Legislative Priorities and Public Opinion:

Representation of Partisan Agendas in the Canadian House of Commons*

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Abstract: Oral questions are a central feature of the Canadian parliamentary system, and a valuable indication of legislators' issue attentiveness. Here, we consider parties' behavior in Question Period, with a particular interest in Opposition parties' representation of the public's (and publics') issue priorities. We do so using a content analytic database of oral questions covering three Parliaments from 1988-1999. We begin with some descriptive analyses of the distribution of oral questions across issues and parties, and then explore what drives parties' attention to issues. Combining the oral questions database with public opinion data, we examine the relationship between the issue priorities of both parties and partisans. In doing so, we examine two different foci of representation: a generalized national constituency, and each party's partisan constituency.

Question Period is the most visible part of the Canadian Parliamentary process. Indeed, for most Canadians, Question Period *is* Parliament. It provides a summary indication of those issues most salient to Canadian elected officials; it is a primary venue for 'position taking' on the part of Government and Opposition members alike; it is a central means by which the executive is kept in check by Parliament; and last but certainly not least, it plays a starring role in nightly newscasts. Nevertheless, in spite of its promotional and institutional centrality to parliamentary federal politics, political scientists know relatively little about oral questions, in the Canadian House of Commons or elsewhere.

We are interested here in two topics in particular: (1) to what extent are public issue priorities reflected in the content of oral questions?; and, (2) if public issue priorities *are* reflected in oral questions, which public tends to be represented, and by whom? The answers are a critical indication of the nature and quality of representation in the Canadian Parliament. Importantly, they also serve to address the question of whether oral questions have any important function in the Canadian Parliament: do they represent vacuous symbolic politicking, or substantive, perhaps even representative, policy-relevant discussion?

Note that our focus on issue attentiveness differs from the typical focus in studies of representation. Both theoretical and empirical discussions of representation are most often concerned with the representation of public policy *preferences* (e.g., Erikson et al 1989; Page and Shapiro 1992; Soroka and Wlezien 2004; Wlezien 1995). Here, we draw on work by Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 2002) and others, emphasizing the importance of issue *attentiveness*. Our study also differs from much work on representation in that we explore the

extent to which representation by Canadian legislators is centred on *generalized* versus *particularized* constituencies – specifically, a general Canadian public versus narrower partisan constituencies.

We begin, however, with a discussion of past work on the legislative representation of various geographic and partisan constituencies, followed by a brief description of the data on which our analyses are based. These sections provide the theoretical and empirical background to the subsequent analyses, exploring the extent to which generalized and/or particularized (partisan) opinion drives change in issue attentiveness in Parliament. In sum, we suggest that Canadian legislators represent a combination of national and partisan issue priorities: on the one hand, there is evidence of partisan representation cross-sectionally in terms of a broad "taxes-versus-spending" dimension; longitudinally, however, party and partisan agendas tend to move very closely together, and representation of shifts in issue attentiveness over time is essentially generalized. Our results speak to the nature of representation and policymaking in Canada and, possibly, in other parliamentary systems. They also indicate the potential importance of considering a combination of particularized and generalized constituencies in work on issue attentiveness and policy agenda-setting.

'Generalized' and 'Particularized' Issue Priorities

For any single representative (or body of representatives), political representation will typically be of several constituencies[1] simultaneously. Some of these constituencies may be more *generalized*, such as a national electorate. Alternatively, they may be more *particularized*, such as partisans, or those of a particular class, region, religion, etc.

The extent to which a representative focuses on any one constituency will largely be a function of its electoral importance. That is, the importance of a particular constituency depends

on factors such as constituency size, distribution, and reliability of support, each of which can contribute to a candidate's chances at (re-) election or a party's efforts at winning a greater share of legislative seats (see, e.g., Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1974). Of course, electoral systems play a conditioning role. Single Member Plurality (SMP) systems producing winner-take-all governments will likely increase pressures for generalized representation; conversely, Proportional Representation (PR) systems producing coalition governments may be more conducive to particularized representation, even when it does not lead to a majority or plurality of votes.

