

The Dimensionality of Party Ideologies

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1 Introduction. Garbage in, gold out?

The work of the Manifesto Research Group does not need to be described in detail to this conference. It does need to be celebrated. There is only one comparable data series in the whole of political science, namely the time-series of national election surveys. The world needs both series if it is to test even the most commonplace generalisations about the interaction between voters and politicians. So I join (I hope) all political scientists outside the Manifesto Research Group in celebrating its work, and especially Ian Budge's 25-year stint with it.

In the most recent book-length treatment of the MRG project, Budge and Bara (2001, pp 4-5) give some interesting history. Measuring media coverage by the column inch predates World War II. Harold Lasswell found out that in the summer of 1939 negative references to the Soviet Union in German papers tailed off ahead of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which nevertheless came as a total surprise to the governments of the UK and the USA (not to mention Poland). Meanwhile, although not mentioned by Budge and Bara and in a different sector of political science, the then-ignored Lewis Richardson was engaged on his huge categorisation of dyads and moods in international relations. Richardson's idea was both to collect data and to derive equations for the mathematical physics of war (Sutherland 1993; Nicholson 1999). The Richardson categorisation of dyads and moods is formally similar to the MRG's procedure of classifying all sentences in party manifestoes. Perhaps a group of international relations scholars with money and devotion might bring the two together by comparing the statements about one another in the party manifestoes of dyads of

countries – as part of the Democratic Peace research project of which Richardson would have thoroughly approved?

Nevertheless, and even once computerised, content analysis has always aroused some suspicion. Is it not *garbage in, garbage out*? Most of what politicians say and the papers write is garbage: so how can one justify analysing it, by howsoever sophisticated a method? The MRG are not the only group to have been exposed to this criticism. So was Richardson, whose recognition was limited to the USA and whose reception by UK international relations scholars was frosty until as late as Nicholson (1999). The pioneer study of Commons Early Day Motions by Berrington et al (Finer et al 1961; Berrington 1973; cf McLean 1995) met with similar scorn in some circles. The tough question is this. Are party manifestoes (resp., political speeches about foreign relations, Early Day Motions) such cheap talk that they are not even worth analysing?

As an outsider, I think that the MRG team are entitled to give a weak and a strong answer. The weak answer runs *The data are what they are. Content analysis of them is better than anecdotal discussion, unsystematic sampling, or ignoring them altogether, which are the only three alternatives.* The strong answer runs *The data yield real, reliable and valid results, which are consistent with results from other methods and which combine to form the counterpart to data on electoral opinion.*

The weak answer may not seem to say much, but I think it says something in particular to historians and to those who typically use historians' methods of archival study. Anybody who has worked in political history has to get gold from dross: must

process a great deal of ore, some of much higher quality than other, in order to derive a few ounces of precious metal. Being now in my anecdotal age, I affectionately recall my own doctoral work on Red Clydeside. I was lucky enough to strike gold in the Public Record Office, finding records of the Ministry of Munitions that only two researchers had used and (I argued) misinterpreted before me, but which took me to the heart of government policy-making in the middle of World War I. On the other hand I had to spend day after day after month after month reading every issue of the *Forward* and the *Glasgow Observer* from 1914 to 1922. Gold there was in that dross (my favourite being “Neither the bar-tender’s pest nor the Sauchiehall Street dude ever spend a penny on the *Forward*.... A man requires to reach a certain level of culture before he can understand Socialism” – *Forward* 28.08.1915, quoted by McLean 1999 p. 177). But not much of it. I sat in the Mitchell Library envying the much easier task of Budge and Urwin (1966) who had merely had to conduct the first probability sample of the electorate of four Glasgow constituencies, to discover that Scottish political behaviour did not differ from English.

Historians do not spend long enough thinking about sampling and representativeness. For some documents, it is appropriate to take a 100% sample. The records of the central policy departments of a government may be a case in point. But even there, the serious historian will become weighted down in departmental archives before she has gone very far. How can she assure her readers that what she quotes is representative of what was said and done? For other documents, such as newspapers, social scientists are primarily interested in the generalisable; historians primarily in the unique. But even historians cannot always operate on a 100% sample. Life is too short, and research grants are even shorter. We should probably give more attention

than we typically do in graduate research methods courses to the problems of appropriate sampling from historical records.

