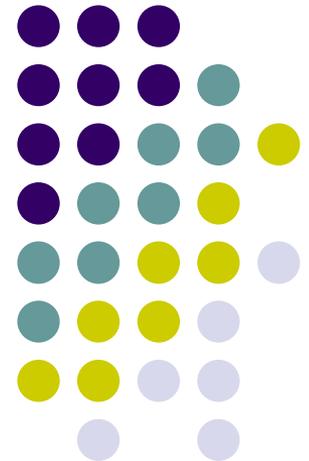


# Polimetrics

## Lecture 2 The Comparative Manifesto Project



# From programmes to preferences



The image displays a collage of political party manifestos. The central focus is on the Labour Party, Conservative Party, and UKIP Party manifestos, each featuring a 'Main Pledges' section and a 'I am your party leader' section with a portrait of the leader.

**Labour Party Manifesto**

**Main Pledges**

- To reduce the national debt (money Britain has borrowed) every year.
- Provide an extra £2.5 billion for the National Health Service by 2020. (This will be paid for by a 'mansion tax' on properties worth over £2 million.)
- Raise the minimum wage workers earn to more than £8.00 per hour.
- No rise in VAT (Value Added Tax), National Insurance or income tax.
- Childcare from 8am-6pm for parents of primary school children.
- Freeze energy (gas and electric) bill prices until 2017.

**I am your party leader: Ed Miliband**

**Conservative Party Manifesto**

**Main Pledges**

- To repay all the national debt (money Britain has borrowed) and have money left-over by 2020.
- Provide an extra £8 billion for the National Health Service by 2020.
- Allow people who rent their houses from the council to buy them at discounted rates.
- People who work 30 hours week and are paid minimum wage, will not pay income tax.
- Working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to be given 30 hours of free childcare per week.
- To allow the British people to vote on the subject of Britain's European Union membership.

**I am your party leader: David Cameron**

**UKIP Party Manifesto**

**Main Pledges**

- The same deal for Wales on funding and powers as Scotland.
- Reduce the voting age to 16.
- Increase the minimum wage to a living wage for more than 250,000 workers and have zero business rates for over 70,000 Welsh companies.
- To get Wales working again: 50,000 jobs through more public contracts for Welsh companies.
- Recruit an extra 1,000 doctors for the NHS in Wales.
- Introduce rent controls to make housing more affordable as well as increasing tenants' rights and creating reasonable minimum tenancy lengths.
- Work towards making higher education free for all. People who live in Wales and are studying to work in fields such as science and engineering, will not pay fees if they stay in Wales for their education.

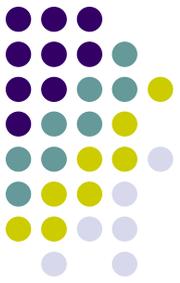
**I am your party leader: Leanne Wood**

Other visible manifestos include the Green Party, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party, and Plaid Cymru Party.

# Why studying texts

Analyses of many forms of political competition, from a wide range of theoretical perspectives, require systematic information on the policy positions of the key political actors

This information can be derived from a number of sources, including mass, elite, and expert surveys either of the actors themselves or of others who observe them, as well as analyses of behavior in strategic settings, such as legislative roll-call voting



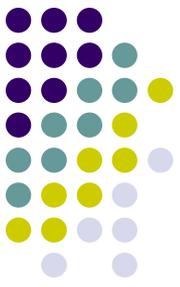


# Why studying texts

All of these methods present serious methodological and practical problems.

Methodological problems with **roll-call analysis** and expert surveys concern the direction of causality- "data" on policy positions collected using these techniques are arguably **more a *product* of the political processes under investigation** than causally prior to them.

Meanwhile, even avid devotees of **survey** techniques **cannot rewind history** to conduct new surveys in the past. This vastly restricts the range of cases for which survey methods can be used to estimate the policy positions of key political actors.



# Why studying texts

An alternative way to locate the policy positions of political actors is to analyze the texts they generate.

**Political texts** are the **concrete by-product of *strategic* political activity** and have a widely recognized potential to reveal important **information on the policy positions of their authors.**

*[e.g. how to get information on the content of the Polimetrics course? Ask experts.. Or read the syllabus]*

Moreover, they can be analyzed, reanalyzed, and reanalyzed again without becoming jaded or uncooperative; others can **replicate**, modify, and improve the estimates involved or can produce completely new analyses using the same tools.



# Why studying texts

Above all, in a world where vast volumes of text are easily, cheaply, and almost instantly available, the systematic analysis of political text has the potential to be immensely liberating for the researcher.

**But how to do that? Hand-coding? Or computerized text analysis?**

We will discuss both ways...



