**Populism in Canada: Elite Rhetoric and the 2022 Freedom Convoy**

Danielle Bohonos
Faculty of Arts
Department of Political Science
McGill University, Montreal
October 23, 2023

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of master's in political science.

Table of Contents

**Abstract**

**EN**

This thesis uses a dictionary approach to text-analysis in an attempt to answer whether there was a spillover of far-right rhetoric from the grassroots movement of the Freedom Convoy Protest into elite-level discourse in the House of Commons. I find that while there are some indications that this rhetoric did impact the speeches of Conservative Party leadership candidates, these results are not statistically significant and could be clarified with further research on the topic.

**FR**

Ce mémoire utilise une approche d'analyse de texte par dictionnaire pour tenter de déterminer s'il y a eu un débordement de la rhétorique d'extrême-droite du mouvement populaire de protestation du Convoi de la liberté vers le discours des élites à la Chambre des communes. Je trouve que même s'il existe certaines indications selon lesquelles cette rhétorique a eu un impact sur les discours des candidats à la direction du Parti conservateur, ces résultats ne sont pas statistiquement significatifs et pourraient être clarifiés par des recherches plus approfondies de ce sujet.

**Acknowledgments**

**Introduction**

For a long time, Canada seemed to be an exception to the global populist trend of elite criticism and anti-pluralist sentiment due to its reputation of multiculturalism and tolerance (Müller, 2016; Mudde, 2004; Taub, 2017). However, in the last few years, Canada has seen a rise in support for far-right politics that follows these global trends (Halle, 2019; Nanos, 2020). Following his failed bid for Conservative Party (CPC) leadership in 2018, former cabinet Minister, Maxime Bernier established the People's Party of Canada (PPC), which originally focused primarily on xenophobic anti-immigrant rhetoric (Hameed, 2019). Although the PPC has yet to win a seat in the Canadian House of Commons, its vote share increased from 1.6% to 4.9% between the 2019 and 2021 elections, which may be due to the introduction of their other defining policy, a strong position against vaccine mandates (Medeiros, 2021). This anti-vaccine position was also a central element of the "Freedom Convoy" that captivated the city of Ottawa for almost a month during the winter of 2022 (Austen, 2022). Differing stances on the convoy issue caused fractions within the CPC caucus and eventually contributed to a new Conservative Party leadership race in the summer of 2022, where many high-profile Conservative leaders adopted some of the populist rhetoric first popularized by the PPC. Thus, the Freedom Convoy event provides an excellent opportunity to study the impact of far-right rhetoric on Canadian mainstream politics. I hypothesize that the Convoy contributed to the popularization of such rhetoric among mainstream parties.

I use text-as-data techniques to analyze the official Hansard records from the House of Commons for Members of Parliament across all major parties with the aim of measuring how levels of populist rhetoric changed after the Convoy. With this project, I aim to answer the question: can a right-wing and populist event influence the rhetoric of mainstream politicians?

Specifically, I use lexicon-based methods, a standard practice in political science, with the intention to measure whether there was any discursive change in the House of Commons following the Convoy. First, I use a pre-established dictionary which was created specifically to identify markers of populist speech in political party manifestos. These manifestos are very similar to the types of formal speech used in the parliament, which allows me to make use of this well-used dictionary. There are two major benefits of using this dictionary: first, using an established dictionary in the comparative literature allows me to directly situate the Canadian context among other well-studied examples of populism; and second, this approach ensures that the definition of populism used in the dictionary has been used in practice, which helps to account for the thinly defined ideology of populism in cross-context comparison (Hunger, 2022; Mudde, 2004). By doing so, I am able to place the rhetoric that I expose in my analysis within the broader discourse on populist speech around the globe.

I conduct a second dictionary approach based on an analysis of the speeches of prominent Convoy protestors, created for this specific context. This is meant to identify any spillover of the rhetoric of the grassroots Convoy Protest into elite party members' speeches, who may have adopted the Convoy rhetoric to address and represent the grievances of their constituency. Here, I do not plan to test populism directly, rather to measure the uptick of Convoy specific rhetoric which may have passed from this grassroots movement to the House of Commons through the attempts of Members of Parliament to attract or appeal to these protestors and their followers. If I measure an increase of this Convoy rhetoric following the Convoy period, this will be evidence of such a spillover effect. I hypothesize that Conservative MPs adopted greater levels of populist rhetoric in the period following the Convoy due to their closer proximity to the far-right PPC party

encroaching on their voter base. As a result, the CPC may have used this as a political opportunity to re-engage those voters who they may have lost to the PPC.

The Canada "Freedom Convoy" protest lasted from January 22, 2022, to February 23, 2022, right in the middle of the period I observed with the Hansard data, which offers me a good opportunity to look at any changes that may have occurred during, and because of the Convoy. The Convoy began as a protest against a requirement that cross-border long-haul truckers be vaccinated against COVID-19, before spreading to a much larger anti-establishment and anti-vaccine mandate community. The protestors occupied multiple blocks of the Ottawa downtown core outside the Canadian parliament buildings for many weeks with long-haul trucks, normal vehicles, hot-tubs, and tents, among other objects and vehicles. The Convoy protest was only brought to an end when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called in the Canadian military to assist the Ottawa Police and the Ontario Provincial Police in their efforts to clear protestors. The Prime Minister's historic use of the Emergencies Act has become incredibly controversial in the time since, and Trudeau faced an official inquiry by the Public Order Emergency Commission for his use of this Act in this context.

The Convoy sparked another important event on the Canadian political landscape: the Conservative Party leadership race. The 2022 Conservative Party leadership race began in the heat of the Convoy protests, when CPC caucus members called for the removal of then-leader Erin O'Toole. In his parting statement, the latter commented "This country needs a Conservative party that is both an intellectual force and a governing force. Ideology without power is vanity. Seeking power with ideology is hubris", indicating potential infighting within the caucus around the time of the event (Boutilier & Connolly, 2022). He was officially voted out on February 2, 2022, by a vote of 73–45, and was replaced by interim leader Candice Bergen. Bergen was replaced by Pierre

Poilievre on September 10, 2022, who won the leadership on the first ballot for the first time in over a decade. Following Bergen's resignation from public office, Maxime Bernier ran in her former riding of Portage-Lisgar (Halmarson, 2023), emphasizing the perceived CPC-PPC competitiveness of these constituencies.

This project fills a gap in the Canadian political science literature on populism in the present context. This thesis examines whether and how rhetoric associated with the Freedom Convoy permeated elite parliamentary discourse in Canada, and to what extent this rhetoric aligns with traditional conceptions of populist rhetoric in political science literature. More broadly, this thesis aims to draw attention to the rise in far-right and populist movements in the Canadian context, which has been considered an exception to the global rise in far-right movements over the 21st century.

**Literature Review**

i.    Global Rise in Populism

Political scientists have been engaged in a debate over explanations of the political trends in disaffection towards democracy over the last half century. This disaffection is two-fold, first there is the post-materialist explanation, and then there is the threat of populism. In their pivotal book, *Cultural Backlash*, Inglehart and Norris argue that the generational shift from materialist to post-materialist values is responsible for the "erosion of conventional political participation… among the younger generation" (2019). Explanations offered for this trend include Inglehart's premise that "cutbacks in the welfare state and high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth" have exacerbated economic stagnation's shift of gains "almost entirely to the top" (2018), leaving youth dissatisfied with their lack of continued progression past their parents'

standing. Inglehart and Norris conclude that this decline in political participation is related to the rise in populist parties around the globe over the same period.

One of the defining features of the populism literature in political science is the debate around conceptual stretching (Sartori, 1970). Various political scientists have long debated the definitions of populism and have determined that this concept is used to describe a multitude of political phenomena, depending largely on context. As Hunger and Paxton discuss in their article *What's in a buzzword? A systematic review of the state of populism research in political science*, one of the key differences comes from the geographic region of focus. These waning periods of increased research interest often follow historical populist movements like the rise of populist rhetoric in Latin America since the 1990s, or the early 1990s in Europe (Hunger, 2022). They also find that there is often "a conflation of populism with nativism" in research on the European context, due to the closeness of these ideologies and the "Us vs. Them" mentality.

Others build these conceptual stretching critiques into their criticism of the cultural backlash explanation. In his article "Cultural Backlash? How (Not) to Explain the Rise of Authoritarian Populism", Armin Schäfer provides a critical review of Norris and Inglehart's book. He poignantly states that "too loose a definition of populism risks producing too many false positives" (2022, 1978), which in this case is too loose a definition of robust analysis. He shows that while Norris and Inglehart found significant cultural divides between young and old generations, when we use a more robust statistical model, these results do not hold up, and instead there is relatively little difference in propensity to hold these beliefs across generations.

