

The CAQ and immigration: a new frontier in Quebec politics?

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Abstract

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In 2018, when the CAQ was elected to form the new government of Quebec, it won on a platform that contained numerous measures to restrict immigration. Some of these measures were criticized and described as marking a radical shift in the province's historical approach to immigration. In order to gain a more precise understanding of the implications of the CAQ's position for Quebec politics, this thesis asks the question: How different is the CAQ's position on immigration from that of the province's main other political parties? To answer this question, this thesis looks at electoral platforms and parliamentary debates, using manual coding (NVivo) and computer-aided dictionary analysis (RStudio). By looking at the CAQ, the PLQ and the PQ's stance, salience and discourse on immigration, it finds that although the CAQ proposed measures that are more restrictive towards immigration, it did so by mobilizing long-standing and well-established discursive logics. This in turn leads us to question our understanding of Quebec as a "pro-immigration" space, as well as the relevance of "pro" and "anti" immigration labels, and invites further research into a more systemized and helpful classification of parties and their positions on immigration.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The CAQ and immigration: A new frontier?

In October of 2018, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) was elected for the first time to form a majority government in the Québec National Assembly. This election broke with the province's recent political history for at least two reasons. First, it marked the end of over 50 years of alternation between the Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ) and the Parti Québécois (PQ) as the natural governing parties in Québec (Bernatchez, 2019). Second, and more interestingly for our purposes here, it marked the arrival in power of a party that departed, at least to some degree, from the established consensus regarding the regulation of immigration in Québec (Xhardez & Paquet, 2020). Indeed, the party was elected on a platform that proposed many measures to *restrict* immigration in the province. These promises included, amongst others, decreasing the number of immigrants welcomed to the province, imposing of a new “Quebec values test” as a condition for permanent residency status, and instating stricter language criteria in the eligibility requirements for migrating to the province (Xhardez & Paquet, 2020).

Given this apparent desire to restrict immigration, the CAQ was labelled by many local observers and some foreign news outlets as an anti-immigration party (Bird, 2018; Kovac, 2018) and compared to the Front National (AFP, 2018; Gagné, 2018). However, many other commentators were quick to highlight the important ideological differences between the CAQ and other far-right parties (Valeria et al., 2018). The CAQ's leader himself, François Legault, also strongly denied any association or similarities between the Front National and his party (Radio-Canada, 2018b). Despite this rejection of the label, a puzzle remained. The fact that the label was used, and that for many voters the party is perceived as holding meaningfully different views about immigration policy than the province's other parties, raises important questions about the nature of the CAQ's positions and our understanding of Quebec's immigration politics. Although the province is generally viewed as “pro-immigration” space, the arrival of a party advancing measures to restrict it in ways that had not been undertaken before (e.g., reducing thresholds) raised important questions. In order to better understand the potential significance of such a shift, this thesis asks the question: Does the CAQ's position on immigration differ from that of the province's other main political parties? And if so, in what ways? The goal of this question is to measure more accurately the scale of the change being brought forward, and to determine its impacts on Quebec's immigration politics.

To answer my research question, I proceeded in two different steps. First, I determined the indicators that make up a party's position and measured those indicators. Then, I compared the CAQ's position on immigration to that of the other main provincial parties. Using content analyses, I found that while the CAQ's position differs in its *stance* by advancing more restrictive measures than the other main political parties, the salience it gives to the issue and the discourse it mobilizes to discuss it remain largely consistent with the existing predominant positions on immigration. In other words, the party's position marks less of a shift in provincial politics than some observers have advanced, and instead brings to the surface already well-established trends and dynamics within the province's approach to the issue.

The province's political context offers us an especially interesting case study. Indeed, the province of Quebec, like other provinces in Canada, is generally considered to be one of the most

supportive nations in the world when it comes to immigration (Bloemraad, 2012). While Quebec has historically had a different approach to immigration than the rest of Canada, with its own selection grid prioritizing French-speaking immigrants and an integration model of interculturalism instead of the federal multicultural approach¹, it nonetheless remains a space that has historically widely supported immigration and offered extensive rights and resources to newcomers. The sweeping electoral success of a party advancing restrictive measures therefore raised significant and challenging questions.

The province of Quebec, thanks to the 1991 Accord Canada-Québec, shares the responsibility of immigration as a policy issue with the federal government. This gives significant powers to the province, including the ability to determine the number of immigrants it wishes to welcome and to establish selection criteria for economic permanent residents and temporary residents. Therefore, while the province's role in handling immigration has some limits (e.g., naturalization remains solely in the hands of the federal government), its responsibilities and powers are nonetheless extensive. Ultimately, around 70% of newcomers are selected by the province (Garon, 2015). It is also worth noting that in terms of integration, the province handles all services and policies on its own, with the federal only providing funding (Paquet, 2016). This decentralization of immigration at the national level has led it to become a "source of competition between political parties at the sub-state level," as previously explored by Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero (2014). Therefore, despite being a case study at the subnational level, it can provide us with extensive insight regarding immigration as a policy issue.

The first step of this research was a literature review of the existing measures of a party's position regarding immigration. This allowed me to use the various elements found across the literature to develop an understanding of what constitutes a party's position on immigration and its main indicators. I then looked at the literature on Quebec's main political parties to hypothesize on how each party's (CAQ, PLQ and PQ) position was expected to differ or to be similar. Then, I proceeded to a literature review of the methods that can be used to measure the various indicators previously identified and developed relevant measurements to analyze and compare the parties' positions on immigration. Finally, I analyzed the results and discussed their implications for our understanding of party politics and Quebec politics more generally.

The logics and dynamics behind a party's positions and proposals are complex and deserve careful examination, especially when considering an issue as sensitive and multilayered as immigration. In our polarized and fast-paced society, it is increasingly easy to make broad generalizations. While there is undoubtedly reason to believe that migration policies that seek to reduce or restrict immigration stem from racism and xenophobia, this is only part of the answer. Greater consideration must be given to the various contextual elements that can contribute to a party advancing more restrictive measures. A more complete understanding can offer more targeted and appropriate responses to these policy positions and proposals, ultimately providing us with more efficient tools to advance our society's most central debates and issues.

¹ See Bouchard (2014)2023-05-17 12:16:00 AM for an exploration of the two models and their differences.

1.2 Analytical Framework – What’s a party?

Why study parties?

This chapter’s goal is to situate this research project in the broader field of party politics, by explaining the main perspectives present within the literature. It first highlights the importance and relevance of studying political parties as case studies to understand broader political issues. Then, it presents the main perspectives used to study parties as well as their advantages and limits. Finally, it explores the advantages and the limits of classifying parties according to ideological considerations and expands on the idea that one of this research’s main goal is to contribute to this form of classification.

Before looking at the literature more broadly, it is worth specifying that this thesis focused on political parties rather than governments. This may be surprising, given that governments are the ones deciding which policies get implemented, and how. Arguably, that would make them more important to understand how a society and its members think about a specific issue. While this may be so, some scholars have argued that parties are “*the* central intermediate structures between society and government.” (Sartori, as cited by White, 2006). Indeed, while governments are (presumably) charged with representing *all* members of a society, a party is specifically concerned with catering to a specific partisan base. It does so by articulating and advancing a clear vision of how things *should* be. This reality helps to explain why there are often important discrepancies between what parties propose and what they implement once in power.

This approach pushes back against a trend in recent party politics literature, where there has been a growing tendency to interrogate the relevance of political parties both as political actors and as objects of study (Montero & Gunther, 2003). According to this perspective, political parties are antiquated actors, often disconnected from their electorate and incapable of commanding loyalty and trust from the electorate who are becoming less mobilized, and responsible for the growing discontent or cynicism towards the ability of political parties to create real change. These concerns are present most notably under the vein of the cartel-party theory and the dealignment model (Enyedi, 2014). According to these models, cartel parties “govern but do not represent” (Katz & Mair, 2009) and general trends in society such as generational changes drive partisan dealignment (Dalton et al., 2011). These models and explanations have, however, been criticized as somewhat exaggerated. Critics argue that while political parties and their roles may have changed in a significant or even worrisome way, their relevance cannot be cast aside (Enyedi, 2014).

Indeed, despite these very real and justified concerns, it is clear that political parties cannot simply be ignored. While their roles and the context within which they operate has undoubtedly changed, they remain central actors in our democratic systems. As stated by Strom & Muller, “Democracy may be conceived as a process by which voters delegate policy-making authority to a set of representatives, and political parties are the main organizational vehicle by which such delegation takes place” (1999). Furthermore, for Enyedi, “In line with their original rationale, [political parties] give continuity and structure to the political field and contribute to the long time horizon of mass politics” (2014). Therefore, so long as we remain in a representative form of democracy, political parties will remain political actors worth studying. This study is inscribed in this desire to continue advancing the theorization of political parties and their roles.

Political parties in the literature: A brief overview

Despite the doubts regarding their relevance, political parties and their politics have long been and remain an important strand of the political science literature. Indeed, between 1945 and 2002, over 11,500 books, articles and monographs had been published that dealt with parties and party systems in Western Europe alone (Bartolini, Caramani and Hug, 1998 cited in Montero & Gunther, 2003). This tradition has led to significant theorizing regarding the behaviour of political parties, of which the three most notable models are 1) the office-seeking party, 2) the policy-seeking party and 3) the vote-seeking party.

Broadly speaking, each model can be defined as such:

- 1) *The office-seeking party*: Seeks to maximize its control over political office benefits (i.e., a party which seeks power for its own sake)
- 2) *The policy-seeking party*: Seeks to maximize its impact on public policy (i.e., a party which seeks to affect public policy through various maneuvers, including possible coalitions at the sacrifice of electoral success)
- 3) *The vote-seeking party*: Seeks to maximize its electoral support (although this is often viewed as instrumental to office-seeking behaviour).

This study sought to analyze Quebec's main parties as political actors across both parliamentary and electoral spaces. In other words, it studied these parties as active and evolving political and ideological entities. In this sense, this study operated under the key notion developed by Strom (1990) that political parties can be vote, office and policy-seeking actors depending on a variety of institutional factors, and that these forms of behaviour can interact and influence one another in significant ways. While parties are seen as political actors carrying specific ideological beliefs, they are also recognized as vote and office seeking ones, who may need to mitigate or nuance some of their ideological beliefs to appeal to the electorate.

This study is also inscribed in a perspective which has heavily criticized the behavioural models previously explained for providing little to no systemized knowledge of party behaviour, as they tend to present political parties as static, unrestrained and unitary actors (Muller & Strom, 1999). As such, numerous scholars have sought to address the important limits of these models by taking other approaches to the study of political parties. One of these approaches has sought to focus on classifying rather than explaining the behaviour of political parties, an approach which I present next, and which informs this study's approach to the issue of immigration.

Studying political parties: Classification as a helpful tool

This study inscribes itself in the tradition of party typology, which seeks to characterize and categorize parties. Typologies can be especially useful not only for comparative study, but also to send specific signals to voters regarding the ideology of the party that they support and to better understand voting behaviour (Costa Lobo, 2008).

Instead of seeking to *explain* the specific behaviours of parties, this approach instead focuses on understanding, measuring and identifying the *nature* of those behaviours. While the left-right cleavage is by far the most widely recognized way of classifying parties according to their ideology, recent research tends to point towards the growing obsolescence of this one-dimensional

understanding of political ideology, with parties increasingly adopting varied and sometimes contradictory positions on issues traditionally associated with either side of this ideological divide (Azmanova, 2011; Hartevelde, 2016; Koopmans & Zürn, 2019). My specific goal here, however, was not to develop a full typology, but instead to serve as a first step that will allow us to develop a more systemized and helpful way of categorizing parties and their positions on immigration and eventually develop a specific typology. The main approach generally used to classify and compare parties is that of the *famille politique* (Seiler, 1980 as cited in Mair & Mudde, 1998). Although described as central to comparative politics, it remains largely undertheorized (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014) and is not without its limits.

Classification based on ideology: Advantages & limits

An important aspect to acknowledge is also that within this approach, there is some contention on whether using parties' ideologies as an indicator is sufficient to try and classify them as a family. Many have argued that this characteristic alone is insufficient to allow for the development of a proper party family. There are many ways to classify parties, from their appeal strategies (Werner, 2021), to their relations to the state (Lavery, 2015), their internal structure (Sartori, 2005) and their origins (Krouwel, 2006). While these concerns are certainly valid, I argue here that ideology as a classification object has the significant advantage of facilitating comparison across political systems as well as being more useful as signal to voters than more structural elements. Those two advantages appear especially important to consider for a topic such as immigration, which has generally suffered from a lack of attention by scholars beyond the European and American contexts and could benefit from cross-national comparisons.

It is also important to acknowledge that previous studies have relied on much more developed sets of ideologies to classify parties instead of positions on a single issue. By ideology, we refer to the "characterization of a belief system that goes right to the heart of a party's identity and is therefore more likely to address the question of what parties are, rather than, as is the case with the policy approaches, the question of what parties do" (Mair & Mudde, 1998). In other words, when discussing ideology, we refer to the specific vision or understanding of how things *should be* which guides a party's policy proposals. It is indicative of the narrative that they create around specific issues, and how various actors or elements are defined.

Focusing on a party's position on a specific issue may run the risk of capturing only a moment in time rather than the party's more "profound" ideology. Still, one can argue that a party's positions are reflective of its ideology. The specific policy proposals regarding an issue are indicative of a party's broader understanding of an issue and the role that it has to play in our society.

Furthermore, in the case of immigration, there is still significant disagreement over the exact nature of the various motivations and social goals that explain a party's positions. Indeed, traditional ideological classifications seem to have trouble encompassing the full range of complexities that immigration as a policy issue represents. While some have argued that parties' stances on immigration still follow the traditional left/right ideological spectrum, with left-wing parties being more likely to be "pro-immigration" and right-wing parties more likely to be "anti-immigration" (Bale, 2008; Carvalho & Ruedin, 2020; van Heerden et al., 2014), others have argued that this clear-cut distribution no longer stands (Alonso & Fonseca, 2012; Natter et al., 2020; van

Spanje, 2011). Some have also nuanced this by stating that left/right ideologies can be predictive of parties' positions on immigration only when taking into consideration the differences between policy proposals on immigration from policy proposals on integration (Natter et al., 2020).

Therefore, despite some concerns on the sufficiency of using a party's position as a basis for classification, there is still arguably something valuable about being able to map out how parties stand on the issue of immigration in a more aggregate manner. As stated before, this could prove informative in outlining the social goals pursued by parties. How do they understand the role that immigration plays in our society? And what are they saying that we should do about it?

Indeed, studying parties and their positions arguably allow us to get a more accurate and detailed picture of the different aspirations and beliefs present within our society. As stated by Fagerholm, "parties are also affected by major changes in the social and economic landscape, leading to greater complexity, increasing demands for cross-national political cooperation, declining rivalry between the 'old' left and the 'old' right and growing polarization along new policy dimensions beyond the core of the left-right framework" (2016). In other words, parties' behaviour and positions are directly affected and shaped by our changing political context and studying them may offer significant clues to gain a better understanding of our society's ongoing developments. Furthermore, understanding parties and their positions is central to studying them. As stated by Ecker et al., "Locating the positions of political parties on a given policy continuum is an essential precondition for testing much of today's theories of party competition, government formation, and legislative decision-making" (2021).

