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Free-Market Populism on the Canadian Right: A Quantitative Discourse Analysis of the Reform Party of Canada

Abstract:

The Reform Party of Canada (1987-2000) has been described as one of the more opaque and internally conflicted Canadian political parties in terms of its messaging and core policy positions (Dobbin 1992; Flanagan 1995; Burbidge 1998). The party was subject to conflicting tensions between its western regional base and its ambitions for national political office; its 'populist' concern for member resolutions with Preston Manning's habits of top-down control; and balancing the frustrations and demands of the public (anti-GST; anti-free-trade) and members with the party's commitment to small-state, free-market economic principles (Dobbin 1992; Flanagan 1995). The party's stance on immigration and social issues have been hotly debated, with all but the earliest Reform documents taking a 'colour-blind' stance on immigration, for example, while many observers found the party's messaging to consist of 'coded' xenophobia (Burbidge 1998).

The paper uses Hansard transcripts of Reform MPs' speech in the Canadian House of Commons, 1994-2000, to quantitatively measure which concepts Reform representatives linked to a core set of terms, including 'immigrants', the 'economy', and 'special interests' or 'ordinary Canadians'. Two main forms of analysis are presented: classifier output (the words most distinctive to each party) by party and year, and 'nearest neighbour' analysis (the most similar words, based on a window of text) for words including 'economy', 'immigrants', and 'trade'. The relevance of Reform includes its officials' later top positions in the united Conservative Party, and its comparability to a more recent free-market populist project – Maxime Bernier's People's Party of Canada.

Introduction

Public frustration with politicians runs rampant in newer and long-established democracies alike. Mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties have declined in vote share across many countries. Filling the void, to adopt Peter Mair's terminology, a number of anti-establishment, 'fringe' or 'populist' left (Syriza; Jeremy Corbyn) or right (Le Pen; Trump) parties and candidates have gained notoriety, and even positions of high office. While the tide may have turned on this populist moment since 2020, with Macron's second presidential win, Joe Biden's win over Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries and Donald Trump in the US presidential election of 2020, and Keir Starmer's replacement of Jeremy Corbyn as the UK's Labour Party

leader, many indicators continue to signal public discontentment with political leaders and institutions. Voter turnout rates, public opinion ratings of core democratic institutions such as national parliaments, and leader approval ratings are notably low since the early 2010s in many established democracies.

In Canada, Harold Clarke and colleagues' description of the post-war political scene as one of largely non-distinctive 'brokerage parties', especially the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, periodically lifting each other's policies, and otherwise cobbling together ideologically indistinct 'bundles' of policies and shifting positions in response to immediate public demands (Clarke et al. 1984). Critics have suggested that Clarke et al.'s bundling together of the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and even the more distinctly left NDP as remarkably non-differentiated from each other is an overstatement. Cochrane (2015) traces how, at least since the 1980s, the main two parties have taken consistently left- or right-leaning stances on several policy areas.

Reform

In any case, the Reform Party of Canada forms a notable example of one of the later 20th century's new right-populist or radical (in the sense of fringe or non-conventional) right parties. Reform defied easy classification, mixing its ideologically free-market underpinnings (stated in print form in Ernest and Preston Manning's writings from the 1960s onward, Dobbin 1991, and in internal party guidance during the early years of Reform, Flanagan 1995) with a generalized appeal to Canadians' frustration with 'patronage', wasteful public spending, and perceived political mismanagement over the Mulroney years. Reform also contained intriguing paradoxes: an 'outsider' party leader, Preston Manning, who was the son and protégé of Ernest Manning, premier of Alberta for 25 years continuously (1943-1968).

Manning (Jr.) was a scholar of early 20th century prairie populisms (Dobbin 1991), yet rejected their elements of economic collectivism. After a wave of western Canada populist parties arose and burnt out quickly in the early 1980s (Dobbin 1991), Manning watched closely and sought to avoid their mistakes: the new party would need to avoid being labelled as a home for cranks and 'nutjobs' (Flanagan); it would need some support from respectable business leaders; and it could not be launched when the PCs were in opposition, as anti-Liberal sentiment would otherwise find a home in the more established party. Preston Manning also preferred to launch a new party when the timing was right (the 'wave' referred to by Flanagan, 1995), and, under a Progressive Conservative federal government, unveiled the Reform Party in 1987.

Reform's political trajectory

Public outcry about a number of patronage appointment scandals during Prime Minister Mulroney's tenure, ambivalence about free trade, and outright dislike of Mulroney's new GST tax helped to elevate Reform. Manning, and other top Reform officials – the party gained its first MP, socially conservative school teacher Deborah Grey, in a by-election shortly after the 1988 general election; Stan Waters; and by the 1993 election, future prime minister Stephen Harper

and political scientist Tom Flanagan – presented an image where democratic deficits were found in excessive public spending, political elites failing to listen to regular people in their ridings, and various 'special interest' groups (women's rights groups, those pushing for nation-wide bilingualism, immigrants and refugees who used welfare) as a threat to the public purse, and by extension to the wellbeing of Canadian democracy.

Reform certainly presented an image of a grassroots-led, direct democracy-supporting party – in pushing for recall legislation, a referendum for any constitutional reforms after Meech Lake, and in the party's frequent (early) references to conducting polls amongst its membership (Dobbin 1991; Flanagan 1995) or in its ridings. (Dobbin viewed these internal polls as much more manipulated and top-down than might be expected – inconvenient polls would be dropped, as with the wider membership's opposition to GST, in favour of early polls with core members on support for flat taxes in general.) The party's top-down controls on speech – only a few could speak on behalf of the party – extended to areas where the cranks or 'crazies' were more engaged: numerous member-submitted resolutions on blocking non-white immigration were stopped by the party, for example.

Understanding Reform: The possibility of quantitative discourse analysis?

Reform's messaging, and in particular its care to not disclose too much about members' high social conservatism (first MP Deborah Grey and others stated that they were personally pro-life, for example) and questionably xenophobic immigration policies, has received attention from qualitative scholars. Burbidge (1998) carefully traces the themes and explicit messaging of the party's speech about immigration. One quotation from a left-leaning activist is especially illustrative: 'everyone knows' that Reform is the party of anti-immigrant and white supremacist figures. Party documents such as campaign manifestos and conference proceedings remained clear of any of Reform's more exclusionary messaging, but the association persisted. A number of scandals with far-right groups joining the party or pledging their support required damage control throughout the 1990s. Seen from some lights, Reform has also been one of the most successful challenger or anti-establishment parties: it became the Official Opposition in 1997, and former top official Stephen Harper later led the united Conservative Party of Canada to govern from 2006 to 2015.