More recent work attempts to further break down the question "who are these populist voters". Hameleers notes that populist politicians are more likely to use social media than non-populist politicians and theorizes that this is a strategic move by these politicians to spread these activating

messages and indicates the importance of developing the study of political discourse in online media. He focuses on some common discursive elements within both populism and conspiracy theories, the major one being the Manichean division between corrupt elite and ordinary people (40) and concludes that these populist politicians are able to "cultivate a pervasive divide between the ordinary people and the corrupt elites and/or dangerous others that are said to collaborate to hide their intentions and maintain the power discrepancy" (2020). In his seminal 2004 piece, Cas Mudde provides a concise definition of populism for the modern context. He defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people". This two-fold definition is slightly more robust that others which help to prevent broad over-classification. In this thesis, I follow the work by Mudde, Hameleers, and others who argue that populist rhetoric rests first and foremost on this Manichean view of politics and the political elite, that opposes them to the will of ordinary citizens (Mudde 2017).

Others have commented on the relationship between populist rhetoric, anti-intellectualism, and COVID-19 misperceptions which I plan to build-on here as well (Merkley, 2020; Eberl, Huber, and Greussing, 2021). In his article "Medical populism and the COVID-19 pandemic" Gideon Lasco refers to an extension of our previous understanding of populist rhetoric, the concept of medical populism "as a political style often used in health emergencies" (2020). Specifically, he discusses how medical populism extends the "Us vs. Them" dynamic to the response style of the government to these crises, arguing that populist leaders place greater emphasis on the "simplification of the pandemic…" through "common-sense" solutions, the "dramatization of the crisis…", and the "forging of divisions" (2020).

ii.        Populism in Canada

Because of the flexible nature of these various definitions of populism, it is important to define what populism means in the Canadian context. Historically, an agrarian populist movement permeated the Canadian political landscape in the late 19th and early 20th century primarily in the Canadian prairies which contributed to one of the earliest partisan divisions in the House of Commons (Godbout, 2020). As in many other western states, the agrarian populist movement focused on attaining political representation and economic mobility for farmers in the western Canadian provinces. More recently, Donald Trump has popularized anti-elite rhetoric that includes open dissent against the federal government and bureaucracy (Rudolph, 2019; Merkley, 2022).

Beyond the establishment of the PPC, we see further examples of the use of far-right rhetoric with the rise in threats towards Prime Minister Trudeau during the federal election of September 2021, which was the first electoral test of Canadians' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One such event occurred on September 6, 2021, where a protester threw small rocks at the Prime Minister as he was leaving a campaign event and returning to his bus in London, Ontario (Zadorsky, 2021). Later, we learned that the protester was recently the president of his local riding association for the PPC. We also see exchange between far-right actors across the border, as many prominent actors in the US extreme-right discourse originated in Canada. Some names may come to mind: former academic Jordan Peterson, far-right activist Lauren Southern, or the Canadian Armed Forces reservist Patrik Matthews, who attempted to form a white nationalist military resurgence movement on the Canadian prairies, then crossed into the US to join a larger branch of the movement and was eventually arrested by the FBI for threatening terrorism (Burke and Pauls, 2021; Shephard et al., 2021). However, in the literature there is a notable emphasis on the inability for any of these emerging far-right movements to gain electoral success. For instance, Medeiros

(2021) shows that due to the geographic dispersion of support for the PPC, the party was unsuccessful at attaining a seat in the federal election. This is in part due to Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system, which disadvantages small parties that are geographically dispersed (Cairns, 1968).

iii.     Western Alienation

This geographic dispersion is not a new phenomenon, nor is it unique to the new PPC. Here I will focus on two notable geographic divisions that define much of the Canadian political science literature. First, there is the West vs East/Centre regional divide between Eastern and Western provinces, separated by the geographic barriers of the Canadian Shield and the Great Lakes (Banack, 2020). Historically, this division contributed to the establishment of certain parties which served regional interests, like the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a socialist party that emerged in the 1930s to accommodate the interests of Western farmers (Godbout, 2020). Other scholars like Jack Lucas and Dave Armstrong have explored the relationship between regional ideology and political elite in Canada, showing that there is a significant relationship between local politicians and micro-level regional identities (2021). They argue that there is a recent resurgence in lower-order regional identities that align more closely with municipal politics than pan-Canadian ideology.

There is also some evidence of a regional division amongst these recent far-right movements in Canada. This regional divide also aligns with the traditional base of the conservative parties in Canada, the Western provinces. Evidence for this includes the emergence of the PPC and, to some extent, that of Western separatist parties like the Maverick Party. Additionally, during the Convoy we saw a strong presence of Convoy support both from Westerners who travelled to Ottawa and in additional smaller protests held in cities across the country, one of which was the Coots

barricade. We also saw the appointment of Candice Bergen as interim leader in the middle of the Convoy, who represents the rural Manitoban riding of Portage-Lisgar, which also happened to have the largest proportion of PPC supporters in the last Federal election in fall 2021. Therefore, we can expect that there is some evidence that there is stronger support for this movement in the western provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. I expect lower tendencies in Ontario and Quebec, the historic centre of political power and the traditional target of those claiming Western alienation (Barney & Laycock, 1999).

iv.      Urban vs. Rural Divide

The second widely experienced geographic dimension is the rural-urban cleavage generally considered to have emerged with the urbanization of the industrial revolution (Ford and Jennings, 2020; Lago, 2021). In her article *Rural identity as a contributing factor to anti-intellectualism in the U.S.* Kristin Lunz Trujillo demonstrates that "an overlooked but significant factor driving anti-intellectualism is rural identity, or a psychological attachment to being from a rural area" (2022). Rural residents are often already primed against the "establishment elite" and carry more libertarian or conservative beliefs than their urban counterparts (Ford and Jennings, 2020; Lago 2021; Banack, 2020). This may follow rational logical reasoning; rural residents often do not have an active or accessible municipal government, and instead have a larger rural municipality government which covers a much larger region of many small communities. In all levels of government, rural residents often face a geographic barrier to accessing public services, which may contribute to anti-government or anti-establishment sentiments. Other authors point out that this sentiment builds from "perceptions of being economically left behind" which are "intertwined with distance from power and isolation" (Lago, 2021).

There is also a notable association in this case between rural areas and working-class jobs. In her book *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* Katherine Cramer explores the awakening of rural consciousness in the United States following the economic collapse of 2008. She uses interviews to pull apart the intertwined dynamics of working-class socio-economic status, anti-establishment beliefs, and rural identity, where she shows that at the time of the recession, "many people in rural communities looked around and saw themselves in a place perpetually stuck in disadvantage" (Cramer, 2016). Cramer argues that Scott Walker was able to tap into a specific type of populist rural consciousness to garner political success in his race for Governor of Wisconsin (2016).

In the Canadian context, these geographic tensions are only further exacerbated than those discussed in literature from the United States due to our much larger land-mass and low population density, meaning that rural residents are only further isolated from perceived metropolitan elite. This may be part of the reason that there is a tendency for those in rural areas to support more conservative-leaning parties while there is a tendency for those in urban areas to support more liberal-leaning parties. Just as it is the case for our southern neighbour, this trend of rural resentment is also on the rise in Canada. In their study of Canadian federal elections over the period 1896–2019, Armstrong et al. "find that the urban-rural cleavage has been more important in recent elections than at any point in Canada's history (2022). Further, in his ethnographic study of rural Albertans, Clark Banack finds that "most similar to contemporary rural America, rural Albertans feel a precise form of rural alienation related to their own sense of a rural identity and a corresponding belief in the idea that rural communities and citizens in Alberta are often unfairly treated, overlooked and even looked down upon" (2020). He finds that rural identity is often encompassed by negative feelings towards city folks, due to an underlying belief that "the

government was not truly interested in them" but stands to serve only this perceived city-dwelling elite (Banack, 2020). Connecting back to the case at hand, the Convoy movement was initially centered around working-class truckers, who often reside in rural areas. Additionally, it is worth noting that over 118 of Canada's 338 federal electoral districts are contained within only three cities (CITE). The metropoles of Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto (and their surrounding areas) house a large proportion of the Canadian population, which is reflected in the federal seat distribution, and represents the stark divisions between these regions and the remaining 200 ridings, which are much less densely populated.

**Objectives**

The aim of this research is to examine whether a populist event influences elite discourse more broadly, focusing on the Canadian "Freedom Convoy" as an example. My hypotheses build upon both the populism literature from abroad, and classic theories in Canadian political science, and are an attempt to interpret the events of 2022 and to establish a clearer idea of how populist rhetoric that culminated in the Convoy protest in Ottawa may have spread in the Canadian context. I have four main hypotheses based upon the literature discussed in the previous section:

*Hypothesis 1:* Conservative Party MPs experienced a greater increase in populist rhetoric than other MPs.