In summary, this research is inscribed within party politics as a research field, and more specifically in the tradition of party classification according to ideology. While this study's goal was not to develop a full typology regarding the classification of political parties according to their positions on immigration, it nonetheless contributes to this important, broader research agenda. While left/right ideologies have traditionally been used to classify parties by ideology, this tool is becoming increasingly obsolete, especially when considering the issue of immigration. Exploring new indicators to classify parties according to their positions on this specific issue is therefore necessary. In order to do so, I looked at the literature to determine the main indicators which have been used to study parties' positions.

CHAPTER 2: A PARTY'S POSITION

2.1 Parties' positions: Main elements

Having established why it is important and relevant to study parties and their positions, I turned my attention to the existing literature on classifying parties according to their positions on immigration more specifically. In order to capture the different elements traditionally used within the literature to study a party's position on immigration, I looked at the literature to understand how parties' positions have been studied and, based on my findings, develop various indicators to analyze and compare parties' positions.

To be more specific, the first part of this chapter is a short literature review which answers the question: What are the elements that make up a party's position on immigration? It focuses on the literature on anti-immigration parties (AIPs). When it comes to immigration, it is one of, if not

the, most prevalent typology within the literature. Although I do not rely on this typology for my specific analysis (for reasons explained later in the chapter), the fact that it relies on a similar categorization to mine (i.e., studying and comparing parties based on positions on immigration), I still consider it. Given that it is the most extensively developed party typology linked to positions on immigration, it appears as a good place to start in order to better understand the main elements that make up a party's position on immigration. This chapter is organized according to the three main elements or indicators identified across the literature to identify a party's position, namely stance, salience, and discourse.

2.2 Previous work on AIPs: Stance & salience as key components

One of the first scholars to try and specifically define what AIPs are was Meindert Fennema. In a 1997 article, he developed a typology of AIPs. He argued that there are three types of AIPs: racist parties, protest parties and far-right parties (1997). While he recognizes the variety of motives and ideologies that can influence a restrictive stance towards immigration, his work remains largely one-dimensional in that it only focuses on *stance* as a way to identify AIPs. This is well demonstrated in Van Der Brug et al.'s work, who later use a more specific definition inspired by Fennema's work to state that AIPs are "political parties that employ the immigration issue as the core political concern in political campaigns or that are considered by elites of other parties to do so" (2005).

This view is still limited because it implies that AIPs are single-issue parties (i.e., restricting immigration is their sole/main political purpose). This is not, however, supported by growing evidence (Mitra 1988; Mudd 1999 as cited in van Spanje, 2011, 306). Indeed, parties typically described as AIPs, such as Britain's UKIP and France's Front National, have also been studied for their claims on other subjects such as European integration and economic policy (Evans & Mellon, 2019; Zaslove, 2008). This indicator alone therefore appears insufficient to fully capture a party's position on immigration.

The second scholar to address the conceptual vagueness around AIPs was van Spanje (2011). He established two criteria that a party must fulfill to be considered as anti-immigration: "First, the measures it requires aim to restrict immigration. The second criterion is that it has to stress the urgency of taking measures regarding immigration" (van Spanje, 2011, 308). In other words, he makes a distinction between issue position (what *stance* is taken towards the issue) and issue salience (the *importance* given to the issue).

These definitions brought two important insights. The first—arguably a relatively instinctive one—is that categorizing parties according to their positions on immigration requires us to determine whether the party takes a stance that leans towards restricting or liberalizing immigration. The second is that how much they stress and give *importance* to the issue of immigration over other policy issues also matters. Salience was therefore a significant indicator to consider in order to achieve a well-rounded understanding of a party's position on the issue.

2.3 A missing piece: Political discourse

Despite their respective strengths, the definitions offered by Van Der Brug et al. and van Spanje still present significant limits and appear to overlook at least one central aspect associated with AIPs and their specific positions on immigration: political discourse. Indeed, numerous parties which are often described as AIPs across the literature (e.g., France's Front National, Italy's Lega Nord or Germany's Alternative für Deutschland) have all been studied through their political discourse (Akbaba, 2018; Cap, 2017, 2018; Eroglu & Köroğlu, 2020; Jenks & Bhatia, 2020; van Heerden et al., 2014). Broadly understood, "political discourse" can refer to a variety of processes and dynamics (van Dijk, 1997). Here, I am referring more specifically to one of the processes that constitute political discourse: *framing*. Frames are, broadly understood, schemes of interpretation (Goffman, 1974) that promote a particular problem definition or causal interpretation (Entman, 1993). In the case of political parties, framing refers to the mobilization by political actors of a specific rhetoric to promote, advance and justify their policies and ideas. In the case of immigration, we are referring to how they frame immigration as a policy issue (i.e., what problems is it linked to, and how the specific policies that the party is proposing will help fix them). Indeed, political rhetoric is a central aspect of how parties position themselves on certain issues. As stated by Finlayson, "[political rhetoric] is not secondary or subordinate to the core propositions of an ideology but it is an intrinsic part of the whole." (2013, 197). In other words, understanding how actors advance and justify a proposal is key to analyzing it.

Therefore, discourse appeared to be a central indicator to examine in order to better understand what characterizes or differentiates the positions that various parties take on immigration. Here, I was focusing less on the broader frames that are used to discuss immigration, and more on specific rationales that are used to advance and justify policy proposals by political parties. In this sense, we are not referring to "framing" as usually more broadly understood, and instead to "problem definition" more specifically. In other words, I am interested here in the kinds of rationales and justification that parties give to *justify* their positions. I am looking at the sentiment or ideology that animates their positions (e.g., racism, nationalism, etc.) and more at how they *define* immigration as a policy issue.

Overall, it seems clear that all three elements stated earlier (stance, salience and discourse) are central to understanding the nature of a party's ideological position on the broad issue of immigration. These findings largely echo Dancygier and Margalit's argument that there are three "key dimensions to how a party handles a political issue: how much focus it places on it (*salience*), what specific aspects it chooses to address (*substance*), and the position it takes on these aspects (*stance*)."

Given these findings, the AIP typology does not seem to be developed enough to serve my purposes here and analyze with sufficient nuance the positions of parties operating in a largely "pro-immigration" context, with no systemized definition or classification having been developed that encompasses all three indicators found within the literature. Despite the wide interest it attracts across academic circles, the label of "anti-immigration party" (AIP) suffers from a deep lack of theorizing. The literature on AIPs rarely defines the term, instead often using the term interchangeably with other terms such as far-right parties (van Spanje, 2011), extreme right-wing populist parties (Sletaune, 2013) or populist radical right parties (PRRPs) (Svensson, 2015), etc. This is problematic, for at least two reasons.

First, restricting immigration is not a concern solely imputable to far-right parties. It has been a long-standing concern of centre-right parties (Bale, 2008; van Heerden et al., 2014) and is becoming a growing concern for mainstream left parties (Alonso & Fonseca, 2012) as well. Second, there is a major disagreement within the literature around the “core ideology” of far-right parties (Golder, 2016) which limits its usefulness as a label.

Therefore, I looked outside of the AIP typology and look at how parties’ positions on immigration have been studied more broadly to develop sophisticated and accurate measurements for the three indicators (stance, salience and discourse) identified above. This means that in order to answer my broader research question, I had to address three “sub-questions” that helped guide my analysis of each party’s position, based on the main elements identified.

- 1) What *stance* do they take towards immigration?
- 2) What *importance (salience)* do they give to the issue of immigration?
- 3) How do they *frame* the issue of immigration?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a literature review on each party to develop a hypothesis for each sub-research question.

CHAPTER 3 : QUEBEC’S MAIN PARTIES ON IMMIGRATION

After establishing the required indicators to compare the positions of the parties being studied, I turned to my case studies and conducted a short literature review of each selected party (CAQ, PLQ and PQ) and what has been written about them, about their ideologies and about their positions generally, but also on immigration specifically. By better understanding the motivations and ideals at the heart of each party since their foundation and through their history, I can gain a more accurate and nuanced understanding of how they understand immigration and its role within our society. This work of contextualization helped me to reach a greater understanding of the type of values animating each party. It also allowed me to study each party through the lens of the existing behavioural models identified previously, anchoring my analysis into a more solid theoretical understanding of the types of parties that I am dealing with here. My goal was to identify, broadly speaking, how each party conceptualizes immigration. I then, based on the findings, formulated a hypothesis regarding the expected answer to my central research question.

3.1 The CAQ

The CAQ was created at the end of 2011 by François Legault and Charles Sirois (Bélair-Cirino, 2021). The party today describes itself as a “modern nationalist party whose first objective is to ensure the development and the prosperity of Quebec’s nation within Canada, whilst defending with pride its autonomy, language, values and culture.” (Radio-Canada, 2016).

There has been relatively limited academic attention given to the CAQ since its creation (Xhardez & Paquet, 2020). This is not necessarily surprising given how young the party is. The most in-depth analysis to have been conducted was by Frédéric Boily. He first studied the party in relation to the province’s broader partisan space, by looking at the evolution of the political right in Quebec (2012). He states that while the party in its early years suffered from a lack of clarity in

its ideological orientations, the party has since resolutely moved towards the centre right, having even absorbed a right-wing party, the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ) in 2012. He states that there is a growing concern within the literature that other issues have come to complexify the distinction between left- and right-wing politics, for example with some authors arguing that new cleavages have become apparent around identity issues (between a multicultural left and a nationalist right).

Boily further explores the difficulty of locating the CAQ's political ideology, especially when it comes to identity issues, in his 2018 book "La CAQ, une idéologie à la recherche du pouvoir?" (2018). In it, he states that the CAQ's ideology is largely centred around the economy and nationalism, which are at the centre of most of its actions and propositions. As such, he presents the party as using two main logics to justify a reduction of the number of immigrants welcomed in the province: economics (the costs of integration) and identity (the importance of language and cultural integration). In other words, the party's ideas about immigration are driven by specific economic and nationalist considerations, but do not represent a turn to what he calls "identity populism," whereby the "others" (understood broadly as immigrants but also foreigners, other countries, globalism, etc.) are actively presented as a threat to the well-being of the nation.

Similarly, Xhardez and Paquet (2020) emphasize the important departure that the CAQ's proposals on immigration constitute from the existing national consensus regarding the need for immigration, but warn against using "dichotomous continuums," which they state are "useful starting points, but too blunt to fully capture the range of party positions on immigration" (Adam and Deschouwer, 2016 as cited in Xhardez and Paquet, 2020). They highlight that despite its commitment to reduce immigration thresholds, the party has not "turn[ed] its back on the positive value of immigration" and describe the party's position towards immigrants as "ambiguous."

Other scholars have added to this observation. Sarra-Bournet noted in a text that while the party and its policies clearly mark the "rise of an identity-based nationalism," there are still important differences between this party's proposals and Europe's anti-immigration parties given that there is no backlash against neo-liberalism and globalism more generally (2017). Similarly, Rioux (2020) points out the party's ongoing commitment to grow foreign investments in Quebec, and states that its approach to immigration is based on defending the interest of the business class, by restricting it to a tool that must serve the needs of targeted industries. Hurteau (2020) also highlights this apparent tension between the party's commitment to reducing immigration and its desire to advance Quebec's position within the global economy.

Additionally, the CAQ has been the subject of much academic attention regarding its approach to cultural plurality and diversity (Koussens, 2020; Mégret, 2020; Seymour & Gosselin-Tapp, 2020). However, these studies have tended to focus less on the party itself and more on one of its most controversial policies: Bill 21 (a law that forbids public servants from wearing religious symbols). While not explicitly anchored in a discussion of immigration, these studies reveal important concerns regarding the impacts that the CAQ's approach to diversity has been having on cultural minorities, formed by immigrants and their descendants. For example, Seymour and Gosselin-Tapp (2020) argue that the CAQ's Bill 21 was based on an instrumentalization of Quebec's cultural insecurity and creates important tensions between the federal approach of multiculturalism and a republican, "jacobin" approach.

Many studies have also included the CAQ as part of broader studies regarding electoral dynamics in the province, but these often reveal little about the party's ideology and positions (É. Bélanger & Daoust, 2020; Daoust, 2015; Durand & Blais, 2020). There has also been a wide amount of attention given to the CAQ in the grey literature, especially news outlets. Some observers have noted that despite its promises, the party has actually increased the total number of migrants welcomed in the province by boosting temporary migrant permits (Perreault, 2019) which would tend to confirm its largely utilitarian view of immigration.

Broadly speaking, the limited literature on the CAQ reveals the portrait of a strategic party that often presents itself as post-political, or beyond the classical left/right ideology. Ultimately, though, its right-leaning preferences are clear, and the party's economic policies, which are at the forefront of its political identity, clearly and firmly situate it within a neoliberal ideology and logic. This heavy focus on economic efficiency and prosperity is also accompanied by a strong sense of nationalism, anchored in a republican approach to diversity and plurality that places it at odds with Canada's historical commitment to a liberal multiculturalism. In this sense, while the literature is clear on the important differences that the party holds with Europe's radical right parties, it is clear that its positioning on issues related to immigration and integration are inscribed within complex local and global dynamics (including populism and nationalism) that require careful consideration to understand their nature. The significant and much larger attention given to the party's proposals and policies on integration and diversity management rather than on its handling of immigration influx also points towards important nuances and distinctions to be made. Furthermore, the desire to appear beyond ideology points towards the party as being more of an office- and vote-seeking actor than a policy-seeking one, given that it advances specific administrative qualities (efficiency, etc.) just as much as specific ideologies or societal projects.

3.2 *The PLQ*

The Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ) was founded 1867, and it was under the leadership of Dominique Anglade until November 2022. Given that they are the province's oldest political party, there have been numerous studies on the party. It is the party which has held power for the longest time in the province's history, and as such has undergone numerous changes in leadership and orientation. Because we know that parties evolve through time and given that immigration has not always been as central as it is now, I focus here on the latest writings regarding the party's approach and positions rather than attempting a review of the entirety of the party's history.²

In the 2006 book *Le Parti libéral: Enquête sur les réalisations du gouvernement Charest*, Vincent Lemieux reviewed what the party in 2003 identified as its own 7 main values: individual liberties, social justice, identification to Quebec, economic development, respect of civic society, Canadian belonging and democratic politics. The party has since added "intergenerational equity" to this list of central values (2006). Of course, these values do not correspond to positions per se, and instead are meant to represent the thought process guiding the party's decision-making process when it comes to its actual engagements. Regarding immigration, identification to Quebec and

² For a more exhaustive look at the party's long history, see Lévesque and Pelletier (2006).

economic development are two most notable values which can help us understand the party's recent orientations on the policy issue of immigration.

The PLQ is generally described as a federalist party with a strong focus on the economy. This is reflected in the party's approach to both nationalism and immigration more broadly. While the party is federalist and does not wish to separate from the rest of Canada, it nonetheless does hold significant nationalistic views. Rivard (2017) and Bélanger (2006) showed that the PLQ and PQ, hold views on immigration and integration that differ, but also overlap on many key aspects. This can be partly explained by the fact that despite this widely different stance on federalism, both parties hold arguably similar nationalistic views on some aspects. According to Montigny and Tessier (2017), both parties view Quebec as a distinct nation with a specific cultural identity. While the PLQ does not wish to separate from the rest of Canada, it does not argue for Quebec to become a bilingual nation and instead gives importance to the preservation and promotion of Quebec's francophone identity and culture.