In short, particularized constituencies can matter, in some cases, a great deal. However, much of the policy agendas research dealing with representation focuses exclusively on generalized representation – that is, the representation of a national agenda by a national legislature. Here, we explore the possibility of a more particularized (partisan) representation in Canada, a country which presents an interesting test case. Observers of Canadian politics typically argue that Canadian party and legislative behavior is characterized by brokerage politics, where partisan preferences are sacrificed in the pursuit of the median voter (e.g., Clarke et al 1996; Johnston 1986; Scarrow 1965). However, recent considerations of the Canadian party system suggest a more particularized party system since the 1993 federal election, when the appearance of regionally-based parties may have encouraged an increasing degree of particularized representation by all parties (e.g., Carty, Cross and Young 2000).

Teasing out the focus of representation may be comparatively easy in Canada. In parliamentary systems, where the legislature and executive are fused, the need for a government to hold the confidence of the legislature can result in relatively strong party cohesiveness, or 'party discipline' (Diermeier and Feddersen 1998; Huber 1996). This is particularly true for

Canada. A party's representative focus, then, may be more reliably mimicked by individual party members in parliamentary systems, where, above all else, party will be the principle driver of individual MPs' legislative behavior.[2]

Particularized (partisan) representation thus seems likely in Canada, and we test for it below. First, however, we review the importance, and measurement, of Parliamentary Question Period.

Parliamentary Question Period

The practice of asking oral questions in the Canadian House of Commons developed rather haphazardly. While Question Period (QP) has existed almost from Confederation (1867), it was not officially codified until 1964 (*Journals*, April 20, 1964, p. 225), and its relatively unsystematic institutional development certainly contributed to the form that QP currently takes. Even now, QP is an unfettered environment in which Opposition and Government party members can ask Government ministers almost anything; moreover, answers are almost always provided, or at least attempted.

Whether this type of parliamentary institution is desirable is another matter entirely. Oral questions in the Canadian House of Commons can catch governments off-guard, eliciting unprepared (and perhaps more truthful or damaging) responses; they can also be driven by morning media headlines. Both of these attributes contribute to the spectacle that is Question Period, and have thus cast doubt on the forum's representational purpose. Existing research does however, suggest that Question Period has important institutional functions. This work suggests, for instance, that Question Period is valuable as (1) a means of ensuring that the Government is held accountable to Parliament, (2) an opportunity for the Opposition to both criticize Government policies and suggest alternatives, and (3) a chance for backbench MPs to gain both

experience and publicity (e.g., Franks 1987; Docherty 1997; outside Canada, see also Chester and Bowring 1962; Franklin and Norton 1993). These notions are buttressed by empirical work suggesting the substantive significance of oral questions in politics and policymaking (e.g., Crimmins and Nesbitt-Larking 1996; Howlett 1998; Soroka 2002a, 2002b). In short, though they often seem chaotic and discordant, even attention-seeking and absurd, oral questions contain relevant information about representatives' political and legislative priorities.

The present analysis supports the established argument that, practically speaking, oral questions are important. Several caveats are in order, however. First, oral questions are not actual policy. They do not reliably indicate the direction of policy and, indeed, are not even a measure of the Government's legislative priorities. The vast majority of oral questions are asked by Opposition parties, so the extent to which these questions reflect Government issue priorities is a function of whether Opposition parties decide to inquire about those issues. In many cases, they do – we believe that the general Parliamentary agenda is often captured by Question Period content. However, it need not be. As such, it should be kept in mind that Opposition parties' issue priorities are the focus here; Government priorities can only be explored indirectly. Consequently, oral questions have only an indirect and perhaps tenuous link with policy. In fact, they likely reflect an agenda that is more symbol than substance. This is not necessarily a disadvantage – much of politics is symbolic, and oral questions may provide a valuable indication of this aspect of the policymaking process.

QP is thus a potentially important policy venue. In fact, it is one of the few venues in which the representational activities of individual legislators and parties, particularly the allocation of attentiveness across policy issues, can be explored. A growing body of work on policy agenda-setting emphasizes the significance of attentiveness, or issue salience, to the

policy process. Specifically, this work argues that attentiveness is a critical pre-requisite for major policy change. (See, e.g., Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 2002; Jones 1994; Kingdon 1995.) We embrace this perspective below and address representation in terms of the link between public issue attentiveness and issue attentiveness in oral questions.