As we do so, we should commend the MRG as a model. It begins with an unassimilable amount of primary data – all party manifestoes since 1945 in its set of countries (with the exceptions candidly listed in Budge et al 2001, Appendix IV). This unassimilable can be assimilated in three ways: by unsystematic sampling, by systematic sampling, or by reduction of the 100% sample to an interpretable body of data. All historians and many political scientists follow the first route. The second route would be better than the first, but the third – the MRG route - is better than the second.

They are entitled to say that it is better because they have run their own reliability and validity checks, which they report in their publications (e.g., Volkens 2001).

Reliability includes inter-coding reliability and inter-language reliability. My favourite MRG reliability story emanates from John Garry (then in an MRG affiliated research group in Dublin), who presented a paper at the 'Estimating the Policy Positions of Political Actors' panel at Mannheim ECPR sessions in 1999. He reported that he had, without knowing any Norwegian, computer-coded Norwegian party manifestoes at a number of elections and the resulting policy positions replicated those derived from the MRG coding of the same manifestos. This establishes the MRG hand-coding as the bedrock on which future electronic coding could be built. It opens up the appealing vista that MRG coders of the future could be able to simply press a button to generate the MRG data while they drink a toast to the valiant hard

work of earlier generations of coders (Garry 1999, 2001). This might be a real-world Turing Test.

The MRG method has always been based on their discovery that politicians do not argue with one another in their manifestoes. They talk past one another. The Conservatory Party says “We will preserve Ruritania’s military greatness”. The Laboratory Party says “We will free the wretched people of Ruritania’s oppressed colonies”. Using this insight, the MRG has generated 56 coding categories for manifesto sentences, such as “Foreign Special Relationships: Positive” and “Keynesian Demand Management”. It has also, perhaps more controversially, generated a unidimensional left-right positioning for the parties in its set. A party gains “left” points for sentences classed into the left-hand column of Table 1, and “right” points for sentences classed into the right-hand column.

Table 1

Sentences that give rise to “left” and “right” scores in the MRG coding scheme

<i>Left-wing sentences</i>	<i>Right-wing sentences</i>
Decolonization	Military: positive
Military: negative	Freedom, human rights
Peace	Constitutionalism: positive
Internationalism: positive	Effective authority
Democracy	Free enterprise
Regulate capitalism	Economic incentives
Economic planning	Protectionism: negative
Protectionism: positive	Economic orthodoxy
Controlled economy	Social Services limitation

<i>Left-wing sentences</i>	<i>Right-wing sentences</i>
Nationalization	National way of life: positive
Social Services: expansion	Traditional morality: positive
Education: expansion	Law and order
Labour groups: positive	Social harmony

Source: Budge et al 2001, Table 1.1

Budge et al explain two important points about this table (2001, pp. 22-3). First, that although put together inductively, factor analysis confirms that these sentences are associated. A manifesto which contains one of the left-column sentences tends to contain others, and the same for the right-column sentences. Secondly, that the MRG scoring scheme scores the “leftness” of a manifesto not by the simple ratio of left to right sentences, but by the net leftness of its left-right sentences *as a proportion of all sentences in the manifesto*. The following explanation is thoroughly Richardsonian:

[A] party that makes 200 statements with 100 (or 50%) of them about Left items and 40 (or 20%) about Right items receives a score of -30 (i.e., 20-50)... Imagine that at the next election this party says exactly the same things it had said last time but adds 200 new statements about an issue that is not of concern to the Left-Right scale (e.g., favourable statements about protecting the environment). Now the party is making 400 total statements, and relative to that total they are making only half as many Left statements (25%) and half as many Right statements (10%) as they did for the first election. The party’s Left-Right position is recorded as moving from -30 to -15 (Budge et al. 2001, p. 23).

Thus the MRG scaling procedure is not quite a unidimensional scheme. Other dimensions enter it in a shadowy way. (See also McDonald and Mendes 2001). This becomes important when we compare it with other schemes, and attempt to comment on the true dimensionality of politics in an industrial democracy, below.