In that sense, it holds similar views to the PQ by not fully embracing the federalist model of integration – multiculturalism – and instead supporting the Quebec model of integration, interculturalism (Lamy & Mathieu, 2020). While both models have important similarities, interculturalism is based on the recognition of a dominant cultural model, where the emphasis is on “civic belonging rather than cultural juxtaposition” (White & Rocher, 2014). In other words, there is an expectation for newcomers to adopt key aspects of the host culture in order to be fully accepted and welcomed.

Bélanger (2006) identifies three main priorities of the PLQ when it comes to immigration. They are to 1. Promote and attract immigrants, 2. Better adequate market needs with selected immigrants and 3. Improve economic and linguistic integration. This shows a resolutely utilitarian view of immigration, where its economic benefits are put at the forefront of the party's position. In other words, they reveal priorities aimed at increasing immigration, but also on using immigration as an economic tool. As demonstrated by Xhardez and Paquet (2020), the party views growing immigration as a key policy tool to “ensure that the province maintains a considerable population base within Canada [...] but also to support Quebec's economic development.”

The party often presents itself as being in complete opposition to the CAQ on the specific issue of immigration thresholds. Beyond the obvious rivalry between the two parties – the CAQ's arrival to power marked the end of almost thirty years of practically uninterrupted reign for the PLQ – the party took specific issue with this proposal by the CAQ, which they viewed as bad economics. During the 2018 campaign, the party was very openly critical of the CAQ's positions and its claims regarding the need to reduce immigration thresholds, citing specific concerns regarding the province's labour shortages. Additionally, the party's leader in 2018, Philippe Couillard, accused the CAQ of being responsible for the rising mobilization and growing notoriety of far-right groups such as *La Meute*, which explicitly gave its endorsement to François Legault as prime minister (Bernatchez, 2019). Similarly, Dominique Anglade has also been very critical of the CAQ's positions on immigration, accusing the party of “lacking openness” (Gagné, 2015) and being divisive (Anglade, 2022). However, beyond immigration thresholds, the party remained in relative agreement with the party regarding most other aspects of its approach to immigration, especially regarding labour market integration. For example, one of the key realizations of the CAQ on the subject, the ARRIMA system, was initially a PLQ initiative (Paquet et al., 2022). The party

can also be understood as an office-seeking party more than a policy-seeking one given its large focus on the economy, which leaves space for ideological flexibility depending on party leaders. In other words, the party exists more as a “vehicle” to advance actors with their own views of the economy than as a vehicle for one clear conception of the economy or other issues.

3.3 The PQ

The Parti Québécois was founded in 1968 from the merging of the Mouvement Souveraineté-Association and the Ralliement national by René Lévesque. Its current leader is Paul St-Pierre Plamondon. The very existential and explicit goal of the party since its foundation has been to make Quebec into a country. The party was initially formed as an alliance between left- and right-wing politicians and supporters who rallied around the very specific project of Quebec sovereignty. However, after the loss of both the 1980 and 1995 referendums, and due to generational changes, the sovereigntist project has been decreasing in popularity (Mahéo & Bélanger, 2018), leading to important debates and somewhat of an existential crisis within the party in the last decades. It is today generally considered as a centre-left party (Bernatchez, 2019; Pétry & Collette, 2012) with a strong focus on nationalism.

The party has been widely studied since its formation, with scholars studying everything from the party’s ideology to its predicted longevity. Described by many as a “generational party” (Lemieux, 2011), it is today largely considered as being in decline. This is due to many factors, including the decreasing popularity of the sovereigntist project and various socio-economic changes, which have led to an apparent partisan realignment whereby old parties such as the PLQ and the PQ have suffered great losses while the CAQ and Québec Solidaire (QS) have made significant gains (Bernatchez, 2019). Despite this relatively recent and arguably growing decline, the party is relevant to study given its key role for the last few decades in shaping the province’s political landscape and its ideological mapping.

It is interesting to note that while the PQ and the PLQ have often been described as each other’s biggest adversaries (that is, before the arrival of the CAQ), a notable convergence between many of their ideologies and positions has been noted in the literature (Bélanger, 2006; Rivard, 2017).

The party’s relationship to cultural minorities and integration more broadly is a complicated one. While the party has historically sought to specifically target immigrant votes (Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero, 2014), it has also had many high-profile incidents that have given the party a not-so-desirable reputation amongst certain communities. From Parizeau’s famous 1995 post-referendum quip that the vote had been lost due to “money and the ethnic vote” to the controversial 2013 “Quebec Values Chart,” the party has often ruffled feathers when it comes to its views on minority cultures or religions.

Furthermore, many scholars have argued that the loss of both referendums on Quebec sovereignty and the subsequent decrease in popularity of the sovereigntist movement and project have led to a shift from political nationalism to an identity-based nationalism (Dufour & Traisnel, 2008; Sarra-Bournet, 2017). In other words, because the sovereigntist movement can no longer hope to separate from Canada, it has become instead focused on its defence of Quebec’s specific

culture and language from any perceived threat, which tends to include the anglophone majority but also newcomers. This phenomenon has been dubbed by some as a form of “*surenchère identitaire*” (Sarra-Bournet, 2017).

There are strong associations that have been shown to exist between attitudes towards sovereignty and attitude towards immigration (Turgeon & Bilodeau, 2014). While these studies have focused more specifically on voters, there is reason to believe that these associations can also be found within the parties’ positions on both nationalism and immigration. In other words, there is reason to believe that the party and its sovereigntist history might make the party more likely to perceive immigration as a threat more than a gain. While it is important not to generalize too broadly, this correlation nonetheless exists and can arguably be at least partially explained by this recent turn towards an identity-based form of nationalism.

Despite this, the party has largely been welcoming towards immigration. Xhardez and Paquet (2020) report that the party’s approach to immigration in the last few years has largely focused on favouring French language immigrants, under the argument of improving integration. Beyond this specific issue, the party has not sought to take a specific position on immigration thresholds, instead focusing on integration as a key aspect of the issue. Contrary to the two other parties, this party could be considered to be a policy-seeking actor before an office or vote-seeking one, in the sense that it advances a very specific policy vision, and most vote- or office-seeking behaviours are arguably subservient to this aim.

3.4 Hypotheses

These literature reviews of each party helped to inform my hypotheses. Additionally, the literature widely recognizes that in the specific context of Canada, parliamentary restraints have made ideologically polarized parties scarce and brokerage politics have prevailed instead (Carty & Cross, 2010). It therefore seemed relatively unlikely that a party could succeed by offering radically different or controversial positions on an existing issue. Therefore, I did not expect any party to be a complete outlier in its approach to immigration and expect all three parties to give a low degree of saliency to the issue.

In terms of discourse, it became clear that while they are informed by a variety of motivations and concerns, all three parties hold relatively similar visions of immigration. The CAQ and the PQ both hold significant nationalistic views that are likely to shape a more restrictive approach to immigration, especially in terms of linguistic and cultural proximity for selection criteria. While the PLQ generally gives less importance to this defence of the cultural identity of Quebec, it nonetheless recognizes its importance and does not necessarily oppose it. Also, all parties studied view immigration as a valuable tool for economic development, and situate their immigration measures as central to economic strategies rather than cultural or social projects. Additionally, we can see that immigration is not necessarily a subject of great importance for the parties being studied. While it certainly is a subject that they address, concerns such linked to the economy and jurisdiction issues generally occupy more space in the core identity and ideology of each party.

Given this, I hypothesized that the CAQ's position on immigration does differ from the positions held by the province's other main political parties. I expected that while the party's discourse and salience would be similar to that of other parties, its stance would vary, given that their proposal to reduce immigration thresholds was criticized and was seen as a break with the existing consensus. However, I expected this difference to be relatively minor, with variations mostly in the CAQ's approach to immigration rather than integration and limited to restrictive policy proposals rather than variations in discourse or salience.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sources of data

In order to verify these hypotheses, I had to address the question: What indicators and instruments have been used to study these elements and measure parties' positions on immigration? In this chapter, I go over the main empirical concerns and challenges acknowledged within the literature in analyzing and measuring each component. This research allowed me to develop the best possible measurements to analyze the CAQ's and the other main political parties' positions and achieve an understanding of their position that is sufficiently refined to reveal relevant similarities and differences, and therefore answer my main research question. For each indicator identified, I considered the empirical concerns raised in the literature to develop my own measurements, and explained how my research was positioned within the various debates.

There are numerous strategies that exist, and which have been used in countless academic studies to measure parties' positions on a number of issues. The following is not an exhaustive list, but nonetheless offers insights into the various challenges of capturing parties' positions accurately. These strategies seek to measure the three major dimensions of parties' positions: stance, salience and discourse.

Electoral platforms & party manifestos

The first method, and arguably the most popular one, is to study electoral platforms. Evidently, issues can arise if a party does not publish a manifesto, or if they do but it is too short to gather enough data and reach significance. What exactly constitutes a manifesto can also diverge across political contexts or even between parties, complicating replicability (Ruedin & Morales, 2019). Most authors who use manifestos tend to go for a qualitative content analysis, with parts of the manifesto being "coded" according to its content.

If done manually, coding can be time consuming and expensive, especially since coding manifestos generally requires expert knowledge to be able to differentiate between positive, neutral or negative proposals (Dancygier & Margalit, 2020). Some authors support the use of computer-assisted coding (Volkens, 2007), but this method presents significant issues, especially in evaluating dimensions beyond the left/right divide (Ruedin & Morales, 2019) and capturing subtle nuances in messages (Lehmann & Zobel, 2018). Manifestos also tend to be a stable source of data over time, allowing for more fine-tuned analysis of changes in party positioning (Dancygier & Margalit, 2020).

Van Elfrinkhof et al. highlights that manifestos combine both qualitative (word as meaningful) and quantitative (word as data) methods (2014). They argue that combining both methods could “lead to a refinement of the individual methods” (van Elfrinkhof et al. 2014). This appeared as a promising way of proceeding when differentiating between salience and stance.

Furthermore, Ruedin & Morales note that “any method deriving positions from manifestos alone will face problems to interpret silence correctly” (2019). In other words, just because a party does not mention an issue in its manifesto does not mean that it does not have a position on it. Nonetheless, the issues that they do choose to address still send important messages to their supporters about what they will prioritize.

In terms of stance, manifestos can render the aggregation of data on a party’s position more difficult. One reason is that statements in manifestos are often concerned with specific issues rather than positions on broad subjects. This is especially relevant for the issue of immigration, which tends to reach across a number of sub-issues (Helbling & Tresch, 2011). This, however, makes it easier to determine which aspects of a subject political parties choose to address or take positions on, and to measure the position on these more specific sub-issues.

Expert surveys

The second strategy regularly used by scholars measuring a party’s position is expert surveys. Advantages of this method include that it is cost-effective (Helbling & Tresch, 2011), and it has shown high levels of reliability and validity (Van Der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009). It allows us to capture a party’s position beyond its “official” stance, or “grasp a party’s position as observed in public discourse” (Lehmann & Zobel, 2018). For example, consider a party who offers little material on an issue in official documents but whose members make numerous or salient public declarations on it. This strategy can help gather information about a party’s position that does not appear in its manifesto.

Additionally, experts surveys make it harder to study younger or less well-known parties, as there may not be any experts on them yet (Volkens, 2007). For instance, given that the party has only existed for 9 years and been in power for 4 years, the CAQ would be relatively hard to study using expert surveys. The method may also be ill suited to take into account very recent or small changes in positions (Lehmann & Zobel, 2018) and it is not always clear what exactly experts are measuring (Volkens, 2007). For example, if experts are asked to rank parties according to how far left- or how far-right they are, specific criteria need to be established to ensure that they are all considering the same aspects (e.g. economic policies, social policies, etc.) Additionally, unless replicated through time, expert surveys can create difficulties in measuring changes in a party’s positions over time (Helbling & Tresch, 2011).

Media coverage

A third, and slightly less common measure, consists of measuring parties’ positions through content analyses of their media coverage. This method is very time and personnel consuming, as it requires the coding and analysis of large amounts of text. One of the biggest concerns with this method is also the issue of journalistic bias. Certain outlets risk mischaracterizing a party’s position on certain issues, filtering what is being said by political elites through specific and possibly biased

frames (for example, by overemphasizing the implications of a declaration to create spectacle and attract readers). As such, “they may not accurately describe where parties stand on various issues” (Van Der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009). Scholars who have adopted this method, however, argue that this can be mitigated by relying on a sampling of diversified news outlets (Helbling & Tresch, 2011).

Proponents of the media coverage approach also argue that, similarly to party manifestos, this strategy offers greater possibilities for replicability given that it is based on publicly available data, which can facilitate cross-measurements by other researchers. Media data also offers greater information on “intra-party heterogeneity” (Helbling & Tresch, 2011). In other words, unlike party manifestos which represent a unified vision of compromises amongst party members, media analysis renders it possible to capture divergent opinions across party members. This can help reach a more complexified and nuanced vision of the party’s positions.

Media analysis is also “sensitive to changes in the political agenda, so that the changes of party positions do not (only) reflect ideological changes” (Van Der Brug et al. 2005) This means that just because members of a party start addressing an issue that it did not address before does not mean that the party’s positions have officially shifted or changed. If a new issue arises, members of the party may make declarations that will not necessarily become incorporated within the party’s official stance. Yet this is not necessarily an overall weakness. Like with expert surveys, this can offer valuable insights into positions that a party may not have explicitly addressed in its manifestos.

Where it does risk creating more significant issues is when considering salience. Immigration especially, given its highly salient and politicized status as a policy issue, is susceptible to this kind of skewed representation. For example, imagine that a politician makes an especially controversial statement about irregular immigration. While other parties may receive a lot of coverage as they respond to this statement, this does not mean that the party would have necessarily put emphasis on this specific issue without prompting. Helbling and Tresch also raise questions about the validity of media coverage as a method to measure salience, showing through cross-validation that it tends to give results that diverge from expert surveys and party manifestos (2011).

Furthermore, some scholars who use media coverage argue that it is more politically significant than party manifestos. They state that “It can be argued that only by passing the media filter the claims and positions in party manifestos become more generally politically relevant” (van der Brug et al., 2015 as cited in Carvalho & Ruedin, 2020). In other words, because journalists do a “filter” work by focusing on the issues which presumably matter most to voters, observing parties’ positions through media coverage allows us to gain a more complete understanding of how parties’ positions will be presented and interpreted by voters. Indeed, it has been shown that voters tend to base their decisions on a “wider environment” and not only on party manifestos (Adams et al., 2014). Capturing this wider environment is arguably important when trying to understand not only how parties position themselves, but also to eventually be able to understand to what message their supporters are responding.

Parliamentary debates

A fourth and least commonly used approach within the literature is to look at parliamentary debates. While this approach is typically more difficult due to its text-heavy nature which requires a lot of resources in order to be analyzed, the growing popularity of computer-assisted methods have made it more accessible to scholars and its use has grown in popularity (Bara et al., 2007). Being a relatively new field, many researchers using parliamentary debates to study party positions use very different terms, ranging from ‘sentiment analysis’ to ‘political scaling’ and ‘ideal point estimation’ (Abercrombie & Batista-Navarro, 2020).