*Hypothesis 2:* MPs from western provinces experienced a greater increase in populist rhetoric than other MPs.

*Hypothesis 3:* MPs from rural ridings experienced a greater increase in populist rhetoric than MPs from urban ridings.

> ***Hypothesis 4:*** CPC Leadership candidates experienced a greater increase in populist rhetoric due to their greater incentive to appeal to PPC supporters by adopting this discourse.

As previously mentioned, this period of analysis also covers the Conservative Party leadership race which allows me to see whether there was a greater increase in messaging amongst these leadership candidates. The leadership campaign is traditionally used to signal a potential policy shift by an incoming leadership candidate, and if they want to regain some of the voters they had lost to the PPC, this would be an advantageous time for these candidates to signal that they might be willing to fight for these same far-right issues. I will also look at all other elected party members, as I expect that MPs from the other parties may show an increase in messaging about the Convoy following the event in their critical response to these protests, although not as marked as in the case of the Conservative Party.

**Data and Methodology**

i.     Hansard Data Collection

I obtained the official digital Hansard records of the Canadian House of Commons Debates for the Second Session of the 43rd Parliament (September 23, 2020 - August 15, 2021) as well as the First Session of the 44th Parliament (November 22, 2021 - Present) from the Parliament of Canada website. This covers a total period from September 23, 2020, to June 21, 2023, which extends over one year prior and one year following the Freedom Convoy event that occurred in January and February 2022. I used web-scraping techniques to obtain the debate records as XML files and separated outcome observations by each new speech entry in the debate record. Put otherwise, whenever the Speaker recognized a member to speak, this indicates a new entry in the dataset. In

addition to the date, content, and length of the speech, I also create additional covariates for the Member of Parliament's constituency, region (West/else), rural/urban status, party, and whether they were a candidate in the 2022 CPC leadership race.

ii.          Populist Dictionary

Many authors argue that populism is a "thin" ideology, meaning that it changes from context to context and fits many different moulds because it lacks its own unique ideological component, and instead can be grafted onto many other ideologies precisely because it lacks this substantive attribute of its own (Hunger, 2022; Mudde, 2004). For this reason, many scholars have also argued that it is difficult to define and measure populism, particularly using text-as-data approaches which rely on automated programming, and that it is increasingly misconstrued as the word populism becomes more popular in public discourse (Hunger 2022, Pauwels, 2011; Bonikowski et. al., 2016). Considering these factors, I have decided to use a dictionary-based approach which allows me to have significant control over the user-input.

I performed two different lexicon-based analyses on the parliamentary speeches in the Hansard records, where each individual speech entry represents one observation in the dataset. The first analysis was conducted with a pre-established dictionary of populist rhetoric (henceforth referred to in this thesis as the Populist Dictionary; specific tokens are listed in the appendix) taken from Matthijs Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels' work *Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis* in which they compare classic hand-coded method to computerised methods of measuring populism (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). This dictionary is also used in other discursive text analyses of comparativists studying the rise of populism in Europe and the United States (e.g., Gründl, 2016), which will help determine how the emerging Canadian context fits within the

16

broader literature of global populist movements. To perform this analysis, I took the exact tokens from Rooduijn and Pauwels and created a bag-of-words function which calculates the total word count of each parliamentary speech in the dataset, the count of total number of Populist Dictionary words per speech, and the proportion of Populist Dictionary words per 100 words.

iii.         Convoy Protest Dictionary

For the second analysis I created a new handmade dictionary which attempts to capture the unique rhetoric used by convoy protesters (henceforth referred to in this thesis as the Convoy Dictionary). This model attempts to identify key terms associated with the Convoy and measure the spillover of this specific Convoy rhetoric into political elite discourse in the Canadian parliament. Additionally, this second approach is meant to determine whether a dictionary built in the Canadian-specific context based on the convoy speeches will show a stronger effect than the broader populist dictionary. I created this dictionary by comparing the published works of known Convoy protest leaders including, Tamara Lich, Benjamin J Dichter, and John Goddard, to the online speeches of other known activists in Canada who are involved in causes other than the Convoy protest. The intention here is to isolate specifically the type of language used by those supporters of the Convoy cause, and not just the rhetoric of protest more broadly. To distinguish the two types of text I created a one-hot encoded sparse matrix of the strings, which has all *unique* words from all texts as its columns and the number of rows is equal to the total number of words in the texts. Word presence is indicated by a 1, and absence by a 0. I used binomial regression to associate words with one of two states: convoy speech or other activist speech (cv.glmnet, glmnet R package).  Performing model prediction on an identity matrix of all unique words in the text, I then select the top 25 words most-associated with the Convoy protest from the model, removing any proper nouns and pronouns. I then used my previous function to calculate the total speech

word count, the total Convoy Dictionary word count, and the number of Convoy Dictionary words per 100 words.

iv.        Difference-in-Differences

I use these dictionary models to formally test the difference between levels of Populist Dictionary and Convoy Dictionary rhetoric in the Hansard speeches, before and after the start of the Freedom Convoy protests, across Conservative and other members. I isolate this analysis to highlight the Conservative Party, because this party has a motive for adopting the type of rhetoric used by the far-right, due to the aforementioned threat of the imposing People's Party. I use two separate difference-in-differences models (Populist, Convoy) where each outcome observation (Coverage) is the total number of instances of Populist Dictionary or Convoy Dictionary speech in the Hansard per day that debates were held. The coefficient of interest is that of the interaction between whether the coverage appeared in Liberal or Conservative speech (Conservative) and whether the coverage occurred in the pre- or post-protest period (ProtestStart).

$$\text{Coverage}_{rt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Conservative}_r + \beta_2 \text{ProtestStart}_t + \beta_3 \text{Conservative}_r \times \text{ProtestStart}_t + \varepsilon_{rt}$$

I conduct three additional difference-in-differences models for the remaining variables of interest, with the same model format as above, replacing the Conservative variable with each of the following: whether the MP represents a riding in the western provinces (West), whether the MP represents a riding in one of Canada's three largest metropoles (Urban), and whether the MP was a candidate in the most recent Conservative Party leadership race (Leadership Candidate).

**Results**

I find that broadly speaking, there are no statistically significant differences across Members of Parliament regarding their use of Populist or Convoy speech as defined by these models. However, there are some intriguing differences between Conservative Members of Parliament and other MPs, as well as between Conservative Party *leadership candidates* and the remaining Members of Parliament, which are worth reporting and discussing.

In Table 1, I present the results of the initial difference-in-differences model which indicates the difference in mean Populist Dictionary and Convoy Dictionary scores between Conservative Party Members of Parliament and all other MPs, before and after the start of the Freedom Convoy Protest. These results show that across the entire time-period, Conservative members actually had a slightly lower overall use of the speech defined Populist Dictionary, and a slightly higher use of the terms defined Convoy Dictionary. Looking at the interaction between the Conservative variable and the start of the protest, which are the results of the D-in-D estimation, we see that there is a slightly larger likelihood for Conservative Party MPs to use language contained in the Populist Dictionary compared to other MPs, and a small but still positive likelihood for Conservative MPs to use the language contained in the dictionary model based upon Convoy leaders' rhetoric. The results in this table also indicate that overall, across all Members of Parliament, there was a slight reduction in the likelihood to use rhetoric as defined by either model, as indicated by the negative estimates for the Start of Protest variable. However, I emphasize that none of these estimates are statistically significant, nor were the estimates of the difference-in-differences models for the remaining three hypotheses. The tables representing the results of the other difference-in-differences models can be found in appendices B-D. Notably the scores for the number of words per 100 words that are recognized by the dictionary are consistently quite low in

all models (often less than 1 word change per 100 words). This may indicate that the speeches in this period did not include high levels of populist and Convoy rhetoric, or, the more likely case, that these dictionary models lack precision and could be better defined.

**Table 1**

|  | Populist Dictionary | Convoy Dictionary |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5.405 | 1.225 |
|  | (0.020) | (0.009) |
| Conservative | -1.005 | 0.123 |
|  | (0.031) | (0.017) |
| Start of Protest | -0.286 | -0.031 |
|  | (0.025) | (0.012) |
| Conservative x Start of Protest | 0.162 | 0.035 |
|  | (0.040) | (0.022) |
| Num Obs | 98834 | 98834 |
| R2 | 0.021 | 0.002 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.021 | 0.002 |
| AIC | 499632.8 | 362616.6 |
| BIC | 499680.3 | 362664.1 |
| RMSE | 3.03 | 1.52 |

In Figure 1, I present the mean dictionary score for both the Populist Dictionary and the Convoy Dictionary, across Conservative Members of Parliament, and all other MPs. The slightly greater tendency for CPC members to use rhetoric defined by the Populist dictionary can be seen more clearly in this figure, but visibly did not change much following the start of Convoy protest, which is represented by the vertical dashed line. There is also an ever-so-slightly greater tendency for CPC members to use rhetoric as defined by the Convoy Dictionary, however, this is very low across both groups.

