

Mapping Policy Preferences II

*Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments in
Eastern Europe, European Union, and
OECD 1990–2003*

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Evaluating Validity with the Standard Left-Right Scale: Matching Measurements to Conceptual Intentions

The mappings based on the standard MRG Left-Right scale distinguish between parties reasonably well and in plausible ways, grouping them to Left and Right as we would broadly expect and identifying changes which we can link to known historical events. This is true not only for the ex-Communist countries studied in Part I but also for the range of established post-war democracies examined in our previous volume (Budge et al. 2001: 24–50). Thus far, therefore, our representations pass the test of face validity.

Here we want to push the issue further and move beyond our own interpretations of the valid confirmations we think we see in the data. One is entitled to ask, for instance, whether the rich cross-temporal variation we see in Left-Right scores is really informative or, instead, reflects errors in recording essentially stable and ideologically fixed policy positions of the parties (Pelizzo 2003). This is particularly pertinent as the major alternative measures of party positions, expert judgements, do give relatively stable and fixed estimates (Budge et al. 2001: 128–30). One is also entitled to ask whether this rich cross-national variation really allows us to use Left-Right scores to validly analyse cross-national comparisons of policy choices by voters, parliaments, and governments.

VALIDITY: WHAT IS INTENDED FOR LEFT-RIGHT MEASUREMENTS?

To address the question of measurement validity, one asks how well the scores assigned to parties match what one intends to measure. Chapter 1 described the thinking and procedures that gave rise to the content of the MRG/CMP Left-Right scale. There we also remarked that our intention has been to produce a Left-Right score for each party-in-an-election based on its official programme. With valid election-specific information of this sort one can inquire about party competition in an electorate (Budge and Farlie 1977; Budge, Robertson, and Hearl 1987), policy-based coalition formation (Laver and Budge 1992), parties in the policymaking process (Budge and Hofferbert 1992; Klingemann et al. 1994), and

parties in the democratic process generally (McDonald and Budge 2005). Both the input intention, in relation to scale construction, and output intention, in regard to scale application, are equally important considerations. Together they reveal all the major elements necessary for evaluating the validity of our Left-Right scores: we want comparable cross-national and cross-temporal Left-Right scores that signal parties' policy commitments to the electors they are promising to represent.

A major alternative to the CMP Left-Right scores are the Left-Right scores produced by expert surveys. They have been produced with the same intentions. Peter Mair and Frank Castles report that their expert survey was motivated by two concerns: (a) 'left-right differences between parties had a major relevance for public policy outcomes' and (b) 'left right differences between parties were ... relevant to policy-based coalition[s]' and 'crucial to the functioning of party systems more generally' (Mair and Castles 1997: 151). And eschewing reliance on personal impressions or party family distinctions, they felt that 'what was needed ... was a more systematic data base, in which variations across a common cross-national scale could be compared, and in which real differences between parties could be measured' (Mair and Castles 1997: 151).

Both approaches are in the best tradition of a scientific research programme. They start with impressions, translate the impressions into hypotheses, and recognize that personal impressions are not necessarily interpersonally comparable—what looks leftist to us may look mainstream centrist to you. They also refuse to take the easy road by relying on easy-to-access extra-personal categories, such as party families. Family affiliation is a good rough indicator of party positions within a nation, but relying on family affiliations across nations requires us to ignore differences within family groupings. That would make all cross-national differences entirely dependent on which families are present in a party system, and it would require acceptance of static positioning across time. The question at hand is how far do the two approaches carry the scientific programme towards a valid conclusion, to a valid set of measurements.

We undertake four analyses. The first involves the preliminary step of showing that the CMP Left-Right party positions are a good match to three expert surveys—Castles and Mair (1984), Laver and Hunt (1992), and Huber and Inglehart (1995). With that as the backdrop, our second analysis proceeds to ask whether there are dynamics in the Left-Right party positions that are worth recording and taking into account. Our third analysis considers cross-national comparisons by asking how far expert surveys and the CMP carry the measurements beyond the impoverished designations based on party-family affiliations. Our fourth and final analysis looks into the reportedly anomalous cases of radical-right parties where, despite their historical extremism, the CMP does not always designate these parties as the most extreme-right parties in a nation.

The results allow us to draw a rather sharp distinction between what the expert surveys and CMP are measuring. On the expert survey side we see a record of party positions based on long-run reputation. Party reputations are mostly stable, so the expert surveys lack a dynamic quality. Reputations are also so

strongly associated with a party's family affiliation that the survey results lack some degree of cross-national comparability. Third, extreme-right parties have reputations based principally on select policy issues, and expert surveys appear to add extra weight to those issues when assigning Left-Right positions to such parties.

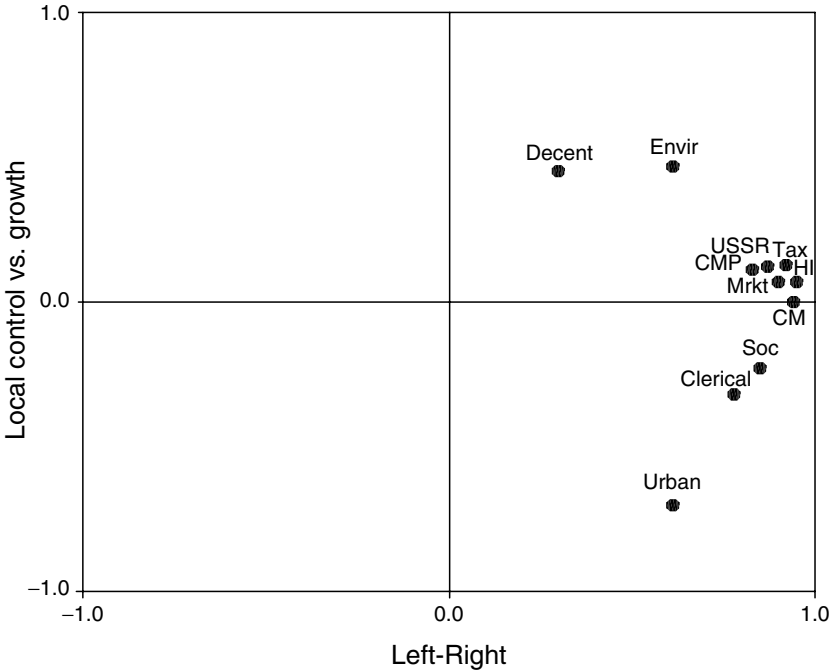
On the CMP side of the line we see a record of policy promises. There are identifiable dynamics in party position taking; at least one-third of parties take systematically different positions across time. There are within-family cross-national differences that matter for making valid cross-national comparisons. And, while radical-right parties are characterized as extremists for their authoritarian and exclusionary policies on social integration and immigration, their positions across the whole set of issues that comprise a Left-Right dimension are not so extreme after all.

LEFT-RIGHT PARTY POSITIONS IN THE CMP AND EXPERT SURVEYS

Left-Right is the core currency of political exchange in Western—and indeed new—democracies (cf. Chapter 3). It is ever present in our thinking about politics even though it cannot be said to tell us everything we want to know. Here we want to know how similar the tale is when recorded by expert survey and CMP data. The three expert surveys and the CMP cover in common seventy-nine parties in seventeen Western nations.¹ The Castles–Mair and Huber–Inglehart surveys were expressly designed to locate parties in the Left-Right space. Laver–Hunt asked experts to place parties along a pro–con continuum in each of eight policy categories.