Parliamentary debates have the advantage of being widely available and easily accessible. However, they are also permeated by specific power dynamics that can shape and influence the nature of a party’s discourse within this space. For example, leading parties will tend to seek the preservation of the status quo, whereas members of the opposition will seek to advance their own visions and argue for change (Ilie, 2002). Their analysis can also differ and complicate cross-national comparisons, given that the number of parties, the structural rules and the topics can differ widely depending on the context (Proksch & Slapin, 2010). Furthermore, MPs have to “comply with basic institutional constraints and discursive practices,” meaning that they cannot necessarily always express themselves as freely as they would in the media. It is also a formal setting where mostly prepared remarks and questions are exchanged rather than spontaneous commentary. This makes it an especially interesting space to consider discourse, because it is the moment when political actors “must officially justify their choices and their party’s preferences” (Xhardez, 2020).

What do these various sources of data and their related concerns reveal about how we can measure positions on immigration more specifically? They show that measuring parties’ positions is no simple task. We can argue that choices of methodology will ultimately differ according to what the researcher views as most representative of parties’ overall positions. In this sense, as stated by Volkens, “The choice of [method] hinges on the specific research question” (2007).

These varied choices also reveal the complexity and multidimensional nature of *positions* as a unit of analysis. Lehman and Zobel state that “party manifesto data reports the self-ascribed position of the party, media data shows which parts of this position are brought into the public debate, and expert data shows how the position is perceived” (Lehmann & Zobel, 2018). It is not always clear what should matter most: Is it the official statements produced by parties? Or the general impression that they give across a variety of texts and platforms? Because parties, in the end, exist at least partially to answer voters’ demands, should it even matter how they position themselves? Or should we care more about how voters perceive their positioning? Of course, these issues are not necessarily specific to the issue of immigration and could be argued to be present in most studies that try to measure parties’ positions.

Parties are also shown to be complex political actors, as discrepancies in positions can happen both internally (disagreement between party members) and externally (difference between official positions and public statements or actions). Ruedin and Morales have argued that “parties rarely have a single, coherent and unequivocal position on any issue or policy area, which makes it impossible to find their ‘true’ position” (2019).

For my purposes here, I chose two of the previously reviewed sources of data: party manifestos and parliamentary debates. I chose not to rely on expert surveys because given the young age of the CAQ as a party, this would have provided limited insights. As stated previously, party manifestos have been long recognized as key political texts within the study of parties and their policies (Basile, 2016; Dolezal et al., 2018; Lehmann & Zobel, 2018). However, given the limited amount of text available due to the young age of the CAQ as a party (only 3 elections), this would provide significant limits. An additional source of text was therefore required in order to strengthen my analysis and provide a more well-rounded view of the party's position. Media coverage was rejected as an additional source of data because of time and resources constraints. Parliamentary debates were selected instead to strengthen and continue our content analysis of their policy proposals and positions. Following this, I proceeded to a literature review of the empirical concerns linked to my research question, in order to operationalize my methods and develop specific measurements for each.

4.2. Issues of measurements

In order to fully answer my three sub-research questions, I needed to operationalize the selected tools and to specify the exact measurements that would be used in each case. To do so, I looked at the literature on position measurements and the specific empirical concerns that they raised regarding measurement and scaling. Numerous scholars have sought to measure parties' positions specifically on immigration. A careful look at the literature reveals two central difficulties in capturing parties' positions on immigration in a comprehensive way.

The first is that it is not always clear what should be included under the broad umbrella of "immigration" as a policy field. There is little consensus in the literature on which specific dimensions should be included, and how they should be categorized. The second is in the difficulties of using "positions" as a unit of analysis. More specifically, there is a difficulty in conceptualizing the ideological space across which these positions stand, and how they should be situated within this space. In other words, determining what differentiates one position from another goes beyond its substance and into more precise concerns of ideological mapping. This kind of differentiation is especially important to avoid making overly broad assumptions regarding parties' positions.

This section goes over each main concern identified and addresses where my own research will be situated. It is worth noting, however, that since my study remains limited to the Quebec case, it cannot directly address the broader issues present within the literature regarding analysis and comparison across national contexts. Nonetheless, it can offer some starting points to consider.

"Immigration" as a policy issue: Challenges in delimiting a complex field

As identified above, one of the key aspects to consider when measuring positions is that of *substance*. In other words, what are parties talking about? This is an especially contentious point when trying to measure positions on immigration. At the most basic level, many scholars have measured positions on immigration by trying to capture immigration as a "whole." For instance, some studies measure party positions on an aggregated "immigration dimension," assuming that

positions in the immigration debate are structured by a single dimension, “orthogonal to the classic left–right dimension” (van Heerden et al., 2014).

In this way, they make some assumptions about what the policy field includes. Hellwig & Kweon (2016) take this characterization in their study of voter behaviour. This seems relatively surprising given that they also describe the issue of immigration as “fundamentally *multidimensional*” (original emphasis) and state that voters’ attitudes for these issues “cannot be distilled into ‘support’ or ‘opposition’” (Hellwig, 2016). To be fair, when stating this they are specifically referring to voter support. Yet, a look at other scholars’ work quickly reveals that there seems to be an increasing consensus towards questioning this “bundling” of positions on immigration at the level of party positioning as well. van Spanje’s study of AIPs used such a scale, but he also looked at another more specific dimension, characterized stance towards immigration as being divided between restrictiveness towards immigration as whole, but also as preference for integration v. preferences for deportation (2011). While certainly useful to a certain degree, this characterization remains somewhat limited. One reason is that it does not capture the variances that can exist across both integration and deportation as policy issues, as certain scholars suggest (see below).

Indeed, across the literature, there seems to be a lack of consensus over which dimensions to include if we are to go beyond the idea of “immigration” as a single policy issue. There is however widespread agreement on at least one central distinction to make when choosing indicators : it is the difference between policies on *immigration* (policies that regulate immigration flows) and *integration* (policies that regulate immigrants’ rights post-entry) (Akkerman, 2015; Bale, 2008; Carvalho & Ruedin, 2020; Dancygier & Margalit, 2020; Lehmann & Zobel, 2018; Natter et al., 2020; van Heerden et al., 2014).

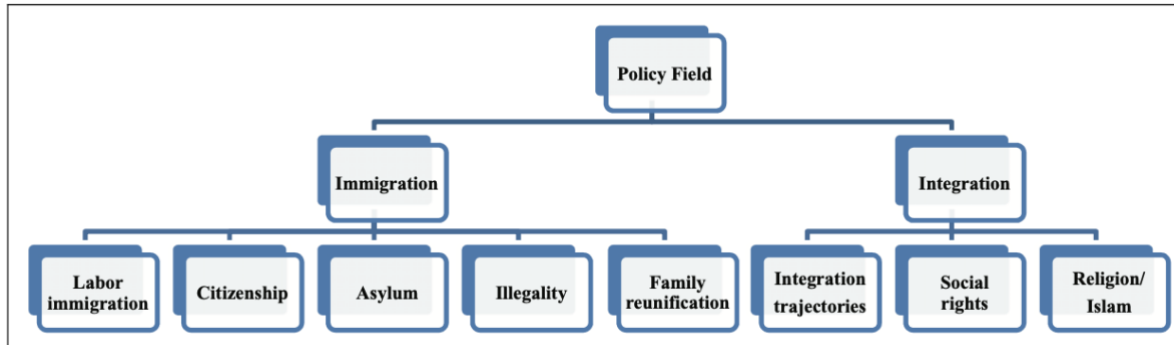
Lehmann and Zobel argue that this distinction is well established within the literature on immigration policy. They posit that it also appears as a significant differentiation in the study of parties given that some parties take opposing positions or strategies on the two (2018). This distinction also allows us to consider and measure salience across sub-issues. Yet the sufficiency of this distinction to capture all sub-issues is contested, and many scholars who have adopted it have also sought to further complexify it, and have created what can be referred to as “original coding schemes” (Dancygier & Margalit, 2020).

Examples of this include Xhardez and Paquet, who develop a coding scheme to study political parties in Québec that separates the issue of immigration across three subjects: volume (immigration levels, quotas and flows), origins (regions, countries, linguistic or ethnic origins), categories (categories of immigrants – e.g., skilled immigrants, entrepreneurs, asylum seekers and refugees, students) and others (2020). Although in their case, they focus *only* on immigration and not on integration policies. They do not state this explicitly, but we can understand that the distinction is being made given that positions on these subjects are ranked solely according to volume (*influx*).

Akkerman also adapts the categorization of immigration to his specific purposes (2015). He argues that the literature on party positions has given insufficient attention to issues of party competition. To remedy this, he studied parties’ positions on the issue of immigration as this policy field has “a sufficiently large variety of sub-issues to provide parties with the option of mixing and

matching.” To demonstrate this, he divides immigration as a policy field into a total of eight sub-issues, shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Akkerman’s Coding Frame



Source: Akkerman, Tjitske. 2015. “Immigration Policy and Electoral Competition in Western Europe: A Fine-Grained Analysis of Party Positions over the Past Two Decades.” *Party Politics* 21(1): 54–67.

Natter et al. make distinctions between relevant policy areas (border and land control; legal entry and stay; integration and post-entry rights; and exit and return regulations) and the migrant category targeted (e.g., high-skilled workers, low-skilled workers, family members, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers) (2020). Odmalm instead uses 7 categories, focused largely on types of immigration: (1) Immigration (in general) (2) Labour immigration (3) Asylum seekers and refugees (4) Family reunification (5) Unaccompanied minors (6) Student migration (7) Retirement migration (2012). Finally, Dancygier and Margalit developed the most fine-grained coding scheme to date. They denote 30 categories meant to capture the entirety of issues that can be touched by concerns towards immigration (2020). These methods also have in common that they allow the researcher to both focus on subcategories or to eventually aggregate them into broader categories if desired.

Distinguishing between dimensions allows us to expand our vision of how we can hope to adapt various coding schemes to different contexts. For example, Goodman argues that a distinction between immigration and integration can prove especially helpful when studying subnational parties (2019). She gives the example of the U.S., where states do not have powers on *flows* of immigration but have a lot of power on integration policies. The same thing could be said about Québec. Here, provincial governments have various powers over both immigration and integration, but none over naturalization policies. Therefore, disaggregating immigration as a policy issue can help ensure adaptability or “travelling capacity” (Sartori, 1984, as cited by Krouwel 2006) across political contexts.

Of course, the question of which dimensions to include when mapping out parties’ positions may very well be an issue that reaches across policy fields. As explained by Laver, it is not always easy to determine which dimensions are most central to any given issue. This also depends on whether researchers are using an inductive or a deductive approach. The difficulties to determine whether “policy dimensions have any a priori substantive meaning, independent of the particular setting under investigation, or are merely dimensions of similarity and difference within a specified set of agents” (2014) are a common concern within studies trying to measure parties’ positions.

How can we make sure that we are using the right dimensions? Laver further states that we cannot, stating that “there is no definitive answer, no ‘one true dimensionality’ for any setting” (2014).

However, for the purposes on this study, I argued that that while there may not be any perfect measure, some disaggregation is still desirable. As such, for this research I sought to reach a “middle ground” in the number of dimensions established within the literature. Based on the findings identified, I established the following categories (see Table 1):

Table 1: The various dimensions of immigration

Immigration	Integration
Volume	Access to services
Origin	Ability to stay
Category of entry	

For the “immigration” dimension, I relied on Xhardez and Paquet’s (2020) established dimensions, since they had already developed a scale adapted for the Quebec context. I only removed the “jurisdiction” dimension, because although it is a significant part of Quebec’s approach to immigration, I argue that it has less to do with parties’ definition of immigration as a social issue, and more to do with the parties’ vision of federalism and federal-provincial political relations. As for the integration axis, I relied on Akkerman’s (2015) work, given that it appeared sufficiently disaggregated without being as cumbersome and complex as Dancygier and Margarit’s (2020) work. However, I chose to remove the “religion / islam” dimension. While this can be seen as controversial, I argue that although issues of religious freedom are important to consider, their equation with the issue of immigration can risk causing “noise” within the analysis, where broader issues of diversity, tolerance, culture, and nationalism would be brought in. These broader ideologies are more directly connected to an approach that seeks to *explain* rather than *categorize* a party’s approach to immigration. This is because the link between religious or social policies and immigration is not always made explicitly (for example, in the case of the CAQ’s infamous Bill 21 regarding secularism, although the law has been heavily criticized by community organizations who support immigrants, a link with immigration is never made explicitly by the party itself and would therefore be difficult to capture through the methods that I mobilize here). Although such measures have significant impacts that cannot be ignored, they are difficult to encompass directly in an analysis of a party’s position on immigration, at least when approaching it from the perspective that I chose for this research.

It is also important to note that this disaggregation is most feasible when analyzing specific sources of text. While it is reasonable to expect being able to classify short statements in more restrictive categories, longer statements such as those contained in parliamentary debates would be much more difficult to categorize. Furthermore, given their text-heavy nature, reading each statement individually would be extremely time consuming. As such, this distinction for dimensions is only applied to party manifestos in my analysis.

Beyond the significant challenges explored above, even if we come to an agreement on the specific dimensions that should be included in the broad policy field of immigration, we are still left with sizable challenges when deciding on how to classify the party’s positions.

Classifying parties' positions: Concerns with scale, context and frames

Another major concern within the literature when it comes to classifying party positions is the important question of how we can map out parties' positions. Should we focus on the partisan space within which the party operates (e.g., a proposal is considered as more restrictive the more it diverges from the status quo), or should we instead focus on the similarities or differences between the overall goal that their proposals seek to accomplish (e.g., regardless of the context, a proposal is considered as restrictive if it targets the same dimension)? This relates specifically to the key dimension of positions as related to *stance*, where it becomes important to understand not only what the proposal of a party is, but also where this proposal stands compared to others.

There is no overall agreement across the literature on how this is best accomplished. For examples, many scholars, such as Dancygier and Margalit, use a relatively simple negative/neutral/positive coding scheme. According to this scale, "Positive references relate to (a) immigrants' positive impact on a given issue/area, (b) increasing immigration, or (c) enacting policies that favour immigrants" and "negative references state the opposite" (2020).

However, other scholars have pointed out that this can obscure nuances in how intensive the change proposed by a party is (or how "extreme" the position is). In this sense, Akkerman adds to this positive/negative a concern to "do justice to the differences between radical and moderate positions." To do so, he argues that a 5-point scale is sufficient (2015). Natter et al. focus on a similar gradation of radical/moderate, but they focus specifically on policy change (i.e., they specifically take into account the status quo in order to determine the magnitude of change caused by the measure). They rank changes according to their magnitude as "'fine-tuning,' 'minor,' 'mid-level' or 'major change'" (2020).

Similarly, van Spanje, one of the only scholars to have tried measuring parties' positions on immigration specifically in order to arrive at clear measurements of AIPs, uses an aggregated "restrictiveness towards immigration" measure as his central measure of parties' positions. To arrive at this, he combines two previous studies based on expert surveys. In the first one, experts were asked to rank parties for how restrictive their positions on immigration are, on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being not very restrictive and 10 being very restrictive). In the second study, experts are asked to rank parties on a scale of 1 to 20, (1 being "favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into [nationality] society" and 20 being "favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants return to their country of origin"). He then re-scales that second study on a scale of 1 to 10 to arrive at an aggregated measure. Van Der Brug and Van Spanje also use this scale (2009). While the indicators used are explained, it is not so clear how the results were positioned across the 1 to 10 scale. Is it based on a consideration for how other parties fare on the same indicators? (e.g., a party is ranked as a 10 because it favours deportation more than any other party). Or is it based on implicit assumptions about where the policies themselves stand? (e.g., a party is ranked above 8 if the expert doing the ranking deems a party's positions to be *extremely* favourable to deportation).