**Figure 1**
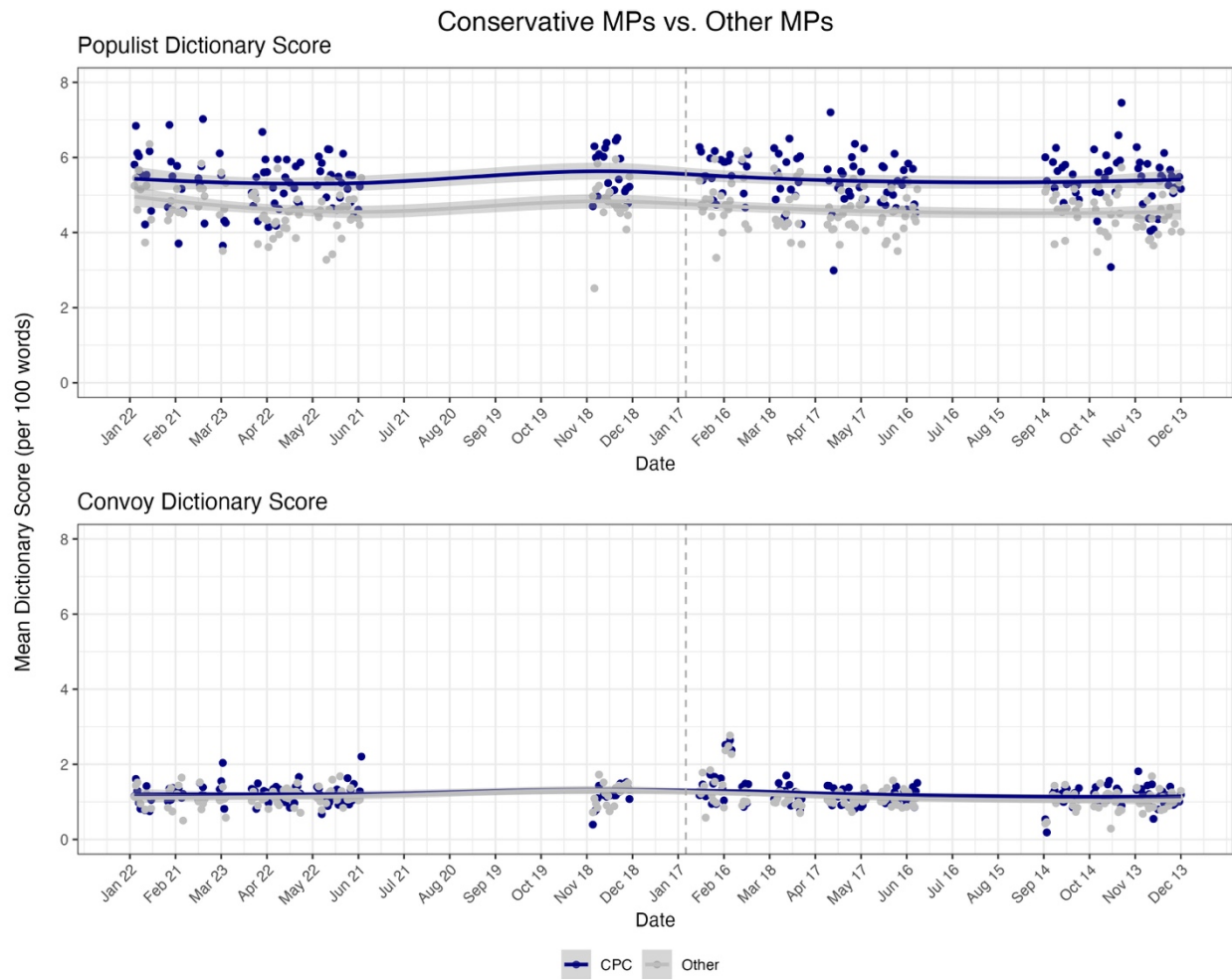


In Figures 2 and 3 I present the visual representation of the West vs. East/Centre and Urban

vs. Rural models, both of which indicate that there is virtually no difference in the use of these

types of rhetoric across these groups. Notably, the clusters of data in these graphs indicate the

duration of the sessions of the House of Commons, and the periods with no data points indicate

the periods when the parliament was not in session.
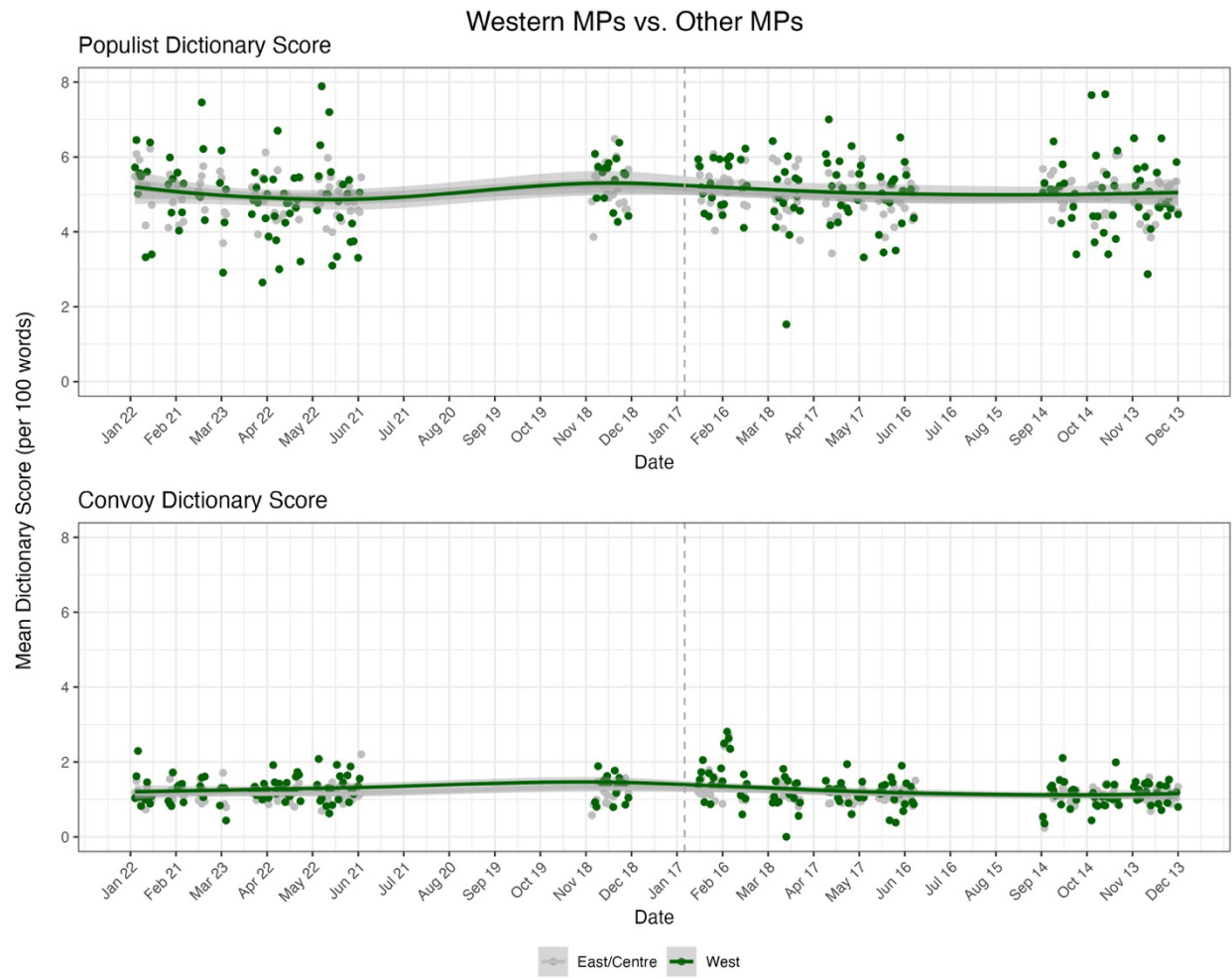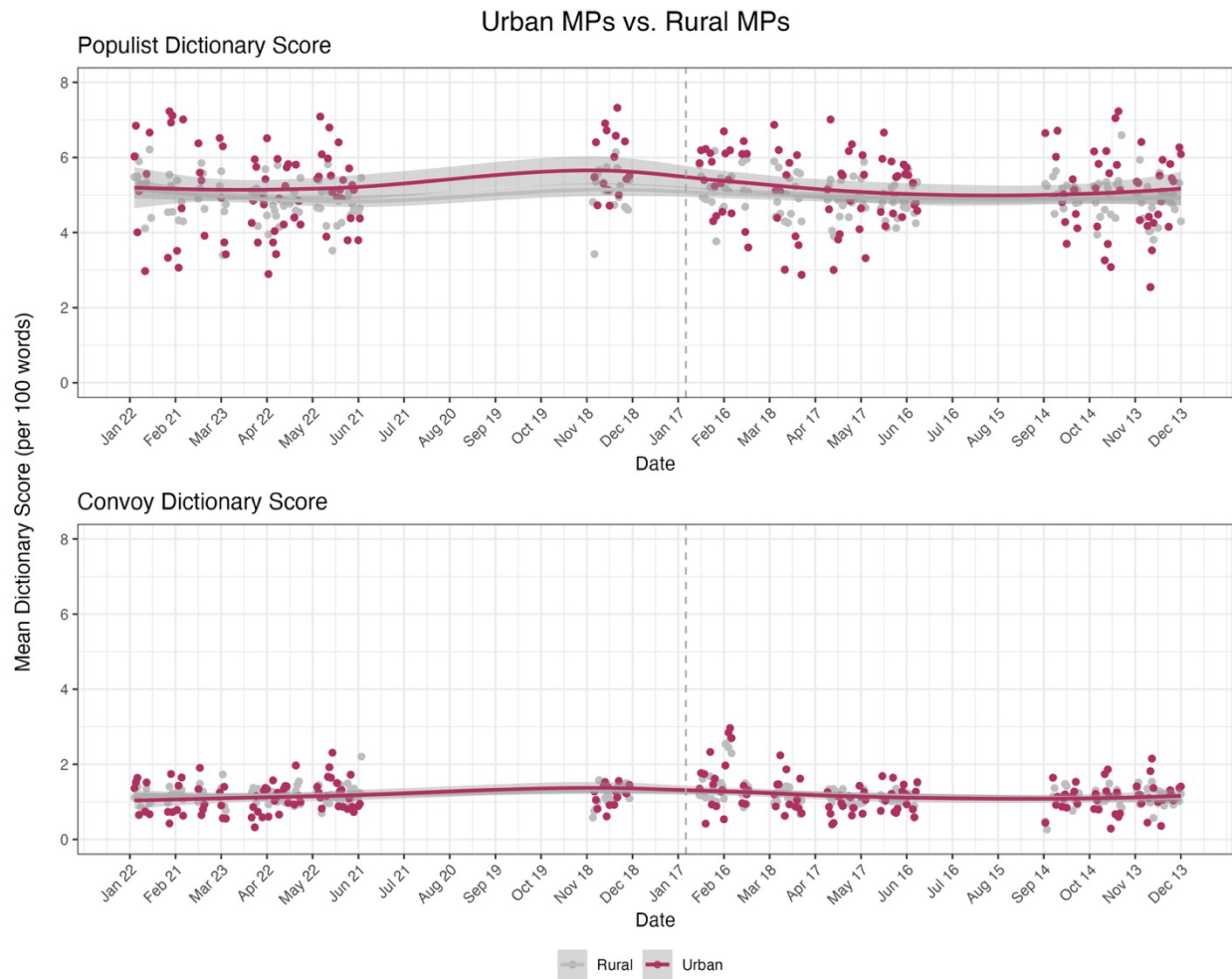
**Figure 2:**