Reform's somewhat cryptic approach to hinting at its values and policies, while not saying them directly, therefore provides a valuable opportunity to study Reform's speech where it was (a) recorded and (b) based on previous research, such as Burbidge 1998, more open about making controversial associations (refugees with illiteracy or HIV/AIDS, for example, Burbidge 1998): in parliamentary debates, recorded by the House of Commons Hansard. I draw on several common methods of computational text analysis, ranging from text classifiers that identify each party's most distinctive words (those that other parties use much less or not at all), to scoring emotional content of the party's speech text on certain topics. I also use pre-trained word embeddings, numeric representations of word meaning, to pull out how a party's speech about a certain topic (in this research, and in others, based on the literal 'window' of words used before and after each appearance of a keyword such as 'immigrant') suggests a set of closely related and associated words.

Data and methods

Parliamentary speech transcripts from the House of Commons, the Hansard, are sourced from LIPAD from 1980 to December 2019, and from OpenParliament.ca from January 2020 to present (Currently: to April 2023). The Hansard records include each MP's party affiliation at the time of each speech. (For any analyses shown after the conversion of Reform to the Canadian Alliance, 2000-2003, and after the creation of the united Conservative Party of Canada, 2003-present, MPs' party affiliation and legislative voting records are sourced from J.F. Godbout's historic voting data, covering 1867-2011 (https://github.com/jf-godbout/data), and from OpenParliament.ca thereafter (2011-present; votes up until the end of the 43rd Parliament, ending in fall 2021, are used).

The text classifiers applied use the 'term-frequency—(multiplied by the log of) inverse document frequency' (TF-IDF) approach, a transparent and longstanding, simply calculated, method. (Classifier and graphics code is taken from the TidyText package in R, written by Julia Silge and David Robinson). 'Term frequency' is the number of times a term (a particular word) is used in a 'document', which, in this application, is each of a party's mentions of a keyword, aggregated, with a 10-word window of context text (i.e., what were the 10 words immediately preceding each mention, and the 10 words following it) attached to the keyword itself. Inverse document frequency is the inverse of what proportion of 'documents', across the total corpus, include the word at all. In some instances, where parties' number of mentions of a term are extremely different, the term frequency (n) is adjusted to be a proportion of the party's total words spoken in the context windows. If this step is not taken, then uninformative, highly common words ('act', 'Canadians', 'make') tend to be highlighted as distinctive words for the parties with higher speech counts.

Emotional scoring is conducted with a custom positive and negative word lexicon, created largely in the manner described in Rheault et al. 2016. The same positive and negative 'seed words', 100 each, are used as in Rheault et al 2016. These words' numeric word vectors (word embeddings, in this case in 50 dimensions) are used with a vocabulary of other words with numeric embeddings, and the closest words in meaning (i.e., in multidimensional distance) to the seed words are then chosen as a new sentiment lexicon. The difference between my approach and that found in Rheault et al. 2016 is that I am again using pre-trained (Stanford GloVe) word embeddings as the numeric vectors in this process, whereas Rheault et al. first developed custom embeddings for a larger vocabulary of words, based on roughly 100 years of the UK parliamentary transcripts. I do not apply fine-tuning, in order to avoid potentially overfitting the word vectors to the same corpus that I measure with the lexicon. Fine-tuning may result in words that have no clear negative or positive association in everyday speech, such as 'fish', appear as positive or negative words in a fine-tuned embedding-based dictionary, due to their connection with negative speech in a parliamentary context.[1]

[1] This specific example comes from one result found by Sybil Kappos, 2022 (APSA), which used the Rheault et al. 2016 approach, with fine-tuning based on the corpus of study. An alternative approach that could avoid this issue would be to fine-tune embeddings on a similar text corpus (such as another country's parliamentary speeches), but this is not applied in the present version.

Word embeddings themselves are based on which words co-locate closely with each other in English-language texts, and in practice, words with closer numeric vectors appear to have more closely related semantic meanings. (Particular dimensions of the vector may also reflect elements of meaning, such as gender or tense). The final sentiment dictionary used for dictionary-based scoring of the Hansard text contains 3200 words: the 200 seedwords, and 1500 words each capturing highly positive and highly negative emotions.[2]

Cosine similarities between pairs of documents measure text similarity. In this application, the numeric vectors inputted to the cosine measurement are not based on word embeddings (which would be one option for measuring document similarities) but are rather based on each party's document-feature matrix (DFM) of its relevant word window texts collected around a certain keyword. Document-feature matrices are sparse matrices that show how many times each document (in this application, meaning each party's texts collated as one party 'document') uses each word, or 'feature', from all the words appearing in any document. In this application, the DFM is first adjusted to show word counts not as raw counts, but as raw counts divided by each party's total number of words used (i.e., row sums of the DFM). This adjustment is conducted so that a party with few speeches and a party with many speeches on a topic are more directly comparable. Document embeddings are not used because the default GloVe vocabulary excludes many negative words, and so that the literal words chosen by parties form an input. (As opposed to a numeric approximation of their meanings).

'Nearest neighbour' words, also presented, help to capture what the words surrounding a keyword of interest suggest about its meaning and connotations or associated imagery. Nearest neighbour words are identified by first using (in this application, pre-trained) word embedding vectors for each word of the 'window text' surrounding each appearance of a keyword. These embeddings are then averaged (with a weighting matrix applied to up-weight rarer words) by each mention of the keyword. Then, these averages are aggregated and again averaged by party. This leaves each party with its own numeric word embedding, reflecting its actual use of the keyword in speech. (This process is described in Rodriguez et al. (2021), and relevant code is sourced from Spirling and Rodriguez's conText package for R). Finally, these different, customized embeddings for the keyword of interest (e.g., the NDP's vector representation of the word 'tax', versus the Liberals', versus each other party's) are used to find the words with the closest meanings suggested by the party's use of the word (i.e., the closest numeric vectors to the party's numeric vector). These closest words in 'meaning' (distance; although word embeddings appear to capture semantic content well) are, again, taken from the Stanford GloVe vocabulary.[3]

A final note is that the official English transcript is used for all analysis. Potential drawbacks include the lack of ability to study the exact words chosen by a speaker in utterances originally spoken in French. As all MPs' speech is of interest, and the official Hansard translation is considered to be careful and high quality, the English translation is nonetheless used.