This shows that there are significant concerns that arise when considering how to index positions. Indeed, as stated earlier, what counts as "radical" vs. what counts as "moderate" may mean very different things across political contexts. One needs only to think about the recent

debates in the U.S. on health care as a “socialist” measure, and how the same measure here in Canada is deeply embedded within mainstream politics.

Interestingly, Akkerman does not rely on a pro/anti spectrum but instead chooses the specific terms of cosmopolitan/nationalist or nativist positions (2015). This is significant because it reflects an increasing concern within studies on parties’ position that positions on immigration cannot simply be described as positive or negative. Instead, according to this view, recognizing and including the variety of *social goals* that informs those positions is more revealing of what various proposals reflect about the nature of parties’ positions.

In this sense, Fiřtová argues that “simple and extreme labels such as “positive” and “negative” and “restrictive” versus “liberal” do not capture the true nature of Canadian parties’ positions on immigration” and that “more subtle, multifaceted model[s] of frames [are] necessary” (2019). To remedy this limit, she separates positions according to how they are framed, and classifies them according to what these frames are based on. Positions can either be identity/value based (when it is a nationalistic or multiculturalist frame), or interest-based when they use economic, security, procedural, and social and labour security frames (2019). Similarly, Van Heerden et al. ponder whether positions on immigration are distributed along a left/right dimension, or instead along a socio-cultural dimension (2014). However, they argue that this frame only applies to discussions on integration. For immigration and integration, the authors instead describe a multiculturalist/monoculturalist frame. In other words, there is an argument being made that it matters not only which kind of policy a party is pursuing, but also the rationales that it offers to justify the policy.

Although Fiřtová’s study is limited to the national context of Canada, it is important to note that similar concerns have been raised in other contexts. Helbling, in his study on Western Europe, also argues that focusing on framing in more details allows us to “present a more nuanced understanding of how political actors conceive and represent immigration, which in turn allows us to better appreciate the positions such actors take on this issue” (2014). Studying frames can also help to better contextualize a coding scheme to a specific political context, since “social and political environment has an impact on the choice of frames” (Helbling, 2014). An example of this is Xhardez and Paquet’s study, who use a relatively simple liberal(pro-immigration)/restrictive(anti-immigration)/neutral scale (2020). They also add a significant axis to their multidimensional conceptualization of the partisan space of Québec: jurisdiction (federal or provincial). They do this because the province has traditionally been organized around this axis rather than the traditional left/right cleavage. This again shows the importance of being able to account for discrepancies across political contexts.

Overall, it is clear that the concerns with immigration as a multidimensional issue and “positions” as a complex unit of analysis are not easily addressed. Based on these findings, I settled on the widely used and recognized scale of restrictive/neutral/liberal used by Xhardez and Paquet (2020). Albeit not perfect, the scale nonetheless allows me to simplify my analysis. Because I focus solely on the Quebec case for this study, parties are compared amongst themselves. In a space generally recognized as “pro-immigration” and in a context of brokerage politics, the need for more disaggregated measurements between more or less “radical” proposals appears limited.

Frames and their limits

Additionally, significant contributions in advancing the concerns raised above have been studies analyzing parties' positions using the concept of *framing*. Broadly speaking, framing refers to the rationales and arguments offered by political actors to justify and explain the positions that they are taking. In other words, how they are defining the problem to which their proposal is responding.

We can, of course, argue that positive/negative categorization is a form of framing. Yet, scholars who have studied how immigration especially is discussed tend to agree that more developed frames are necessary to fully capture the variety of motivations driving the positions that parties take. A broad variety of frames and rhetoric have been used to describe how some parties justify their positions on immigration including “racially divisive appeals” (RDAs), crime frames (Brown, 2016), nationalist appeals that portray immigration as an economic and a security threat (Jenks & Bhatia, 2020), a rejection of multiculturalism (Nortio et al., 2020), fearmongering and othering (Cap, 2017; (Cap, 2017; Lazaridis & Tsagkroni, 2015), monoculturalism (van Heerden et al., 2014) and xenophobia (Krzyżanowski, 2020).

These frames hold important similarities but also reveal subtle nuances that may be worth engaging with. For example, Betz and Johnson, in their study of AIPs argue that these parties have typically rejected immigration by arguing for “exclusion in the name of the preservation of identity” (Betz and Johnson 2004; 317). They argue that this differs slightly from “traditional” racism in that it is not necessarily about explicitly targeting minorities due to race. Instead it is based on a broader argument of “cultural incompatibility” (Betz & Johnson, 2004). This idea of one “pure and true” national culture which must be preserved and cannot be in the face of too much immigration is also reflected in discussions of “monoculturalistic” and “othering” frames, where both migrants' and the host nation's cultures are essentialized and presented as impossible to reconcile without significant damage being done to the host nation's national identity. In other words, justifications given for a policy proposal can conflict with identified impacts and other potential, implicit motivations. While differentiating between the two can be desirable, it nonetheless makes analysis much more complicated and tends to rely on assumptions rather than empirical proof.

Framing is also an important part of categorizing policy proposals in a more meaningful way. However, most of the measurements proposed within the literature and presented above advance frames that have a lot to do with the ideologies that are purported to explain the various policy proposals. As such, I sought to develop my own categories of framing in order to arrive at a classification that had less to do with the specific *intentions* behind a policy and more to do with the *problem definition* that it represented. Having considered the empirical concerns that surrounded my research agenda, I then sought to apply the chosen sources of data (party manifestos and parliamentary debates), chosen dimensions, and indexation, to arrive at specific measurements that would allow me to analyze each element of a party's position (stance, salience and discourse). Given that my study focuses on comparing the CAQ with the other main Quebec political parties, the time range studied went from 2012 to the present day, therefore relying on a relatively limited time frame of only 10 years.

4.3 Operationalizing stance

In order to measure stance, I collected the electoral platforms of all parties being studied on POLTEXT. A codebook was created to identify whether the various measures present in the electoral platforms were restrictive or not. I borrowed from van Herdeen et al.'s (2014) study and used the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP)'s basic methodology (Werner et al., 2011). As explained before, the most notable distinction which came back most often across the literature was immigration and integration, which was the first category integrated in the codebook. Immigration is understood as policies that affect the number and characteristics of people entering the country, whereas integration is understood as referring to policies that affect the rights and resources of people once they are already in the country. Therefore, for my measurement's first question, I divided the issue of immigration into two sub-issues, and instead asked: Does each party seek to restrict immigration flows? And: Does each party seek to restrict immigrants' post-entry rights? (In other words, are they seeking to make it harder for immigrants to access various services and/or retain their migratory status?)

Once all sub-issues and distinctions were made, the following codebook was obtained:

Table 2: Codebook for manifesto analysis

IMMIGRATION POLICY	What aspect of immigration policy is the sentence about?	What is the position towards the issue?		
		Expansionist	Restrictive	Neutral
	1.1 Volume (immigration levels, quotas and flows)	<i>Increase immigration flows in terms of volume</i>	<i>Decrease immigration flows in terms of volume</i>	<i>Unspecific or vague statement regarding the volume</i>
	1.2 Origins (regions, countries, linguistic or ethnic origins)	<i>Increase the share of immigrants from a specific origin or language</i>	<i>Decrease the share of immigrants from a specific origin or language</i>	<i>Unspecific or vague statement regarding preferred origins or languages</i>
	1.3 Category of entry (humanitarian, family reunification, economic)	<i>Decrease the share of immigrants from a specific category of entry</i>	<i>Decrease the share of immigrants from a specific category of entry</i>	<i>Unspecific or vague statement regarding the category of entry</i>

INTEGRATION POLICY What aspect of integration policy is the sentence about?	2.1 Access to services (francisation, health care, etc.)	Expansionist <i>Expand access to integration services and other public services</i>	Restrictive <i>Restrict access to integration services and other public services.</i>	Neutral <i>Unspecific or vague statement regarding the access to services</i>
	2.2 Ability to stay (facilitate long-term establishment)	Expansionist <i>Increase or accelerate paths to permanent residency, increase skill recognition, etc.</i>	Restrictive <i>Decrease or reduce paths to permanent residency, restrict skill recognition, etc.</i>	Neutral <i>Unspecific or vague statement regarding the ability to stay</i>

Party manifestos were collected from the POLTEXT platform and cover three elections: 2012, 2014 and 2018. The choice to restrict my measures to electoral periods and not to the actual policies implemented by the party stems, as stated earlier, from a concern to differentiate between the party's *desired* policies (its vision of immigration) from the adjustments or compromises it arguably had to make once in power.

Once the data was collected, I codified each sentence for every manifesto. I first differentiated every sentence in the manifestos according to whether they concerned immigration or integration. After that, I classified all quasi-sentences of the manifesto according to their corresponding case in the codebook. The same criteria was then applied to the sub-issue of integration.

4.4. Operationalizing salience

To measure salience, a similar process to the previous one was undertaken and took an in-depth look at their party manifestos. Again, this represents three years: 2012, 2014 and 2018. There are two forms of saliency that can be considered across the literature: internal (how much attention the party gives to immigration compared to other issues) and external (how much attention the party gives to immigration compared to other parties). In my case, I used both. Internal saliency was measured by calculating how much attention each party gave to the issue of immigration compared to all other issues that it addressed. External saliency was measured by comparing how each party's established level of attention towards immigration compared to that of other parties. In order to study these two measures, I again used the party's manifestos. Borrowing from the CMP's basic methodology, this time I also looked at Pogorelis et al.'s study (2005) as an example based specifically on salience. Having previously manually codified every sentence from the documents, I determined the percentage that had to do with immigration compared to other categories of issues. Statements were counted only if they concerned a specific electoral promise. Statements which described previous accomplishments were disregarded since they referred more directly to policy rather than position and gave limited insight on the party's current proposals.

4.5. Operationalizing frames

In order to develop a helpful categorization, I looked at the literature on party framing of immigration issues. As seen in the review of frames mobilized by AIPs, the terms used to describe the frames mobilized when talking about immigration are numerous and varied, and often have to do with the ideological nature of specific discourses. However, most frames that concern immigration can also generally be classified into three specific categories according to the how they define immigration as a policy issue, which have been expanded upon and developed by Helbling (2014). These are identity, economic and security frames.

His study offers one of the most sophisticated accounts of the kinds of frames mobilized by parties to discuss their immigration policies. It is important to note that there is a deliberate choice here to focus on justification frames. In other words, these frames refer specifically to the rhetoric that political actors mobilize in order to justify their positions and allow us to understand the aspects of a subject that a party chooses to highlight (Ferree et al. 2002 as cited in Helbling, 2014).

In order to help solidify this measure, another study appears especially revealing in its study of the frames mobilized by political parties. Akbaba (2018) highlights the use of pejorative and derogative terms to describe immigrants by the leaders of what he calls populist parties, and which include France’s Front National, Finland’s True Finns and Italy’s Northern League. He argues that “their political rhetoric is all built on exclusion and provocation via this use of language,” and refers to this type of discourse as a “narration of enmity” and “a rescue narrative” (Akbaba, 2018). In other words, what appears especially important across these types of discourses is the desire to present immigrants as undesirable and incompatible with the current society, to explain the harm that they—purportedly—will cause to the host community. This is similar to the idea of “loss” frames developed across numerous studies under framing theory (Ledgerwood & Boydston, 2014). This type of frame, widely studied within framing approaches, refers to how policies are justified either in terms of loss (e.g., lives lost without military intervention) or gains (e.g., lives saved through military intervention).

Table 3: Frames regarding immigration

Types by Habermas Frame Categories	Identity		Moral- universal	Utilitarian			
	Nationalistic	Multicultural	Moral- universal	Economic	Labour and social security	Security	Pragmatic
Examples	Foreign infiltration National identity Loss of traditions Avoid Islamisation Avoid flows of refugees National sovereignty	Integration through tolerance Advantages of cultural diversity Tolerance between religious groups European identity	Fairness Equality Discrimination of groups Human rights Freedom of opinion Geneva convention Rule of law Democracy	Attract high-skilled immigrants Productivity International competition	Unemployment rates Salary dumping Poverty Welfare state Congestion social security system	Terrorism Youth criminality Internal security Political stability Organised crime	In our interest Capacity to act Legal security Response to globalisation Reputation Legality

Therefore, it appears that Helbling (2014) frames can be reconfigured slightly to emphasize Akbaba’s findings. We can then go from his initial frames (see Table 1) to a clearer categorization (see Table 2). By reorganizing the categorization of the economic, security and identity frames as either gains or loss frames, their specific relevance to the issue of immigration in the context of

policy proposals formulated by parties become clearer. Indeed, “loss” or “gain” allows us to better understand the kinds of problem definition that can be associated with each category of frame. Each policy is proposed either to prevent a loss or to ensure a gain, or both at the same time.

Table 4: Frames regarding immigration classified as “loss” or “gain”

Frame Categories	Loss			Gain		
	Identity	Economic	Security	Identity	Economic	Security
	Nationalistic	Labour and social security	Threat	Multiculturalist	Prosperity	Moral-Universal
	Foreign infiltration National identity Loss of traditions Avoid Islamisation Avoid flows of refugees National sovereignty	Welfare state Congestion social security system Unemployment rates	Terrorism Youth Criminality Internal security Political stability Organised crime	Integration through tolerance Advantages of cultural diversity Tolerance between religious groups European identity	Attract high-skilled immigrants Productivity International competition	Fairness Equality Discrimination of groups Human rights Freedom of opinion Geneva convention Rule of law Democracy

I am disregarding the pragmatic frame here, because Helbling’s study showed that it was much less aligned with ideology than with more contextual limits (i.e., bigger parties tend to mobilize it while smaller ones do not) (2014). In order to measure which of these frames is mobilized by the CAQ and the other parties, I focused on parliamentary debates. I again relied on content analysis through the software R Studio in order to be able to process large amounts of text rapidly. To better codify discussions of migration and whether or not they rely on elements of fear, I first conducted a more extended literature review to determine the specific vocabulary and expressions that the various frames identified can include. I then built a dictionary containing the specific terms associated with each frame and, adapting from Firtova (2019), and applied it to my corpus using the R Quanteda package (Benoit et al., 2018).

This approach allowed me to associate specific words/expressions to specific frames, scan the relevant corpus, and achieve a clear profile of the presence of each frame across the CAQ’s speeches and declarations in Parliament. I was then able to determine which of the frames are present within the CAQ’s justifications of its policy proposals.

I chose to look for frames within parliamentary debates. Because they are text-heavier than manifestos, they are more likely to contain text that is rich enough to provide *justification*, which is the type of frame that I chose to focus on. Three key steps were undertaken to identify these frames. The first was to gather a corpus of the parliamentary debates from 2012 to 2020. Researching the National Assembly website using the key words “integration” and then “immigration,” a corpus containing 1,219 declarations was gathered. I then decided to proceed to a content analysis using a computer-assisted method, more precisely a dictionary approach using the analytical software R.

