individual policy placements from the expert surveys with the expert survey left-right scale indicate that the components of left-right vary significantly from country to county. The implication is that no single scale pre-built from individual components (such as the CMP left-right measure) will accurately characterize the left-right dimension in all cases. Finally, our country-by-country exploration of the correlates of specific policy dimensions with expert left-right placement also suggests important ''new'' dimensions of politics, such as immigration and the environment, whose omission from the measure of left-right are bound to cause inaccuracies.

We also recognize the possibility, however, that it may also be unclear (or meaningless) to country specialists, especially in systems characterized by multidimensional political competition, what it means to locate a party on an single general left-right continuum. Additional issues with expert surveys include whether experts can accurately interpret party positions at a single point in time, and whether different experts use dimension scales in the same manner. This third issue is a serious and substantive one, yet beyond the scope of our discussion here.

6. Comparing the substantive meaning of the left-right dimension in CMP and expert survey data

We began our exploration of the substantive content of left and right in the expert survey data by looking at the relationship between left-right party placements and placement of the same parties on four substantive policy dimensions, relating to economic, social, environmental, and decentralization policy. On this matter, and subject to a number of caveats, it is possible to conduct broadly compatible analyses of both CMP and expert survey data. The caveats are as follows.

6.1. Different units of analysis

A ''case'' in the CMP data is a policy estimate for a party for a year. A ''case'' in the expert survey data is a policy estimate for a party by an expert. Thus an estimate of the substantive components of left and right in the CMP data will depend upon which substantive policy variables covary with left and right over time. An estimate of the substantive components of left and right in the expert data will depend upon which substantive policy variables covary, across experts at one time point, with placements of parties on the left-right scale. Nonetheless, we may get some intuitions about the substantive content of left and right in each of these contexts.

6.2. Need to construct CMP scales for the four substantive policy components

The CMP left-right scale is a general scale dealing with social-economic policy positions. It is however possible using common-sense substantive judgements to sort the component variables of the scale into those dealing with social policy and those dealing with economic policy.[7]

Thus an economic policy ratio scale for the CMP data was defined as follows:

Left econ (=L): PER (403 + 404 + 406 + 412 + 413 + 504 + 506 + 701)
Right econ (=R): PER (401 + 402 + 407 + 414 + 505)
Econ RL scale: (R − L)/(R + L)

A social policy ratio scale for the CMP data was defined as follows:

Lib soc (=Lib): PER (103 + 105 + 106 + 107 + 202)
Con soc (=Con): PER (104 + 201 + 203 + 305 + 601 + 603 + 605 + 606)
Soc LibCon scale: (Con − Lib)/(Con + Lib)

These two scales comprise an exclusive and exhaustive partition of all component parts of the original CMP left-right scale, combining together two separate ratio scales, each with zero at its theoretical centre. Environmental policy can be taken directly from the CMP dataset as PER501 ''Environmental Protection''. Policy on decentralization can be defined as PER(301 − 302)/(301 + 302)—where PER301 is decentralization and PER302 is centralization in the CMP dataset. To give a feel for these scales, Fig. 5 plots the time series of British party policy positions on the economic and social policy components of the left right scale. This decomposition of the CMP left-right scale for Britain is quite instructive

[7] Precise substantive definitions of each of the CMP coding categories can be found in MPP.