**Figure 3**



Finally, in Figure 4, I show the visual representation of the average dictionary score per 100 words for both dictionaries, comparing the speeches of Conservative Party leadership candidates to all other Members of Parliament. Here we can see the starkest indication of a potential effect of the Freedom Convoy on the speeches recorded in the House of Commons. Because the leadership race began right in the middle of the Convoy, theoretically the CPC leadership candidates are the most likely Conservative MPs to utilize far-right rhetoric in an attempt to appeal to these protestors. This is evident in this figure, where leadership candidates

show both an uptick in Populist Dictionary scores and a slight increase in Convoy Dictionary scores following the start of the Freedom Convoy protest.

**Figure 4:**
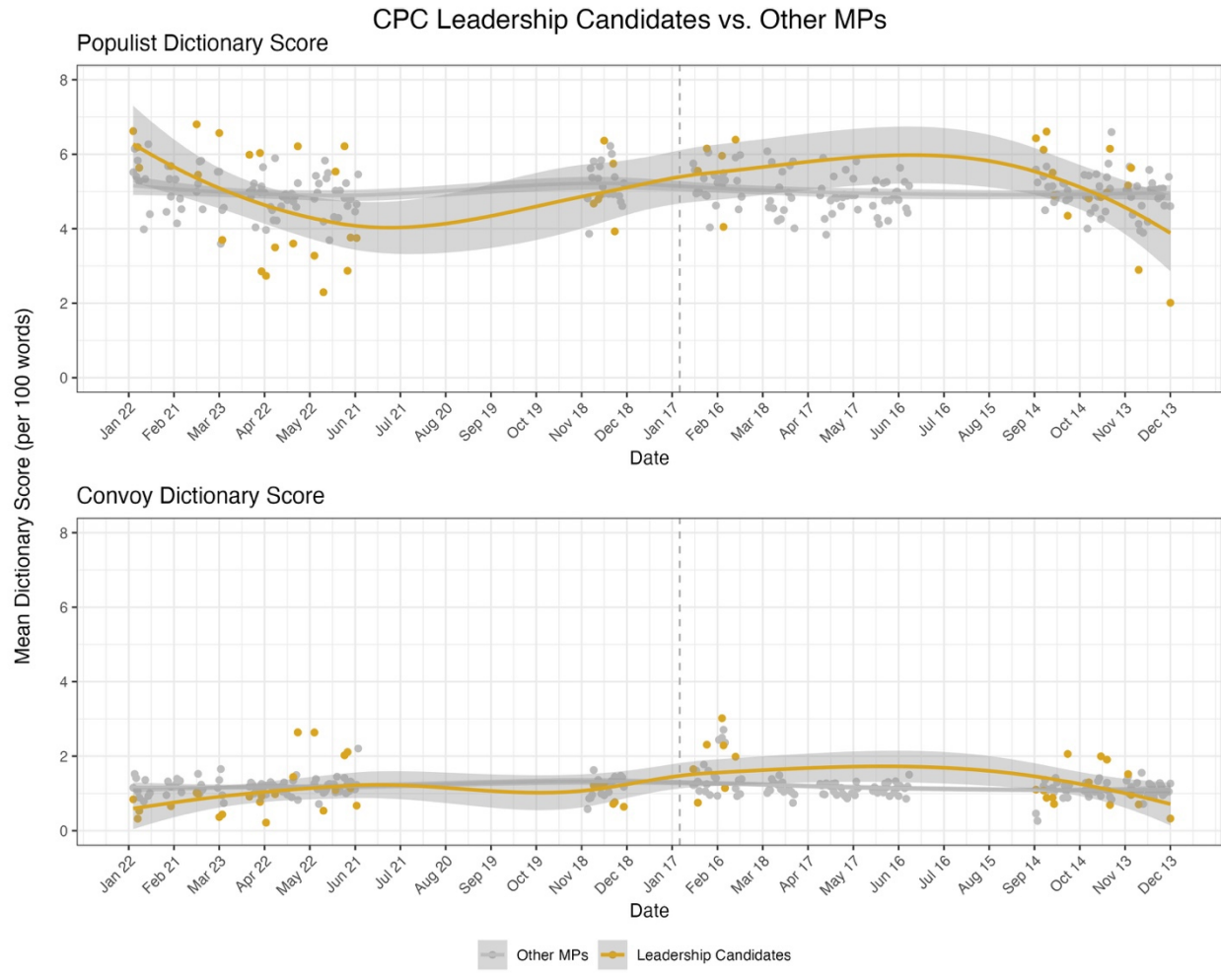


To conclude the results of the quantitative methods section, I provide a summary of how these results relate to the initial hypotheses, noting again that none of these results are statistically significant or robust. First, Hypothesis 1 considered the difference between Conservative MPs and other MPs. Evidence for this hypothesis indicates that there was an increase in 0.162 Populist Dictionary words and 0.035 Convoy Dictionary words (per 100 words) used by Conservatives

following the start of the Freedom Convoy. Hypothesis 2 considered the difference between MPs from western and other regions. Similarly for hypothesis 2, the results indicate that there was a 0.132 increase in Populist words and a 0.062 *decrease* in Convoy words (per 100 words) by those MPs from western ridings following the start of the Freedom Convoy. Hypothesis 3 compared the difference between MPs from rural and urban ridings. Here, there was a decrease of 0.376 Populist words and a decrease of 0.015 Convoy words by Members of Parliament representing Canada's three largest urban metropoles. This result is interesting as it means that comparatively, there were higher usages of the rhetoric encapsulated by these dictionaries by rural MPs, as expected. However, notably this definition of rurality could be more precise in future work and should extend beyond this oversimplified definition of urban ridings. Finally, Hypothesis 4 considered the difference between CPC leadership candidates and all other MPs. The CPC leadership model shows that there was a 0.190 increase in the number of Populist words and a 0.312 decrease in the number of Convoy words (per 100 words) used by these candidates in the period following the start of the protest compared to the period prior to the protest. The results of hypothesis 4 are the largest of any of the models in this study, indicating that these CPC candidates may have been the most receptive to the spillover of this rhetoric from the Convoy protest. While the directionality of the estimates is somewhat interesting, these results are not robust enough to make any definitive conclusions about the use of the messaging as defined by the dictionary models.