Figure 4.1 records the commonality in Left-Right party scores for the two Left-Right expert surveys and the CMP, as located in a factor space defined by those three scores and the eight policy categories scores from Laver–Hunt. Five of the eight Laver–Hunt issue categories are highly correlated with Left-Right, though party alignments on the environment, urban interests, and decentralization leave room to manoeuvre. After extracting two dimensions (varimax rotation, with dimension extraction for eigenvalues ≥ 1.0), we rotated the axes so that the first factor would indicate Left-Right as marked by Castles–Mair while having no relationship to the second factor. This makes factor one something close to a Left-Right factor and nothing else. With that, each squared loading (communality, h^2) on factor one can be interpreted as a statement of the validity of each measure as an indicator of party Left-Right positions.

Castles–Mair and Huber–Inglehart are, by the factor analytic standard applied here, the two most valid measures. Each has a communality, h^2 , in the vicinity of 0.9. The CMP is a valid indicator, again by the standards of validity founded on this factor analysis, but about a sixth of its variance is distinctly different from that of the expert surveys, i.e. $h^2 = .87^2 = .76$, and $1 (.76/.90) = .16$.



	Left-Right	Local control vs. growth.
Castle-Mair	.94	.00
Huber-Inglehart	.95	.07
CMP (1972-98 average)	.87	.12
Tax/Spend	.92	.13
USSR, Cold War	.83	.11
Market Economy	.90	.07
Social Restrictiveness	.85	-.23
Pro-Clerical Role	.78	-.32
Pro-Urban Interests	.61	-.70
Decentralization	.30	.45
Pro-Environment	.61	.47

Fig. 4.1. Factor analysis of Left-Right scorings in two expert surveys and the MRG/CMP scale, together with expert placements of parties on eight specific policy scales

What contributes to CMP distinctiveness? One possibility is that the CMP contains one-sixth more noise than the expert measures. Another possibility, which our analyses support, is that the so-called specific variance in CMP scores (where total variance is composed of commonly shared plus indicator-specific plus error variances) is informative cross-temporal and cross-national variation that goes unrecorded by the expert scores.

PARTY POSITION DYNAMICS

Elsewhere McDonald and Mendés have shown that three sets of expert survey scores from the early 1980s through early 1990s are highly reliable but have very little dynamic variation (McDonald and Mendés 2001: 100). Ninety-eight to 99 per cent of the reliably estimated cross-time variation is stable. A re-analysis that extends the analysis to 2002–3 is very much in line with these stability estimates.² This is troubling because it presents us with the possibility that the expert scores are akin to locating parties in the Left-Right space according to their party–family affiliation. Measurements based on family affiliations would be highly reliable from one decade to the next, but we would be hard-pressed to find dynamic variation.

Are the expert scores missing any important dynamic variation? We investigate that possibility for party Left-Right locations of eighty-one parties in seventeen Western nations.³ Except for two Danish parties and with allowance for the special circumstances of Belgium, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, the eighty-one parties include those for which we have data on coded manifestos in consecutive elections totalling more than half of a nation's elections from the late 1940s through 1998.⁴ The Belgian parties split along the lines of language during the period 1968–77, and we treat the pre- and post-splits as separate party systems. Parties under France's Fifth Republic, but not the Fourth Republic, are included. The analysis of Italian parties stops in 1992 after which many of the Italian parties reconfigured. Finally, the three separate Christian parties in the Netherlands combined at the time of the 1977 Dutch election to form the CDA; the three parties and the CDA are treated as four separate parties.

Our approach to uncovering evidence of systematic change, in this chapter, is based on estimating an autoregressive equation on each party's series of positions—in Chapter 5, we return to this question and consider alternative approaches to uncovering the dynamics. Party positions that shift over the long run, such as those forming a trend, will result in an autoregressive equation that indicates whether a party's long-run expected value (a sort of dynamic mean) is different from its mean as reported in Figure 4.2.⁵ A party that changes by drifting away from its mean position for a sustained period but later coming back to it—a characteristic of cyclical movements—will result in an autoregressive equation with patterned change that leaves the long-run expected value and the mean close to one another. Finally, results from an autoregressive equation that indicates that the mean is a reasonable description regardless of a party's position at the previous election, are situations where parties are moving as if randomly around their respective mean positions, neither trending nor drifting.

To describe in more detail how the autoregressive equation can be used to identify what we label as *changers*, *drifters*, and *homeostatic wanderers*, we start with the equation as applied to any one party's Left-Right position. It takes this form:

$$LR_t = \alpha + \beta LR_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

where LR_t is a party's Left-Right position for the current election; LR_{t-1} party's Left-Right position at the previous election; α the intercept; β the slope; and ε_t a set of (assumed to be) well-behaved (homoscedastic and non-autocorrelated) errors in party positions at the current elections. When the estimated value of β is not distinguishable from zero, it indicates that the movements around the party Left-Right mean are, so far as we can tell, random deviations from its typical (mean) position, to which a party can be expected to return at the next election. When β is distinguishable from zero and in the interval -1 to $+1$ (all our estimates are in that interval), party movements show signs of sustained changes through time. For example, a statistically significant slope of .75 indicates that a deviation from a party's long-run typical Left-Right position is expected to move towards (but not to) that position at the next election. The speed at which it approaches that long-run typical position is $(1 - \beta)$. In the case of the example $(1 - \beta)$ is $1 - .75$, or .25; therefore, that party is expected to move one-quarter of the way from where it was at the last election towards where it is expected to be in the long run.

The difference between where we can expect a party to be in the long run and where it is on average is one way to describe how and by how much a party has changed. To estimate where a party's Left-Right position will be in the long run, we divide the intercept by 1 minus the slope, i.e. $[\alpha/(1 - \beta)]$ (see Spafford 1971; Price and Sanders 1993).

As we see, there are parties for which the slope is distinguishable from zero, and the difference between the mean and the party's long-run expected position is large. We call these parties *changers*. There are also instances of parties with slopes distinguishable from zero but with small differences between mean versus long-run expected value. These are parties that drifted one way, then the other—going through cycles of reliably predictable and moderately sustained movements. We call these parties *drifters*. Finally, there are parties that diverge from and converge towards their mean values in an essentially unpredictable manner. For these parties, movements away from their mean positions are expected to be short lived, with an expectation of each one returning to its mean position at the next election. We call these parties *homeostatic wanderers*.

For a party with patterns of change that show a shift to a new position, as would be true for a party whose positions create a trend, we have said there is a large difference between its mean Left-Right position and its long-run expected Left-Right position. Figure 4.2 is a histogram that displays these differences for each of the eighty-one parties. Not many parties show much difference. Only 10 of the 81 parties (12.3 per cent) have expected long-run positions that differ from their respective mean positions by more than ± 4 points. Two of those 10 parties—the Dutch CDA and Italy's PSI—show changes larger than ± 4 , but their changes are based on estimated slopes that we deem to be unreliable.⁶ That leaves eight parties that changed their Left-Right positions through time in a reliably estimated manner. They are the eight, so-called, *changers*.