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[2] One caveat is that the Stanford GloVe appears to exclude many negative words, possibly due to deliberate removal of negative or offensive words by the Stanford GloVe's creators – a relatively common practice in applications such as predictive text generation based on word embeddings.

[3] Many of the results returned synonyms for the original keyword, meaning that the keyword itself should possibly be removed from the window text before conducting this process. Spirling and Rodriguez suggest removing the keyword.

Findings, 1990s:

The results of applying these quantitative measurements to the window text surrounding keywords such as 'economy*', 'refugee*', 'special interest*', and 'Quebec*'. The asterisk symbol signifies a wildcard character in R, and so a keyword search for "economy*" would return instances of "economy" or "economy's", but not "economist", "economics", "economies", and so on. A word window of 10+10 words surrounding each instance is collected, and forms the basis for all text analysis shown below.[4]

'Economy', 1994-2000:*

A text classifier reveals more negative words surrounding mentions of the 'economy' for parties in opposition – 'overheating', 'kills' (in context: often 'kills jobs'), and 'disastrous' are among the most distinctive words for the Bloc Québécois, Reform, and Progressive Conservatives.

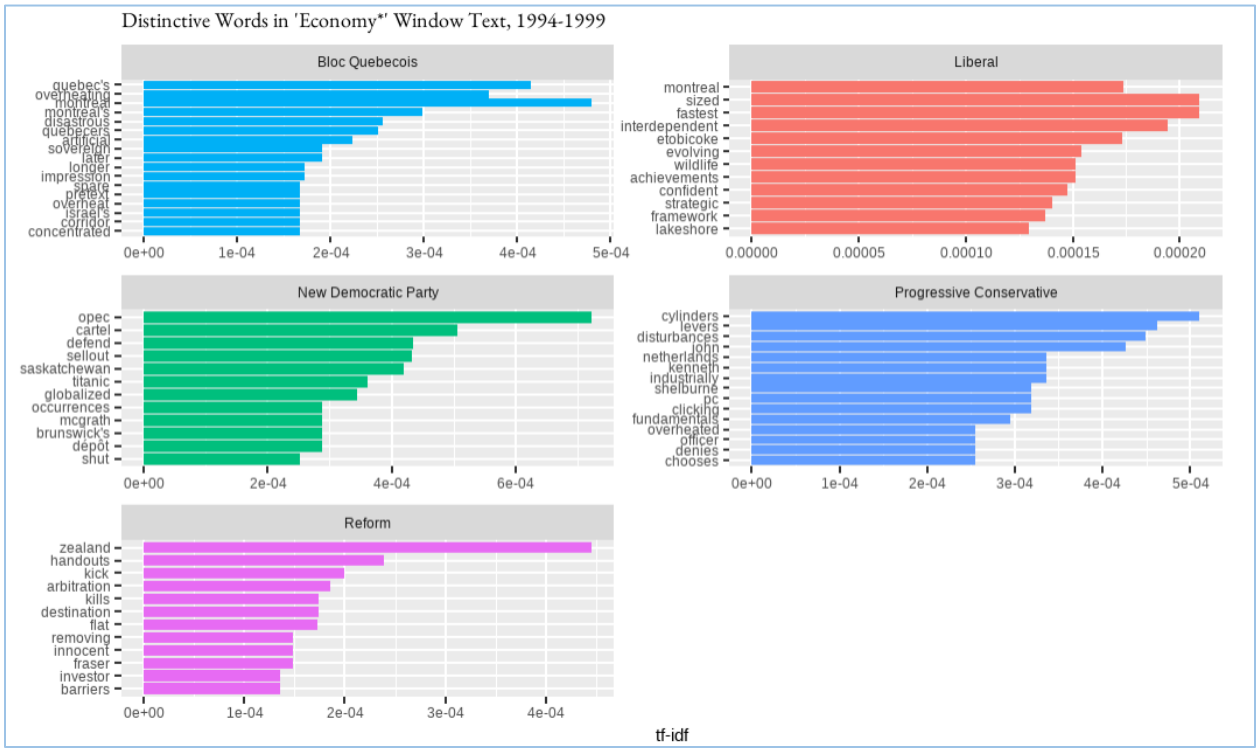

Figure 1: Text classifier for 'economy*', unigrams (single words)

The NDP, in its distinctive words and bigrams (two-word phrases or words), is also set apart from the others in mentions of 'huge corporations', 'wealthy corporations', and similarly leftist terminology. Reform, by way of contrast, makes references to the Fraser Institute ('fraser').

[4] Images are marked as '1994-1999' but include up until March 26, 2000, the last appearance of Reform in the parliamentary record.