One other prominent researcher has independently used the same technique as MRG: the late W.H. Riker in his last completed book, *The Strategy of Rhetoric* (Riker 1996). In this book Riker concludes his 30-year study of the 1787 Philadelphia Convention, which drafted the US Constitution. Riker analysed the motives and tactics of the Federalist Framers and their Anti-Federalist opponents, before, during, and after the convention.

The records of the Federal Convention, and the newspaper controversies over whether or not to ratify it, are very high-grade ore. They are also in part ready-smelted. A peerless record of the secret discussions of the Convention itself was kept by its most assiduous and cleverest delegate, James Madison, and published after his death. And American historians have proudly and reverently published all the surviving paper they can find, on both the Federalist and the Anti-Federalist sides, in multi-volume sets.

In *The Strategy of Rhetoric* Riker's research question is: how on earth was a Constitution ratified? It required 9 out of 13 states to ratify. Anti-Federalists were strong in most states and dominant in at least four, including two of the biggest (Massachusetts and Virginia). A further two (North Carolina and New Hampshire)

probably had Anti-Federalist majorities in the state, even though they sent Federalist delegates to Philadelphia.

As so often in his career, Riker deserves credit for focusing on a large and curiously neglected issue. Scholars of the US Constitution take it too much as a given. They rarely remark how simply *improbable* it is. The Americans wrote a constitution, and had it popularly ratified, in 1787-8. The French, in the heartland of the Enlightenment, failed to produce a popularly ratified constitution in 1789, again in 1791, again in 1793, and again in 1830. One was written for the Second Republic in 1848, but it collapsed with the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte in 1851. Marx's title is a sarcastic reminder that the Nephew repeated what his Uncle had done on the original 18th Brumaire (9 Nov. 1799): seize power in a coup d'état. The Canadians never submitted their constitution (the British North America Act 1867) for popular ratification. On electoral evidence, it would have lost if they had. Their struggles through the 1980s to amend the constitution suggest that nothing has changed. The UK has never had a written constitutional text, and therefore has never had a ratification debate. The British-Irish Treaty of 1921 was debated in the Irish parliament, but ratified only as a result of the pro-treaty party winning the ensuing civil war. At this writing, the Giscard constitution of the European Union seems likely to fail ratification. Only the Australians followed the US pattern, with their ratification process of 1892-1901 - over a century after the pioneer of popular ratification.

Riker asks why the rhetoric of the Federalists was more effective than that of their opponents. By content analysis of the huge volume of texts on both sides he derives

what he calls the Dominance Principle and the Dispersion Principle. The former states that

when one side dominates in the volume of rhetorical appeals on a particular theme, the other side abandons appeals on that theme

and the latter that

when neither side dominates in volume, both sides abandon it . (Riker 1996, p.6)

If both of these principles applied fully, then in equilibrium the two sides would totally talk past one another. They would reach this equilibrium – where no actor has a rational incentive to change strategy – once they had found out on which issues they could dominate in the volume of electoral appeals. After that, every possible issue would be raised either by precisely one side or by precisely zero sides. Riker's data (especially Riker 1996, Table 8.4, p. 117) show that the Dominance and Dispersion Principles, although suggestive, do not totally explain the rhetorical strategies of the two sides. This led one hostile reviewer of this 'in some respects unfortunate book' to conclude that 'those interested in the substance of the debate ... would do better to examine the primary sources for themselves'. That would be the four volumes of Max Farrand's *Records* and the eighteen of Jensen, Kaminski and Saladino's *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, then? (Wall 1998; Jensen et al 1976; Farrand 1966). This review so magnificently misunderstood Riker's whole point that it makes mine. A historian cannot possibly make a fair précis of 22 huge volumes of

priceless primary records without either unsystematic or systematic sampling.

Systematic sampling is better than unsystematic sampling. Riker's central insight is the same as the MRG's: that politicians largely talk past one another rather than debate with one another.

2 *Budgeans and other sects*

The Holy Grail is a reliable and valid measurement of party ideology. The Budgeans (as I shall call the MRG) are one of the leading groups of questers for it. As with any other object of religious reverence, though, many sects are engaged in the quest.