The Data: Dataset Design and General Trends

Our analyses rely on a content analytic database of all oral questions asked in the House of Commons from December 1988 (the opening of the second Mulroney Government) to December 1999 (the middle of the second Chrétien government). This database includes about 19,000 oral questions, spanning three Parliaments. Issue codes were drawn from the U.S. *Policy Agendas* project, though several codes were adjusted to reflect Canadian rather than U.S. policies (e.g., Canada Pension Plan), and several others were added to accommodate uniquely Canadian political issues (e.g., National Unity).[3] Questions (and answers) differ in length considerably, and our goal was to capture the amount of time dedicated to each issue. As such, the analysis is based on proportional measures – the number of column cms on a given topic each month, as a proportion of all column cms each month, either for the entire Parliament, or for individual parties.

[Figure 1 about here]

The resulting series for the four issues focused on here – healthcare, education, national debt, taxes – are shown in the first four panels of Figure 1. Each graph includes the unadjusted monthly series (dotted line), along with a lowess-smoothed trend line (bandwidth=.3). Based on opinion polls (see below), healthcare is one of the most salient issues in Canada, and its rise on the parliamentary agenda can already be seen in the mid- to late-1990s. Education has been less salient in Canadian federal politics, and our data illustrate its comparatively lower priority in QP.

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Movement in both debt and taxes illustrate well-known trends over the time period. For debt, punctuations occur when March budgets are introduced. As well, a prolonged period of higher salience is observed in the mid-1990s, when the Chrétien Liberal Government made cutting the deficit a major priority. The heightened salience of taxes in 1989-1990 reflects the debate surrounding the introduction of the national Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Fundamental to our analysis are the data shown in the final panel of Figure 1. Rather than examine attentiveness for parties and partisans issue-by-issue, we rely on a single issue dimension – drawn from recent work by Fournier et al. (2005) – which greatly simplifies our comparison of multiple party and partisan agendas. The issue dimension measures the trade-off between preferences for fiscal restraint and preferences for government spending; more precisely, it is the relative salience (% of total QP agenda) of health or education minus the relative salience of taxes or debt/deficit issues. While the QP and MIP data do not technically capture preference (but rather attentiveness), the four issues this measure uses are essentially uni-directional. That is, during this period in Canada, attention to health or education almost always meant *increasing* spending in those domains, while attention to taxes or debt/deficit almost always meant *decreasing* taxes or spending. Note that the measure represents not just an empirical convenience, but a theoretical conviction. The policy agendas literature asserts that issue attentiveness is finite – giving more attention to healthcare, for example, necessarily means giving less attention to other issues. It follows that attentiveness to healthcare and education, or taxes and debt, represents not just issue attentiveness *per se*, but issue preference. Thus, the measure nicely summarizes the relative priority attached to increasing versus limiting spending/policy.[4]

The general trend in the taxes-versus-spending dimension is illustrated in the bottom panel of Figure 1. The fact that attention to taxes and debt almost always outweighs attention to healthcare and education is emblematic of the time period, where Canadian governments were preoccupied with taxes and debt/deficit issues. Specifically, there is an initial bias towards decreased taxes during the second Mulroney Conservative Government. Then, there is a swing towards increased spending preceding the election of the first Chrétien Liberal Government, followed by a move towards decreased taxes as that government focuses on eliminating budget deficits. By the late 1990s, these budget deficits are eliminated, and the House increasingly focuses on social spending priorities, particularly healthcare.

Representation of Issue Priorities in Question Period

To what extent does movement in the Parliamentary taxes-versus-spending dimension reflect a similar movement in a public dimension? Moreover, to what extent does it reflect generalized Canadian public issue priorities, or more particularized partisan issue priorities? These questions are explored here by comparing the parliamentary data with public opinion time series drawn from quarterly Environics omnibus surveys. Public opinion is indicated by the 'most important problem' (MIP) question, which taps the salience of particular issues for the public.[5] The proportion of respondents citing healthcare and education issues are subtracted from the proportion citing taxes and debt issues to identify a public taxes-versus-spending dimension directly comparable with the parliamentary measure. The resulting taxes-versus-spending opinion measure is plotted alongside the parliamentary data in Figure 2. Opinion is available only quarterly, so parliamentary data here are also aggregated by quarter. Again, the series are lowess-smoothed; bandwidth=.2 for public and .4 for Parliament.