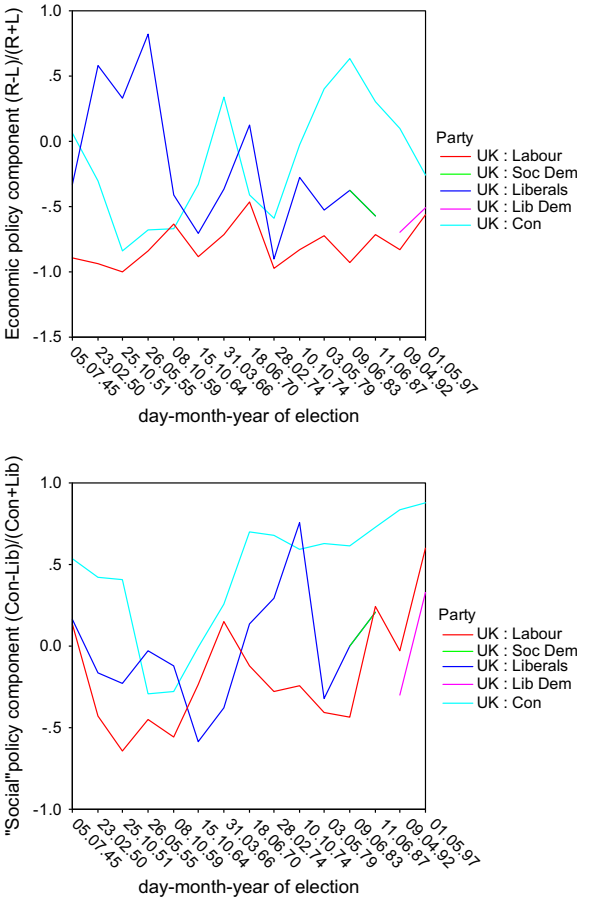

Fig. 5. British party positions on economic and social policy ratio scales.

substantively. It shows, for example, that the far right position of the Liberal Party on the CMP scale in the 1950s (see Fig. 1) is a product of what seem to be very right wing economic, as opposed to social policies. Even more intriguingly, the CMP's estimated right wing movement of the Conservative Party from the 1980s (see Fig. 1) is achieved in the face of what the CMP data estimate as a steady shift leftwards on economic policy by the British Conservatives since 1983 (see top panel Fig. 5). The rightwards shift by the Conservatives on the CMP left-right scale, underpinning its face validity, was obviously achieved as a rightwards shift on social policy and an increasing contribution of social policy to the left-right position of the Conservatives.

This interpretation can be checked directly in the CMP data, and Fig. 6 does this, showing the time series of the difference between the emphasis given to right

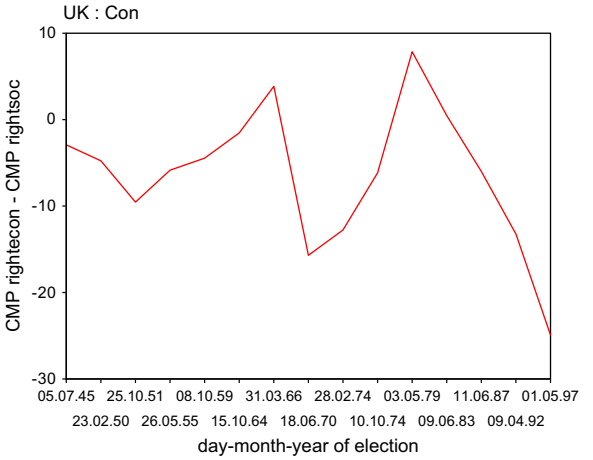

Fig. 6. Differential contribution of economic and social policy to CMP estimates of British Conservative party left-right positions.

wing economic coding categories in the CMP scale, and the emphasis given to right wing social policy coding categories. The relative contributions of economic and social policy to the CMP estimates of the British Conservative position on the left right scale do change drastically over time—but the striking trend since 1979 was the increasing contribution of social, as opposed to economic, policy to the CMP estimate of the left-right scale position. The substantive meaning of this left-right scale is clearly changing substantially over time.

Fig. 7 shows equivalent figures for the British Labour Party, showing the time series of the difference between

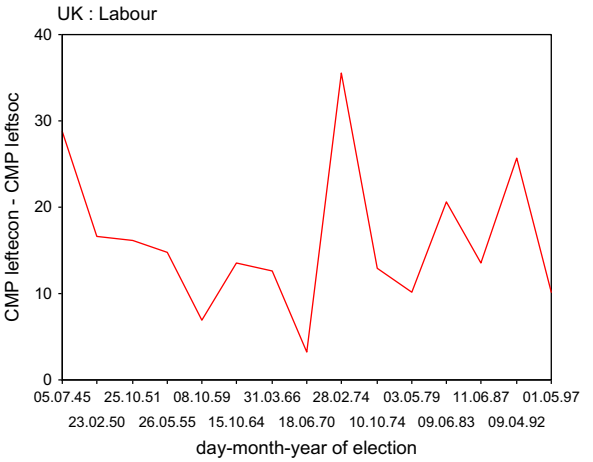

Fig. 7. Differential contribution of economic and social policy to CMP estimates of British Labour party left-right positions.