There are *Budgeans*, *Macdonaldites*, *Downsians*, *Laverites*, *Aydelottians*, *Pooleans*, *Rikerians*, and doubtless more. Also as with any other religion, the sects sometimes fight among themselves with a passion that outsiders cannot always understand. To this outsider (albeit with some affiliations to the churches of Aydelotte, Riker, and Downs) the sects are much closer than they sometimes say to each other that they are.

The Manifesto Group (Budgean) approach is that parties try to "own" issues. It is rational for a party to speak much on an issue where public opinion is on its side and little where it is not. It is very predictable that the UK Conservative manifesto for the 2005 General Election will contain more sentences on asylum, and fewer sentences on the NHS, than the Labour manifesto. In its stress on direction and saliency the MRG is closer to the directional theory of Macdonald and Rabinowitz (e.g., Macdonald and Rabinowitz 1998) than to classic Downsian stress on parties' position in Euclidean space. Nevertheless, perhaps because of the sheer dominance of the Downsian model in empirical political science, most of the intellectual engagement of the MRG has been with Downsian political science. Indeed the attempt, reported above, to produce

a summary statistic of the “leftness” of all parties in all countries in the MRG set seems driven by the wish to provide empirical data for Downsian analysis. That is certainly how political scientists elsewhere in the woods tend to approach MRG data.

Here, the main rivals to the MRG are the Laverites and the Aydelottians. The Laver expert survey approach is in one sense an offshoot from the MRG. As is well known, it works by contacting academic specialists in the politics of a country and asking them to position the country’s political parties in issue space (see, e.g., Laver and Hunt 1992; Laver 2001). This Conference will attest how far the Budgeans and the Laverites have been reconciled. As one affiliated to neither church I admire the teachings of both. The spatial measures of parties’ position produced by each method act as a reliability and validity check on the other method. As far as I am aware, there has been no case in which the Laver and MRG estimates of a party’s location have been seriously at odds. Several chapters of Laver (2001) report impressive intercorrelations between different methods of coding the spatial location of parties across many democracies. Specifically, Garry (1999) compared expert survey generated policy positions to word frequency based computer coding generated positions and to MRG generated positions, with reassuring results.

The Budge method locates parties by the statements in their manifestoes; the Laver method by whatever signals the country specialists hear when they respond to one of Laver’s expert surveys. A third method, which I label the *Aydelotte method* in honour of its originator, estimates party positions in a legislature by examining roll call votes there. The method has become an industry standard in the USA, but is only now

spreading to other jurisdictions. In particular, nobody attempted to replicate Aydelotte's own work on the UK Parliament for forty years after he started.

With coauthors I have analysed the Aydelotte programme elsewhere (especially McLean and Bustani 1999; McGillivray et al 2001). Beginning in the 1950s when computers barely existed, Aydelotte collected data on a heroic Richardsonian scale on the UK Parliament of 1841-47. 815 MPs sat in that Parliament. Aydelotte collected up to 300 pieces of information about each member, including his vote on each of 114 (later expanded to 186) divisions. It was an ideal case for examining the dimensionality of legislative voting, because in 1846 the Tory Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, proposed the Repeal of the Corn Laws, an action that flew in the face of the vested interest and ideology of his own party. Repeal was enacted on the votes of most of the opposition and a minority of the governing party, with 2/3 of Peel's own MPs opposing him.

Like the MRG, Aydelotte constructed a unidimensional measure of opinion, which he called the Big Scale. All of Aydelotte's 24 scales were derived by Guttman scaling. The Big Scale linked votes on the Corn Laws, Ireland, the relief of working-class distress, and income tax, among other things. If Tory MPs are regarded as the "right" and their Whig and Liberal opponents as "left", then the right-wing cluster is opposition to working-class relief combined with support for the Corn Laws; for coercion in Ireland, and for the reintroduction of income tax in 1842. (The last of these might surprise Gordon Brown). The left-wing cluster is the opposite position on each of these. Again, the formal similarity with the MRG method of left-right scaling is evident.

The reason that the Aydelotte program made most progress in the USA is partly methodological and partly substantive. American political scientists in the 1960s, unlike those in Britain, were not scared of numbers. Therefore, the Iowa school founded by Aydelotte rapidly spread its wings into the US Congress. Because of weak party discipline, Congress was in any case a more suitable forum for roll call analysis than the House of Commons (no subsequent Parliament having been as fluid as that of 1841). The culmination of the Iowa program is therefore the work of Poole and Rosenthal (1997). Poole and Rosenthal's program NOMINATE and its derivatives enable them to estimate the dimensionality of House voting in every Congress since the First (1789-91). NOMINATE is in turn a descendant of Aydelotte's Guttman scales.