[Figure 2 about here]

The figure shows a striking similarity between the two series. That is, there is a strong relationship between the issue priorities of the Canadian public – at least where the balance between these four issues is concerned – and the issue priorities in Question Period. Recall that this is not the same as a strong relationship between policy and preferences. Indeed, recent work examining the actual policy outcomes of governments suggests that the opinion-policy relationship in Canada is comparatively mild (Soroka and Wlezien 2004). In that work, representation does appear greater for more salient issues, however, and we are looking only at relatively salient issues here. But Figure 2 also investigates a different form of representation. Symbolic behavior in Question Period, principally by Opposition parties, seems to be relatively strongly related to the issue priorities of the Canadian public.

It is nevertheless notable that the public and Parliamentary agendas seem to diverge around 1997. This trend in the Parliamentary series has more to do with a shift in the balance of power across parties in the legislature than it does with shift in the issue focus of (aggregated) individual legislators. Both right-wing parties – Reform and PC – have more seats following the election in 1997; the Reform Party forms the Official Opposition, and the overall QP agenda moves to the right as a consequence. Whether the public and Parliamentary agendas continued to move apart requires more data than we currently have available. For the meantime, we take this divergence as a sign that the individual party agendas may be quite different and certainly worth investigating more closely.

In order to do so, we disaggregate our results by party/partisanship. For Parliament, this means building a separate measure for each party (i.e., using oral questions asked by the party). For the public, the MIP data is disaggregated by intended vote to find partisans' issue priorities. Note that using intended vote presents some difficulties, since we cannot adequately discern

whether parties are representing the changing priorities of the same partisans over time, or whether partisans are changing their vote based on parties' changing priorities. It is likely that both are happening, and while much of the movement is likely partisan- rather than party-driven, this cannot be adequately explored here. Nevertheless, the measure should provide a reasonably accurate portrayal of the preferences of those that identify with each of the different parties.

[Table 1 about here]

Before plotting the issue dimension over time, Table 1 shows means values for attentiveness by each party and corresponding partisan group. Both the left-leaning NDP and its partisans predictably devote more of their attentiveness (9% and 5% respectively) to health issues than any other group. The fiscally-conservative Reform Party is more attentive to debt issues than the other parties; they also devote considerable attention to taxes, trumped only by the other fiscally-conservative party, the PCs. Reform attentiveness tends to reflect their partisans' concerns, as well – Reform voters dedicate 15% of their over-all attention to the debt and 8% to taxes, significantly more than other partisan groups. The Liberals – both Parliamentary and public – occupy a middle space across the four issues in question, reflecting their status as a pan-national brokerage party. Patterns in BQ party and partisan attentiveness are more elusive, partly because the party is preoccupied with national unity issues that are not captured in our issue dimension.

Table 1 thus reveals few unexpected patterns. Moreover, it suggests a considerable degree of representation of partisans' issue priorities by parties in Question Period. Figure 3 partly buttresses this finding. The figure shows the taxes-versus-spending issue dimension, by party and intended vote, over time. The first panel shows that there is not as wide a range of preferences between groups of partisans as we might expect. Indeed, the major difference is

between Reform Party voters and all other voters. Still, differences between other partisans are

discernable, and their ordering from taxes to spending is roughly similar across the time period.