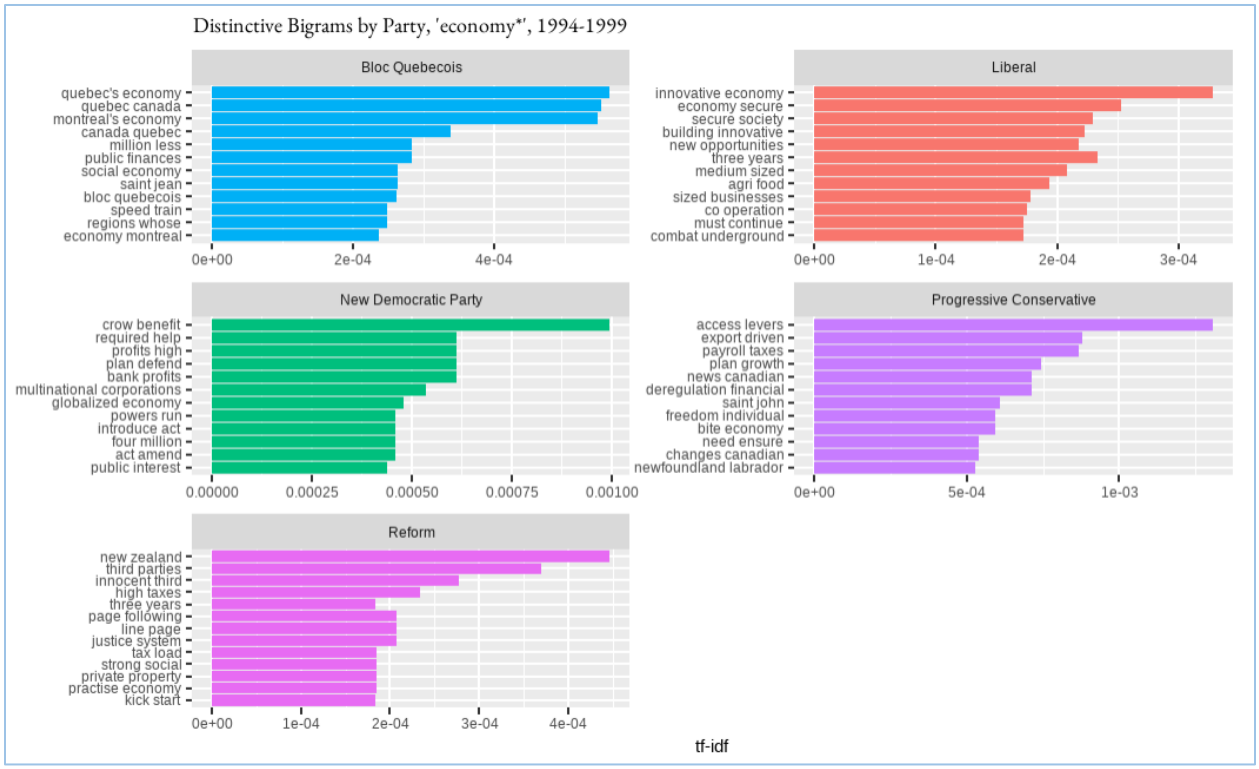

Figure 2: Text classifier for ‘economy*’, bigrams

References to New Zealand and Israel refer to other countries’ free-trade agreements signed in the 1990s.

Comparing the similarity of each party’s window text around ‘economy*’, over the entire 1994-early 2000 time period, the Liberals are close (by a document-feature matrix-based cosine similarity measure) to Reform, but also to the Progressive Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc. Independents have fewer than 100 speeches on the economy, and so their high dis-similarity to other parties may be due to the noise inherent in this small number.

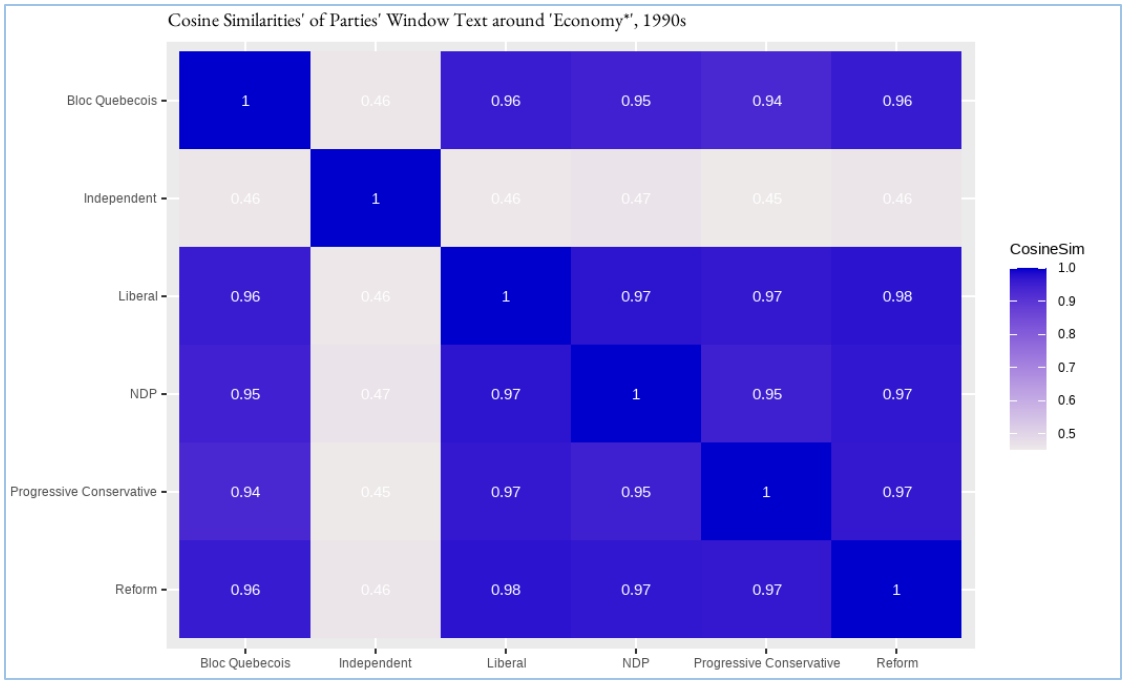

Figure 3: Cosine similarity of parties' mentions of the 'economy'.*

Positive and negative emotional scoring of the 'economy*' window texts likewise finds quite similar scores between parties, albeit with Reform somewhat higher than other opposition parties, perhaps due to its advocacy for free markets and trade.

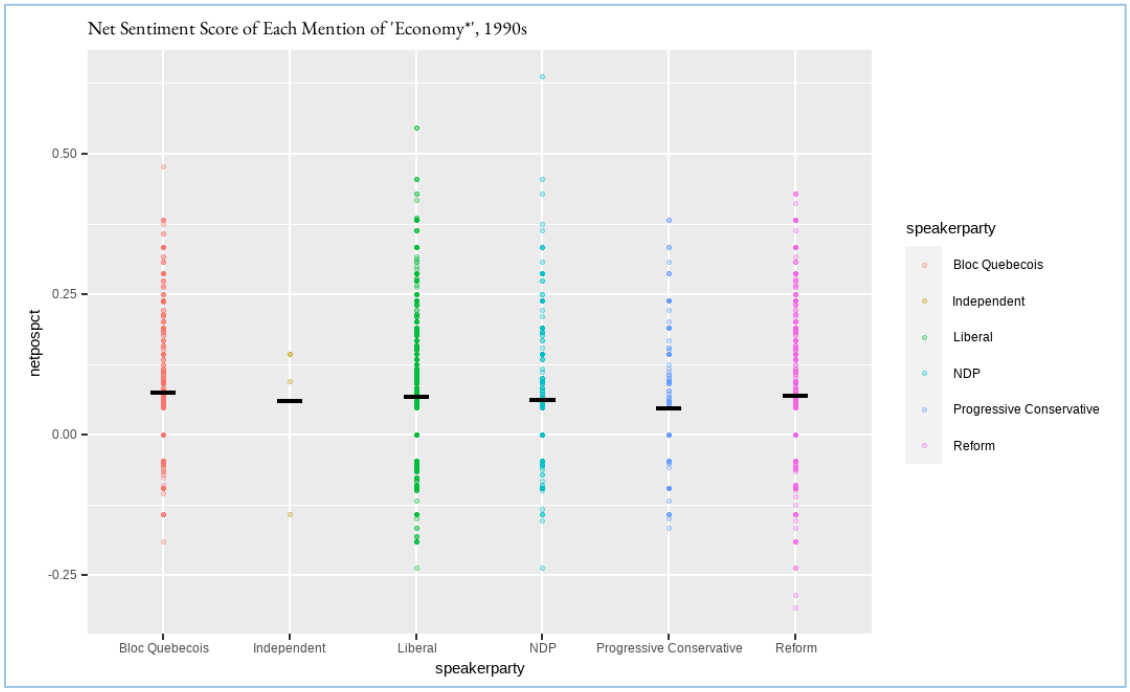

Figure 4: Sentiment score of each mention of 'economy*' and its window text. Party means are indicated by black line segments.