# CMP's objective

If we want to estimate the policy positions of politicians, one of the main sources of information at our disposal is **political text/speeches (written or oral texts)**

There are of course many different types of political text, but one authoritative source of information about the stated electoral policy positions of political parties is the **official party manifesto**

# CMP's objective

It might be argued that in the *real world* very **few voters** read any party manifesto at all, while almost no sane (!!!) voter checks all party manifestoes and conducts an in-depth comparative analysis of these, **basing her voting decision** on the results of this analysis

Nonetheless the party manifesto is the **official statement of party policy**, to which the party can be **held accountable** – by critics, journalists and expert observers of the political scene



# CMP's objective

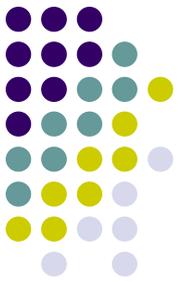
In this sense, positions outlined in the party manifesto can be taken as “**official**” **party policy**

Moreover, we can take party manifesto as an indicator of the party's policy preferences at a **given point in time** (i.e., a perfect indicator to estimate something that happens **AFTER** that moment, i.e., the kind of cabinet that is going to be formed, its policy program, etc.)



# CMP's objective

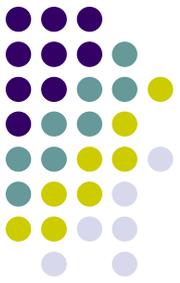
The longstanding **Comparative Manifestos Project** (CMP) (<https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/>) has conducted a systematic analysis of party manifestos over a long period of time, using trained **human readers** to code, into a **predefined 56-category coding scheme** (57 if we include the “uncoded” category), **every sentence** of every manifesto investigated



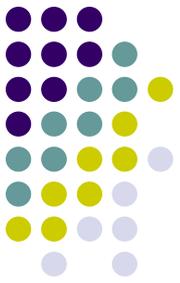
# CMP's objective

Coverage extends to almost every party manifesto issued at **every democratic election since World War 2**

This has generated a time series of the electoral party policy positions that spans the post-war era for **most parties in most democratic states** (OECD members, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and South-East Asia)



# Two-step process



## 1. **Unitising** – cutting text in **quasi-sentence**

The coding unit is a quasi-sentence, that contains exactly one statement

e.g.: “We need to address our close ties with our neighbours / as well as the unique challenges facing small business owner in this of economic hardship”

# Two-step process



2. **Coding** – find the right code for a quasi- sentence  
Attribute to each coding-unit **one, and only one**, category

CMP developed a category system composed of 56 categories, grouped in 7 policy areas, designed to be comparable between parties, countries, elections and across time

Since 2015 some changes to the categories have been implemented: [https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/down/papers/Evolution\\_of\\_the\\_Manifesto\\_Coding\\_Instructions\\_and\\_the\\_Category\\_Scheme.pdf](https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/down/papers/Evolution_of_the_Manifesto_Coding_Instructions_and_the_Category_Scheme.pdf)

*Table 1: 56 Standard Policy Preferences in Seven Policy Domains*

**Domain 1: External Relations**

- 101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive
- 102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative
- 103 Anti-Imperialism: Positive
- 104 Military: Positive
- 105 Military: Negative
- 106 Peace: Positive
- 107 Internationalism: Positive
- 108 European Integration: Positive
- 109 Internationalism: Negative
- 110 European Integration: Negative

**Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy**

- 201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive
- 202 Democracy: Positive
- 203 Constitutionalism: Positive
- 204 Constitutionalism: Negative

**Domain 3: Political System**

- 301 Decentralisation: Positive
- 302 Centralisation: Positive
- 303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency: Positive
- 304 Political Corruption: Negative
- 305 Political Authority: Positive

**Domain 4: Economy**

- 401 Free Enterprise: Positive
- 402 Incentives: Positive
- 403 Market Regulation: Positive
- 404 Economic Planning: Positive
- 405 Corporatism: Positive
- 406 Protectionism: Positive
- 407 Protectionism: Negative
- 408 Economic Goals
- 409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive
- 410 Economic Growth

- 411 Technology and Infrastructure: Positive
- 412 Controlled Economy: Positive
- 413 Nationalisation: Positive
- 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive
- 415 Marxist Analysis: Positive
- 416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive

**Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life**

- 501 Environmental Protection: Positive
- 502 Culture: Positive
- 503 Equality: Positive
- 504 Welfare State Expansion
- 505 Welfare State Limitation
- 506 Education Expansion
- 507 Education Limitation

**Domain 6: Fabric of Society**

- 601 National Way of Life: Positive
- 602 National Way of Life: Negative
- 603 Traditional Morality: Positive
- 604 Traditional Morality: Negative
- 605 Law and Order: Positive
- 606 Civic Mindedness: Positive
- 607 Multiculturalism: Positive
- 608 Multiculturalism: Negative

**Domain 7: Social Groups**

- 701 Labour Groups: Positive
- 702 Labour Groups: Negative
- 703 Agriculture: Positive
- 704 Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive
- 705 Minority Groups: Positive
- 706 Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive

000 No meaningful category applies

# Two-step process



e.g.: "We need to address our close ties with our neighbours (107) / as well as the unique challenges facing small business owner in this of economic hardship (402)"

However, there can be ambiguity in interpretation/focus:

"We need to address our close ties with our neighbours" is about foreign policy(107) or economy(407, "Protectionism Negative")?

→ e.g. *TTIP – FPÖ (anti-EU or anti-market)?*

And ambiguity in the categories. E.g. "Peace" (106) and "Military Negative" (105) very similar to each other;

Some categories are missing, e.g. "Law and Order" negative; "Social Harmony" has no reverse category; ...