The eight *changers* are listed in Table 4.1. There, too, we provide a description of the pattern of change along with each party's mean value over the period, its so-called target position (which is where, based on our analysis, we expect the

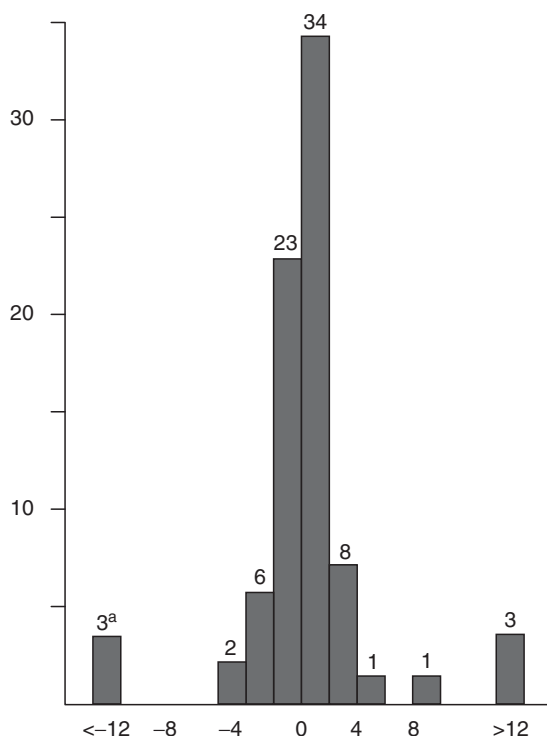


Fig. 4.2. Histogram of the difference between a party's mean and long-run expected Left-Right position over eighty one parties 1945–98

Source: Compiled by authors from CMP data (Budge et al. 2001).

^aOne large leftward changer (–34, Dutch ARP) is not fully depicted in this representation; it is one of the three cases in the category labelled < –12

party Left-Right position to settle over the long run), and its Left-Right position by decade. The first thing to notice is that of the eight *changers*, four no longer existed in the same organizational form in the mid- to late 1990s. Two Italian parties, the PSDI and PRI, each of which had been moving to the right, were themselves transformed when the party system as a whole changed after the 1992 election. In addition, two other *changers* are Dutch Christian parties—ARP and CHU—that combined, also with the Catholic KVP, to form the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), in the 1970s. The movements of both Dutch (Protestant) Christian parties show a trend leftward, and after they merged into the CDA, they held a centre-left position. That leaves four parties that have different Left-Right positions in the 1990s compared to where they stood in, say, 1960.

Patterns of change for these four still-in-existence *changers* are consistent with what informed observers of these parties tell us was happening throughout the period. The Austrian FPÖ is reported to have placed itself to the left during the

Table 4.1. Identification and description of movements by *changers*^a

Country	Party	CMPid	L-R		Pattern of change Numerical value of L-R mean by decade
			Mean	Target	
Austria	FPÖ	42420	2.5	14.2	Started centre, moved left, then steadily back to centre and continued on past centre to right 50s = +4.5 60s = -26.8 70s = -13.8 80s = +4.6 90s = +39.5
Ireland	FG	53520	11.1	6.5	Started right, moved steadily to centre-left until 80s, then moved to centre-right 50s = +46.6 60s = -2.0 70s = -17.6 80s = +2.8 90s = +9.3
Italy	PSDI	32330	-12.2	-4.5	Started left and moved rather steadily towards and to centre 50s = -28.5 60s = -24.1 70s = -5.3 80s = +3.5 90s = +2.3
Italy	PRI	32410	-0.7	15.3	Started left-centre and moved, in step-like manner rather steadily to right 50s = -17.0 60s = -10.0 70s = -1.0 80s = +22.8 90s = +36.7
Netherlands	ARP	22523	5.0	-29.6	Steady movement from centre-right to centre-left when it ended in early 70s 50s = +16.1 60s = +1.6 70s = -16.1 80s = ~~~ 90s = ~~~
Netherlands	CHU	22525	8.9	-3.1	Started right, moved to centre in the 60s and ended in centre-left in the early 70s 50s = +21.5 60s = +4.0 70s = -17.7 80s = ~~~ 90s = ~~~
Norway	SP	12810	-5.3	-17.3	Started right-centre, moved steadily and quickly left, reaching left-centre by mid-60s and stayed there 50s = +18.8 60s = -12.7 70s = -16.6 80s = -15.7 90s = -15.6
USA	DEM	61320	-12.8	-1.9	Started left-centre into the 1980s, then moved steadily to and through centre to centre-right 50s = -19.1 60s = -15.6 70s = -20.4 80s = -14.1 90s = +10.5

^a A changing party takes Left-Right positions in a manner that changes predictably from one election to the next and produce an estimated long-run Left-Right position removed from its mean Left-Right position over the post-war period (beyond ± 4 points).

Source: Estimations and compilations by authors based on CMP data (Budge et al. 2001).

1960s in order to gain favour with the SPÖ for government coalition bargaining purposes, but then gave up that strategy and moved strongly to the right (Müller 2000: 87). Mair (1986) reports that Fine Gael took noticeable steps to the left during the 1960s and 1970s and stood clearly to the left of Fianna Fáil during that time. Hanne Marthe Narud and Kaare Strøm have said of the leftward drift

of Norway's SP that 'the party's opposition to European integration has gradually generalised into a greater scepticism towards market economies' (Narud and Strøm 2000: 164). Finally, US Democrats, most especially under the leadership of President Clinton but presaged by smaller movements towards the centre during the 1980s, are generally understood to have moved there over time (see, e.g. Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2001).

Nineteen parties are classified as *drifters*, more than twice the number of *changers*. The *drifters* are listed in Table 4.2. Recall that our classification criterion for *drifters* versus *changers* is that, while a *drifter's* position undergoes predictable and sustained changes, in the long run its Left-Right position is not much different from its mean position over the entire period. This is reflected in the column in the middle of the table, where the mean and (long-run) target values are reported. One general pattern of drift covers the Anglo-American parties. In Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA, the *drifters* each moved towards the right—a movement that also describes the US Democrats in Table 4.1. The reason many of these appear to be *drifters* rather than *changers* is that along the way their movements were erratic enough not to provide a firm basis for describing them as trends. Among the *drifters* in Belgium (if we were to add in the combined liberals of the 1950s and 1960s), the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, the movements follow a pattern where the 1960s and 1970s show a leftward shift followed by rightward shifts during the 1980s and 1990s. Four other parties did not head towards the right side of the spectrum during the 1980s and 1990s—the Irish FF, Danish CD and KrF, and the Swiss CVP. Fianna Fáil moved rightward in the 1960s and 1970s only to move leftward towards the centre in the 1980s and 1990s. The two Danish parties, CD and KrF, started on the right, both having won seats for the first time in the traumatic 1973 Danish election, and tended to move slightly leftward towards a centre-right position. The Swiss CVP appears to have moved erratically but decidedly to the left over the entire period.

The modal outcome is that of the *homeostatic wanderers*. There are 54 of them, 66.7 per cent of all the parties analysed—too many to be reported in a table. These are parties that, as the wandering portion of their label suggests, have moved around without developing patterns of sustained change across time. We say of them, then, that, so far as we can tell from the autoregressive estimations, their movements are as if random. Of course, the 'homeostatic' qualifier in the label indicates that a party's wandering is anchored in a meaningful position, presumably meaningful for their leaders as well to voters.

