



T2PP

From Text to Political Positions

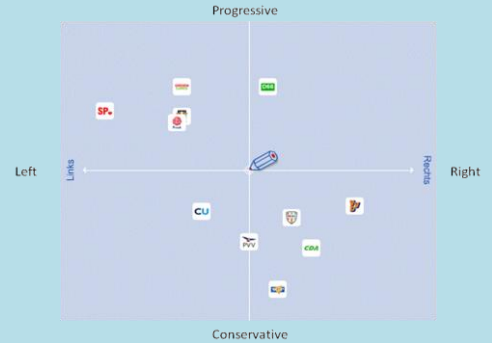
From Sentiments and Opinions to Political Party Positions

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T2PP combines contemporary theories and methods in linguistics with political science to develop an automated research tool for rich text-mining and opinion-mining. The transdisciplinary relevance of the project is that it will merge insights from political science with critical discourse analysis, cognitive processes and lexico-semantic-, computational- and corpus linguistics.

The convergence of Political, Linguistic, and Discourse Analysis

We apply three methods to position political parties on a Left/Right dimension and a Progressive/Conservative dimension, using Dutch election manifestos of 2010 as data. The aim of the study is to point out methodological constraints to party positioning and to show how a combination of methods can lead to a refinement of the individual methods.



Goldstandard Kieskompas 2010

Method I Words as Data (WD)

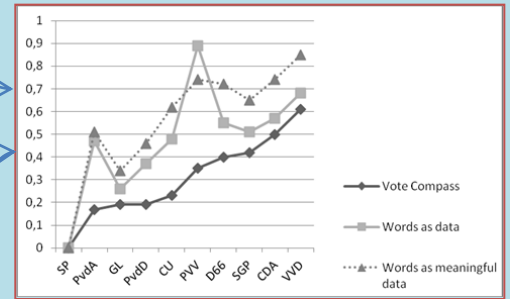
Wordscores is a quantitative text-analysis method developed by Laver, Benoit and Garry (2003). With regard to election manifestos, the underlying logic is that political parties do not use the same words with the same frequency. The relative frequency of words can be used to differentiate between parties' stances. The underlying logic is that political parties do not use the same words with the same frequency. Ex. Political parties on the right propose "to cut taxes" in their election manifesto. Left-wing parties do not use the words "to raise taxes", although their plans might imply it. The word "tax" is therefore considered indicative of right-wing parties.

Method II Words as meaningful data (MWD)

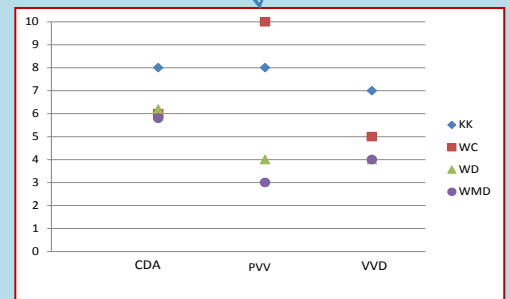
This method combines Wordscores with a lexical semantic approach that selects deontic expressions in the election manifestos. Deontic expressions are relatively frequent in election manifestos and important in that they refer to a future ideal state and to some kind of actions toward that ideal. Ex. "The Netherlands must be prepared to give some kind of humanitarian aid."

Method III Words in Context (WC)

Words in context takes a discourse approach to analyze the construction of stance taking particular to the motivation in party programs. The purpose is to differentiate between ground rationales of parties' worldviews on three basic parameters: Time, Space and Modality. We assume that Time and Space construct cognitive frames of reference that are consistent with ideologically motivated programs. Ex. "Holland is full!"



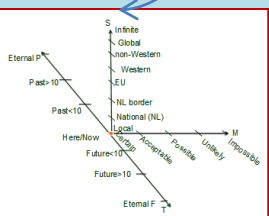
Results on Left/Right: Method II approximates the gold standard most



Results on Progressive/Conservative: Method III approximates the gold standard most

Conclusions

The three methods operate on different levels: word frames, deontic-semantic frames and cognitive-discursive frames. We find that Method II gives better results on Left/Right than Method I and that Method III gives better results on Progressive/Conservative. Methods II and III complement each other for party positioning on the two political dimensions. They add a deeper level for opinion mining and take into consideration both qualitative and quantitative aspects of text and meaning.



Time-Space-Modality axes