# Two-step process



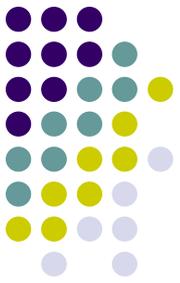
Note that the number you find in the CMP dataset in correspondence to each category is **not the ‘raw’** numbers of quasi-sentences coded into each category, but the **percentage** calculated out of the total number of references to all categories

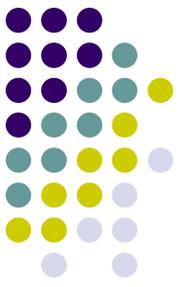
For example, if you find the number 3.2 in correspondence to the per107 category, this means that 3.2% of all the quasi-sentences of that party in that manifesto is devoted to discuss the per107 category  
*(Internationalism: Positive)*

Through this “**standardization**” it becomes possible to directly compare electoral programs irrespective of their relative length (short or long)!!!

# CMP's theory

The comprehensive coverage of CMP dataset has made it a popular choice within researchers, despite the fact that, theoretically, the CMP actual coding scheme very explicitly impounds a particular “**saliency**” **theory of politics** that is relatively far from the mainstream of spatial modeling





# CMP's theory

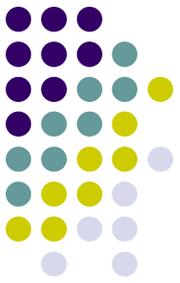
According to this theory, party strategists see electors as overwhelmingly **favoring one course of action** on most issues

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

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

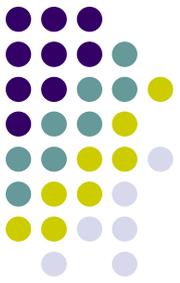
Rather, the CMP data are about the party-specific **saliency weights** of different policy dimensions.

# CMP's theory



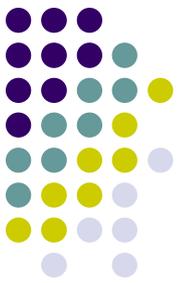
The good news for those who have used CMP data to operationalize theoretical models, assuming that these were about **party policy positions** as opposed to **saliency weights**, is that the CMP did not actually use saliency theory when designing its own coding scheme for party manifestos: about half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

# CMP's theory



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

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



# CMP's theory

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

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

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



# CMP's theory

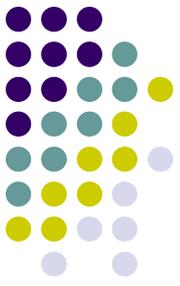
There is thus actually just one of the 56 coding categories in the CMP coding scheme, “*economic goals*”, that does not undermine the assumptions of “saliency theory”

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

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

So we can use CMP data without any problems!!!

# CMP's left-right scale



Manifesto data can be used, and have been used, to provide valid and reliable measurements of party policy position

You can estimate parties' positions over several policy dimensions

However, the most used one using CMP data is the **Left-right scale estimates** (Budge et al. 2001)

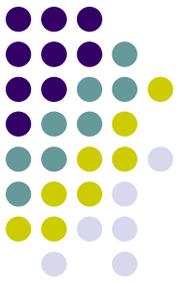
But how to do that?

Two different ways (again!): **a-priori** and **a-posteriori**

# CMP's left-right scale

A-priori approach:

**13 leftist categories vs. 13 rightist categories**



# CMP's left-right



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.

# CMP's left-right scale



**Left categories** are linked with Marxist and progressive political analyses of around 1900, and contrast with **Right topics** linked together in opposing analyses broadly supporting the existing order and market

These categories are bound together by being essential parts of a detailed and intricate analysis of Western internal and international relations: i.e., the basis of their selection therefore, is not that its constituent policy categories **go together empirically across the data**, but that highly influential early modern theorists put them together in their political analyses

# CMP's left-right scale

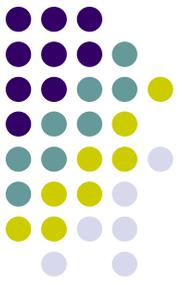


Having said that, these categories tend to empirically co-vary in the data-set (according to factor-analysis) as it stands is evidence for the continuing relevance of the ideologies, and of the scale based on them, to post-war democracies

Note two things:

- 1) given that the categories are stressed equally in the original arguments, so there are no grounds for **weighting one category more** than the other. They are all equally important!!!
- 2) Estimating the left-right in this a-priori way produces an **invariant comparative and over time measure**

# CMP left-right measure: the RILE measure



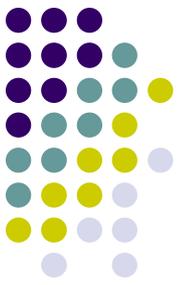
Each party's position is measured as **the difference** (in percentages) **between** the sum of the **right-** associated text mentions (R) **and** the sum of the **left-** associated ones (L):

$$\text{RILE} = (\text{R}\% - \text{L}\%)$$

The final scale ranges from -100 to 100

This is the official CMP left-right measure!