From frames to dictionary

Following Roggeband and Vliegenthart's (2007) methodology, I first conducted a broad literature review to gain a better idea of the various frames that my dictionary would seek to identify. However, because a dictionary is heavily context and domain reliant, I then had to proceed to an inductive study by looking more specifically at my corpus and developing my dictionary according to the specific words in it that corresponded to the identified frames, a process which will be explained in more details in the next chapter.

The discourses on immigration in Quebec take many shapes following a diversity of logics, interests, and ideas. Here, I focused specifically on frames on immigration. "Frames" within the literature are a specific but overall limited part of the much broader idea of "discourses." Nonetheless, they serve as useful indicators for some of the logics underpinning certain social debates and ideas and which play a key role in shaping discourses. They can be broadly described as "scheme[s] of interpretation" (Goffman 1974). In other words, frames refer to the way we define an issue as a problem, and which allow us to make sense of it. This can refer to specific words that we use but also specific narratives that we create, in order to highlight particular aspects of an issue and use them to interpret it.

For my specific purposes, I focused here on elite frames regarding immigration, and looked at how political actors discuss immigration, and what aspects of this broad policy field they choose to put forward when discussing it. Because my corpus was made up of declarations extracted from parliamentary debates, I considered, more specifically, what are referred to as "justification frames." According to Helbling, these frames refer to "frames [that] help us to understand how actors justify their positions and why they direct our attention to certain causes and consequences, and to grasp what is at stake for them on a specific issue" (2014). In other words, I looked at the words and ideas that elected officials use in order to advance their specific policy positions and proposals; I sought to understand how they view immigration as it stands now as a *problem* (i.e., What is the narrative that they create in order to justify or critique specific policies?)

Before turning to the construction of my dictionary, however, I conducted a brief overview to determine the extent to which each frame is present within the Quebec discourse on immigration, and in which specific form. This in turn helped me determine the kinds of words that I could expect to find across the corpus, and provided guidelines to go back to throughout the process of dictionary building.

The background on immigration frames in Quebec

The debates on the merits and necessities of immigration in Quebec are nothing new. While we evidently cannot review the whole history of the relationship between Quebecers and immigrants all the way to this period, it is nonetheless important to understand that some of the ongoing debates have long, historical roots that make the province's relationship to immigration somewhat unique. Amongst other things, it is important to understand the role that the province's colonial history has had in shaping the province's cultural and social identity, including its own experience as an English colony which threatened its ability to sustain its national language and culture for many decades.

Despite this relative uniqueness, I argue that the broad strokes of our provinces' debates on the issue remain somewhat similar to broad frames that have been observed in other countries and which generally underpin modern societies' understandings of immigration as a policy issue. Therefore, I provide a brief overview of how each frame is present in the Quebec context and the specific debates and ideas that have shaped it, and which actors have most mobilized it.

Loss – Identity

This frame refers to specific concerns regarding cultural preservation, especially those present within nationalism. According to this frame, immigration is viewed as threat to a nation's cultural and linguistic identity. As such, policies stemming from this frame show a strong preference for assimilation and tend to portray the current immigrant population as insufficiently integrated, especially in terms of linguistic indicators.

As previously addressed, identity concerns have been a long-standing issue in Quebec. As a minority nation within Canada, the province has historically – most notably, since the 1960s–sought to arduously defend its culture and its language (Bariteau, 2003). This is explained by a variety of historical social dynamics, as well as by the ongoing status of Quebec as a minority nation, which, as we know, have especially complex relations and responses to diversity (Barker, 2010). These concerns have, especially in recent years, deeply permeated debates about immigration. More specifically, as concerns linked to the perceived decline of French amongst Quebec society have grown, immigration and language policies have become increasingly entangled, and issues of language acquisition and integration are now deeply connected (Conrick & Donovan, 2010).

In addition to these more restricted concerns linked to language, concerns about broader issues of cultural integration have been present within the province, especially linked to the topics of civic integration. Notable events and debates such as the “reasonable accommodation crisis” of 2006 have marked the social imagination and impacted the political discourses regarding cultural diversity and its implications (Le Moing, 2016).

Many scholars have argued that while Quebec, as minority nation, tends towards an “anxious and fragile form of nationalism,” it also has “received reinforcement from the globalized circulation of gendered Islamophobic images and sentiments” (Helbling & Tresch, 2011) which has led to a growing tendency towards a “nationalistic secularism” (Koussens, 2020). Notable societal debates such as the one regarding “reasonable accommodations” often go beyond mere cultural insecurity and tap into a more deeply rooted fear of social breakdowns and the undermining of what are viewed as core social values (Le Moing, 2016).

However, some scholars have noted that while the “Gérard Bouchard/Charles Taylor ‘Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences’ in towns across rural Québec has exposed a noticeable anti-immigrant current” (Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero, 2014) these concerns were not necessarily reflected in political parties' programs and policy proposals in the following years (Mielusel & Pruteanu, 2020). Nonetheless, specific policy proposals such as Jean Charest's “integration contract” (Stasiulis, 2013) and the CAQ's proposed value test (Laxer, 2020) are arguably reflective of a form of societal angst or unease towards newcomers that is based not only on a civic conception of integration but also on “thicker,” more

exclusionary understanding of identity and national belonging. Overall, it is clear that the idea of immigrants as potentially posing a threat to the province's cultural identity has existed in the province for a long time and continues to be present.

Gain – Identity

Under this frame, it is made clear that immigration and immigrants can and do contribute positively to a society's cultural identity. A diversity of cultural norms and practices is viewed as positive or even desirable, and not a threat to the existing culture.

In Quebec, this discourse is present in various forms. When it comes to inclusivity and openness, one model that is often cited as an example within the literature is that of Canada's federal policy of multiculturalism. Indeed, at the federal level, cultural diversity is generally portrayed as a positive and desirable phenomenon (Bloemraad, 2012). Under the federal multiculturalism policy, there is generally a political consensus regarding the need to celebrate and embrace cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 2015).

The province, however, has a contentious history with multiculturalism. Upon its implementation as a federal policy in the 1970s, it was viewed by many Quebecers as an attack on Quebec nationalism, an attempt to diminish its specific claims to be recognized as a distinct nation and equating it to all other cultures within the country. As explained by Potvin (2014): "This was perceived as 'treason' by many nationalists and sovereigntists in Quebec, a feeling expressed more than once in the debate on RA, from discourse vehemently opposing the 'charter' to criticism of Canadian multiculturalism and of the 'power of the judiciary,' transforming 'minorities' and 'immigrants' into scapegoats."

Nonetheless, while there is for many actors a tendency to reject specific terms such as "multiculturalism," there is still a desire for many political elites to make the province a place that can welcome cultural diversity. From the 1960s onward, as Quebec's national identity grew in strength, the province also started to perceive immigration as a positive tool that could serve to preserve the "francophone character" within Quebec, to promote the recognition of the Quebec state, and to affirm Quebec's place as a political actor on the global stage (Barker, 2010). This has been most notable in Quebec's response to multiculturalism and its development of interculturalism as an integration model (Bouchard, 2011). Although the model has never been adopted as a full-fledged policy, numerous governments have repeated their support for this model, and is often presented as an "in-between" assimilationist models and multicultural models (Lamy & Mathieu, 2020).

In other words, while the balance between viewing cultural diversity as a loss or a gain is often complex and delicate, an effort has nonetheless historically been made to achieve it, and the province and its political actors have often supported the idea that newcomers' culture can be beneficial to Quebec's society.

Loss – Economic

This frame refers to a perception that immigration has a negative impact on the host nation's economy. It has been largely studied in Europe and in the USA, and is typically linked to concerns

that immigration can lead to a more competitive labour market and decreased wages, or become a fiscal burden (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). It has been studied at the Canadian level as well, where the population tends to show a preference for higher-status immigrants (Harell et al., 2012).

In Quebec specifically, the research on the population's perception of immigrants as an economic threat is extremely limited, and it is therefore hard to determine the extent to which such a fear exists. However, it is worth pointing out that where research has focused on immigrants' economic impact, they have focused largely on issues of economic integration (Asselin, 2019; Boudarbat & Grenier, 2017).

These concerns have also been reflected in provincial politics, with the development of various policy tools such as the ARRIMA system, which had the explicit goal of better "tying" the profiles of newcomers to the existing labour market needs (Schué, 2019). The province has also deployed numerous strategies and measures to regionalize immigration and redirect immigrants towards more rural spaces where labour shortages are the most severe, due to a concern that the province's immigration is largely concentrated in urban centres and therefore not responding correctly to labour needs (Gravel et al., 2020). Additionally, recent proposals by the CAQ to reduce immigration thresholds, to "take in less but take better care of them" have also been justified by François Legault as stemming from a concern with inadequate selection policies that can lead to immigrants having a high unemployment rate and becoming an economic burden on the state (Radio-Canada, 2018a).

Broadly speaking, the perception of immigration as having a potentially negative impact on the economy seems to be present in the province, and to be more restrictively linked to concerns about selecting the "wrong" immigrants than with concerns about all forms of immigration.

Gain – Economic

This frame presents immigration as having a positive impact on a society's economy. The long-term gains of immigration often presented in the economic literature range from growth in GDP per capita, positive contribution to workforce growth, and spurring of innovation and economic growth (Jaumotte et al., 2016). In Canada, immigration is presented explicitly as an economic tool, serving and helping the country's economy in governmental texts (IRCC, 2022). Similarly, Quebec governments have explicitly described their immigration plans as part of a broader economic strategy (MIFI, 2022). More specifically, the province focuses on its own socio-economic challenges of labour shortages, and explicitly positions immigration as a tool to help address it.

The political science literature has also shown that the Quebec political discourse tends to approach immigration mostly in utilitarian terms (Idir 2012; Piché 2018; Labelle *et al.* 2009 as cited in Paquet, 2020), whereby immigration is discussed in terms of the economic benefits that it can bring to the province.

This perception, however, is not necessarily a consensus, and limits to this approach have been highlighted by actors who warn of focusing *only* on immigration as a tool to address the existing challenges to economic growth and question its efficacy as an economic tool (Bendali,

2022). Nonetheless, it seems clear that this frame is well established within the Quebec discourse on immigration, both at the political and societal levels.

Loss – Security

Presented under this frame, immigration poses a threat to the host nation which goes further than mere cultural differences and to the core of the society's integrity and cohesion. It is worth noting that in Quebec, most political actors have refrained from the overtly racist and prejudiced discourse that we have seen in many other countries, and which tend to portray immigrants as criminals and direct threats to the safety and integrity of a country's inhabitants (Gagnon & Larios, 2021).

Concerns linked to immigration being a threat to social cohesion have been relatively limited to specific issues, the first being asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Canada border on foot. In 2017, a sudden and notable increase in the number of immigrants opting for this irregular route led to many political actors stating concerns over a loss of control at the border and presenting asylum seekers as a potential security threat (Côté-Boucher et al., 2023). It is worth noting that given that border security is within the federal jurisdiction, we expect to find little trace of it in provincial parliamentary debates and party platforms.

Additionally, issues related to deeper concerns of social cohesion could arguably be placed under this frame. Although “social” and “cultural” threats tend to get bundled together in the literature, the line between immigrants being perceived as security threats and threats to civic values and social cohesion is often thin. For example, the CAQ's proposed mandatory values test was, for some observers, a signal that they were projecting an image of immigrants as potentially holding values that could pose a threat not only to the province's culture, but to its very civic integrity (Laxer, 2020).

Overall, therefore, while this frame has been present in a relatively muted form compared to other contexts, it is nonetheless present, and I expected to find words relating to issues of divergent values and concerns for maintaining social cohesion, and potentially to concerns for border and national security.

Gain – Security

This frame reflects the humanitarian perspective on immigration and is distinct from the cultural gain frame in that it is not simply about the advantages of cultural diversity; it is also about being a welcoming and open nation. Under this frame, humanitarian and cosmopolitan concerns are added as valid justifications for various immigration programs and policies.

In Canada, there has been, at least since the 1970s with the adoption of multiculturalism as a policy, a sense that the country's openness and inclusivity towards immigrants are central to its national identity (Fiřtová, 2019). Still, previous political measures and texts have at times shown a certain degree of ambivalence between welcoming immigration as part of a humanitarian tradition of asylum and protection, and a cautious approach linked to security issues and concerns (Fiřtová, 2019; Labelle et al., 2009).

In Quebec specifically, the humanitarian frame has been less present historically, with immigration having been first perceived positively mainly as a tool to reinforce the province's demographic weight within Canada (Monnot, 2012). This could partially be explained by the fact that the province, despite its extensive powers in immigration, ultimately retains a limited say when it comes to humanitarian immigration. Nonetheless, immigration has sometimes been presented through various measures as a “social resource [...] for the province's (national) development” (Gagnon & Larios, 2021, p. 708). In other words, while the sense of humanitarian duty and cosmopolitanism associated with this frame may not have been mobilized at the same degree at the Quebec level than it has been at the federal level, there is still an existing sense that the social benefits of immigration can extend beyond cultural diversity and include more profound reflections and concerns for the nation's identity.

However, the growing preference for temporary immigration has been argued to be part of a growing tension between the humanistic ideals of immigration and the increased focus on its economic benefits (Proulx-Chénard, 2020). Côté-Boucher et al. (2023) similarly argue that the political reaction to the growing number of asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Canada border irregularly demonstrates an established trend away from discussing immigration as a humanitarian duty or obligation. Therefore, while the frame has certainly been present in previous political discourse, there is some evidence to believe that it is becoming less and less mobilized by political actors.

Nonetheless, I expected to find at least some words that reflect a desire to justify immigration based on a desire to fulfill humanitarian duties, or even nationalistic ideals of inclusivity and openness.

Building a dictionary

In order to determine the extent to which each identified frame was actually mobilized by each party, I chose to conduct a dictionary analysis. Broadly speaking, « Dictionaries use the rate at which key words appear in a text to classify documents into categories or to measure the extent to which documents belong to particular categories. » (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013). In other words, they are a computer-aided method used to classify texts using key words. The goal is to associate search strings (specific words) to specific categories (e.g., frames), and to then use found occurrences of the search strings to classify the analyzed text within the relevant category. It is part of what the computational text analysis literature refers to as a “bag-of-words” approach. In this approach, words are analyzed as *features*, and word order is not considered in the analysis (van der Meer, 2016). Indeed, “It is assumed that a simple list of words can be sufficient to convey the general meaning of the text of analysis” (Jurafsky & Martin, 2009 as cited in van der Meer, 2016).

In order to determine the categories used to classify the texts, two main avenues are available to the researcher: using already established dictionaries (for example, with dictionaries that are used to determine the tone of specific texts and which tend to rely on well-established dictionaries developed in the psychology and sociology literatures) or build the dictionary. To build a dictionary, one must first determine whether the desired categories are known or not. If the categories are not known, “researchers should come up with a combination of theoretical, experimental, or statistical evidence to demonstrate that the output of the method is conceptually accurate and valid (Budge & Pennings 2007; Slapin & Proksch, 2008 as cited in van der Meer,

2016). For this analysis, I was faced with a situation where while the categories are known broadly speaking, they are not part of an existing, precise and contextualized dictionary. As such, I followed van der Meer’s advice, according to whom “If no categorization scheme is available beforehand, unsupervised methods are useful by inductively finding new categories. In some cases a combination between these methods can be insightful, especially for new research projects with recently collected data.” (2016). This is an extremely important step in the building of a dictionary. Indeed, “content analysis stands or falls by its categories. Particular studies have been productive to the extent that the categories were clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem” (Loughran & McDonald, 2011). In other words, categories need to be relevant to both the corpus itself and to the specific research question being studied.