It is proper to enquire further whether the wandering is untethered or homeostatic. A set of completely random numbers will have a mean; hence, having a mean can hardly be a justification for inferring that these parties have an identifiable ideological home. The inference of homeostasis therefore rests on how widely these parties wander away from their respective mean positions. The standard deviations around the mean positions of *homeostatic wanderers* are actually slightly smaller on average than the standard deviations around the regression lines of the *changers* and the *drifters*. Among the 54 *homeostatic wanderers*, the average standard deviation is 12.4; for the *changers* and *drifters*, the average standard deviation around their regression lines is 13.1 (average s_e values). In that

Table 4.2. Identification and description of movements by *drifters*^a

Country	Party	CMPid	L-R		Pattern of drift Numerical value of L-R mean by decade
			Mean	Target	
Australia	LAB	63320	-11.1	-7.3	Started left, stayed left through the 70s, drifted to varied positions at and around the centre 50s = -22.5 60s = -14.2 70s = -22.1 80s = +3.2 90s = +5.6
Belgium	CVP	21521	-1.9	1.5	Started centre-left in late 60s, moved steadily to centre-right in 80s, and moved to centre 50s = ~~~ 60s = -12.8 70s = -8.2 80s = +7.7 90s = +1.7
Belgium	VU	21913	-2.9	-3.4	Started centre, veered to centre-left in late 60s, climbed back centre-right and moved to centre 50s = ~~~ 60s = -5.8 70s = -8.4 80s = +4.7 90s = -2.9
Canada	PC	62620	4.2	6.2	Centre until mid-70s and drifted to right-centre thereafter 50s = -2.4 60s = -0.6 70s = +2.3 80s = +14.9 90s = +17.6
Denmark	CD	13330	21.9	21.3	Started right (70s), stayed right in 80s and moved to centre in 90s 50s = ~~~ 60s = ~~~ 70s = +26.7 80s = +25.1 90s = +6.0
Denmark	KrF	13520	20.3	18.6	Started right (70s), moved to centre-right in 80s, and stayed 50s = ~~~ 60s = ~~~ 70s = +30.0 80s = +12.2 90s = +12.3
Ireland	FF	53620	6.4	8.3	Started centre, moved right in 60s and 70s, jumped back to centre in late 70s and stayed centre 50s = +8.0 60s = +22.4 70s = +26.5 80s = -10.2 90s = +0.7
Netherlands	PvdA	22320	-25.0	-25.5	Started left (60s), moved steadily left in 60s and 70s, and back towards and to centre-left in 80s and 90s 50s = -21.3 60s = -27.6 70s = -43.3 80s = -22.5 90s = -8.9
Netherlands	D'66	22330	-18.3	-18.3	Started left (60s), moved further left in 70s, and to centre-left in 80s and 90s 50s = ~~~ 60s = -18.3 70s = -30.8 80s = -11.7 90s = -13.0
NZ	LAB	64320	-24.4	-24.5	Started left, moved steadily towards centre in 60s and 70s, drifted unsteadily back to left in mid-80s and 90s 50s = -34.6 60s = -29.4 70s = -16.4 80s = -11.2 90s = -22.2

Table 4.2. (Continued)

Country	Party	CMPid	L-R		Pattern of drift numerical value of L-R mean by decade
			Mean	Target	
Norway	KF	12520	0.1	-2.4	Started centre-right, drifted steadily to centre-left til 90s, and jumped back to centre 50s = +15.7 60s = -4.5 70s = -5.2 80s = -13.8 90s = +2.0
Norway	Høyre	12620	4.2	3.2	Started centre-right, drifted steadily towards centre-left from 60 till mid-70s, and moved back to centre-right 50s = +16.4 60s = 0.0 70s = -14.2 80s = -2.3 90s = +14.4
Sweden	SDP	11320	-23.2	-20.6	Started left, moving a little further left in 60s, jumped to centre-left in early 70s, drifted back left, only to move to centre in 90s 50s = -32.7 60s = -46.0 70s = -18.9 80s = -21.2 90s = +4.7
Sweden	FP	11420	-4.2	-6.4	Started centre-right, jumped to left in 60s, and gradually drifted back to centre-right 50s = +10.8 60s = -33.4 70s = -15.6 80s = +3.3 90s = +12.5
Sweden	MSP	11620	36.9	34.9	Started right, moved to centre-right in 70s, moved back to right 50s = +51.8 60s = +40.3 70s = +14.0 80s = +40.5 90s = +40.5
Sweden	CP	11810	-3.3	-0.7	Started centre drifting right, swung centre-left in 60s and stayed until early 80s, drifted to centre-right 50s = +2.5 60s = -6.5 70s = -16.2 80s = -6.8 90s = +12.9
Switzerland	CVP	43520	10.1	6.6	Started right, jumped to centre in mid-60s and stays centre 50s = +25.1 60s = +19.9 70s = +1.2 80s = +0.6 90s = -6.8
UK	CON	51620	7.9	10.5	Started variably though slightly left, drifted towards centre-right through 60s and 70s and to right in 80s and 90s 50s = -8.0 60s = +0.8 70s = +11.0 80s = +29.7 90s = +26.8
USA	REP	61620	13.9	15.9	Started erratically around centre, more reliably centre in late 60s and 70s, and moved right in 80s and 90s 50s = +7.0 60s = +4.3 70s = +3.7 80s = +28.5 90s = +27.3

^a A drifting party takes Left-Right positions in a manner that changes predictably from one election to the next but has an estimated long-run Left-Right position close to its mean Left-Right position over the post-war period (within ± 4 points).

Source: Estimations and compilations by authors based on CMP data (Budge et al. 2001).

sense, the unpredictable variation of the *homeostatic wanderers* based on their means is slightly less than the unpredictable variation based on the otherwise predictable movements of the *changers* and *drifters*. In short, a mean position of a *homeostatic wanderer* generally characterizes its positions and a regression equation a position of a *changer* or *drifter*.

Our evidence indicates that one-third of the eighty-one parties changed their Left-Right positions in detectable, systematic ways. Given the systematic change, it is really necessary to try to capture the dynamic aspects of party positioning. On the other hand, only four ongoing parties have changed their long-run positions to a substantial degree. This limited number of *changers* makes it understandable that long-run perceptions of party positions, what we think is recorded by expert surveys, would record high degrees of stability.

In anticipation of what we will have to say in Chapter 5, a word of caution is in order. The dynamic variation beyond that which we have here labelled systematic should not be thrown on the junk pile, as if it amounts to nothing more than noise. Much of it has been explained as systematic policy adjustments to the circumstances of each election (Budge 1994; Adams 2001; Adams et al. 2004). Statistical models of cross-temporal attributions of stability, change, and noise require one to have in mind a model of 'true behavioural change' in order to be able to separate noise in the measurements from change in the behaviour (Heise 1969)—an issue we take up directly in Chapter 5. Here we have employed a commonly used model of 'true' behaviour change in the form of a Markovian process. In effect, the assumption we are making here says that when behaviour truly changes it does so by way of particular forms of systematic Markovian process movements, depending on a party's current position, but not on its previous positions nor on how long it has taken its current position. It then adds by implication that to the extent behaviour is not following a Markovian process, the remaining portion of the measured signal is noise.

A close examination of systematic change by parties would reveal widely accepted real changes that do not show themselves as such in our results. One clear example is Britain's Labour Party. Surely it has moved from left to right under the leadership of Tony Blair and the CMP records that movement. But, because it showed up so late in the CMP series, this is effectively left as noise because, by 1998, it was still too early to say whether the movement was systematic in the statistical sense (cf. our similar point in Chapter 1 about the British Conservatives' move to Left in the 1950s if we cut the series off at 1959 (Figure 1.15a)).