'Special Interest'*

Mentions of the term 'special interest' or 'special interests' show that, notably, Reform uses the word 'bilingualism' much more than other parties do. In contrast, Liberals and the NDP discuss terms such as 'abuse' and (in bigram results) 'woman abused' or 'abused husband'. (As stopwords have been excluded prior to analysis, this phrase may group instances of 'abused husband' and 'abused by her husband' or other similar wordings with stopwords between the two component words). In a reading of the context texts, left-leaning parties appear to be defending women's groups against (presumably) criticism of them by Reform.[5]

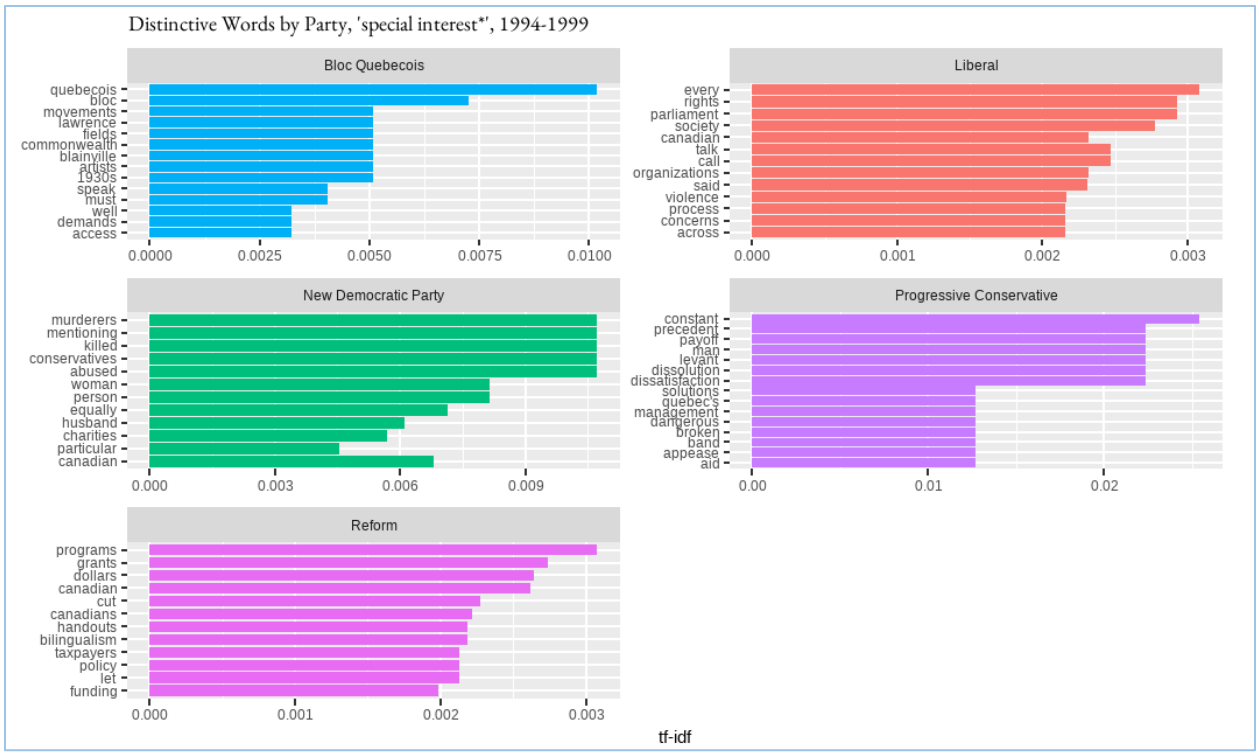

Figure 5: Distinctive unigrams by party, 'special interest*'.

Reform's focus on the public spending implications of a range of Canadian public policies is clear in their mentions of 'taxpayers' and 'funding' among their distinctive words identified by the classifier. In 'nearest neighbours' analysis, Reform also appears to choose quite different words in the immediate context of discussing 'special interests', in comparison to the Liberals or NDP: The Liberals and NDP speak about[6] organizations, and their closest words

[5] Parties using each others' catchphrases in order to criticise or argue against them is not dealt with well by the methods, currently. More filtering of the window texts to detect when this occurs, such as flagging uses of a phrase that also mention another party's name, could be possible.

[6] The word embedding-based approach employed here means that the Liberals and NDP might not have used the nearest neighbour words literally in the 'special interest*' word windows, but does mean, at a minimum, that they chose extremely similar words and phrases to the ones shown as 'nearest neighbours'. (I.e., the closest words in meaning to what is suggested by the party's word window text around the keyword). In contrast, the classifier results highlight some of the literal words spoken in the window text.

seem to share a more positive tone – other than the NDP's 'bigots', possibly used in criticizing other parties' use of the 'special interest(s)' phrase.

target <chr>	feature <chr>	rank <int>	value <dbl>
Liberal	advocacy	1	0.5040039
Liberal	groups	2	0.5004739
Liberal	organizations	3	0.4407132
Liberal	agendas	4	0.4294994
Liberal	grassroots	5	0.4274572
Liberal	lobbies	6	0.4216859
Liberal	advocates	7	0.4178338
Liberal	disadvantaged	8	0.3808781
Liberal	advocating	9	0.3762561
Liberal	taxpayer	10	0.3714792

target <chr>	feature <chr>	rank <int>	value <dbl>
New Democratic Party	advocacy	1	0.4711505
New Democratic Party	groups	2	0.4423765
New Democratic Party	lobbies	3	0.4340020
New Democratic Party	advocates	4	0.3585026
New Democratic Party	associations	5	0.3409865
New Democratic Party	bigots	6	0.3391223
New Democratic Party	group	7	0.3367118
New Democratic Party	agendas	8	0.3193389
New Democratic Party	disadvantaged	9	0.3192950
New Democratic Party	organizations	10	0.3149616

target <chr>	feature <chr>	rank <int>	value <dbl>
Reform	taxpayer	1	0.4695479
Reform	advocacy	2	0.4236784
Reform	subsidizing	3	0.4171278
Reform	lobbies	4	0.4079061
Reform	agendas	5	0.4059673
Reform	welfare	6	0.4043682
Reform	subsidies	7	0.3829232
Reform	subsidize	8	0.3818373
Reform	advocating	9	0.3783168
Reform	groups	10	0.3782453

Figure 6: Nearest neighbour words to 'special interest*', three major parties shown.