A dictionary is a very contextual measure which requires domain-specific words to be used in order to bring valid results. Therefore, in addition to the frames identified within the literature, an inductive analysis was conducted on the specific corpus to identify the exact words and expressions that would allow me to recognize each frame as used in the Quebec context.

This analysis focused on a corpus composed of 1,219 declarations on the subject of immigration from Quebec’s National Assembly made between 2012 and February 2020. The reason for the shorter number of months examined in 2020 is simply that the full transcripts of the assembly were not yet available at the time of data collection. The declarations were collected by researching the key words “immigration” and integration” on the National Assembly’s website. Declarations were then manually extracted from the resulting debates transcripts and compiled into a single Excel file, which was then imported into R. Meta data included the year, month, day and party of each declaration. The resulting corpus had a total of 427,707 words and 16,157 sentences, with an average of 13 sentences per declaration. The following table gives an idea of the distribution of declarations by year and party.

Table 5: Distribution of parliamentary debates across party and year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
CAQ	3	1	3	22	42	9	37	362	3	482
PLQ	18	45	4	39	72	33	19	290	3	523
PQ	11	17	6	15	29	32	3	33	0	146
Total (parties studied)	32	63	13	76	143	74	59	685	6	1,151
Other (QS + Independent)										68
TOTAL :										1,219

We can see that the CAQ and the PLQ are slightly overrepresented across the corpus. This can be explained by the fact that both parties, when in power, presented significant bills aimed directly at immigration reform. Additionally, the two busiest years in terms of the number of declarations correspond to the years that these bills were introduced : 2016 saw the introduction of Bill 77, which replaced the existing *Loi sur l’immigration du Québec*, and 2019 saw the introduction of Bill 9 which instituted the ARRIMA system as the new provincial process to select immigrants. It is also worth noting the very few declarations that were available for the year 2020

when the data was collected, which shows that no declarations by the PQ were collected for that year.

Pre-processing

The first step in most computer-aided text analyses is the pre-processing. This step is important, as it reduces the size and complexity of the data being analyzed, facilitating the process (Benoit, 2019). It is a necessary step, given that “the essence of treating text as data is that is *always* transformed into more structured, summary, and quantitative data to make it amenable to the familiar tools of data analysis.” (Benoit, 2019). In other words, what is lost in complexity and nuances in the text is gained back in the processability and possible analyses of the text using computational methods.

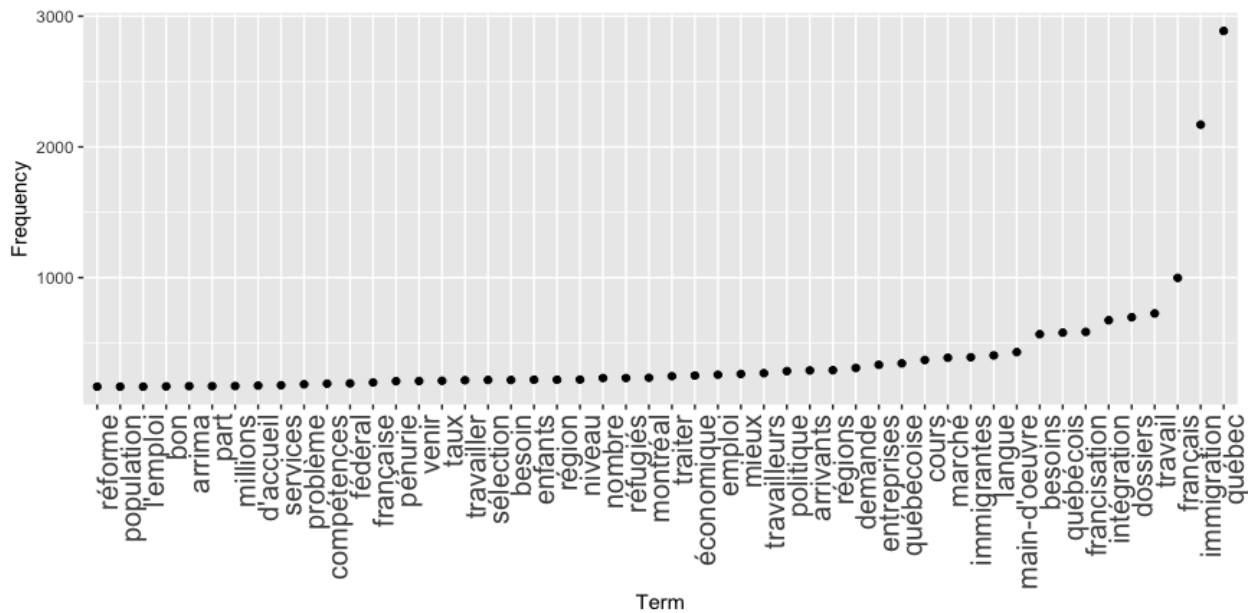
It is a decision process during which a selection is made regarding which feature will be analyzed or not, and can have significant impacts on the final results of an analysis (Gilardi & Wüest, 2020). In my case, the data was first cleaned to remove punctuation, capital letters and “stopwords”.³ These words are “usually function words such as conjunctions, prepositions, and articles that occur in the greatest frequency in natural language texts but add little specific political meaning to the text that would be deemed useful to analyze from textual data” (Benoit, 2019). In other words, they are meaningless (relative to our purposes) terms and are removed to avoid capturing noise in the descriptive statistics or analyses. The words removed for this specific study were chosen if they had no obvious link to the specific issue of immigration or were not informative. This took quite a few tries. First, analysis was conducted in order to find the most frequent words and removed the words which were useless. This was done until all the most frequent features remaining were relevant to our analysis. There is a high level of transparency regarding which words were removed since they are all indicated directly within the R script.

Most frequent terms

After an initial pre-processing, a frequency table of the 50 most frequent terms across the corpus was created (see Figure 1). There was then a back and forth process between cleaning new stopwords that appeared in the frequency table but created noise. What this initial look at the corpus reveals is that the primary lens through which lawmakers discuss immigration is linked to economic and labour market concerns. Notable words include “main-d’oeuvre”, “emploi”, “travailleurs”, “entreprises”, “économique” and “français”.

³s'est", "qu'il", "j'ai", "c'est", "n'est", "fait", "faire", "fait", "ans", "d'un", "qu'on", "d'une", "qu'ils", "n'a", "qu'elle", "a", "alors", "aussi", "ça", "est-ce", "dire", "dit", "fait", "fait", "là", "si", "tous", "va", "président*", "mme", "ministre", "plus", "immigrants", "gouvernement", "question", "déjà", "être", "aujourd'hui", "deux", "comme", "où", "parce", "quand", "veut", "encore", "donc", "merci", "tout", "très", "nouveaux", "n'y", "oui", "non", "avoir", "bien", "beaucoup", "depuis", "fois", "façon", "pense", "peut", "avoir", "premier", "toutes", "vont", "collègue", "entre", "plusieurs", "pourquoi", "prendre", "puis", "sorte", "temps", "peu", "entre", "doit", "notamment", "personne", "personnes", "s'assurer", "années", "chose", "d'ailleurs", "députée", "saint-henri", "sainte-anne", "également", "gens", "libéral", "maintenant", "matière", "ministère", "monde", "parle", "parti", "place", "pouvoir", "toujours", "système", "vraiment", "caq", "d'avoir", "mois", "nelligan", "justement", "vais", "loi", "projet", "répondre", "parler", "loin", "commission", "mesures", "parler", "société", "avant", "choses", "dont", "évidemment", "important", "moins", "nouveau", "programme", "rapport", "questions", "situation", "chez", "mettre", "trois", "afin", "député", "autre*", "côté", "savez", "actuellement", "après", "comment", "d'autres", "chambre", "dernier", "l'opposition", "parlementaire", "pays", "c'était", "ceux", "année", "six", "li", "mot", "ainsi", "loin", "motion", "vu", "pu", "sait", "l'a-t-on"

Figure 1: 50 most frequent terms across the corpus



Trends over time

I then broke down the most frequent terms across time in order to understand how these terms had evolved or changed. A frequency table showing the most frequent words across the years was created (see Table 6). This analysis allowed me to notice that 2015 was a year marked by concerns regarding refugees, possibly following the announcement by Justin Trudeau of his intention to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees in the country. We can also see that concerns for language, more specifically francization, remained a constant concern over the past 9 years, with “français” or “francisation” being present almost every year, except in 2014 and 2015. We also notice that in 2019 and 2020, words appear to demonstrate a growing concern regarding delays in the treatment of immigration demands, such as “traitement” and “dossiers”. However, there is not enough data for 2020 to view this as a significant trend.

Table 6: 20 most frequent terms for every year

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
cours	français	québec	québec	québec	québec	québec	québec	dossiers
français	québec	immigration	réfugiés	immigration	français	immigration	immigration	immigration
québec	immigration	pouvoirs	fédéral	français	immigration	main-d'oeuvre	dossiers	cours
francisation	langue	intégration	sécurité	intégration	langue	français	travail	dossier
langue	québécois	sélection	immigration	francisation	francisation	intégration	besoins	bilan
québécois	travail	pleins	accueillir	travail	québécois	arrivants	main-d'oeuvre	délais
immigration	francisation	canada	syriens	langue	intégration	mieux	québécois	québec
intégration	politique	dispositions	plan	cours	travail	besoins	marché	français
mesure	française	réfugiés	l'accueil	besoins	arrivants	pénurie	traiter	francisation
d'anglais	intégration	immigrantes	d'accueil	politique	entreprises	plan	immigrantes	répondu
travail	l'école	familles	québécois	immigrantes	française	entreprises	français	l'intérieur
arrivent	exemple	regroupement	intégration	québécoise	l'emploi	emploi	demande	l'ensemble
francophones	propos	familial	services	arrivants	reconnaissance	travail	régions	parrainage
message	régions	travailleurs	enfants	enfants	professionnels	problème	intégration	traitement
services	attaché	travail	villes	marché	cours	ressources	québécoise	invités
française	montréal	l'emploi	ressources	travailleurs	compétences	taux	entreprises	invitations
organismes	elles	demande	canada	québécois	chef	économique	pénurie	déposer
santé	niveau	communautés	montréal	économique	officielle	nombre	arrima	traités
emploi	communautés	régions	organismes	vision	ordres	cours	emploi	millions
premiers	sélection	nouvelles	sûr	population	travailler	francisation	travailleurs	marché

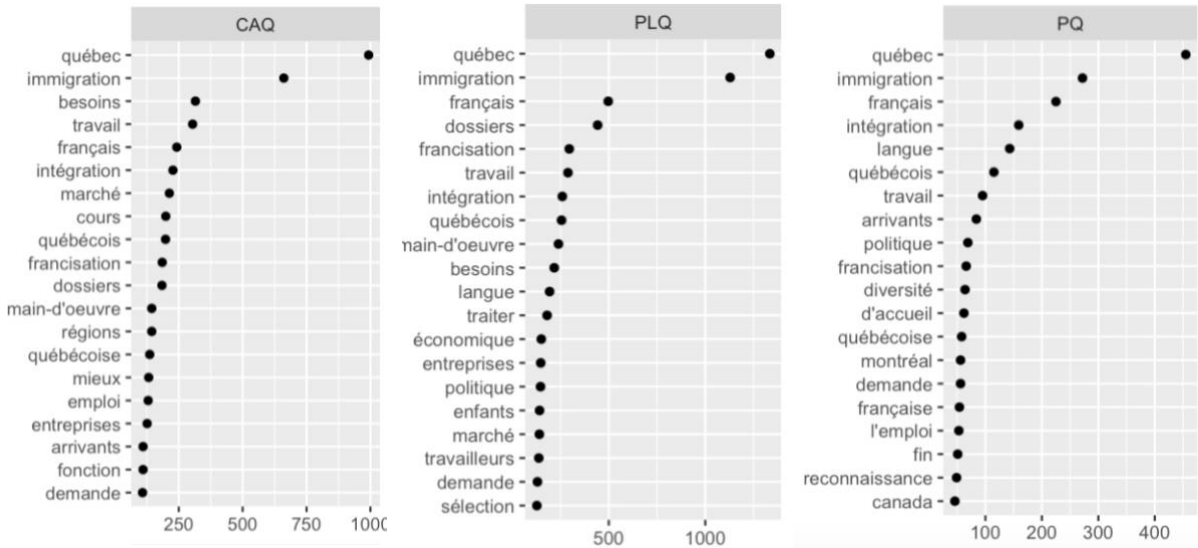
Trends amongst parties

I also broke down the most used terms according to each party. A comparative table was created to see the differences between the most frequently used words for each party (see Table 7).

Table 7: Comparison between the CAQ, the PLQ and the PQ's 20 most used terms

CAQ	PLQ	PQ
québec	québec	québec
immigration	immigration	immigration
besoins	français	français
travail	dossiers	intégration
français	francisation	langue
intégration	travail	québécois
marché	intégration	travail
cours	québécois	arrivants
québécois	main-d'oeuvre	politique
francisation	besoins	francisation
dossiers	langue	diversité
main-d'oeuvre	traiter	d'accueil
régions	économique	québécoise
québécoise	entreprises	montréal
mieux	politique	demande
emploi	enfants	française
entreprises	marché	l'emploi
arrivants	travailleurs	fin
fonction	demande	reconnaissance
demande	sélection	canada

Figure 2 : Relative frequency of features for every party



A visual representation of the relative frequency of these terms allows us to see that they are used in relatively similar proportions across all three parties, with “Québec”, “immigration” and “français” being most widely used and other terms holding lower, similar weight across the rest of the corpus. The most notable term here is “régions”, with the CAQ being the party that uses the term most often, showing their specific interests in using immigration to fulfill the economic needs of rural regions in particular.

This confirms that while there are some variations in words, the three parties overall mobilize very similar terms and address similar themes across the corpus. Then, a table was created to allow me compare changes across the years for each party (see Table 8, 9 and 10).