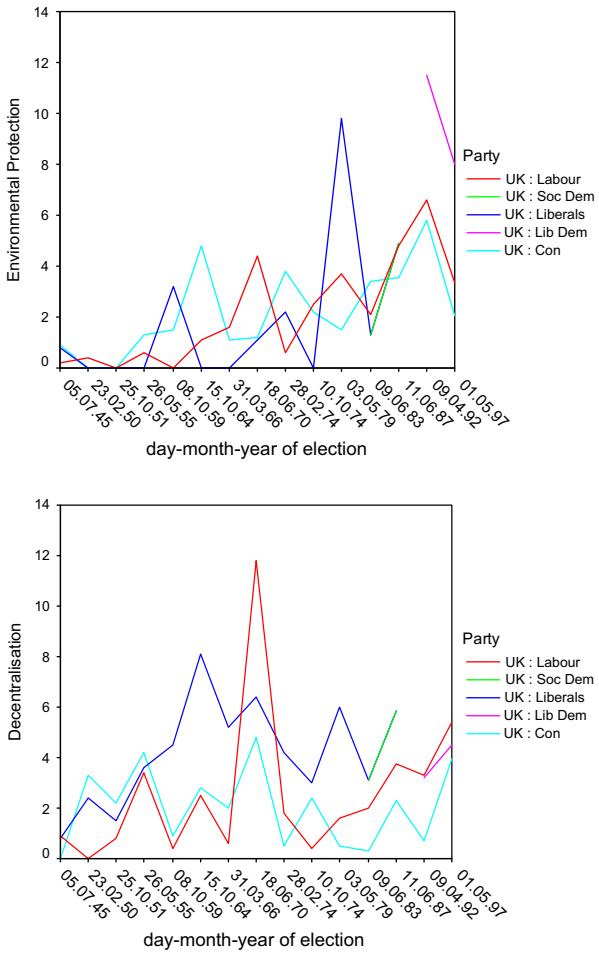

Fig. 8. Time series of CMP emphases on environmental protection and decentralization given by the British parties.

emphases given to left wing economic categories in the CMP scale, and the emphasis given to left wing social policy categories. There seem to be few trends in evidence here, but some very sharp short-term variations can be seen in the relative contributions of economic and social policy to the CMP estimate of the left-right positions of Labour in Britain. The substantive meaning of the CMP left-right scale is not stable over time in this sense—at least in Britain.

Moving from economic and social policy to policy on the environment and decentralization, Fig. 8 plots the time series of CMP estimates of party emphases on these matters in Britain. Again we see very substantial short-term variations, with the Liberal Party, for example, moving from being the least, to the most, to the least environmentalist British party over the three elections from 1974 to 1983. Measuring environmental policy using the single CMP coding category that addresses this issue, the possibility of unquantified measurement error clearly raises itself once more, and the same possibility must surely considered in relation to decentralization. Having plotted these time series, it would seem unwise to proceed as if the data were error free.

6.3. *Comparing substantive policy components of left and right*

Having defined and explored economic, social, environmental, and decentralization policy scales for the CMP data, we are now in a position to compare what the CMP and expert survey datasets have to tell us about the substantive policy content of left and right in different countries. In what follows we confine ourselves to western Europe. The tables in Appendix B show the simple Pearson correlations between the substantive policy scales and the estimated left-right scale, for both expert survey and CMP data. It should be noted that the correlations between economic and social policy and the left-right scale should by definition be higher for the CMP data, since the CMP left-right scale is constructed arithmetically out of these component parts, while the expert survey left-right positions represent an independent observation. What we are looking for in Appendix B is the relative strength of the association between economic and social policy to the left right scale in each country. Thus, to take countries where the two datasets are in agreement, both agree that, for Sweden, the left-right scale is more about economic than social policy positions. A similar pattern can be seen for Belgium, Denmark and Ireland. There are also countries in which the substantive correlates of left and right differ quit starkly. In Finland, for example, CMP left-right positions are more strongly associated with social policy, while expert survey left-right positions are more strongly associated with economic policy. Similar patterns can be seen in Greece and the Netherlands.