## Hansard Text Excerpts

While overall, I cannot conclude to the presence of a systematic (and statistically significant) spillover of Convoy rhetoric onto Canadian MPs' speech in the legislature, a more qualitative combing of those speeches provides some striking examples that do point to some

influence of the Convoy event on MPs' legislative discourse. In this section, I present a few examples of text excerpts from the Hansard speech entries to provide further context for the previous section's quantitative results and the limitations of these models. First, I provide excerpts from two of the top scoring speeches of Conservative Party MPs, all which received a content score of 9-10% by the Populist Dictionary:

Mr Scott Aitchison Parry Sound—Muskoka, 2022-02-21

*"Madam Speaker, 'Grant thy servant an understanding heart that I may discern between good and evil' As I took my seat for the very first time in the House, these words of Solomon came to mind, seeking wisdom to lead… Leaders stand up for every citizen: every Canadian, urban, rural, rich or poor, white collar, blue collar, right and left, regardless of their faith or creed and regardless of their place of origin… While I understand some of the reasons I have heard for vaccine hesitancy, I do not understand all of them, and I do not need to. I do not need to understand my fellow citizens' medical choices to defend their fundamental right to make those choices. That is the beauty of this country. We get to make our own health choices… This debate should never have had to happen. Truckers should never have had to park their trucks in front of Parliament. The divisive rhetoric and demonizing of a minority of Canadians by their own government, whatever the intention, was, quite simply, disgusting. This is clearly not the first time the political class has used our differences of opinion to divide us for political gain, and it likely will not be the last… Let us go forward together, building each other up and bringing Canadians from all walks of life together in our mutual cause of Canada, our beloved true north, strong and free."*

Mr Tony Baldinelli, Niagara Falls, 2022-03-24

*"Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in this place to speak to our Conservative opposition day motion… The motion reads: That, given that Canada has one of the world's highest vaccination rates and every province across Canada has lifted or has a plan to lift vaccine mandates, the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates in order to: (a) protect the jobs of federally regulated employees; (b) enable Canadians to travel unimpeded; (c) ensure Canada's tourism industry recovery; and (d) allow for the free flow of goods across the Canadian border... For the sake of supporting Canada's travel and tourism industry, we need to get back to the days of 2019, and we need to do so in a safe and responsible way, following what the data and the science is now telling us… All Canadians deserve a federal government that is here to serve and protect its citizens and our national best interests. That means it does not matter what our political party is, where we live in this country, what faith we follow or what our vaccination status is… For two years, Canadians have done their part. It is now time for the current federal government to hold up its end of the bargain and lift all federal vaccine mandates in Canada."*

Similarly, I include text excerpts from the three highest scoring Conservative Party MP speeches according to the Convoy Dictionary, presented in the order of the score they received by the model. Notably, these top scoring excerpts often contain sentiments which indicate support for the Convoy protestors in the period following the protest:

Mr Garnett Genuis, Sherwood Park— Fort Saskatchewan, 2022-10-31

"*Madam Speaker, tonight I would like to speak about the idea of freedom in Canadian politics because I think, underneath the debate we are having about this budget, there is a deeper debate about the nature of freedom. What is freedom? Freedom, in the modern context, in common usage, has the sense of describing a reality in which the individual has a broader range of decision-making space. An individual who is free can make more decisions about his or her life, and an individual who is less free has more decisions made for them by others... Freedom of speech, association, conscience and religion are the means through which we find truth and meaning. Therefore, intervention in our lives by the state that limits these freedoms is particularly harmful and dangerous…Canadians are sick of a government that is content to let people choose drugs and choose death, but does not want to let them choose to keep more of what they have worked for and built on their own. We need a government that gives people the space, the encouragement and the freedom to build beautiful things that last.*"

Mr Dane Lloyd, Sturgeon River—Parkland, 2022-02-17

"*Madam Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister and ministers across the aisle, it actually gives me no pleasure to rise to speak to the matter at hand. The invocation of the Emergencies Act earlier this week, for the first time in Canadian history, is a significant moment and it is not a moment to be pleased about… This is not just any violence, the Liberals are saying; this is violence intended for the furtherance of an ideological and political objective. I am very concerned with the language that the government is beginning to use, because that language is very similar to the language under terrorism laws. The*

*definition of terrorism is the use of violence to advance a political or ideological agenda… The government has been very quick to label protesters and anyone who would oppose its political agenda. In 2021, even before the protests began, the Prime Minister called people who opposed mandatory vaccinations racists and misogynists, among other epithets. Since the beginning of the protests, the government has sought to brand and label all protesters as fringe extremists with "unacceptable views"…. We are going to keep fighting. We are not going to stop standing up for the rights and freedoms of Canadians."*

Mr Michael Barrett, Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands And Rideau Lakes, 2022-05-10

*"Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this evening to take the opportunity, on behalf of Canadians who are wondering, to ask the government when it will end the mandates… The vaccine mandates that the government put in place, as we have heard from the minister on more than one occasion, have served their purpose. They drove vaccine rates up. If that was the raison d'être and it has been successful, then let us hang up the "mission accomplished" banner and end the mandates. This is what we have been looking for. What are the epidemiological factors that the government has been relying on to keep the mandates in place? Are they based on waste-water surveillance? Are they based on vaccination rates? Are they based on regional or provincial case counts? We do not know and when we have asked, the government does not seem to know… My questions are as follows. Whose decision is it to lift the mandates? What are the benchmarks that are being evaluated for them to arrive at their decision to end the mandates? On what day or date does he reasonably expect that the mandates will be lifted? Canadians deserve to know."*

Here we see some evidence from the Convoy Dictionary that certain Members of Parliament did integrate the language used by the Convoy Protestors into their House of Commons speeches in the period following the Freedom Convoy protest. These texts excerpts demonstrate support for Hypothesis 1, indicating that Conservative Party MPs did show support for the Convoy protest and against a vaccine mandate. Additionally, the accuracy of both dictionaries could be improved upon in future research by incorporating additional terms based on the repeating themes of these excerpts.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Although the results of the difference-in-differences are not statistically significant, there is a slightly greater tendency for Conservative Members of Parliament to use the rhetoric defined in the Populist Dictionary across time. Additionally, we see an increase in both the rhetoric defined in the Populist Dictionary and that of the Convoy Dictionary amongst Conservative Party leadership candidates. While these results do not prove the claims made in my initial hypotheses, they do provide grounds for further research on this topic. Potential future research could expand on the dictionaries used here by utilizing a different collection of tokens in the bag-of-words model used to create the Populist Dictionary. This may provide a clearer indication that the speeches that are picked up by the dictionary models are in fact populist rhetoric and reduce the number of potential false positives. One potential flaw with the bag-of-words used in the present research is that many of the tokens could also be used in some of the pandemic-era speeches which attempted to create a sense of unity and comradery amongst the Canadian population in attempt to unite against the virus. This is one potential reason for why the results are not as significant as expected.

Additionally, future research could explore a different understanding of the Urban/Rural divide in Canada, which perhaps takes into account data from the Canadian Census Study in order

to pinpoint a more precise definition of urban and rural communities outside of the three largest metropoles. A more precise delineation between rural and urban communities in Canada may provide a more definitive result for this variable.

This project aimed to answer whether a grassroots movement like the Freedom Convoy could impact elite-level discourse in the House of Commons, and found that overall, the results are inconclusive. However, the marginal increase in rhetoric shown by Conservative Party leadership candidates indicates that this phenomenon may have occurred amongst these Members of Parliament, however further research is needed in order to fully substantiate these claims. If the null results found in the present thesis are confirmed by further research, then it would mean that Canada is indeed an exception (that is, it's as impervious to the global rise of populism as some have argued in the past) and that the perception of rising populism in Canada in recent years may be just that: a perception.