CROSS-NATIONAL VARIATION

An important purpose of party position indicators is to provide valid indications of party differences across nations. Party-family affiliations are not up to the task of drawing consistent distinctions between parties across nations, even

though family affiliations are surely useful for rank orderings within nations (see, e.g. the within-nation rank orders from different studies in Mair 2001: 21–2).

Under the assumption that family affiliation does not travel especially well across countries, one has to expect that some part of the variation within families comes from national influences on individual parties. Norway's political space, for example, while containing variance that is largely associated with parties from different families, makes its own contribution to the location of Norwegian parties. In other words, we expect that Norway's political parties are generally to the left of parties of the same family in, say, Australia and the USA. This is because Norway's Labour Party (DNA), an affiliate of the social democratic family, is to the left of social democratic Australian Labour and American Democrats, and the Norwegian Høyre (conservative family) is to the left of Australian Liberals and American Republicans (also belonging to the conservative family).

This analysis focuses on seventy-nine parties belonging to one of eight families in seventeen nations, the same nations used in the factor analysis above (see Note 1). We include parties from eight families: Communists, Greens, Social Democrats, Liberals, Christians, Agrarians, Conservatives, and Nationalists. To create a Left-Right score from the Laver–Hunt data, we follow the recommendation in McDonald and Mendés (2001: 99) and calculate a weighted sum of the Laver–Hunt scores on their *public ownership*, *tax/spend*, and *social permissiveness* policy dimensions. The CMP scores are based on average Left-Right scores over the period 1978–96 (except for Italy for which we calculate a CMP mean through the 1992 elections). For convenience, we linearly transformed all four sets of scores so that each one's metric ranges from a minimum of zero (0 = extreme left) to a maximum of ten (10 = extreme right). In the case of the CMP data, for which possible maximum left and right values are far removed from the observed maximum values, the re-scaling set $-50 = 0$, $0 = 5$, and $+50 = 10$, i.e. the re-scaled CMP scores equal $[(CMP + 50)/10]$.

Variation Across Families

We begin by asking how the four sets of Left-Right scores line up by party family. The family averages are shown in Table 4.3. As one would expect, on average, Communists are far left; Greens and Social Democrats are on the left; Liberals, Agrarians, and Christians are centre to centre-right; Conservatives are on the right; and Nationalists are far right. On this general ordering, all four data-sets agree.

With respect to variability across and within families, however, the CMP data stand distinct. Perhaps most noteworthy is that there is more cross-family variation and less within-family variation in the expert survey sets compared to the CMP. The experts record more homogeneity within families and more distinctiveness between and among families compared to the latter. The R^2 values at

Table 4.3. Average party Left-Right positions by party family

Party family	N	Mean (std. dev.)			
		Manifesto project	Castles and Mair	Laver and Hunt	Huber and Inglehart
Communist	8	1.83 (.99)	1.70 (.48)	1.77 (.35)	1.86 (.43)
Social Democrat	22	3.75 (1.18)	3.54 (.98)	3.80 (1.08)	3.74 (.82)
Green	4	3.62 (1.29)	3.83 (.83)	3.45 (.70)	2.85 (.71)
Liberal	13	5.35 (1.52)	5.84 (1.17)	6.10 (1.33)	6.01 (1.30)
Agrarian	5	5.16 (1.60)	6.10 (.99)	6.19 (.66)	6.39 (1.35)
Christian Democrat	11	5.67 (1.08)	6.31 (.70)	6.79 (.49)	6.27 (.99)
Conservative	14	6.13 (1.63)	7.18 (.73)	7.12 (.87)	6.95 (.77)
Nationalist	2	7.89 (1.06)	9.45 (.50)	8.55 (.95)	9.63 (.53)
All parties	79	4.70 (1.91)	5.09 (2.08)	5.23 (2.05)	5.12 (2.06)
Summary statistics					
R^2		.553	.832	.844	.812
R^{-2}		.509	.815	.829	.793
s_e		1.336	.892	.850	.936

Notes: Table entries are for party families mean Left-Right locations based on 0–10 metrics for all four data-sets. Summary statistics come from regressing the party positions onto dummy variables for each of seven families, withholding one family to serve as the baseline category.

the bottom of the table indicate that sizeable proportions of the Left-Right variation for the expert data are associated with family affiliation; all three exceed .8. Given that error variance (simple noise) almost surely constitutes between 5 and 10 per cent of the total variance of each set of expert scores, these R^2 s are probably too high. At a minimum, this is contrary to the stated purpose of moving beyond family to more finely graded Left-Right scores. Therefore, at first reading, the expert survey data do not appear to tell us much about Left-Right party positions beyond what party-family affiliations, standing alone, could have told us. The CMP data are not so strongly associated with party family. Compared to the expert survey data, the CMP data have a smaller standard deviation for the seventy-nine parties considered overall ($s = 1.91$ vs. about 2.06). Also, within each and every party family the CMP standard deviation is larger than the corresponding standard deviation in the expert data. It follows, then, that the R^2 value when predicting CMP scores from party family is more modest.

Only 55 per cent of the variation in CMP Left-Right scores is associated with family affiliation.

Variation Across Countries

One way to estimate where in Left-Right space each nation's party system operates relative to the space of other nations' party systems is to calculate the distance between each party's Left-Right position and its family mean, and then average those distances by nation.⁷ For nations whose parties stand uniformly to the left of their respective family means, the average distance will be negative; for nations whose parties stand uniformly to the right of their respective family means, the average distance will be positive.

Table 4.4 reports the national averages. For the CMP data, a statistically significant 38 per cent of the variation in these party differences is associated with the nations. Among the expert survey sets of scores, the constructed Left-Right score for Laver-Hunt has the highest percentage of variance associated with nations: 32 per cent, but with such a large number of dummy variables, it falls short of statistical significance ($F = 1.780$, $p = .055$). For the Castles-Mair as well as the Huber-Inglehart scores, the variance associated with the nation dummy variables is clearly not greater than chance.

The findings suggest that party locations identified by expert surveys, especially Castles-Mair and Huber-Inglehart, correspond so closely to party-family affiliation that information about nations does not tell us very much about party positions. This conclusion is troubling but should not be overdrawn. It is conditional on a statistical analysis that considers all nations jointly. When attention is switched to specific nations, one can see common tendencies that have to be taken to mean that not all the expert results, for each and every country, are just noise. All four data-sets, for example, have parties in Canada placed to the left of their family counterparts. On the other side as well, the CMP and expert surveys place parties in Australia to the right of their respective families, on average. Given such commonalities, it has to be said that there is some degree of cross-national validity, or at least reliability, in all four studies.