Reform's references to tax- and money-related words: 'welfare', 'taxpayer', 'subsidize', on the other hand, displays a focus on the (supposed) financial implications of any government supports for advocacy groups. Larger non-profit organizations such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, NAC, were undergoing cuts to their public funding support over the Mulroney and Chrétien administrations.[7]

[7] NAC, for example, emerged out of a 1960s public commission on gender equality, and received 90 percent of its budget from public funding before cuts began in the late 1980s (Anderson and Lambert 2006).

'Aboriginal' rights and issues; 'Quebec*':*

Reform's single-minded focus on public spending issues – many of its first speeches in the House of Commons, made by Deborah Grey in the 1988-1993 parliament, called for a trimming of the size of the federal cabinet, and for individual ministers to voluntarily take pay cuts – is, finally, seen in their discussions surrounding the word 'Aboriginal*'. (Related terms for Indigenous people and organizations appear in the 1990s text, such as 'First Nation*' and 'indigenous', but 'Aboriginal*' is used here due to it being by far the most frequently used synonym for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the time studied.[8]

Monetary words such as "fiscal" and "accountability" are distinctly associated with Reform, whereas other parties' refer to Aboriginal 'veterans' (NDP), 'languages' (NDP), and make other references to socioeconomic difficulties or new programs (Liberal), without similarly suggesting themes of corruption or graft. The Progressive Conservatives, interestingly, appear more concerned with protests than finances: 'confrontations' and 'disruption' are found in their distinctive words (Appendix, Figure A3).

Similarly, the Reform Party's references to 'Quebec*' also include monetary terms such as 'debt' and 'subsidized' in classifier output, whereas other parties' distinctive words do not. (Appendix, Figure A4).[9]

Additional Topic Keywords: 'Refugee', 'Trade'*

Limiting immigration-related searches to one on 'refugee*' ('refugee' or 'refugees'), a single-word (unigram) classifier returns such skeptical terms as "bogus" and "genuine" as distinctive for Reform. Other parties tend to have specific countries' names in their distinctive words, and the governing Liberals, as expected for a governing party (generally more positive in speech, e.g. Hirst et al. 2010) have the positive word 'proud' in their top most distinctive words. Perhaps unexpectedly, the NDP have the markedly negative 'flooding' among their results. Furthermore, between all pairs of parties during the period studied, the Liberal Party and Reform have the highest similarity of window texts: cosine similarity of 0.98 for all relevant texts from this time period (barring the Independents, with more dissimilar scores but very few speeches). However, similarities are scored extremely highly overall. (Appendix Image A2).

Finally, discussion of 'trade' in the 1994-2000 dataset reveals more distinctions among the left-of-centre parties, than between Reform and others. One exception is Reform's frequent mentions of the Mi'kmaq fishing rights case that led to the Supreme Court's 'Marshall'

[8] 'Aboriginal*' has 10,488 hits whereas 'first nation*' has 4,637; 'indian*' 4,823 (not all of which may be relevant); 'native*' 3,947, and 'indigenous' only 112. One alternative would be to append the window texts for all related terms, possibly after some initial screening of irrelevant texts. However, in practice I have found that slightly different words from the same topic ('economists' versus 'economy', for example) tend to have drastically different window texts. If the parties use the various words at different rates, these differences would be further compounded. As a result, the keywords I am searching hold the keyword itself constant, as they have few variations – usually just the word itself, and its plural. All text is lowercased for analysis.

[9] The mentions of 'Quebec*' were not filtered, but inspection of the window texts revealed another problem: Quebec MPs (including, for this time period, many Bloc MPs) often discuss or praise local or provincial figures, such as congratulating athletes or notable public figures from Quebec. In contrast, the other parties are typically discussing Quebec's role in Canadian politics.

decision(s) of late 1999.[10] Reform vehemently opposed what they saw as the Supreme Court's affirmation of 'race-based rights' in this case.

Discussion and Conclusions

The Reform Party undoubtedly took up some of the budget-cutting, pro-market, and direct-democracy messages it had promised to the public. In the 1988 to 1993 parliament, many of MP Deborah Grey's speeches call for actions such as ministers taking pay cuts, for cuts to the number of cabinet ministers, and for 'thoughtful' recall legislation for MPs who did not serve their constituents. Reform's parliamentary speeches also, based on these quantitative measurements, do seem to reflect the party's official documents, in hewing closely to a formally 'colour-blind' line. Opposition of "race-based" Mi'kmaq fishing rights could be argued to take on a similarly liberal-universalist vision as the Trudeau-Chrétien 'White Paper' of an earlier decade. While mentions of 'Quebec' and 'Aboriginal(s)' seem to bring out Reform's concern for the mis-use of public funds, so did many other topics for Reform.

Mentions of 'refugee(s)' bring out concern for 'genuine' or 'bogus' cases of asylum applications, but no explicit smoking gun where the Reform Party openly used more discriminatory language than this. In many ways, the results confirm Burbidge's (1998) qualitative analysis of how Reform carefully avoided openly racial language. The present analysis extends to Reform's dissolution as a party in 2000, and systematically measures not only Reform's words in the close context of topic words such as 'refugees', but also other parties' associations to the same topics. Although some of the quantitative text research's outputs are suggestive at best, and qualitative discourse studies undoubtedly contribute greatly to our understandings of parties' policy stances, much is gained from applying scrutiny to *all* parties in the House, with systematically applied and transparent methods.

Future analysis will extend to whether the associations and themes to core public policy topics that Reform employed in the 1980s and 1990s persisted into the re-formation of Reform into Canadian Alliance and then the united Conservative Party of Canada, under Stephen Harper, in the 2000s and 2010s. The Harper government notoriously pursued at least some of the harsh immigration policies and discourse themes put forward by Reform – rescinding some refugee healthcare protections in 2012 (Webster 2015); phasing out NAC funding fully (Anderson and Lambert 2006); and using phrases such as 'bogus refugee' during the 2010s (Gulli 2015). Maxime Bernier, Canada's most recent right-populist party founder, has arguably taken an even more inflammatory messaging tack on 'multiculturalism' and farm subsidies since splitting from the Conservatives in 2018; his parliamentary speech up until his exit from the House of Commons in 2019 will also be compared to either more radical right or centre-right colleagues in the Conservative Party caucus.