# CMP left-right measure: the RILE measure



In terms of ‘**raw**’ numbers of quasi-sentences coded into each category (rather than their percentage) we can write:

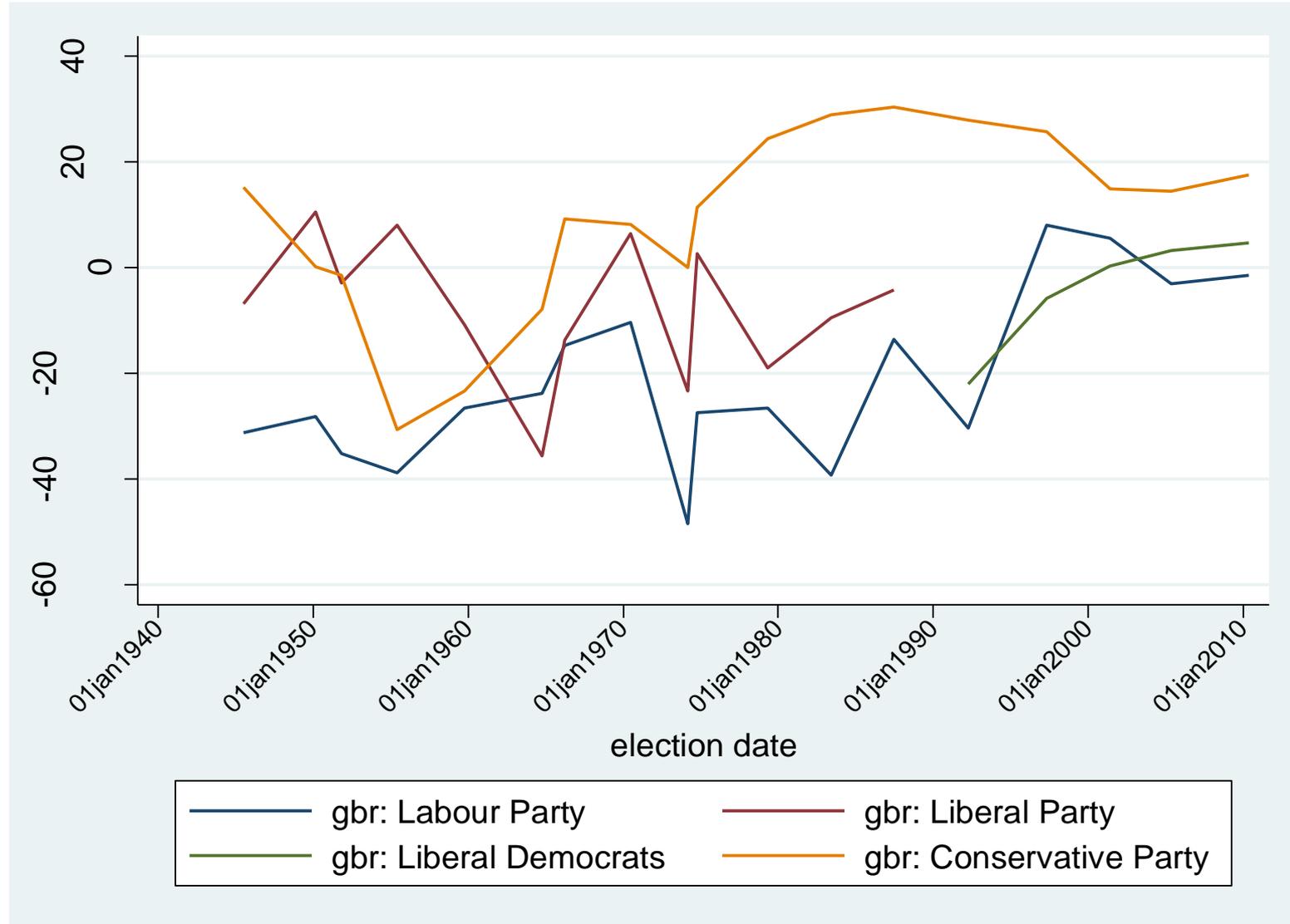
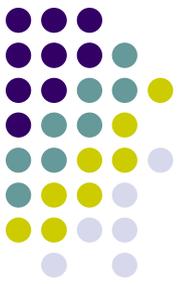
$$\text{RILE (raw scores)} = (R - L) / (R + L + O) = (R - L) / N$$

Where O are the “other categories”

This measure is based on the difference in counts between left and right sentences counts normalized by the **total number of sentences** in the manifesto on any issue

From this definition it is clear that each count in L or R has the **same marginal effect**:  $1/N$

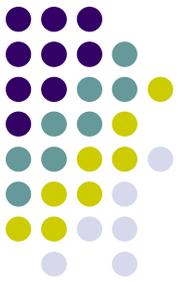
# An application of the RILE measure to UK



# “QUESTION” TIME

Do you know these two famous and brilliant guys?

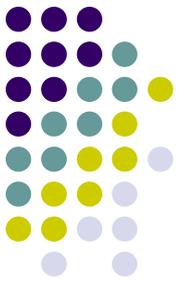
(hint: she is not *Meryl Streep*!)