While such differences might be put down to the different units of analysis, the association between the left-right scales—and environmental policy in particular—are striking. Essentially, with the exception of the Netherlands and to a lesser extent Switzerland, there is little or no association in the CMP data between parties' environmental policies and their positions on the CMP left-right scale. In the expert survey data, in contrast, parties' environmental policies

are always strongly correlated with their left-right policy positions; specifically, the environment is systematically more a left- than a right-wing issue. This could be due to what may be a high degree of noise in the CMP estimates of environmental policy—as suggested by Fig. 8. Or it may be because environmental policy was associated with the left in 2003–2004, but was not systematically so over the entire post-war period.

7. Conclusions

This paper has compared estimates of the left-right positions of political parties derived from the Benoit–Laver expert survey, recently completed by the authors, with manifesto-based estimates of policy positions published by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). Our focus has been on comparing the two different measures in their ability to capture not only general left and right policy positions of political parties cross-nationally, but also with regard to more specific policy dimensions. Our findings can be summarized briefly as follows.

First, we demonstrate through an analysis of the expert survey results that the substantive meaning of left and right is not constant, either from country to country or even across time within a single country. Using exploratory regression analyses of expert left-right placements on constituent policy dimensions, we show that the relative weight of the specific policy dimensions which constitute left and right in particular countries varies substantially from one country to the next. Analyzing the relative contribution of economic and social policy for the British Conservative and Labour parties, moreover, we also find strong evidence for the changing composition of left and right from the CMP time-series data. These results strongly support the notion of left and right having a meaning strongly tied not only to country context, but also to specific political periods within a country. This holds true whether the components of left and right are subject to open interpretation by experts, using the Benoit–Laver general left-right dimension ''taking all aspects of party policy into account'', or according to a predefined scale as per the CMP measure. One substantive implication, however, is that scales built from pre-defined and fixed components of left-right will fit actual party policy positions poorly when applied across space and time.

Second, through direct comparison of the cross-national expert and CMP placements, we demonstrate that, while on average they concur, important differences also emerge for placements of parties in many countries. Highlighting these cases and exploring methodological issues in the construction of the CMP left-right scale, our conclusion is that the expert survey estimates are more accurate because they contain smaller measurement error. Due to the inherent structure of manifestos and the mathematically constrained nature of the saliency-based CMP left-right measure, CMP estimates, not only of left and right but also of specific policy dimensions, contain inherently more noise than summaries of expert placements. Our specific look over time at British party positions also lends strong support to this interpretation.

While raising a number of important issues in both measurement and the substantive meaning of policy positioning, our brief investigation is hardly the last word on such matters. Much work remains to be done to further understand the nature of both expert survey results and CMP estimates. For expert survey estimates, for instance, we remain unable to compare positions over time, since a time series of expert placements does not exist for most countries. In addition, there are deeper issues in the substantive meaning of left-right, as measured by the direct placement approach, to be explored more fully. For the CMP data, outstanding issues include a much more thorough characterization of the uncertainty of its point estimates, which would entail more fully understanding the signal-to-noise ratio introduced in the process of manifesto writing, manifesto coding, and left-right estimation using the standard CMP scale. Given the obvious contribution to political science research of empirical measures of cross-national party policy positions, we view it as a healthy step forward that these issues should be raised and addressed.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Predictors of left-right position in Benoit–Laver expert survey are shown in Table A1.