New Democratic Party (NDP) partisans are further towards spending, and Reform partisans are

furthest towards restraint. Over the time period examined here, there is a 15- to 30-point

difference between NDP and Reform voters. That said, the closeness of preferences in terms of

both distance and trend over the period indicates that similar forces are affecting most voters; the

average position of all voters seems to lean toward fiscal-restraint in the middle period and

toward spending in the later period.[6]

[Figure 3 about here]

The second panel of Figure 3 shows results for parties. The relative ordering of parties is

similar to that of partisans (albeit more clearly later in the period), providing initial evidence that

parties are representing their partisan constituencies' issue priorities. Again, the Reform Party is

the most clearly differentiated. In the 1993-97 period, Reform is 10 points further to the restraint

side than the NDP, and after 1997, the gap is 15 points. Apart from the big swings early in the

period by the Liberals and NDP (attributed to their heavy focus on the controversial Goods and

Services Tax (GST)), the NDP remains on the spending side of the dimension for virtually the

entire period, while the Liberals hold relatively close to the zero-point. The Progressive

Conservative (PC) Party maintains a center-right fiscal position over much of the time period.

The Bloc Québécois' generally center-left views do not seem represented in the first half of the

period examined here. The Bloc was a new party during these years, however, with a stark focus

on national unity; little attention was paid to any of these four issues, except for the criticism

directed at specific applications of the GST and, more generally, the national debt. Over time

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(and particularly after the 1995 Québec referendum), the Bloc comes to focus on a greater range

of issues and moves to a more center-left position on the taxes-versus-spending dimension.

Though the ordering of parties on the spending-restraint dimension is roughly similar to

the ordering of partisans, the trend over time in Parliament seems less pronounced than in

opinion. That is, public opinion has moved towards spending relatively dramatically since the

mid-1990s, yet the same trend is barely evident in QP content. Whether this difference reflects a

lack of representation is not clear. The public can simply ignore issues they are not interested in,

while legislators will usually need to pay at least some attention to many issues at any given

time. Thus, the swings evident in public opinion should perhaps not be expected, at least not to

the same extent, in QP content.

The relationships between both general and partisan public and parliamentary issue

priorities can be examined more formally. Indeed, this can be accomplished using a simple time-

series cross-sectional (TSCS) model, where each party is a panel. The model is as follows:

$$QP^i_t = \alpha + QP^i_{t-1} + MIP^{All}_{t-1} + MIP^i_{t-1} + \varepsilon \; , \tag{1}$$

where QP^i is the taxes-spending dimension as represented in Question Period for party i, MIP^{All}

is the same dimension as evident in public opinion data for all respondents combined, and MIP^i

is the dimension calculated for respondents voting for party i only. MIP^{All} thus captures the

extent to which a party's legislative agenda follows general public priorities, while MIP^i captures

the extent to which that party's agenda follows their own partisans' priorities. (The model also

includes a lagged version of QP (at t-1) on the right-hand side, since the distribution of

attentiveness in any one period will be partly determined by the distribution of attentiveness in

previous periods.[7])

[Table 2 about here]

Results for this model are shown in Table 2. The model is estimated in three stages: the

first stage includes only MIP^{All}; the second includes only MIP^i; the last includes both variables.

Results in the first column show no significant effect of MIP^{All} on the parties' QP agendas. The

second column, however, shows a significant effect of partisan agendas (MIP^i) on parties' QP

agendas. A coefficient of .215 implies the following: if 5% of any one partisan constituency

moves from being principally attentive to taxes/debt issues to being principally attentive to

health/education issues, then the balance between these two issue categories in the related party's

oral questions should shift by about 1.08% in the same direction. This effect is statistically

significant, though rather small in magnitude. In the final model, including both MIP^i and

MIP^{All}, MIP^i remains significant – indeed, its magnitude increases somewhat. Notably, MIP^{All}

remains insignificant.[8]

These results should be interpreted carefully. The aforementioned effect of a 5% shift in

partisan preference is worded in terms of a shift over time; however, there are several clues that

the power of the MIP^i coefficient comes from cross-sectional (across parties) rather than

longitudinal variation. First, MIP^{All} is not significant even on its own, and Figure 3 does not

suggest that there should be large differences in over-time trends between the generalized MIP^{All}

measure and the more particularized MIP^i measure. Figure 3 also does not suggest that there are

large over-time differences between the different parties' MIP^i agendas. Indeed, there are strong

correlations between the generalized and partisan taxes-versus-spending dimensions. The

Reform Party MIP^i has the lowest correlation with MIP^{All} at .72; the Liberal Party MIP^i has the

highest at .91.