According to Poole and Rosenthal, the dimensionality of voting in the House of Representatives is low. Except in the 1820s and the 1850s, most votes in the House scaled into a single dimension, from whatever might be labelled "left" in the context of the time to whatever might be labelled "right". The biggest exception was a chaotic period in the 1850s, in which the old party alignment was destroyed by the irruption of slavery – an issue which politicians had consciously tried to suppress in the interest of national harmony since the writing of the Constitution in 1787.

3 *How many dimensions?*

But how many issue dimensions are there really in the national politics of a typical democracy? The question is vital because if politics is unidimensional a powerful

existence theorem predicts that it will be stable. If politics is pluridimensional, an equally powerful impossibility theorem predicts chaos. The existence theorem is Duncan Black's Median Voter theorem (MVT); the impossibility theorem is Kenneth Arrow's.

According to the MVT, the ideal platform of the median voter is a strongly stable, Condorcet-winning position: that is, it would defeat any other in a straight binary vote. Therefore, Downsian (which should really be called Blackian) political science predicts powerful convergence on the median voter. As the MVT is a valid piece of reasoning, any observed failure to converge must be due to some pathology. This may be:

- A defective electoral system (example: plurality rule in the UK suppressed the median when Conservative and Labour ideology diverged symmetrically to right and to left in the 1980s);
- Imperfect information (example: politicians who falsely believe that their issue position coincides with the electoral median. Joseph Chamberlain (1903); Barry Goldwater (1964); George McGovern (1972); Tony Benn (1982); Howard Dean (2004) are prominent examples).
- Future-oriented campaigns. Some of the politicians just mentioned might counter-claim that they were trying to bring the electorate round to their position, rather than adapting their position to the electorate's. Tony Benn hailed the 8 million Labour votes cast in the UK 1983 General Election as votes for socialism.
- Multidimensionality (here we are in contested terrain. Most Downsians deny it exists. Rikerians insist that it does).

The MVT fails to generalise to more than one issue dimension. When Duncan Black discovered the failure of the MVT in two dimensions, he reports that it made him feel sick (Black, McLean and Squires 1991). Arrow (1951) proved that no ranking system could simultaneously satisfy transitivity, universal domain, the weak Pareto principle, independence of irrelevant alternatives, and nondictatorship. Black's condition of single-peakedness imposes a domain restriction. If single-peakedness holds, then so does the MVT (the converse is not necessarily true).

Arrow's Theorem is powerful in itself, but it generates a set of striking corollaries known as the chaos theorems most associated with McKelvey (1976) and Schofield (1978). There are many technical discussions of the domain and range of these theorems and subsequent refinements, and this is not the place for them (but see, e.g., McLean 2002 and references cited there). The theorems state that chaos is always possible. *Chaos* here means the property that majority-rule outcomes could wander anywhere in issue space – that there may be a global cycle among all possible outcomes.

The high priest of chaos was W. H. Riker. Having felt that political science lacked a deductive basis, he leapt on the work of McKelvey and Schofield, which he first saw in preprint in the mid 1970s, because he felt that it supplied that basis. If economics was the study of general equilibrium, then let political science be the study of general disequilibrium. Accordingly, Riker developed the new art, or science, of heresthetic(s) (McLean 2002). Heresthetics is the art of political manipulation, and in a series of stories that rapidly spread around the discipline, Riker celebrated the wiles

of those who could manipulate the dimensionality of US politics to bring about unexpected outcomes such as the ratification of the Constitution in 1787 or Abraham Lincoln's victory (on less than 40% of the vote) in the 1860 Presidential election.

The Riker school is distinctive and controversial. It celebrates disequilibrium. All other schools, whether Downsian, Budgean or any of the other sects listed above, prefer to examine low-dimensional equilibria. In my slightly awkward position as the known most strident UK disciple of Riker invited to contribute to a festschrift in honour of Ian Budge, I now attempt to see what the schools have to teach one another.