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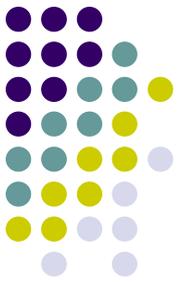
**Name:** Tony “*Third Way*” Blair

**Name:** Margaret “*Iron Lady*” Thatcher

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**Name:** Tony “*Third Way*” Blair

**Party:** “New” Labour

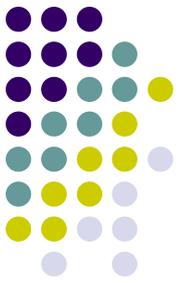
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# “QUESTION” TIME

Do you know these two famous and brilliant guys?

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**Name:** Tony “*Third Way*” Blair

**Party:** “New” Labour

**Blamed for:** War on Iraq (which one?)

**Name:** Margaret “*Iron Lady*” Thatcher

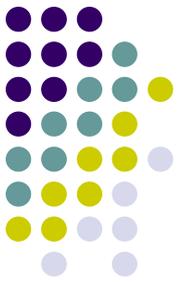
**Party:** Conservative

**Blamed for:** Closing 20 state-owned coal mines

# “QUESTION” TIME

Do you know these two famous and brilliant guys?

(hint: she is not *Meryl Streep*!)



**Name:** Tony “*Third Way*” Blair

**Party:** “New” Labour

**Blamed for:** War on Iraq (which one?)

**He said:** “*We know Saddam had Weapons of Mass Destruction. We sold him some of them*”

**Name:** Margaret “*Iron Lady*” Thatcher

**Party:** Conservative

**Blamed for:** Closing 20 state-owned coal mines

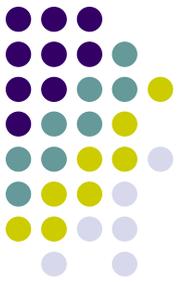
**She said:** “*You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning!*”

# “QUESTION” TIME

Do you know these two famous and brilliant guys?

(hint: she is not *Meryl Streep*!)