However, it is also possible that certain Members of Parliament adopted these messages without using the exact same messaging that the Convoy protestors used, and that MPs engaged in dog-whistling on this issue. Additionally, it could be the case that the definition of populism in this dictionary was not specific enough to the context to be picked up by the model. Further analysis using an alternative definition of populism in the dictionary may find a different result. Therefore, if future, more robust analyses confirm the results of the models in the present study indicating that there is a slight substantive rise in the rhetoric of the Hansard speeches, this would show that Canada is not immune to the global trend of rising populism.

**Works Cited and Consulted**

Armstrong, David A., Jack Lucas, and Zack Taylor. "The Urban-Rural Divide in Canadian Federal Elections, 1896–2019." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne De Science Politique* 55, no. 1 (2022): 84–106. doi:10.1017/S0008423921000792.

Aslanidis, Paris. 2018. "Measuring Populist Discourse with Semantic Text Analysis: An Application on Grassroots Populist Mobilization." *Quality & Quantity* 52(3): 1241–63.

Austen, I., & Isai, V. (2022, January 29). Canadian trucker convoy descends on Ottawa to protest vaccine mandates. The New York Times. Retrieved November 17, 2022, from https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/29/world/americas/canada-trucker-protest.html

Banack, C. (2020). Ethnography and political opinion: Identity, alienation and anti-establishmentarianism in rural Alberta. Canadian Journal of Political Science, 54(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423920000694

Barney, D. D., & Laycock, D. (1999). Right-Populists and Plebiscitary Politics in Canada. Party Politics, 5(3), 317–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068899005003004

Barney, Darin David, and David Laycock. 1999. "Right-Populists and Plebiscitary Politics in Canada." *Party Politics* 5(3): 317–39.

Beasley, Ryan K., and Mark R. Joslyn. 2001. "Cognitive Dissonance and Post-Decision Attitude Change in Six Presidential Elections." *Political Psychology* 22 (3): 521–40.

Berman, Sheri. 2019."Populism is a Symptom Rather than a Cause: Democratic Disconnect, the Decline of the Center-Left, and the Rise of Populism in Western Europe." *Polity* 51:4, 654-667. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/705378

Bonikowski, B., Halikiopoulou, D., Kaufmann, E., and Rooduijn, M. (2019) Populism and nationalism in a comparative perspective: a scholarly exchange. *Nations and Nationalism*, 25: 58– 81. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12480.

Bonikowski, Bart, Noam Gidron, The Populist Style in American Politics: Presidential Campaign Discourse, 1952–1996, Social Forces, Volume 94, Issue 4, June 2016, Pages 1593–1621, https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov120

Boutilier, Alex, and Amanda Connolly. "O'Toole Calls for 'Balance' as Conservative MPs Plunge Party into Leadership Race - National." Global News, Global News, 3 Feb. 2022, https://globalnews.ca/news/8588503/erin-otoole-ousted-in-caucus-revolt/.

Breyer, Magdalena. 2023a. "Populist Positions in Party Competition: Do Parties Strategically Vary Their Degree of Populism in Reaction to Vote and Office Loss?" *Party Politics* 29(4): 672–84.

Burke, A., &amp; Pauls, K. (2021, March 15). Military conducted secret investigation of reservist Patrik Mathews as a possible terrorist threat | CBC News. CBCnews. Retrieved March 26, 2023,

from https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/patrik-mathews-canadian-forces-neo-nazi-terrorist-1.5948202

Butler, Daniel M and David E Broockman. 2011. "Do politicians racially discriminate against constituents? A field experiment on state legislators," American Journal of Political Science, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00515.x

Cole, Alexandra. 2005. "Old Right or New Right? The Ideological Positioning of Parties of the Far Right." *European Journal of Political Research* 44 (2): 203–30.

Cramer, Katherine. (2016). *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker,"* Chicago: University of Chicago Press (selected chapters)

Debates (Hansard) No. 1 - November 22, 2021 (44-1) - House of Commons of Canada. (n.d.). https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-1/hansard

Decadri, Silvia, and Constantine Boussalis. 2020. "Populism, Party Membership, and Language Complexity in the Italian Chamber of Deputies." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 30(4): 484–503.

Eberl, Jakob-Moritz, Robert A. Huber & Esther Greussing (2021) From populism to the "plandemic": why populists believe in COVID-19 conspiracies, Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 31:sup1, 272-284, DOI: 10.1080/17457289.2021.1924730

Elchardus, Mark & Spruyt, Bram. (2016). "Populism, Persistent Republicanism and Declinism: An Empirical Analysis of Populism as Thin Ideology," *Government and Oppositions,* Vol. 51, No. 1: 111-133

Feldman, Stanley. 2003. "Values, Ideology, and the Structure of Political Attitudes." In D.O. Sears, L. Huddy and R. Jervis (ed), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, 477–508. New York: Oxford University Press.

Feldman, Stanley. 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 32 (2): 416-440.

Foa and Mounck. 2019. Youth and the populist wave, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Volume: 45 issue: 9- 10, page(s): 1013-1024, https://doiorg.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1177/0191453719872314

Ford, Robert and Jennings, Will, The Changing Cleavage Politics of Western Europe (May 2020). Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 23, pp. 295-314, 2020, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3602495 or http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052217-104957

Gidron, Noam and Peter Hall. 2017. "The politics of social status: economic and cultural roots of the populist right," *The British Journal of Sociology* 68 (S1)

Gillies, Jamie, Vincent Raynauld, and Angela Wisniewski. 2023. "Canada Is No Exception: The 2022 Freedom Convoy, Political Entanglement, and Identity-Driven Protest." *American Behavioral Scientist*: 00027642231166885.

Godbout, Jean-Francois. *Lost on Division: Party Unity in the Canadian Parliament*. University of Toronto Press, 2020.

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. (2013). Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts. *Political Analysis, 21*(3), 267-297. doi:10.1093/pan/mps028

Gründl, Johann. 2022a. "Populist Ideas on Social Media: A Dictionary-Based Measurement of Populist Communication." *New Media & Society* 24(6): 1481–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820976970

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2017). "Global Populisms and Their Impact." *Slavic Review*; 76(1): pp. 3-8.

Guardian News and Media. (2021, September 14). Trudeau energized by anti-vaccine protests in Canada election few wanted. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/14/trudeau-anti-vaccine-protests-canada-election-campaign

Haggard, Stephan, Robert Kaufman. 2021. "The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding Journal of Democracy, Volume 32, Number 4, October 2021, pp. 27-41 https://muse-jhuedu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/pub/1/article/815935/pdf

Halle, Freeman. 2019. "The Limits of Tolerance: Evaluating State-Sponsored Multiculturalism in Canada," 17.

Halmarson, D. (2023, May 11). "Parachuting into the riding": Maxime Bernier hints at running for Manitoba seat long held by Tories. Winnipeg. https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/parachuting-into-the-riding-maxime-bernier-hints-at-running-for-manitoba-seat-long-held-by-tories-1.6394039

Hameed, Asif. "The People versus The People's Party: Maxime Bernier, the People's Party of Canada and the Twitter Response." : 2019.

Hameleers, Michael, and Rens Vliegenthart. 2020. "The Rise of a Populist Zeitgeist? A Content Analysis of Populist Media Coverage in Newspapers Published between 1990 and 2017." *Journalism Studies* 21(1): 19–36.

Hameleers, Michael. They Are Selling Themselves Out to the Enemy! The Content and Effects of Populist Conspiracy Theories, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Volume 33, Issue 1, Spring 2021, Pages 38–56, https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edaa004

Hopkins, Daniel. 2015. "The Upside of Accents: Language, Inter-group Difference, and Attitudes toward Immigration," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 531-557

Hunger, S., & Paxton, F. (2022). What's in a buzzword? A systematic review of the state of populism research in political science. *Political Science Research and Methods, 10*(3), 617-633. doi:10.1017/psrm.2021.44

Inglehart, Ronald F. 2018. Chapter 2: "The Rise of Postmaterialism in the West and the World," in *Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations are Changing, and Reshaping the World*. Cambridge University Press.

Jardina, Ashley. 2019. "White Consciousness and White Prejudice: Two Compounding Forces in Contemporary American Politics," *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics* Ed. by Disalvo, Daniel / Stonecash, Jeffrey. Volume 17, Issue 3, Pages 447–466, ISSN (Online) 1540- 8884, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/for-2019-0025

Jones, Andrew William. "The Kids Are Alt-Right: The Intellectual Origins of the Alt-Right." : 304.