Comments on the methods in particular are very welcome.
Thank you for reading!-CM

[10] The 'trade' search was the only search where irrelevant results, i.e., those less related to free trade, were removed. Mentions that included 'sex trade', but not 'free trade', were removed, as were those that included 'trade union*' but not 'free trade'.

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R Packages

conText (Spirling and Rodriguez 2020); quanteda (Benoit et al. 2018); tidytext (Silge and Robinson 2017); ggplot2 (Hadley Wickham); lsa (Fridolin Wild); scales (Hadley Wickham).

Appendix

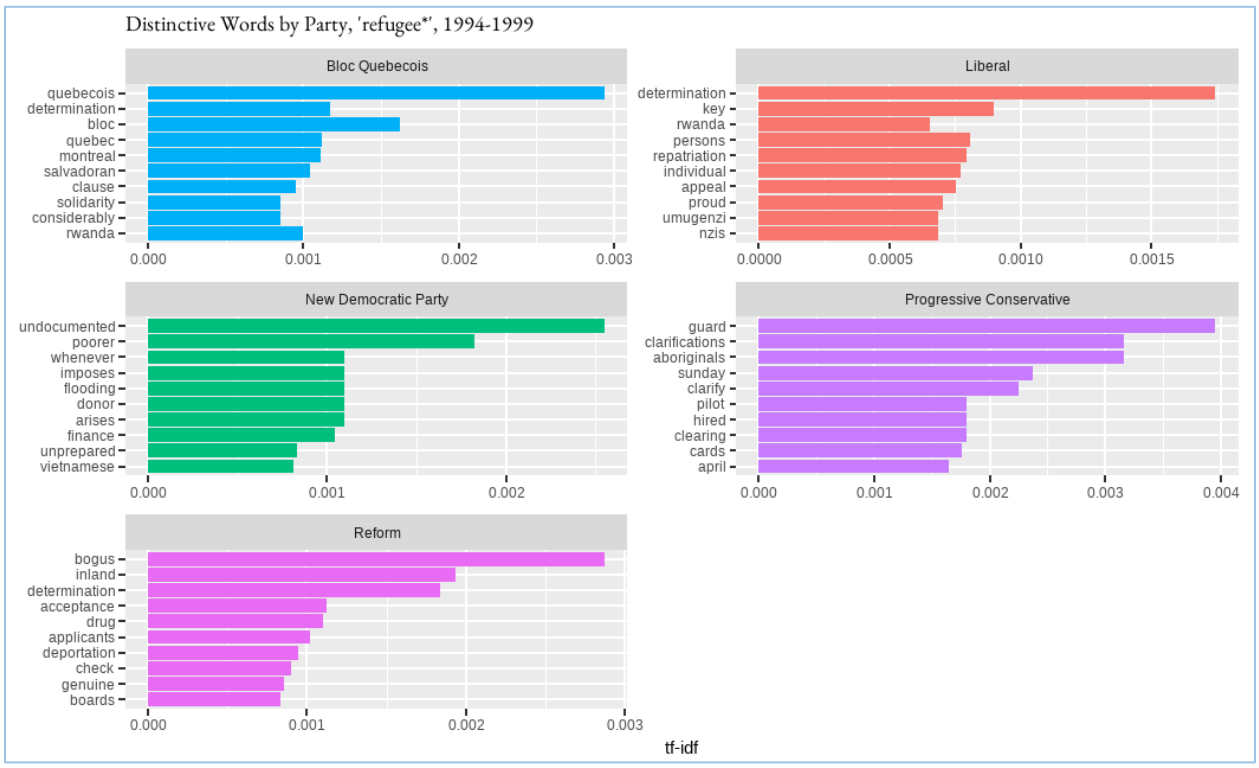

Figure A1: Classifier results, unigrams, for 'refugee'.*

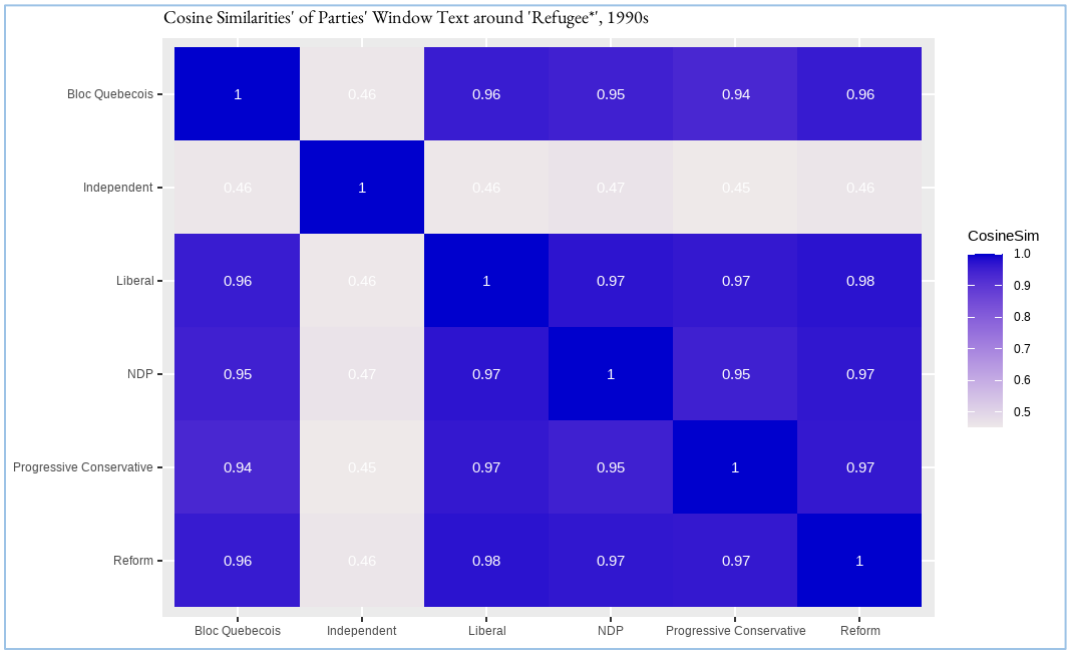

Figure A2: Cosine similarity scores between parties' window texts for 'refugee*'.