Table A1

Country	Taxes	Social	Environment	Decentralization	Immigration	Former Communists	Deregulation	Privatization	Adjusted R^2
Eastern Europe									
Albania	**0.761**	−0.089	**0.318**	0.048					0.623
Albania	**0.711**	−0.101	**0.313**	0.058		0.075			0.619
Albania	**0.398**	−0.014	0.089	−0.008		0.320		0.250	0.645
Bosnia	−0.125	0.705	0.346	0.078					0.946
Bosnia	0.086	1.070	−0.011	0.060		−0.188			0.910
Bulgaria	**0.529**	0.012	0.119	−0.156					0.295
Bulgaria	**0.321**	0.130	−0.064	−0.016		**0.700**			0.704
Bulgaria	0.100	0.073	−0.093	0.046		**0.585**		**0.401**	0.774
Croatia	−0.091	0.023	−0.133	**0.787**					0.666
Croatia	−0.118	−0.095	−0.088	**0.601**		**0.364**			0.722
Croatia	−0.140	−0.037	−0.098	**0.638**		**0.368**		0.152	0.732
Czech Republic	**0.787**	**0.110**	0.047	**−0.121**					0.695
Czech Republic	**0.422**	0.023	**0.105**	−0.037		**0.490**			0.796
Czech Republic	**0.273**	0.037	**0.095**	−0.028		**0.358**		**0.307**	0.822
Estonia	**0.737**	0.094	0.194	0.106					0.890
Estonia	**0.707**	0.102	0.220	0.110		0.076			0.890
Estonia	**0.594**	0.146	0.081	0.138		0.029		0.232	0.898
Hungary	0.058	**0.728**	−0.063	0.102					0.621
Hungary	0.082	**0.361**	0.084	0.084		**0.589**			0.788
Hungary	0.069	**0.388**	0.081	0.087		**0.588**		0.054	0.789
Latvia	**0.504**	0.240	0.071	**0.381**					0.567
Latvia	**0.311**	0.039	0.152	0.090		**0.567**			0.758
Latvia	−0.014	0.004	**0.169**	−0.065		**0.215**		**0.774**	0.907
Lithuania	**0.577**	**0.266**	0.145	0.022					0.401
Macedonia	**0.595**	0.217	−0.031	−0.131					0.500
Macedonia	**0.544**	0.050	0.069	**−0.311**		**0.500**			0.628
Macedonia	**0.533**	0.052	0.063	**−0.289**		**0.490**		0.046	0.621
Moldova	**0.367**	−0.255	**0.317**	**−0.425**					0.531
Moldova	**0.312**	−0.233	0.207	−0.278		0.259			0.558
Moldova	0.197	−0.271	−0.001	−0.023		0.158		**0.423**	0.636
Poland	**0.392**	**0.488**	0.005	**−0.175**					0.496
Poland	**0.201**	0.119	0.014	**−0.158**		**0.530**			0.591
Poland	0.000	0.165	0.021	−0.121		**0.479**		**0.318**	0.624
Romania	**0.438**	0.093	0.001	−0.044					0.141
Romania	0.315	0.092	−0.020	0.038		0.232			0.153
Romania	0.329	0.088	−0.017	0.029		0.237		−0.031	0.143
Russia	**0.636**	−0.170	0.066	0.170					0.455
Russia	**0.612**	−0.082	0.055	0.183		**0.295**			0.530
Russia	**0.619**	−0.085	0.056	0.182		**0.295**		−0.010	0.525

Table A1 (*continued*)

Country	Taxes	Social	Environment	Decentralization	Immigration	Former Communists	Deregulation	Privatization	Adjusted R^2
Serbia	0.126	**0.718**	**0.365**	0.294					0.699
Serbia	0.007	**0.682**	0.297	**0.353**		0.200			0.705
Serbia	0.009	**0.685**	0.297	**0.353**		0.187		0.016	0.692
Slovakia	**0.505**	**0.364**	0.111	0.149					0.459
Slovakia	**0.314**	0.172	0.125	0.167		**0.437**			0.556
Slovakia	0.130	0.139	0.045	0.170		**0.200**		**0.585**	0.733
Slovenia	**0.260**	**0.591**	−0.034	−0.026					0.508
Slovenia	**0.172**	**0.251**	0.005	0.044		**0.520**			0.626
Slovenia	**0.154**	**0.279**	0.003	0.039		**0.451**		**0.140**	0.641
Ukraine	**0.716**	0.076	−0.113	−0.138					0.486
Ukraine	**0.420**	0.040	0.013	−0.008		**0.557**			0.690
Ukraine	**0.258**	0.029	0.028	0.145		**0.456**		**0.392**	0.760
Western Europe									
Austria	0.099	**0.737**	0.113	−0.005					0.747
Austria	0.131	**0.483**	0.001	−0.003	**0.364**				0.785
Belgium	**0.501**	**0.321**	**0.178**	**−0.173**					0.808
Belgium	**0.415**	**0.226**	0.085	**−0.130**	**0.297**				0.843
Belgium	**0.302**	**0.230**	0.062	**−0.105**	**0.312**		0.143		0.854
Britain	**0.372**	**0.355**	**0.235**	0.004					0.753
Britain	**0.348**	**0.341**	**0.228**	−0.008	0.075				0.756
Britain	**0.256**	**0.218**	**0.185**	0.005	0.048		**0.309**		0.796
Cyprus	0.548	0.271	0.210	−0.328					0.730
Cyprus	0.557	0.240	0.152	−0.299	0.087				0.724
Cyprus	0.102	**0.297**	0.132	−0.155	0.007		**0.735**		0.849
Denmark	**0.391**	**0.180**	**0.448**	−0.049					0.732
Denmark	**0.343**	0.090	**0.336**	−0.053	**0.268**				0.760
Finland	**0.609**	**0.353**	0.058	**−0.131**					0.680
Finland	**0.620**	**0.398**	0.070	**−0.131**	−0.070				0.678
Finland	**0.221**	**0.369**	0.018	**−0.113**	−0.024		**0.515**		0.771
Germany	**0.449**	**0.432**	**0.179**	**−0.101**					0.729
Germany	**0.423**	**0.332**	**0.159**	**−0.108**	**0.147**				0.735
Greece	**0.535**	**0.330**	0.009	0.205					0.743
Greece	**0.458**	**0.284**	−0.029	0.166	0.204				0.755
Greece	0.272	**0.237**	0.011	0.185	0.137		0.250		0.763
Iceland	**0.707**	−0.003	0.236	−0.019					0.816
Iceland	**0.653**	−0.050	0.186	−0.088	**0.243**				0.859
Iceland	**0.518**	−0.048	0.154	−0.051	**0.228**		0.207		0.869
Ireland	**0.588**	0.062	**0.331**	−0.074					0.681
Ireland	**0.524**	0.044	**0.291**	−0.076	**0.140**				0.687
Italy	**0.387**	**0.312**	**0.327**	**0.095**					0.761
Italy	**0.283**	**0.162**	**0.158**	0.048	**0.435**				0.819
Italy	**0.275**	**0.163**	**0.154**	0.050	**0.436**		0.012		0.819