Riker's more extreme claims of universal chaos are not sustainable. Chaos is always possible – the chaos theorems are valid pieces of reasoning – but rarely observed. This may be because institutions suppress chaos, so that voting in any one institution (say a Congressional committee) is one-dimensional, and the rules of aggregation prevent an issue settled in committee from being raised again on the floor of the whole house. Or it may be because opinion in mass democracies really can be validly fitted into a single issue dimension. Or, most controversially, it may be that opinion is truly multidimensional, but that the measuring instruments available to us give a false reading, showing it to be of lower dimensionality than it truly is. The rest of this paper explores the last two alternatives.

The first observation is the trite one, made many many times since Converse (1964), that nothing logically constrains mass opinions on one subject, given opinions on another. Budge *et al's* list of constituents of left-wing and right-wing issue space (Table 1) would disappoint both Robert Nozick and Gordon Brown. Nozick (1974)

argued (and I happen to think that he was right) that economic liberalism implied social liberalism. He would have been disappointed to see *Free enterprise* and *Economic incentives* in the same column as *Traditional morality: positive* and *Social harmony*. Brown (2003) makes *Protectionism: negative* definitive of his version of social democracy, while abandoning *Economic planning* and *Controlled economy*. He argues that

A progressive government seeking a strong economy and fair society should not only support but positively enhance markets in the public interest.... [I]t is not only unwise but impossible to shelter our goods and services markets by subsidies or by other forms of protectionism without incurring long-term damage. (Brown 2003 pp. 270-1).

As to *Peace*, Benjamin Disraeli boasted at the end of the Congress of Berlin in 1878 that “Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace – but a peace I hope with honour”. Neville Chamberlain echoed Disraeli when he brought home the Munich Agreement of 1938: “I believe it is peace for our time ... peace with honour”. Do these examples mean that while “Peace” is left-wing, “Peace with honour” is right-wing; or that Salisbury, Disraeli, and Chamberlain were closet leftists? Would Labour under Brown become a more right-wing party? Is *Anarchy, State and Utopia* a left-wing manifesto?

These are all rhetorical questions, not to be taken very seriously. Even as ruthlessly logical figures as Nozick and Brown do not insist that only one combination of attitudes to market and to state is logically consistent. Converse was right. Factor

analysis of both popular opinion and party manifestoes shows that there is usually a single principal dimension, and that attitudes (of people or parties) on one subject predict their attitudes on another. Politicians want low dimensionality to sell their package. Voters want low dimensionality for information saving. Similarly, Guttman analysis of rollcalls, as in the Aydelotte and Poole-Rosenthal schools, also shows parliamentary voting to be of low dimensionality. Both McLean (in McLean and Bustani 1999) and Schonhardt-Bailey (1994) have found that the 1846 votes on Repeal of the Corn Laws were not orthogonal to votes on other matters in the 1841-7 parliament, even though those votes shattered the UK party system for a generation and hover like some distant echo of the Big Bang over every successive Conservative leader who “will not be another Peel” as numbers of them from Balfour to Howard have proclaimed.

And yet, and yet. Some methods suppress dimensionality. The pioneer expert survey by Mair and Castles (see Mair and Castles 1997) invited respondents to classify parties on a left-right scale, even parties that did not define themselves by their leftness or rightness but by something else entirely. Laver and associates do not do this, but summarise their responses so as to give left-right spatial locations to all the UK parties including the nationalists in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. A critic might argue that to evaluate Plaid Cymru, the SNP, and Sinn Fein by their degree of leftness is to miss the essential point about each of them (Budge 1999). As to roll-call analysis, McLean and Spirling (2003) found an interesting quirk when we applied Optimal Classification (OC), a cousin of Poole and Rosenthal’s NOMINATE suite, to voting in the House of Commons.

The rank ordering for the parliamentary session between the general elections of 1997 and 2001 did not accord to common understandings and anecdotal knowledge of which MPs should be properly considered of the left and those that should be properly considered of the right. Particularly, several left-wing Labour MPs are given scores placing them to the right (i.e. more conservative than) the bulk of the Labour party....