The Independents have very few speeches, likely explaining their high difference from all other parties.

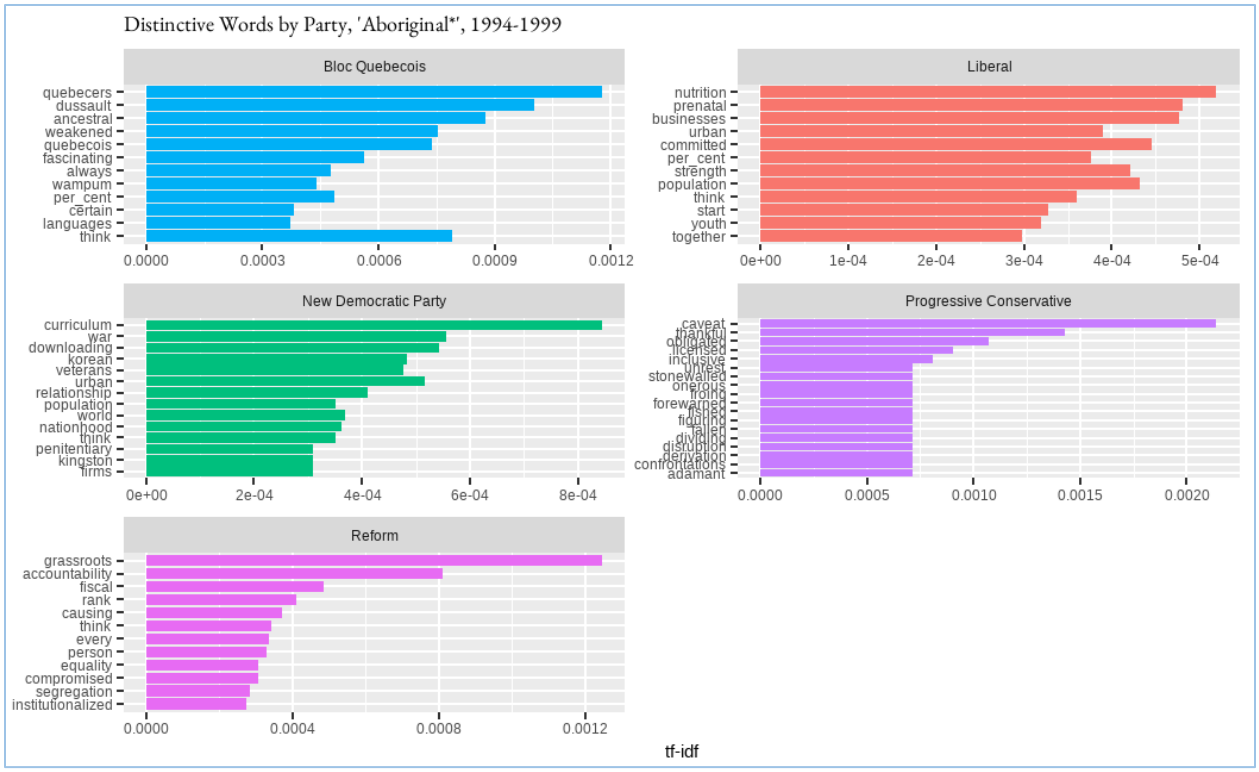

Figure A3: Classifier results, unigrams, for 'Aboriginal*'.

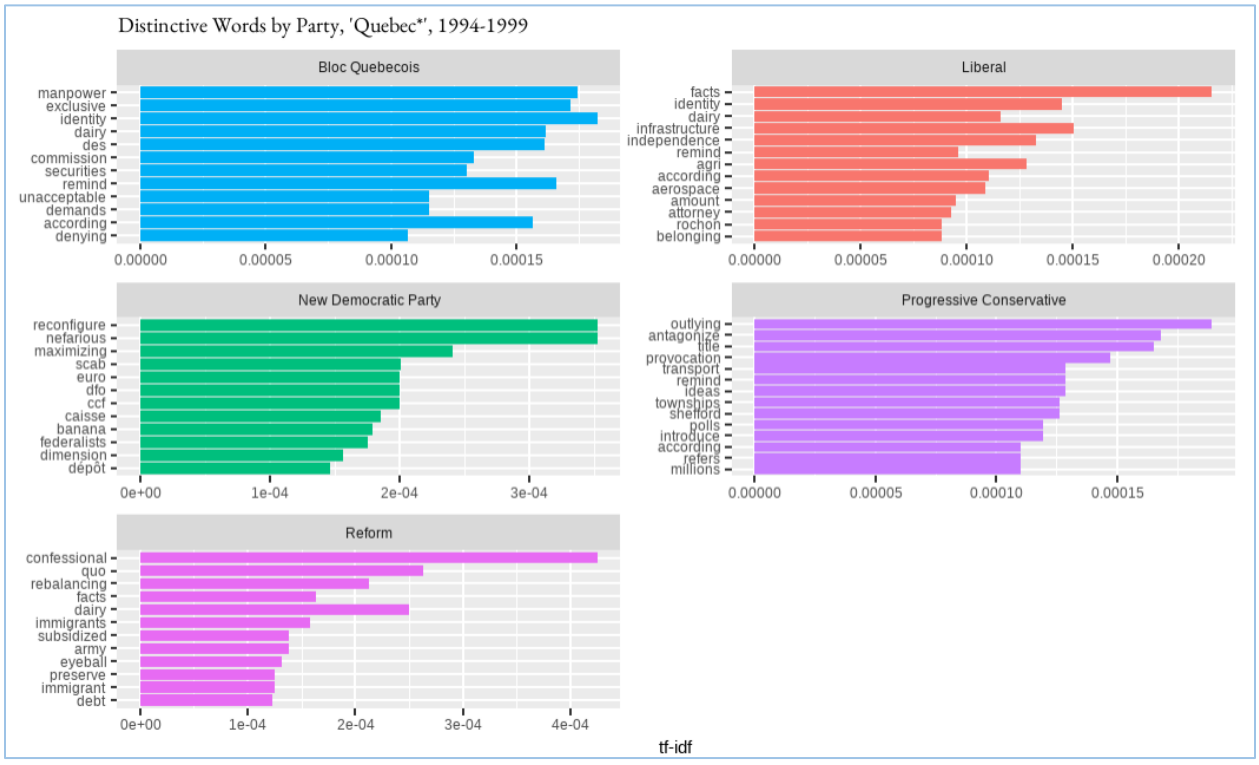

Figure A4: Classifier results, unigrams, for 'Quebec*'.