(*continued on next page*)

Table A1 (*continued*)

Country	Taxes	Social	Environment	Decentralization	Immigration	Former Communists	Deregulation	Privatization	Adjusted R^2
Luxembourg	0.480	0.370	0.128	0.179					0.701
Luxembourg	0.301	0.047	−0.069	0.231	**0.635**				0.806
Luxembourg	0.292	0.058	−0.075	0.231	0.619		0.024		0.792
Malta	−0.201	0.671	−0.177	−0.233					0.359
Malta	−0.139	0.548	0.030	−0.303	−0.123				0.269
Malta	−0.245	0.308	0.036	0.159	−0.580		0.925		0.447
Netherlands	**0.663**	0.072	**0.275**	−0.049					0.833
Netherlands	**0.471**	0.055	**0.189**	−0.050	**0.323**				0.866
Netherlands	**0.275**	**0.091**	0.089	−0.047	**0.281**		**0.342**		0.889
Norway	**0.846**	0.049	**0.132**	−0.048					0.853
Norway	**0.837**	0.039	0.079	−0.044	0.075				0.854
Norway	**0.296**	0.023	0.047	−0.059	0.017		**0.643**		0.906
Portugal	**0.231**	**0.531**	**0.260**	0.031					0.872
Portugal	**0.229**	**0.522**	**0.254**	0.025	0.023				0.871
Spain	**0.394**	**0.342**	**0.286**	−0.041					0.886
Spain	**0.372**	**0.283**	**0.255**	−0.050	**0.128**				0.889
Spain	**0.292**	**0.243**	**0.215**	−0.044	**0.123**		**0.175**		0.896
Sweden	**0.724**	**0.136**	**0.152**	**−0.068**					0.807
Sweden	**0.721**	**0.139**	**0.149**	**−0.063**	0.006				0.807
Sweden	**0.393**	**0.154**	**0.111**	−0.039	0.006		**0.388**		0.839
Switzerland	**0.703**	**0.254**	0.045	−0.021					0.901
Switzerland	**0.501**	**0.138**	0.029	−0.020	**0.337**				0.921
Switzerland	**0.382**	**0.153**	−0.006	−0.018	**0.353**		**0.151**		0.927
Far western lands									
Australia	**0.399**	**0.579**	−0.063	0.087					0.723
Australia	**0.403**	**0.535**	−0.100	0.094	0.101				0.713
Australia	0.058	**0.596**	−0.114	0.052	0.081		**0.377**		0.756
Canada	**0.501**	**0.332**	**0.172**	0.032					0.865
Canada	**0.515**	**0.288**	**0.158**	0.040	0.064				0.861
Canada	**0.393**	**0.171**	**0.114**	0.041	**0.093**		**0.272**		0.874
Northern Ireland	**0.408**	0.332	0.064	0.160					0.526
Northern Ireland	0.328	0.333	−0.109	0.150	0.326				0.644
Northern Ireland	0.195	0.354	−0.220	0.152	0.367		0.211		0.649
Turkey	−0.067	**0.482**	**0.305**	−0.035					0.468
Turkey	−0.073	**0.385**	**0.258**	−0.069	**0.292**				0.501
Turkey	−0.066	**0.386**	**0.263**	−0.070	**0.287**		−0.016		0.497
USA	**0.254**	**0.395**	**0.317**	−0.039					0.908
USA	**0.253**	**0.377**	**0.304**	−0.048	0.039				0.909
USA	**0.218**	**0.340**	**0.256**	−0.034	0.035		**0.142**		0.913