**QUESTION: Guess when they became party leader?**



**Name:** Tony “*Third Way*” Blair

**Party:** “New” Labour

**Blamed for:** War on Iraq (which one?)

**He said:** “*We know Saddam had Weapons of Mass Destruction. We sold him some of them*”

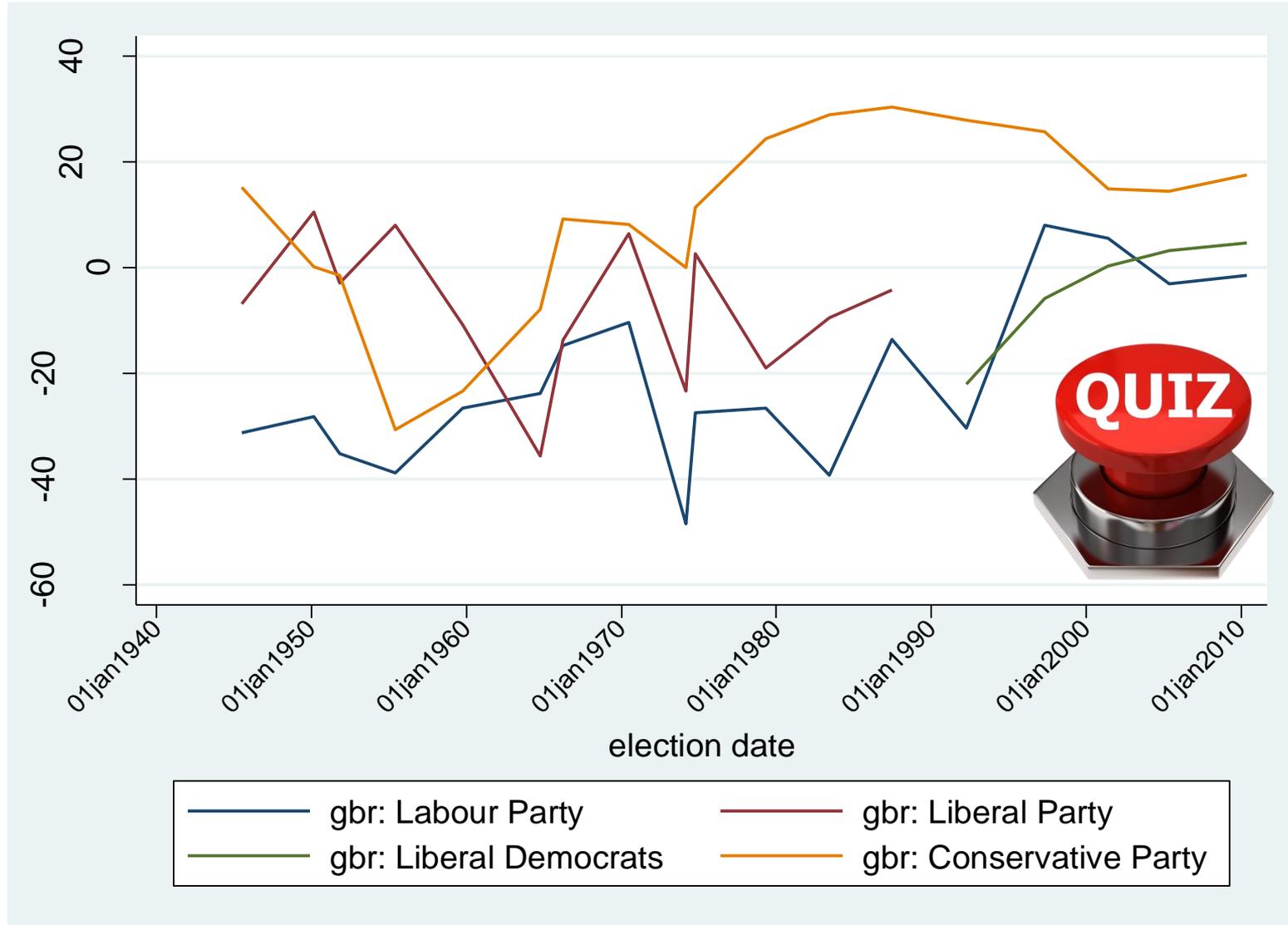
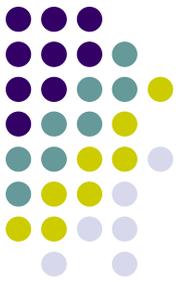