The question is whether the selected common tendencies are generalizable? We can look at the generalizability by correlating the four sets of national positions reported in Table 4.4. The six correlations are ($N = 17$):

CMP and C-M = .575 ($p = .008$)

CMP and L-H = .703 ($p = .001$)

CMP and H-I = .329 (not significant, $p = .099$)

C-M and L-H = .427 ($p = .049$)

C-M and H-I = .036 (not significant, $p = .445$)

L-H and H-I = .742 ($p < .001$)

Table 4.4. Average distance, by nation, between party Left-Right positions and party family means

Country	N	Average distance (standard deviation)			
		Manifesto project	Castles and Mair	Laver and Hunt	Huber and Inglehart
Canada	3	-.64 (1.07)	-.52 (.17)	-1.20 (.51)	-1.01 (.92)
Norway	6	-1.38 (.65)	-.48 (.77)	-.57 (.52)	-.31 (.78)
UK	3	-.42 (1.80)	-.56 (1.02)	-.39 (1.49)	-.25 (.96)
Ireland	4	-.90 (.83)	-.06 (.58)	-.34 (.34)	-.37 (.88)
Spain	5	-.61 (.43)	.59 (.82)	-.58 (.93)	-.56 (.61)
Finland	7	-.46 (1.35)	-.20 (.45)	-.06 (.47)	.58 (.96)
Germany	5	.02 (.85)	-.01 (1.04)	-.13 (.69)	-.34 (.64)
France	6	-.51 (.90)	-.13 (.70)	-.08 (.54)	.11 (.67)
Sweden	4	.51 (1.49)	-.21 (.52)	.05 (.45)	-.03 (.89)
Italy	7	.84 (1.15)	-.13 (.97)	.17 (.74)	.12 (.76)
Belgium	7	.18 (.82)	.13 (.97)	.14 (.87)	-.23 (.64)
Netherlands	4	-.29 (1.01)	.22 (1.19)	.23 (.81)	.20 (.59)
New Zealand	2	-.53 (.25)	-.46 (1.02)	.67 (1.31)	.82 (1.09)
Austria	3	1.05 (.58)	-.03 (.86)	.51 (.72)	.82 (1.50)
Australia	4	1.33 (1.08)	.83 (1.08)	.42 (.56)	.18 (1.43)
Denmark	7	.91 (1.88)	.35 (.98)	.68 (1.01)	.41 (1.07)
USA	2	1.25 (.59)	.44 (1.16)	.72 (.38)	-.35 (.15)
Summary Statistics					
R^2		.376	.182	.315	.233
R^{-2}		.216	-.029	.138	.035
s_e		1.129	.863	.753	.877

Notes: Entries are average within-nation differences between a party's location and its respective family mean. Negative/positive values mean that parties within a given nation are on average to the left (negative) or right (positive) of their party family mean. Summary statistics come from regressing the differences onto sixteen nation-specific dummy variables, with one nation serving as the baseline. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses. Reporting the standard deviations supplies the greatest flexibility for readers to test hypotheses about individual nations. The homoscedastic standard errors for nation i are equal to $s_e/\sqrt{n_i}$, where s_e is the standard error of estimate from the regression (reported under summary statistics at the bottom of the table). The standard errors corrected for heteroscedasticity through weighted least squares equal $(s/\sqrt{n_i})$, where s is the standard deviation reported in the table. For testing paired comparisons without assuming homoscedasticity, the standard error for any pair of nations, a and b , is $\sqrt{(s_a/n_a + s_b/n_b)}$, where s_a is the standard deviation for nation a and s_b nation b . Nations are ordered top to bottom according to the average Left-Right national position across all four data-sets, with left-most nations at the top.

The evidence of generalizable commonalities across the four studies is mixed. The Castles–Mair national spaces share essentially no variance with Huber–Inglehart ($r = .036$; therefore, $r^2 = .001$). The CMP and Laver–Hunt country locations share something in the vicinity of 50 per cent of variance. In between, the CMP and Castles–Mair share about a third of their variation and Castles–Mair and Laver–Hunt one-sixth.

Close inspection of the country-specific numbers in Table 4.4 reveals that the mixed generalizability comes in large part from five nations being located in very different positions in one or another of the data-sets. Castles–Mair places Spanish parties substantially to the right in relation to their party families, while the other three studies have Spanish parties substantially to the left relative to their party families. Also, Castles–Mair locates the Austrian system near the centre while the other three place it considerably to the right. Huber–Inglehart locates Finland’s parties on the right; the other three have Finland on the left. Even more surprising, Huber–Inglehart places the US Democrats and Republicans to the left of their family counterparts; the other three studies arrive at the more commonly held view that American parties are substantially to the right of family affiliates. Finally, the four studies render a rather dramatically split decision on New Zealand’s party system. Castles–Mair and the CMP put New Zealand’s party system on the left, relatively speaking, while Laver–Hunt and Huber–Inglehart report that New Zealand’s party system is on the right.

Re-calculating the correlations of national spaces across data-sets after excluding the five anomalous nations shows the following ($N = 12$).

CMP and C-M = .706 ($p = .005$)

CMP and L-H = .753 ($p = .003$)

CMP and H-I = .597 ($p = .021$)

C-M and L-H = .794 ($p = .001$)

C-M and H-I = .635 ($p = .013$)

L-H and H-I = .926 ($p < .001$)

Within the restricted set of twelve countries, all the correlations are statistically significant.

The evidence on cross-national comparability shows that party Left-Right locations identified in expert surveys are much more strongly conditioned by party–family affiliation than is the case for the CMP, which says meaningful cross-national variation in expert survey scores is muted relative to what we see in the CMP scores. On this aspect of measuring what is intended to be measured, the CMP has a substantial edge. The evaluation should not be read as an all-or-nothing judgement, of course; some of the reasons for the missing variation in expert surveys can be identified, and, to the extent it is, it can be remedied.

RADICAL-RIGHT PARTIES

Our final inquiry into the validity of the CMP's Left-Right scale takes its motivation from commentators who have told us there must be something wrong with the scale because it misrepresents the positions of some radical-right parties (Gabel and Huber 2000: Special Issue of *Electoral Studies* (ed.) 2007 passim). A prominent case in point is Italy (Pelizzo 2003). The neo-fascist *Alleanza Nazionale* (MSI from 1948 to 1972 and MSI-DN from 1972 to 1994) has been and is by all accounts a party on the extreme right. On average, however, the CMP scores AN as a centre-right party. Two particular features of the CMP Left-Right construction account for the AN centrism in the CMP data. The first is, again, related to reputation; the second has to do with how the CMP calculates Left-Right scores. Both are core matters of validity—what do we intend to measure?

The AN gains much of its radical-right reputation from its fascist heritage, fierce anti-communist rhetoric, and monarchist sympathies. At times, however, it takes positions that accord with policies associated with the left, as in the mid-1980s when it supported the PCI (communist) referendum measure to raise the ceiling on the wage indexation system. The AN like some other radical-right parties is not always hostile to welfare state provisions, and supports a strong state with many forms of intervention into the economy—necessary in their eyes to safeguard national integrity.

Data from a recent expert survey acknowledge as much (Benoit and Laver 2006). They asked country experts to place parties along a Left-Right dimension and along several specific policy dimensions, one of which is a pro-welfare versus anti-welfare state indicator of raising taxes to increase public services versus cutting public services in order to cut taxes. The AN, along with its dissident members who formed the MS-FT and the anti-immigrant LN, are by the experts' rendering the three most extreme-right parties in Italy as of 2003. All three are also judged to be the most socially conservative and anti-immigrant of the Italian parties. On the welfare state indicator, however, the AN is judged to be moderate, and its MS-FT offshoot is left-leaning. How does a party with a moderate or leftist position on the welfare state end up being a party located at the extreme right end of the political spectrum? The very real possibility is that its reputation precedes it. Given that 'everyone knows' that the AN, MS-FT, and LN—by the very labels they are given, viz. radical- and extreme-right parties—are very far to the right, the reputation associated with the label is the score assigned.