The greater effect of MIP^i on issue attentiveness in QP is thus not so much the product of

different partisan trends over time as it is a function of ongoing differences in the *level* of each

partisan (and party) series. In other words, durable partisan differences in the taxes-versus-spending dimension – as shown in Table 1 as well as Figure 3 – are clearly represented in parties' behavior in QP; short-term shifts in partisan issue attentiveness appear to play a lesser role. This subtle difference between representation across time and representation across space is critical. In Parliamentary Question Period, durable partisan differences in issue attentiveness are clearly represented, but short-term trends in partisan issue attentiveness over time have a relatively weak effect, if any effect at all.

Conclusions

Are public issue priorities reflected in the content of oral questions? Preceding evidence suggests the answer is yes – parties' agendas vary in a manner that reflects public issue attentiveness. That this suggestion is true is, at a minimum, evidence that Question Period can be an important representational forum – important in the sense that representation of public attitudes can and does happen there, though the extent to which this content is linked to subsequent policymaking may admittedly be another matter. Still, evidence that questions are at least partly linked to public issue concerns lends support to the idea that oral questions play a valuable role in the Canadian Parliament.

More importantly, our results suggest two things about the character of the representation of public issue priorities in Parliament. First, representation during this period seems be more particularized – specifically, partisan – than generalized. Perhaps this is not surprising: the appearance of two new parties in the 1990s – one of them with a strong grassroots orientation and the other with a strong anti-centralist orientation – likely increased the presence of, and the pressure for, particularized representation. Second, to the extent that representation of public issue attentiveness exists in QP, cross-partisan differences clearly trump over-time trends. That

is, at any given time, parties' behavior in QP broadly reflects differences in the issue priorities of their partisans. Over time, the link between public attitudes and QP content seems a little more tenuous, at least over the short term, where our taxes-versus-spending measure is concerned.

While the particular trends shown here are restricted to Canada, the general findings (a) that representation exists in oral questions, and (b) that representation of issue attentiveness can reflect a number of different constituencies, are of course not restricted to the Canadian case. Similar phenomena will exist across democracies, though political institutions will play an important structuring role. In the US, a division of executive and legislative power and less party discipline may mean that individual members of Congress find less incentive to represent a broad, national constituency, and a stronger incentive to represent the issue priorities (partisan, or more generalized) of their narrower geographic constituency. More proportional systems in Continental Europe, where smaller parties can govern in coalitions and thus may have a lesser incentive to move towards the median voter, may foster stronger representation of partisan interests; indeed, far narrower partisan interests which show differences not just in cross-sectional levels of issue attentiveness but also exhibit quite different over-time trends. And across all systems, the proportion by which a given candidate or party won an election will affect their representational strategy -- their efforts to "expand" or "protect" their electoral base (Fenno 1978).

In short, the representation of issue attentiveness will almost always reflect a number of different constituencies, both generalized and particularized. Thus, the strategy employed above can and should be applied widely. This more nuanced approach to issue attentiveness agendas has the potential to enrich our understanding of the mechanics and nature of representation not just in Canada, but elsewhere as well.

Notes

[1] Note that we use 'constituency' here in a general sense – that is, a subset of the population, rather than a geographic electoral unit.

[2] These pressures may be lessened in presidential systems; see, e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 1998, 2000; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Kiewit and Cox 1991.

[3] A list of Canadian topic codes is available from the authors; US topic codes are available via the Policy Agendas Project website (www.policyagendas.org) at the University of Washington.

[4] It is worth reiterating that this condition is not expected to be the case in general. We assert that the measure is a reasonable summary for Canada during this period, and the forthcoming analysis supports this supposition.

[5] The question reads, "What do you think is the most important problem facing Canada today?"

[6] This shift in public preferences is supported by past research on the representation of spending/saving preferences in Canada during this time period. See Soroka and Wlezien 2004.

[7] Statistically speaking, this lagged variable also of course accounts for autocorrelation in the dependent variable.