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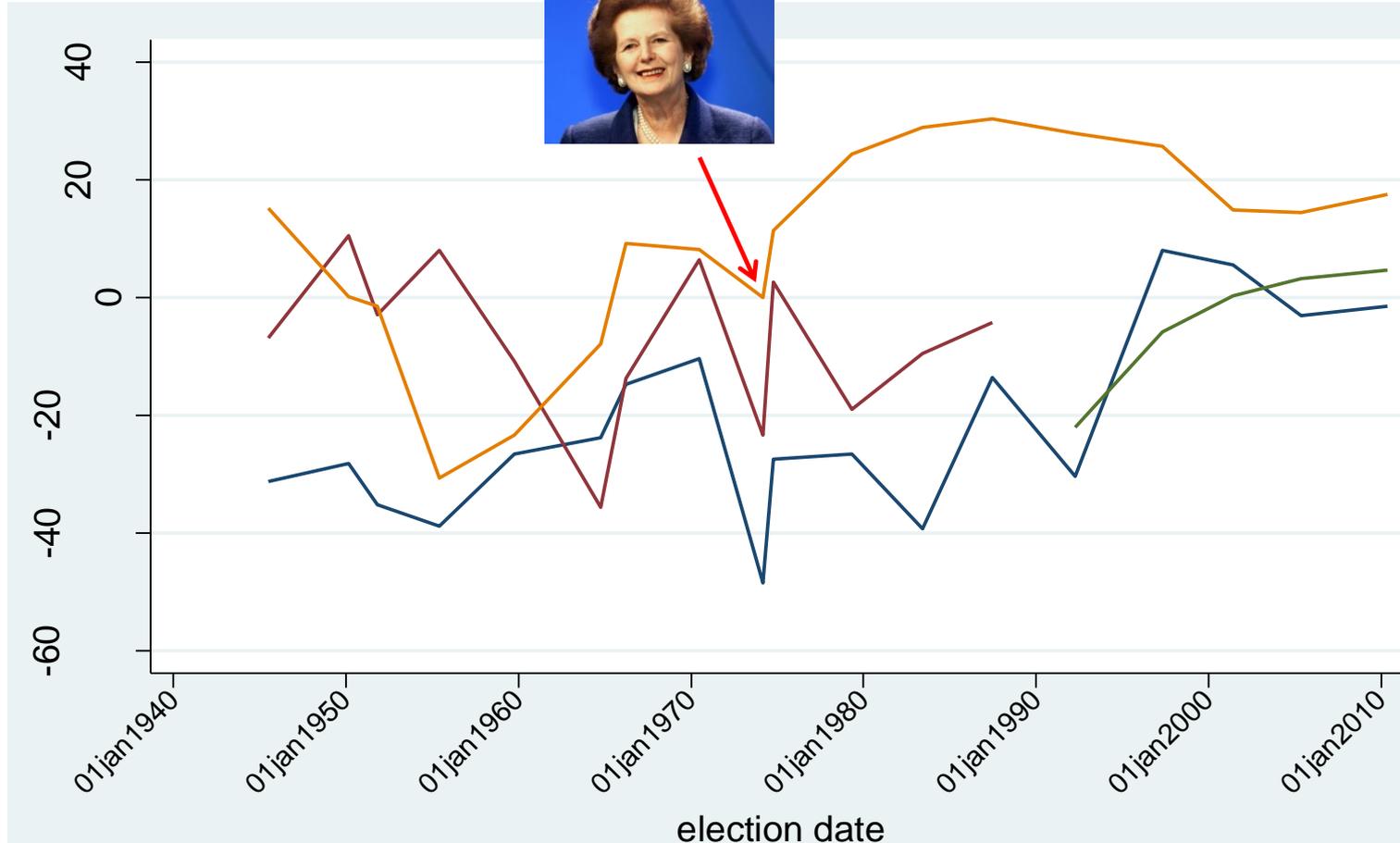
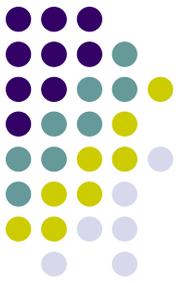
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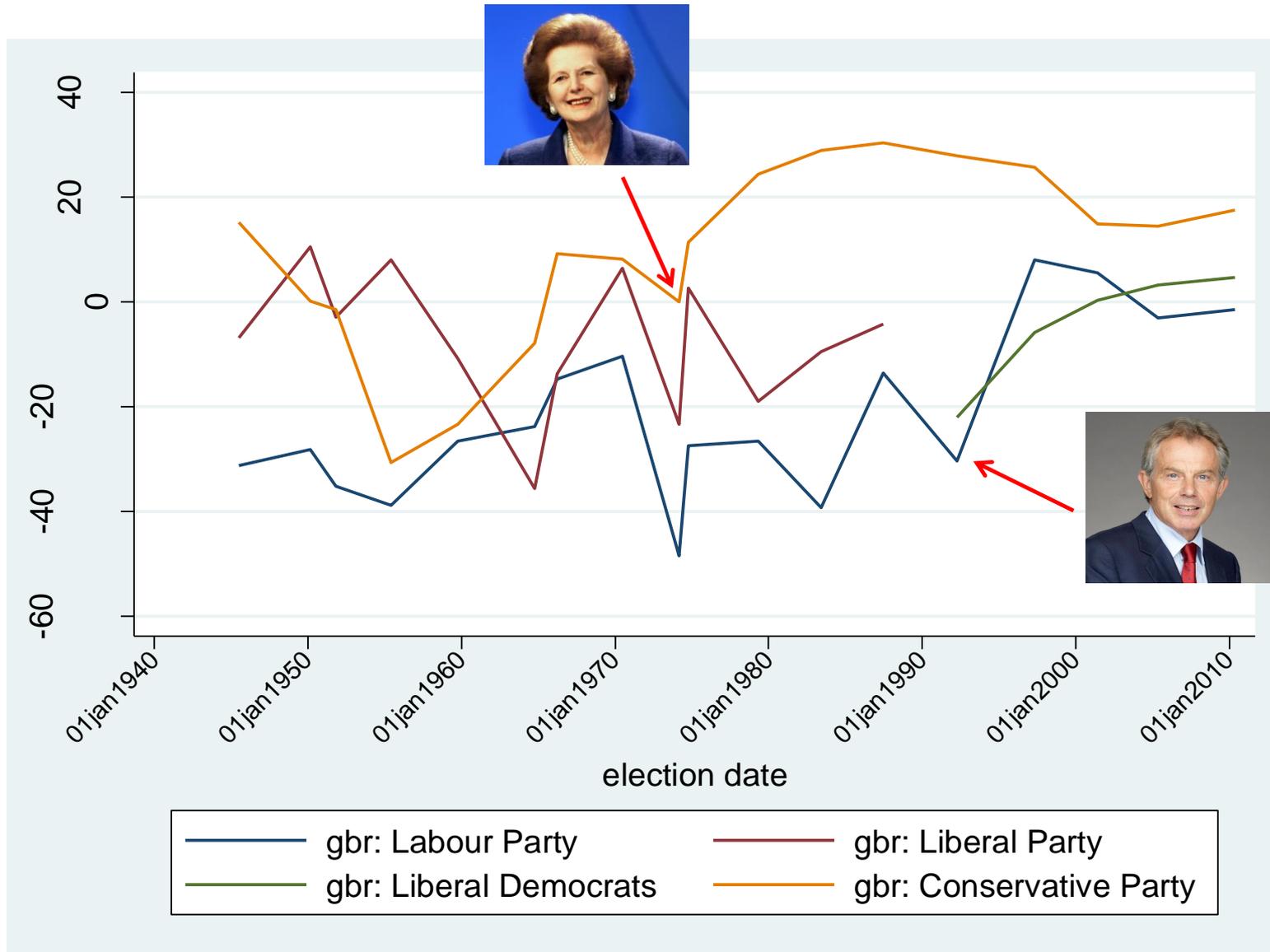
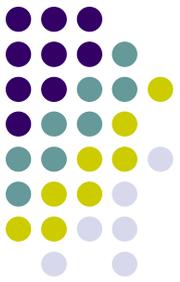
# An application of the RILE measure to UK