Keating, John. 2021. "Populist Discourse and Active Metaphors in the 2016 US Presidential Elections." *Intercultural Pragmatics* 18(4): 499–531.

Koopmans, Ruud and Bram Lancee, Merlin Schaeffer. 2014. *Social Cohesion and Immigration in Europe and North America: Mechanisms, Conditions, and Causality*, Routledge

Lago, I. (2021). Rural Decline and satisfaction with democracy. Acta Politica, 57(4), 753–771. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-021-00221-8

Lasco, G. (2020). Medical populism and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Global Public Health*, *15*(10), 1417-1429. DOI: https://doi- org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1080/17441692.2020.1807581

Laycock, David H., and Lynda Erickson, eds. 2015. *Reviving Social Democracy: The near Death and Surprising Rise of the Federal NDP*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Lucas, Jack, and David A. Armstrong. 2021. "Policy Ideology and Local Ideological Representation in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 54(4): 959–76.

Lunz Trujillo, K. (2022). Rural identity as a contributing factor to anti-intellectualism in the U.S. *Political Behavior*, *44*(3), 1509–1532. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-022-09770-w

Lusztig, Michael and J. Matthew Wilson (2005) "A New Right? Moral Issues and Partisan Change in Canada." Social Science Quarterly 86(1): 109-28

Medeiros, Mike, and Timothy B. Gravelle. 2023. "Pandemic Populism: Explaining Support for the People's Party of Canada in the 2021 Federal Election." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 56(2): 413–34.

Medeiros, Mike. 2021. "Demand without Supply: Populist Attitudes without Salient Supply-Side Factors of Populism." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, September 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423921000779.

Meléndez, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2019). Political identities: The missing link in the study of populism. *Party Politics*, *25*(4), 520-533. DOI: https://doiorg.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1177/1354068817741287

Merkley, Eric. Anti-Intellectualism, Populism, and Motivated Resistance to Expert Consensus, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 84, Issue 1, Spring 2020, Pages 24-48, https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfz053

Mounk, Yasha and Jordan Kyle. 2019. "What Populists do to Democracies," *The Atlantic*

Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. What is populism? In *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, pp 1-12

Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition* 39(4): 541–63.

Müller Jan-Werner. *What Is Populism?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Nanos, Nik. 2020. "From 'Sunny Ways' to 'Dark Days': The 2019 Canadian Federal Election Suggests That Canada Is Not a Positive Outlier to Populist Politics but Gripped by Feelings of Declinism." *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 26 (2): 207–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2020.1724166.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). The Cultural Backlash Theory. In *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (Chapter 2: pp. 32-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108595841.003

Parkin, Andrew, Sessional Lecturer, & Justin Savoie, PhD Candidate. (2022, February 8). Who voted for the People's Party of Canada? anti-vaxxers and those opposed to vaccine mandates. The Conversation. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from https://theconversation.com/who-voted-for-the-peoples-party-of-canada-anti-vaxxers-and-those-opposed-to-vaccine-mandates-171575

Pauwels, Teun. 2011a. "Measuring Populism: A Quantitative Text Analysis of Party Literature in Belgium." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17457289.2011.539483 (September 10, 2023).

Potenteau, Doyle. "Canada Election: PPC Support in B.C.'s Interior above National Average." Global News. Global News, September 21, 2021.

Rooduijn, M. (2018). What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Comparing the electorates of 15 populist parties. *European Political Science Review*, 10(3), 351-368. doi:10.1017/S1755773917000145

Rooduijn, M., & Pauwels, T. (2011). Measuring populism: Comparing two methods of content analysis. *West European Politics*, *34*(6), 1272–1283. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2011.616665

Rudolph, Thomas. Populist Anger, Trump and Election. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17457289.2019.1582532

Schäfer, Armin. 2022. "Cultural Backlash? How (Not) to Explain the Rise of Authoritarian Populism*," British Journal of Political Science.* https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political- science/article/cultural-backlash-how-not-to-explain-the-rise-of-authoritarian-populism/FFE9742798D8CC4BF6ED325FDBAFA251

Shephard, M., Mak, A., &; Kaschor, K. (2021, November 10). White hot hate. CBCnews. Retrieved March 26, 2023, from https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/undercover-investigation-patrick-mathews/

Spryut, Bram; Keppens, Gil & Van Droogenbroeck, Filip. (2016) "Who Supports Populism and What Attracts People to it?" *Political Research Quarterly,* Vol. 69(2): 335-346

Taub, Amanda, 2016, "The rise of American authoritarianism," *Vox;* *http://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump- authoritarianism*

Taub, Amanda. 2017. "Canada's Secret to Resisting the West's Populist Wave." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/27/world/canada/canadas-secret-to-resisting-the-wests-populist-wave.html (November 16, 2021).

Tóth, Tamás, Manuel Goyanes, and Márton Demeter. 2023. "Extend the Context! Measuring Explicit and Implicit Populism on Three Different Textual Levels." *Communications*. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/commun-2022-0009/html?lang=en (September 10, 2023).

Vallée-Dubois, F., Godbout, J.-F., & Cochrane, C. (2021). Parliamentary debates in Canada (1901–2015). *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *54*(4), 769–790. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423921000718

Voogd, Remko, this link will open in a new window Link to external site, and Ruth Dassonneville. 2020. "Are the Supporters of Populist Parties Loyal Voters? Dissatisfaction and Stable Voting for Populist Parties." *Government and Opposition* 55(3): 349–70.

Young, Lori & Stuart Soroka (2012) Affective News: The Automated Coding of Sentiment in Political Texts, Political Communication, 29:2, 205-231, DOI: 10.1080/10584609.2012.671234

Zadorsky, J. (2021, October 6). Case of man accused of throwing rocks at Justin Trudeau in London, ont. put over. London. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from https://london.ctvnews.ca/case-of-man-accused-of-throwing-rocks-at-justin-trudeau-in-london-ont-put-over-1.5612903

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Appendix A**

Tokens used in the Populist Dictionary bag-of-words model:
("people", "citizen", "community", "society", "public", "population", "nation", "all of us", "each of us", "everyone", "our", "we", "voter", "electorate", "referenda", "direct democracy", "public opinion", "country", "canada", "canadian")

excluded from source model: "citizens", "voters", "national"

**Appendix B**

Table indicating the results of the difference-in-differences model for the West model.

| | **Populist Dictionary** | **Convoy Dictionary** |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5.123 | 1.250 |
| | (0.017) | (0.008) |
| West | -0.317 | 0.097 |
| | (0.040) | (0.019) |
| Start of Protest | -0.247 | -0.011 |
| | (0.022) | (0.011) |
| West x Start of Protest | 0.132 | -0.062 |
| | (0.051) | (0.025) |
| Num Obs | 98852 | 98852 |
| R2 | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| AIC | 501596.5 | 362840.0 |
| BIC | 501644.0 | 362887.5 |
| RMSE | 3.06 | 1.52 |

**Appendix C**

Table indicating the results of the difference-in-differences model for the Urban vs. Rural model.

As noted above, Urban ridings are defined as those within the three largest metropoles in Canada,

being Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto, and their greater surrounding areas. These metropoles

make up approximately 1/3 of the total federal ridings.

|  | **Populist Dictionary** | **Convoy Dictionary** |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 4.860 | 1.275 |
|  | (0.016) | (0.008) |
| Urban | 1.218 | -0.053 |
|  | (0.046) | (0.019) |
| Start of Protest | -0.162 | -0.018 |
|  | (0.021) | (0.011) |
| Urban x Start of Protest | -0.376 | -0.015 |
|  | (0.059) | (0.027) |
| Num Obs | 98852 | 98852 |
| R2 | 0.017 | 0.000 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.017 | 0.000 |
| AIC | 500133.6 | 362844.1 |
| BIC | 500181.2 | 362891.6 |
| RMSE | 3.04 | 1.52 |

**Appendix D**

Table indicating the results of the difference-in-differences model for the Conservative Party leadership candidate model.

|  | **Populist Dictionary** | **Convoy Dictionary** |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5.078 | 1.262 |
|  | (0.016) | (0.007) |
| Leadership Candidate | -0.745 | 0.362 |
|  | (0.129) | (0.217) |
| Start of Protest | -0.224 | -0.017 |
|  | (0.020) | (0.010) |
| Leadership Candidate x Start of Protest | 0.190 | -0.312 |
|  | (0.152) | (0.223) |
| Num Obs | 98852 | 98852 |
| R2 | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| AIC | 501623.7 | 362838.3 |
| BIC | 501671.2 | 362885.8 |
| RMSE | 3.06 | 1.52 |