The reputational issue is not one just associated with Italian parties. Figure 4.3 shows the relationship between the Benoit–Laver Left-Right and pro-tax versus anti-tax and spend positions in five countries, including Italy, each with one or more radical-right parties (the designation of which parties are among the radical right comes from Norris 2005: Table 3.1). In all five countries, radical-right parties are the parties standing farthest to the right in the system in the experts' judgements. Nevertheless, with the single exception of the *Fremkridtspartiet* (FrP, Progress Party) in Denmark, the radical-right parties are not the ones judged to stand farthest right on taxing and spending within the context of their respective

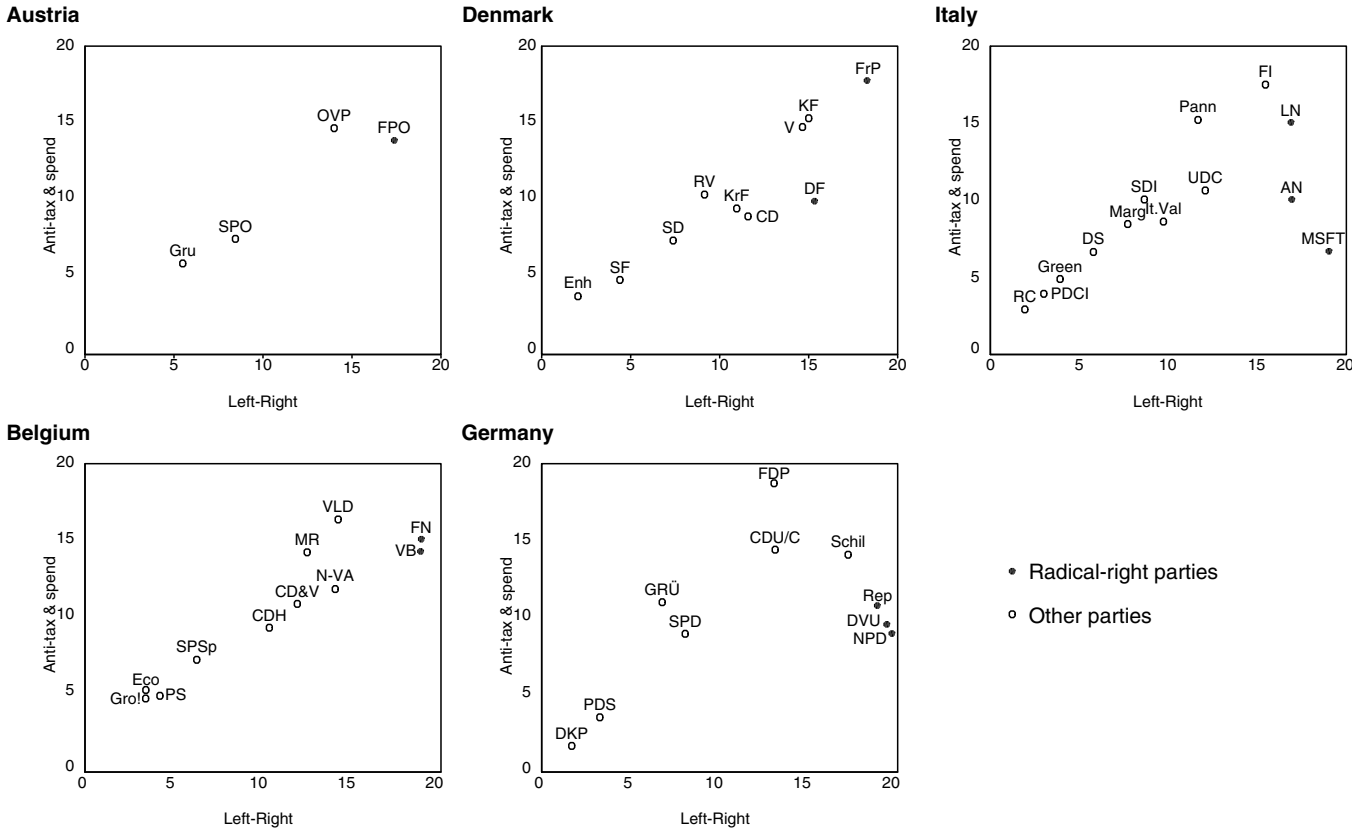


Fig. 4.3. Relationship between expert judgements of party Left-Right placement and tax and spend positions in five countries in 2003

party systems. In several cases, including the AN in Italy, as we have said, the radical-right party positions on taxing and spending are judged to be downright centrist.

Given the policy mix of the radical-right party issue positions, where do they belong along the Left-Right spectrum? As with all questions related to measurement validity, the answer depends on one's intention. If the intention were to ensure that the measurement comports with the descriptive labels or to ensure a match with the experts' perceptions, the CMP has a validity problem (which, as we will see below, could be solved). But, since the intention is to record the policy promises to electors and to be able to check whether the policies they pursue while in parliament and government square with those promises, placement of a party such as the AN by the CMP is not necessarily out of line. In sum, the difference between the CMP and expert survey placements is principally a function of experts scoring party reputations more than specific party promises and policy commitments.

A second reason the AN score in the CMP appears to be out of line with expert perception is a consequence of how the CMP calculates Left-Right scores. It takes Left-Right to be indicated by the difference between summations of thirteen right and thirteen left policy categories. Parties that do not say much about these twenty-six policy categories receive scores around zero, near the centre on the Left-Right dimension. The AN is a party that typically has little to say about issues in the CMP's twenty-six Left-Right categories. With little to say about issues that identify where it stands in the Left-Right space, it looks rather centrist.

To identify this scoring decision as a part of the source of a seemingly anomalous AN Left-Right placement is a long way from justifying the decision, certainly. The diagnosis does not so much answer the criticism as raise a different question: Is the difference in summations the valid form for calculating a Left-Right score? An alternative scoring procedure could be applied. Hee-Min Kim and Richard Fording introduced a ratio-calculation alternative to the CMP's difference scoring (Kim and Fording 1998; see also Laver and Garry 2000). They subtract the scores in thirteen left categories from scores in the thirteen right categories, *but* they then divide the difference by the sum total of all Left-Right scores, i.e. $[(\text{Right} - \text{Left})/(\text{Right} + \text{Left})] * 100$. This has the effect of consciously wiping out how salient Left-Right issues are to a party and, instead, scores a party for its Right versus Left emphasis among only the Left-Right issues it values enough to include in its manifesto.

One congenial result produced by the ratio measure is to score the AN, on average, as among the most right-leaning parties in the data-set. Of the 135 parties in Western democracies for which we have five or more manifestos, the MSI average Left-Right ratio score ranks as the nineteenth most right-leaning.

That is the good news, seemingly. The bad news is that its re-scored position imposes a validity problem or, more accurately said, creates an invalidity problem. While the ratio scoring now puts the AN in line with the Left-Right location one would think a radical-right party would have, it glosses over the fact that often the AN is not telling voters much about where it stands over the full range of

Left-Right issues. The ratio scoring has the effect of handing the relative weight given to specific issues over to the party (a good thing in and of itself) not on the sole basis of how much it values a particular issue but on the additional basis of how much it does not value issues associated with Left-Right policies. A near obsession with government support for agriculture and a statement or two about education expansion in rural areas does not make a party an extreme-left party; as well, a near obsession with government support for agriculture plus a passing statement or two favouring protectionist policies does not make a party an extreme-right party.