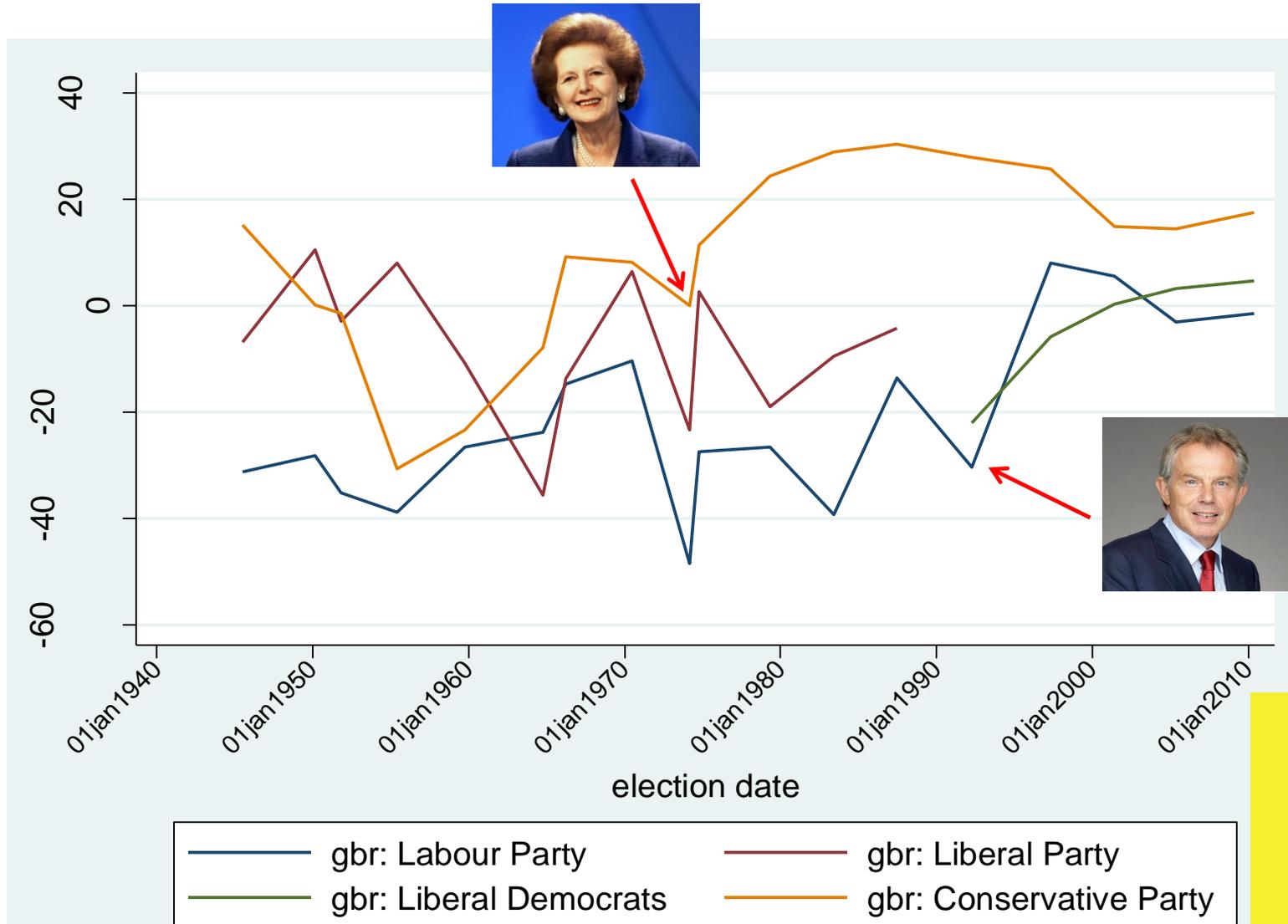
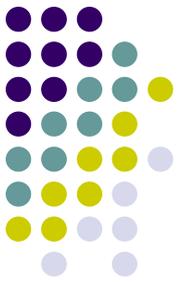
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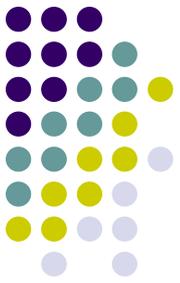
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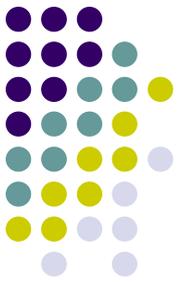
# CMP left-right measure: the RILE measure



One possible problem with the RILE measure:

Imagine two situations: 1) a 200-sentence manifesto with 100 right sentences and no left sentences; 2) the same manifesto with 50 sentences added that are neither left nor right (e.g. on the environment)

# CMP left-right measure: the RILE measure



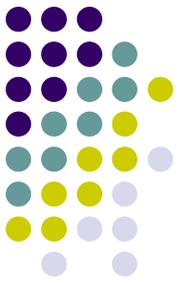
The RILE score would change from  $(50 - 0) = 50$  to its RILE score to  $(40 - 0) = 40$  - suggesting that the party shifted 20% toward the left

The party is thus scored as less Right-leaning in the second election compared to the first even though the proportion of left and right sentences, the raw material for expressing a position, have **not changed**

It has moved towards the Centre by virtue of devoting more attention to topics that are not purely Left or Right!!!

For the RILE scale, this means that counts of the categories **not in the scale** still affect estimated party positions!!!

# CMP left-right measure: the RILE measure



Underlying assumption: if an issue becomes less important then a party will devote fewer sentences to it!!!

This can be justified on the grounds that programmes are not just a compilation of discrete policy stands but an integrated and complete statement all of whose constituent parts have been carefully considered in relation to each other by programme committees and party conventions and approved as a whole by the latter