[8] This model was also estimated with the Bloc Québécois excluded, as it could be argued that the party has no clear reason to represent a generalized Canadian interest, insofar as it may differ from a generalized Québec interest. This made no difference to the results.

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Table 1. Parliamentary Attentiveness and Public Opinion

	Lib	PC	NDP	Ref	BQ
			Parliament		
	Lib	PC	NDP	Ref	BQ
Health	4.1	3.0	9.2	4.5	3.0
Education	0.9	2.7	1.5	0.1	0.9
Debt	1.4	3.8	1.8	4.2	1.9
Taxes	3.2	9.0	2.5	5.8	3.9
			Public Opinion		
	Lib	PC	NDP	Ref	BQ
Health	4.4	4.1	5.4	2.9	2.4
Education	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.2
Debt	6.4	8.8	5.0	15.4	7.0
Taxes	5.2	5.1	4.7	7.7	3.1

Cells contain mean values for attentiveness to each (as a percent of attentiveness to all issues), including all quarterly data from 1991q1 to 1999q4.

Table 2. Parliamentary Activity and Public Opinion, TSCS Analysis

| Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: QP^i		
QP^i_{t-1}	.224***	.203***	.202***
	(.073)	(.074)	(.074)
MIP^{All}_{t-1}	.131	——	-.139
	(.165)		(.213)
MIP^i_{t-1}	——	.215*	.287*
		(.123)	(.155)
Constant	1.737	2.651*	2.167
	(1.707)	(1.489)	(1.740)
R^2	.088	.109	.112
N	150	148	148
Panels	5	5	5