Parties face people and circumstances involving a broad swathe of issues. A party may choose to put its emphasis on one or a small set of issue domains or even subcategories within a domain. Such a focused interest forms an important concern to the CMP data collection, relying as it does on saliency. But when a party chooses not to make Left-Right issues much of a concern they are not staking out an extreme position on the Left or Right. That is what the CMP Left-Right scoring records, validly given the intention of the scale.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The validity of the CMP Left-Right scale stands up rather well to the empirical scrutiny brought to bear on it in this chapter. Parties' average positions match the positions along the Left-Right dimension that experts see. *And* the CMP's measurements move beyond the collective judgements of experts by recording positional dynamics and cross-national differences. Identifying typical positions, observing dynamics, and facilitating comparisons across nations are goals that prompted the creation of the MRG. The project continues to respond to critics and other commentators who want the data to be accurate in all its particulars. Attention to specific objections helps to focus attention in useful ways. Sometimes there are actual problems. But more often, as with Left-Right locations of radical-right parties, the commentary assists in clarifying the very concept the CMP intends to measure. What might at first look like a validity problem is sometimes more a matter of the commentator wanting to measure something different.

We have leaned heavily on expert scoring as the major alternative to the CMP and found it wanting in three respects—largely because it depends too much on parties' long-term reputations. Long-term reputational scoring washes out most dynamic variation, mutes the variance associated with party systems of different nations, and gives extra weight to particular issue categories. The CMP-expert comparisons in this chapter have not been intended as criticisms; rather, they have been used to spotlight three key elements that have to be considered as part of a validity evaluation. The expert survey scores are what they are. Given what they are—records of various parties' reputations—they are reliable. But they lack important variation that would make them more valid, given the intentions of the survey administrators and of the CMP.

There is, of course, safety in numbers and comfort in the consistency that gives rise to the experts' reliability. But this is not all that is important, and it is not what is centrally important to validity. The downside to safety in numbers, when the numbers involve appeals to experts, is the risk of committing the combined fallacies of ad populum appeals to authority. In the spirit of a scientific programme, of which the CMP and expert surveys form parts, it is the evidence that matters most, not anyone's or, for that matter, everyone's impression. The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the evidence compiled and used by the CMP to construct its Left-Right scale is valid.

NOTES

1. The nations are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. Unfortunately, the CEE countries are not covered in all the surveys, so we have to omit them from the analysis. We also take the CMP data only up to 1998 to facilitate comparison with the expert surveys conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. We could have added data from Kenneth Benoit's and Michael Laver's 2002–3 expert survey, which we do use in an analysis later in this chapter, but that would have forced us to drop France, because they did not solicit Left-Right information on French parties, and Italy, because the Italian party system was transformed after 1992 (Benoit and Laver 2006).
2. We re-estimated the stability based on the Castle–Mair (early 1980s), Huber–Inglehart (early 1990s), and Benoit–Laver (early 2000s) surveys (see Note 1). Because we lose parties from France and Italy (Benoit–Laver does not record left-right scores for France, and the Italian party system has been remade) and a few other parties, the common pool of parties (conditioned by a party having had to appear in the Laver–Hunt survey of the late 1980s), numbers 56. Estimated stability for the early 1980s to 1990s under the truncated set of parties and using the Castles–Mair, Laver–Hunt, and Huber–Inglehart data is .947. Using the Castles–Mair, Huber–Inglehart, and Benoit–Laver data, the estimated stability is a similar .942. Both estimates are lower than the previously reported .982, but that apparently is due to the different set of parties included in the analysis rather than having arrived at something different. That is, if we were arriving at something different, the re-estimate from the three previously used data-sets would be in the vicinity of .982, and not of .942.
3. These are not exactly the same seventeen nations used in the factor analysis. Here we exclude Spain, because the number of elections since democratization is too small and we include Luxembourg, which was not present in the factor analysis because its parties had not been scored by Castles and Mair.
4. A few of the manifesto data points are estimated from the party's manifesto at an earlier election. Such carryover data present problems for our analyses on two counts. They artificially reduce variation and create autocorrelation. Therefore, we exclude carryover manifestos. The exclusion is usually for one election at the beginning or end of a party's series. The single election exclusions are the Belgian PVV in 1995, the Belgian FDF in 1965, the Belgian VU in 1958, the Canadian SC in 1972 and 1974, all Danish parties in 1998, all Norwegian parties in 1997, and the Swiss SVP in 1947. Dropping the 1998 Danish data caused observations on the Danish CD and KF to go from 11 of 22 (half)

to 10 of 21 (less than half). Still, we decided to keep both Danish parties in the analyses. In the case of the French Conservatives, the entire series had to be excluded because several of its manifestos are recorded as estimates. Finally, the single manifesto score of the United Socialists in Italy for the 1968 election is the 1968 score that we assign individually and separately to the PSI and PSDI.

5. As we explain immediately below, the dynamic mean is distinguishable from the mean conceived as the average of all cases. The dynamic mean is the end-state towards which changes tend. It can be calculated by estimating an autoregressive equation and seeing whether the slope is zero. If the slope is zero, then the mean value of Y at any given time is estimated to be equal to the autoregressive intercept. If the slope is different from zero, then the mean, which is estimated to vary, is estimated by the intercept divided by one minus the slope. For informative discussions about autoregressive equations, with substantive applications to politics, see Spafford (1971) and Sanders and Price (1991).
6. We take what could be considered a liberal approach to a decision rule for reliably estimated relationships, but what we have done in fact is to take account of the effect of measurement error. Errors in an X variable reduce the magnitude of an estimated slope, and errors in both the X and Y variables are likely to increase the slope's standard error. Given that a t -ratio is (b/s_b) , the effect of measurement errors makes tests of statistical significance at conventional levels (e.g. $p < .05$) prone to Type II errors. Therefore, we loosen the conventional standard of, say, $p < .05$, so that reliably predicted behaviour is deemed to exist when a slope's t -value has a magnitude such that $t < -1.5$ or $t > 1.5$. Twenty-one parties show a statistically significant relationship at conventional levels, compared to 27 using our looser 1.5 t -value. Note that the liberal decision rule has no effect on our subsequent analyses and evaluations, except to cause us to provide detailed descriptions of change for twenty-seven instead of twenty-one parties in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Tests of statistical significance could also be affected by autocorrelated errors. We have checked for autocorrelation for each of the eighty-one party series. When a lagged value of Y is on the right hand side, the test (e.g. Durbin's h) is a large sample test and is not especially powerful. With our small samples of between six and twenty one elections for any one party, about half of the tests are not calculable. However, we have calculated values of ρ for all parties. We find an estimated ρ between $\pm .25$ for 72 of the 81 parties. Therefore, in no more than a few cases could it be said that a concern about autocorrelation is warranted.

7. Analysing difference-score variables can create inferential complications. They assume that the coefficient on X , in a $(Y-X)$ calculation is 1.0. If it is not, then analysing the reasons for the differences reflects in part the reasons for the differences themselves and in part the reasons why the coefficient is not 1.0. We have checked to ensure that such complications do not confound our analyses of cross-national differences. In addition to asking how the difference scores relate to nation dummy variables, we created a variable from the party family means and moved it to the right-hand side of the equation. Thereafter, we regressed the respective party scores onto the mean party family values (i.e. \hat{Y} from the party family regression) plus the nation dummy variables. That allows us to check whether the coefficient on that variable equals 1.0. It very nearly equals 1.0 for all four sets of party Left-Right scores—CMP, \hat{Y} -hat slope, = 1.003; Castles and Mair = 1.010; Laver and Hunt = 1.009; and Huber and Inglehart = .994.