[T]he Labour party MPs count in from the 'left' to position 428. The last 30 scaled positions include MPs such as Tam Dalyell (position 404), Robert Marshall-Andrews (405), Dennis Skinner (411), Jeremy Corbyn (416), Diane Abbott (420), Tony Benn (421), Ken Livingstone (422) and Bernie Grant (427). To be clear, OC classifies these MPs as some of the most right-wing of the Labour party. Ideologically then, they are the closest to the Conservatives. This seems odd. Commentators have not been slow to cite some or all of these individuals as Labour rebels, but not for the reason suggested by the attendant analysis. Rather, these members are widely accepted as ideologically left-wing – disagreeing with the government on foundation-hospital NHS reform, the Iraq war and social-security/disability benefits to name but three policy areas. Yet here we observe them being placed right of their Prime Minister and, in fact, the entire Cabinet.

Who then were the most left wing members of the Commons (1997-2001) if it is not these individuals? Apparently, MPs Galbraith and Radice, with members Morris, Stevenson, Maxton and Ashton not far to their right. (McLean and Spirling 2003, pp. 2, 4; data from Firth and Spirling (2003).)

McLean and Spirling go on to argue that OC (and therefore any Guttmanoid technique, because the whole family descends from Guttman scaling, as used by Aydelotte) gives misleading signals and spurious validity statistics. Almost every division in the Commons of 1997-2001 is perfectly consistent with the ranking of MPs listed above. The validity of the scale is tremendous. Its value is zero. The anomaly arises because sophisticated voting exists. In a party-controlled legislature, the governing party sets the agenda. Those who dislike its proposals can only vote against them or abstain. Typically, rebels on the Government side and members of the Opposition dislike the government's proposals for opposite reasons, but they vote in the same lobby. At least one of the groups casts a sophisticated vote. *Even if the underlying dimensionality is low*, the observed dimensionality, if correctly measured, would be higher. It is the measuring instrument that has failed, not reality. Where sophisticated voting exists, so does the scope for cycles. Therefore the Riker approach is not invalidated for legislatures. When Poole and Rosenthal report that the dimensionality of Congressional voting is low throughout the entire history of the USA, we observe that their measure may be under-recording the true dimensionality of voting. It certainly cannot pick up, and correctly assign, instance of sophisticated voting. And yet these instances are the mainspring of Riker's stories.

Reverting to parties and their ideologies, it may be that the MRG is closer to capturing true underlying multi-dimensionality than is conventional Downsian spatial analysis, and yet that the willingness of the MRG to generate and discuss a left-right scale for their parties may have obscured this. I take as a starting-point the Mannheim Manifesto, as I shall label Budge's (2001) typically feisty defence of the MRG coding

procedure. Here Budge counter-attacks those who had expressed ‘doubts about the extent to which the one-position saliency codes typically used by the MRG really measure the kind of policy spaces assumed by classical theories of party competition and coalition formation’ (Budge 2001, p. 53). He quotes Stokes (1966) on the primacy of “valence” over “position” issues, an approach which informed the US and UK election studies in the waves with which Stokes was concerned (e.g. Burler and Stokes 1974), but has progressively given way to the now-standard Downsian spatial view. Stokes was a pungent critic of the Downsian approach. Budge further quotes Robertson’s (1976) analysis as showing that “parties do not directly oppose each other on an issue by issue basis” (p. 57). This discovery of Robertson’s determined the MRG coding scheme, described above, to which it has stuck ever since. As we have noted above, Riker made the same discovery when he analysed the rhetoric of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist campaigners for and against the ratification of the US Constitution between 1787 and 1790.

Nevertheless, the Budgeans compromise with the Downsians to the extent of deriving a left-right scale from an underlying dataset that has Stokes’ characteristics of saliency and valency. Parties make statements about things that are salient to them, and/or to the voters to whom they hope to appeal. Most of those statements are univalent. Few party manifestoes promise lawlessness and disorder, social disharmony, war, or the contraction of social services. Actually, this finding is perfectly consistent with Downsianism. The median voter in all democracies is almost certainly at the univalent position: in favour of law, order, social harmony, peace, and the expansion of social services (well, some of them).