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients from a TSCS estimation with panel-corrected standard errors, with standard errors in parentheses and standardized coefficients in italics.
* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Figure 1. Issue Attentiveness in Parliament, Monthly
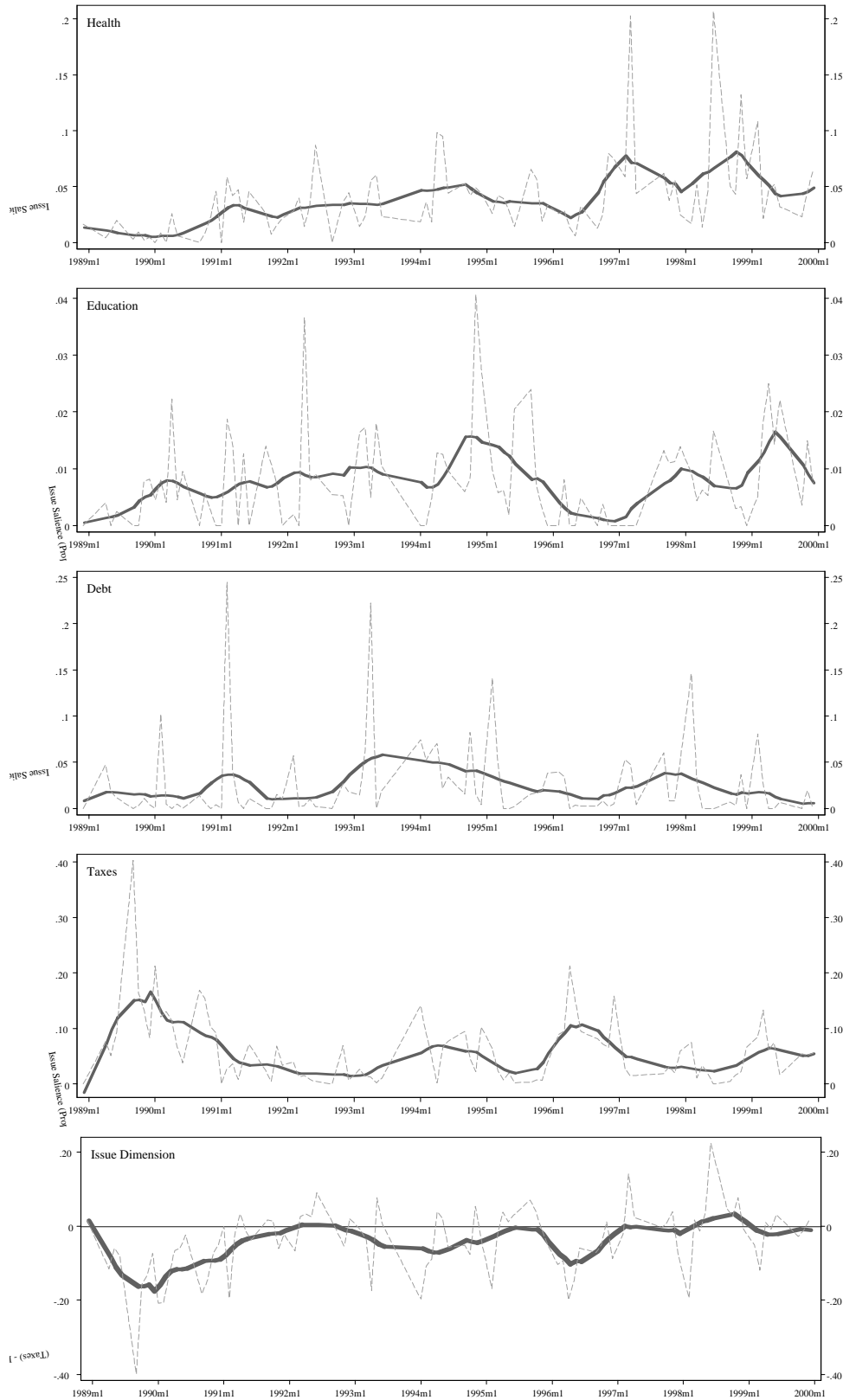
Figure 2. Taxes-versus-spending Dimension, Public and Parliament, Quarterly
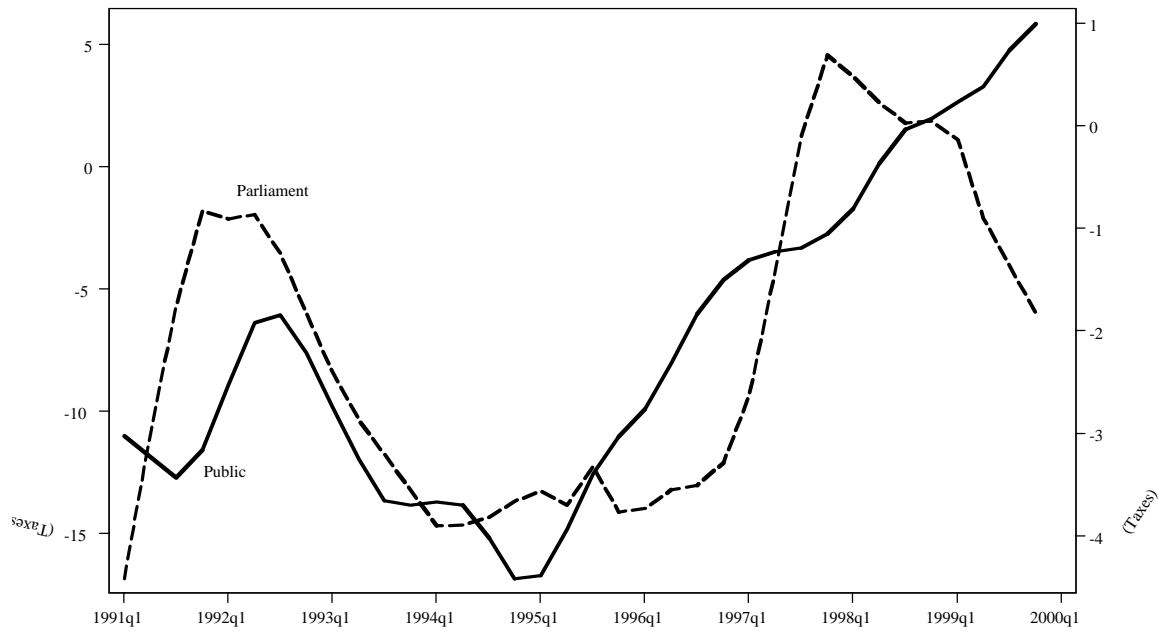
Figure 3. Taxes-versus-spending Dimension, in Public and Parliament, Quarterly, by Party/Partisanship