Bold = significant at better than 0.01.

Each row reports standardized coefficients for weighted OLS regressions where the case is a placement of a party by a country expert; the dependent variable is the expert placement of the party on the left-right scale; the independent variables are the placements of the same expert of the same party on the scales identified in the column headings. Cases are weighted by the party share of the vote in the most recent election.

Appendix B

Pearson correlations of other scales with left right scales in both CMP and Benoit–Laver expert survey are shown in Table B1.

Table B1

Country	Study	Correlation of this scale with left-right policy			
		Econ	Soc	Decent	Envir
Austria	CMP	0.860**	0.874**	0.026	−0.069
Austria	Expert	0.699**	0.863**	−0.287*	0.687**
Belgium	CMP	0.759**	0.600**	−0.043	−0.141
Belgium	Expert	0.796**	0.760**	−0.383**	0.749**
Britain	CMP	0.806**	0.816**	−0.339*	0.042
Britain	Expert	0.823**	0.698**	0.703**	0.736**
Denmark	CMP	0.830**	0.752**	−0.235*	−0.165*
Denmark	Expert	0.780**	0.559**	0.027	0.850**
Finland	CMP	0.513**	0.762**	na	−0.221*
Finland	Expert	0.644**	0.595**	−0.138*	0.475**
France	CMP	0.703**	0.729**	−0.132	−0.035
France	Expert	na	na	na	na
Germany	CMP	0.703**	0.644**	0.075	−0.24
Germany	Expert	0.567**	0.787**	−0.017	0.579**
Greece	CMP	0.598**	0.913**	na	−0.229
Greece	Expert	0.765**	0.589**	0.596**	0.606**
Iceland	CMP	0.665**	0.757**	0.123	−0.253*
Iceland	Expert	0.910**	0.306*	−0.359**	0.787**
Ireland	CMP	0.694**	0.382**	0.125	−0.134
Ireland	Expert	0.841**	0.330**	0.582**	0.717**
Italy	CMP	0.561**	0.736**	−0.081	−0.039
Italy	Expert	0.669**	0.740**	−0.038	0.712**
Luxembourg	CMP	0.738**	0.839**	0.024	0.022
Luxembourg	Expert	0.787**	0.778**	0.008	0.693**
Netherlands	CMP	0.836**	0.867**	−0.199	−0.531**
Netherlands	Expert	0.896**	0.434**	−0.337**	0.713**
Norway	CMP	0.866**	0.880**	−0.277**	−0.273**
Norway	Expert	0.924**	0.381**	0.294**	0.613**
Portugal	CMP	0.365**	0.784**	na	0.191
Portugal	Expert	0.802**	0.949**	0.545**	0.875**
Spain	CMP	0.850**	0.812**	−0.204	−0.628**
Spain	Expert	0.855**	0.884**	0.189**	0.833**
Sweden	CMP	0.957**	0.829**	0.111	−0.144
Sweden	Expert	0.890**	0.625**	−0.016	0.658**
Switzerland	CMP	0.728**	0.899**	−0.105	−0.341**
Switzerland	Expert	0.850**	0.751**	−0.566**	0.698**

**Indicates statistically significant correlation at $p \leq 0.01$ level; *indicates statistically significant correlation at $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$ level.

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