The left-right scale derived from the univalent sentences of Table 1 is displayed country by country by Budge and Klingemann (2001). They argue that it shows some real facts, consistent with results from other traditions. As an observer would expect, the US Republican position moves sharply to the right in 1964 and from 1980 to 1988; the Democratic position moves sharply left in 1972 and sharply right in 1992. (The US manifestoes analysed are those for the presidential, not the congressional, campaign). The results for the two most interesting (in this context) Westminster regimes are more mixed. For the UK, Budge and Klingemann show Labour as moving to the right of the Liberal Democrats for 1997. For New Zealand their graph actually has Labour moving *left* in 1984 and 1987, the two elections which hailed a rightward transformation of New Zealand politics more extreme than anything that has happened in any other Westminster regime since the Repeal of the Corn Laws (Nagel 1998). In the British case their graph captures a partial truth but in a perhaps misleading way. In the New Zealand case it obscures more than it clarifies.

Undoubtedly, the British Labour Party stopped talking in 1997 about many of the things in the left-hand column of Table 1, and talked for the first time in its history about some of the things in the right-hand column. Meanwhile, I assume that the British Liberals' *relative* use of those sentences did not change (and remember from the gloss given on Table 1 that it is relative use that matters most). Furthermore the two intellectual leaders of New Labour, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, were consciously developing a more market-friendly, less producer-group oriented, ideology. But to say that Gordon Brown (in particular) is more right-wing than Hugh Gaitskell or Jim Callaghan is perhaps to miss the point. In Brown (2003) and other writings, he is developing a new ideology of state and market: essentially that the two

roles of the state are to redistribute to the poor (but to rely less on redistribution for raising bottom-decile incomes, and more on welfare-to-work), and to intervene in market failure, such as collusion among capitalists or patients' ignorance of their medical condition. In contrast to vacuities about the Third Way that have emanated from some Blairite advisors, this is gritty and novel policy-making. Yet much of it is too subtle to be caught in manifesto coding. For instance, the Brownite redistribution to the poor has been a remarkable achievement of the 1997 and 2001 Labour administrations, yet it is one about which they have been almost totally silent. The reason is probably that the lowest decile of the income distribution includes people who are socially excluded; liable to be stigmatised (Welfare Scroungers!! Bogus Asylum Seekers!!! Slovakian Gipsies!!!! Vandals!!!! Teenage Mothers!!!!!!), and not particularly likely to vote, for Labour or any other party. They are not median voters. Budgean principles explain why Labour makes no mention of its generosity to the bottom decile in its manifestoes. But therefore they fail to capture how left-wing the party is, in this dimension.

And then there is free trade. To be mischievous, one might say that the most left-wing Labour Chancellor before Brown was Philip Snowden (Chancellor in 1924 and from 1929 until his break with Labour in 1931). Brown and Snowden shared the view, which too many of the Labour Chancellors in between have failed to share, that free trade is better for the British working class than protectionism. The overwhelming weight of economic theory and evidence since Ricardo is with them. Brown adds, what is certainly correct, that free trade is the best thing for the poor of the Third World. The best thing, in at least the following sense: that the best thing that governments of the rich world can do for them is to remove the outrageous protection

of farm produce, steel, and other commodities where the comparative advantage lies with the South but the political clout with the North. Brown may not be the most left-wing Chancellor since Lloyd George (though in the pub I might be prepared to argue that), but he is the most effective left-wing Chancellor since Lloyd George.

The New Zealand case maybe shows up a more direct problem with the MRG method. Nagel (1998) explains the transformation there by arguing that the Labour leaders David Lange and Roger Douglas opened up a new issue dimension. In the dimension of social liberalism, they took a distinctively 'left' or 'liberal' position on nuclear weapons, the environment, and Maori land rights. This package appealed sufficiently to post-materialist Labour activists, horrified by the diagonally opposite policy platform (economically welfarist and socially conservative) of the National Party's dominant incumbent Robert Muldoon, that they did not notice, or even (ahead of Labour's coming to power) did not care about Labour's New Right economic policies. The MRG methodology obscures this heresthetical shift. It reports New Zealand Labour as having shifted in a minor way in one dimension, where it actually shifted tectonically in two.

Intellectual honesty (and the wish for a scrap) compel me to set out my disagreements with the Budge programme. But I end as I started by honouring its achievements.

Political science would be much the poorer without it.

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