Table 8: 10 most frequent terms across the years for the CAQ

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
cours	québec	québec	réfugiés	québec	immigration	québec	québec	dossiers
francisation	français	pouvoirs	québec	immigration	francisation	immigration	immigration	cours
français	cours	immigration	accueillir	français	intégration	mieux	besoins	dossier
immigration	certain	pleins	syriens	intégration	québec	besoins	travail	immigration
d'anglais	niveau	sélection	fédéral	cours	travail	arrivants	marché	francisation
l'accès	langue	intégration	québécois	francisation	français	main-d'oeuvre	dossiers	l'intérieur
intégration	exemple	fédéral	immigration	d'immigrants	cours	entreprises	immigrantes	invités
arrivants	étudiants	arrivants	sécurité	taxi	région	français	québécois	invitations
francophones	inquiétant	nouvelle	cours	nombre	officielle	pénurie	régions	déposer
devoir	universités	devrait	plan	valeurs	professionnels	emploi	main-d'oeuvre	traités

Table 9: 10 most frequent terms across the years for the PLQ

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
cours	français	québec	québec	immigration	québec	immigration	québec	délais
français	québec	familles	réfugiés	québec	français	québec	immigration	québec
francisation	langue	canada	fédéral	français	immigration	main-d'oeuvre	dossiers	bilan
québec	immigration	immigration	immigration	francisation	francisation	problème	main-d'oeuvre	traitement
québécois	québécois	travailleurs	sécurité	besoins	langue	taux	traiter	immigration
langue	travail	regroupement	villes	travail	québécois	mots	travail	français
immigration	française	familial	enfants	intégration	intégration	intégration	québécois	mieux
mesure	politique	réfugiés	plan	immigrantes	travail	attention	besoins	politique
arrivent	l'école	partie	sûr	marché	entreprises	critère	pénurie	parlent
intégration	intégration	sélection	intégration	travailleurs	française	arrivants	demande	seulement

Table 11: 10 most frequent terms across the years for the PQ

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
québec	immigration	immigration	québec	québec	québec	français	québec	NA
français	québec	québec	réfugiés	immigration	français	québec	immigration	NA
cours	jeanne-mance-viger	dispositions	fédéral	français	langue	parlent	dossiers	NA
langue	immigrantes	intégration	québécois	intégration	québécois	plan	français	NA
résident	entendue	l'emploi	l'accueil	langue	travail	langue	demande	NA
permanent	français	immigrantes	d'accueil	politique	arrivants	maîtrise	québécois	NA
santé	francisation	nouvelles	immigration	diversité	intégration	aide	emploi	NA
statut	politique	bonnes	sécurité	francisation	immigration	seuils	régions	NA
publique	sens	emplois	syriens	arrivants	reconnaissance	québécois	main-d'oeuvre	NA
employés	intégration	travail	population	travail	l'accès	nombre	intégration	NA

We can see that for the two parties, labour shortages have gained momentum and importance in the past 3 to 4 years, with “pénurie” and “main-d’oeuvre” appearing on a more regular basis. What is most striking about these analyses is, again, the relative similarities in words and their change overtime. While the CAQ and PLQ are often presented as opposites in terms of how they discuss immigration, a careful analysis allows us to strongly nuance this claim. This also reveals the lack of discursive diversity within the Quebec parliamentary environment regarding immigration more broadly. While there are some changes across the years depending on events or specific concerns that arise (e.g., Syrian refugees or labour shortages), the main themes remain relatively stable and similar across parties and time.

KWIC analyses

Furthermore, in order to better understand my corpus and its characteristics, I proceeded to *keyword -in-context* analyses. This specific command allows me to conjure up all occurrences of a

specific word within my corpus, with a specific number of words before and after. For example, I can quickly look at all occurrences of the word “francisation”, and see the context within which it is used. This was extremely useful as it allowed me to test specific words that I assumed were relevant to certain frames and to see whether their actual use was relevant to my dictionary.

Many keyword-in-context (KWIC) analyses were conducted in order to determine how each word that appeared the most frequently were used within the corpus, and help give a sense of whether they could be helpful to build the dictionary or not (See Appendix A for a list of the words used to conduct KWIC analyses).

Topic modelling

To deepen my understanding of my corpus, I proceeded to a topic modelling analysis. Topic modelling is what is referred to as an “unsupervised” learning method, where the software is not imputed with specific criteria. In other words, “unsupervised learning methods are a class of methods that learn underlying features of text without explicitly imposing categories of interest. Rather than requiring users to condition on known categories beforehand—supervising the methods—unsupervised learning methods use modelling assumptions and properties of the texts to estimate a set of categories and simultaneously assign documents (or parts of documents) to those categories » (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013).

Topic models, more specifically, are “a broad class of Bayesian generative models that encode problem-specific structure into an estimation of categories” (van der Meer, 2016). Essentially, the software scans the corpus for repetitive co-occurrences between features and attempts to build relevant categorizations accordingly. The process still requires human input and manipulation, since the choice of the number of topics is left up to the coder. It is therefore a “trial-and-error” method, in that the specific number of topics that gives sufficient differentiation between the categories while also revealing all the relevant or meaningful nuances can require many tries and is ultimately a choice from the coder which needs to be justified. This method has also been argued to be an especially helpful form of analysis to study frames, given that topics function in a relatively similar way to frames – as “clusters of concepts” which can be assumed to hold similar meaning (Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018). It is also especially useful in building a dictionary because it allows us to potentially reveal previously unsuspected or understudied categories of the text at hand.

As shown in Table 8 below, a topic modelling analysis was conducted on the corpus in order to better understand the variety of terms and themes discussed within the corpus, and to see how they could help us build our dictionary depending on the themes found and the most relevant terms associated with each (See supplementary materials for the detailed script). After initially trying to get 10 themes, it became clear that this was too many to get significant differentiation between the themes. Four proved to be a “sweet middle” where topics had sufficient differentiation to be understood.

Table 12: Automatically generated topics

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
[1,]	"québec"	"québec"	"québec"	"québec"
[2,]	"immigration"	"immigration"	"français"	"immigration"
[3,]	"français"	"dossiers"	"immigration"	"travail"
[4,]	"intégration"	"main-d'oeuvre"	"québécois"	"travailleurs"
[5,]	"francisation"	"traiter"	"réfugiés"	"besoins"
[6,]	"travail"	"français"	"travail"	"francisation"
[7,]	"besoins"	"québécois"	"langue"	"français"
[8,]	"immigrantes"	"pénurie"	"intégration"	"sélection"

We can see that while some themes have some notable variations, they still revolve around the two key themes of the economy and French language. Economic immigration is identified as a need for regions in Topic 1. Economic integration is highlighted in Topic 2 through skills recognition and market integration. Topic 3 stands out, by focusing instead more on refugees. Topic 4 also highlights the need to answer labour market needs, though it is more focused on selection than post-arrival concerns. A topic modelling analysis was also conducted to look for noticeable changes across the years, but no significant variation was found.

Conclusions for dictionary building

What this descriptive work allowed me to highlight is the highly utilitarian nature of Quebec's discourse on immigration. Because the discourse is so centred around the economy and French/francization, I expected to find very few terms that could be relevant to my dictionary that go beyond the economic and identity dimension of the issue. In other words, the security and social frames were expected to be especially difficult to operationalize into a working dictionary. That does not mean that they would not be present at all, though, as 2015 clearly highlights a moment where other concerns arose, and immigration was discussed under a new light.

While this is perhaps slightly different than the other topics in that it concerns a federal policy, it is nonetheless relevant since the Quebec government had to react and arrange the welcoming of the refugees by enacting specific policies. This revealed the need for me to be very specific and careful in my dictionary in order to balance the limits of a dictionary approach with the reality of language, where a theme can be discussed under a myriad of concerns and perspectives. For example, it was important to ensure that my dictionary captured francization in a way that reveals the specific concerns that are highlighted when discussing it. Why is francization needed? Simply for workforce integration, or also for the preservation of our national identity? When it comes to the economy, a similar claim can be made. Do we need immigrants only to fulfill our labour market needs? How much importance do we give to this idea, and what does it reveal about what we think may be the risks of immigrants whose profiles are not perfectly aligned with our labour market needs?

Following this in-depth descriptive analysis, I proposed the following dictionary, based on the frame categories presented earlier. It is important to note that this dictionary seeks to make all categories mutually exclusive, in that each word/expression is present in only one frame and

excludes any ambivalence or duality. Each has been checked to ensure that they only or mostly refer to declarations that have to do with the relevant associated frame. Following the application of my dictionary, they were also checked for external relevance by a random sample of declarations.

To test the validity of my dictionary, I compared it with hand coding. I selected a random sample of 40 declarations, which I manually read and coded according to the frames identified within each extract. I then used Hostli's inter-coder reliability formula (Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007) to verify that my computer-aided dictionary rendered similar results to manual coding. I selected this index instead of the most widely used index of Krippendorff's alpha due to the extremely small size of the sample being used, which greatly reduces the likelihood of "chance" decisions being made and therefore required a less sophisticated calculation (Zhao et al., 2013).

$$IR = \frac{\sum 2M}{\sum (N1 + N2)}$$

In this formula, M signifies the total number of agreements between the computer and coder, N1 the total of the coding decisions made by the computer and N2 the total of the coding decisions made by the coder. The average reliability across frames that I found was of 0.90, which is acceptable (Werner et al., 2011).

Table 13: Dictionary

GAIN	Economic	pénurie besoins du marché arrim* adéquation attirer/attraction main-d'œuvre
	Identity	richesse culturelle diversité enrichir
	Security	humani*/d'humani* discrimin* vivre-ensemble
LOSS	Economic	chômage gaspillage surqualifi*
	Identity	recul du français faible francisation capacité d'absorption culturelle protéger le français / protection du français
	Security	valeurs québécoises cohésion sociale criminalité

Equipped with these measurements (codebook, salience measure and dictionary), I then conducted my analysis as planned, to see the CAQ, PLQ and PQ’s stance, salience and discourse on immigration and how they differed.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS & ANALYSIS

5.1 Stance: A limited restrictiveness

Here, the results of each specific indicator are presented. First, I present the results regarding the stance of each party about immigration. These results are based solely on the content analysis of their manifestos for each year. The number in each box corresponds to the number of sentences or quasi-sentences that corresponds to each category. For example, a sentence that concerns immigration is added in the “Volume – Restrictive” box when it expresses or explains an electoral promise of that year is considered to 1. Regard volumes of immigration and 2. Seek to restrict / decrease the volume of immigration (as per the codebook presented earlier). A specific example of such coding is the following extract from the 2012 CAQ electoral manifesto : « La première est de limiter le nombre d’immigrants à 45 000 durant une période de deux ans » which was coded as belonging in the « Volume – Restrictive » box. As such, one declaration was added to this box in Table 15. All coded declarations are then added up within their corresponding boxes, which allows us to get an overview of the kinds of stance which are most present across each party’s platforms in a disaggregated and revealing way. See supplementary materials for the full list of proposals and their classification.

Table 14: Number of restrictive (R), expansionist (E) and neutral (N) electoral promises regarding immigration per year

	2012			2014			2018			Total across the years		
	R	E	N	R	E	N	R	E	N	R	E	N
CAQ	8	20	11	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	0	3	11	20	14
PLQ	0	8	3	0	4	7	0	8	9	0	20	19
PQ	2	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	2	3	5	5
Average %	40	41	18	0	43	57	22	27	51			

5.1.1 The CAQ

Table 15: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, CAQ – 2012

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 5	Expansionist 0	Neutral 2
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 2	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 2	Neutral 3
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 8	Neutral 2
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 10	Neutral 4

In 2012, the CAQ was already suggesting reducing immigration thresholds. They stated that this pause would allow them to « mettre en place les ressources et les mécanismes qui permettront de maximiser l’employabilité des immigrants et leur intégration harmonieuse à la majorité francophone du Québec » - CAQ, 2012. Measures proposed concerned largely linguistic and economic integration, with a desire to facilitate and accelerate job market integration and a desire to increase the proportion of francophone immigrants. We can see that while immigration is a subject that is being addressed, it is not in a “category” of its own. It is present within the sections on language vitality and economic prosperity and in both cases it is presented as a policy tool for these broader issues.

CAQ – 2014

That year, the CAQ focused heavily on its “Projet St-Laurent” and offered a very slimmed down manifesto. While it addressed issues of cultural promotion and state secularism, immigration was not mentioned explicitly.

CAQ – 2018

Table 16: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, CAQ – 2018

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 0	Neutral 1
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 2	Expansionist 0	Neutral 2

In 2018, the CAQ released no official electoral platform. Instead, scholars at Laval University compiled media declarations concerning electoral engagements as well as various media releases published on the party’s website. For this year, they discussed immigration as a separate issue, and advanced restrictive measures which included a decrease in the overall number of immigrants, as well as expansionist measures which included, again, the facilitating and acceleration of skills and diploma recognition and transfer upon arrival. For the first time, they advanced the idea of “Francisation à 100%,” stating that « pour une intégration réussie des immigrants, la francisation sera obligatoire pour tout nouvel arrivant qui désire obtenir un Certificat de sélection » - CAQ, 2018. Neutral statements included a desire for a better regionalization and better integration, but with no specific measure attached.

Overall

Table 17: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, CAQ – Total

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 6	Expansionist 0	Neutral 3
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 2	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 2	Neutral 3
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 8	Neutral 2
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 2	Expansionist 10	Neutral 6

From these results, it becomes clear that while the CAQ does hold restrictive positions towards immigration, it overall cannot be described as a party that *only* seeks to restrict immigration, with only about 24 % of its overall measures seeking to restrict it but 45% seeking to expand it. As expected from the literature, it instead takes a mixed approach where restrictive measures in some respects (volume, origins) are matched with more expansionist positions on others (access to services, ability to stay, etc.).

It is worth noting, however, that the restrictive measures are somewhat concentrated under immigration policy, while expansionist ones are mostly under the category of integration policy. This arguably goes in line with the reported goal of the party’s restrictive measures, which was stated to have the goal of “take in less but take better care of [immigrants]” (Radio-Canada, 2018a).

Indeed, it’s important to highlight that both stances are justified through similar argumentation. While the issue identified is immigration as a threat (whether to the economy, the culture, or the society itself), two responses can be offered: restrictive measures that seek to limit immigration, or expensive ones that seek to ameliorate the resources and possibilities for immigrants in specific areas such as learning French. This is an interesting dynamic in that while the two stances can seem contradictory at first, they can still be justified by a similar discourse. Nonetheless, the potential impact of advancing restrictive measures cannot be ignored, and as such the expansionist measures do not “cancel out” the restrictive ones. Rather, they reveal a “piecemeal” approach to immigration, where specific aspects (cultural and economic integration) are privileged over others (social integration, openness). The party’s position on the topic also stays

very stable through time, with new measures being added but many being reused in 2018 from 2012.

5.1.2 The PLQ

PLQ – 2012

Table 18: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PLQ – 2012

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 1	Neutral 3
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 4	Neutral 0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 1	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 2	Neutral 0

For the PLQ, in 2012 all measures related to immigration were situated within their broader economic policy. Amongst other things, a better adjustment of the selection grid according to labour market needs was a primary goal. For example, « la grille de sélection des immigrants sera également révisée afin d'accorder davantage de points au demandeur qui détient une offre d'emploi validée. » - PLQ, 2012. Such measure was considered as neutral, because the changes in the selection grid are not specific and could, depending on their nature (preference for high-skilled or low-skilled labour), either make immigration to Quebec more or less accessible to other countries. The stated purpose of such measure was to facilitate market labour integration. Another key concern was to facilitate the long-term instalment for foreign students having studied in Quebec.

PLQ - 2014

Table 19: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PLQ – 2014

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 4	Neutral 6
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 1
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0

In 2014, the party presented one main measure on immigration, again as part of a broader economic strategy, stating the implementation of the Démarrage-Québec program and stating as one of its goals the attraction of “les entrepreneurs étrangers les plus talentueux à l’aide du programme Visa Démarrage Québec” - PLQ, 2014.

PLQ – 2018

Table 20: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PLQ – 2018

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 5
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 2	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 6	Neutral 4

For 2014 and 2018, the PLQ also did not release a formal electoral platform and electoral promises in the form of press releases and media interventions were collected instead. Measures on immigration were again presented as tools to respond to two broader economic needs for the province: 1. Improve rural communities' economic prosperity and 2. Respond to the province's growing labour shortage. For regional needs, they stated that they wanted to « travailler avec les municipalités et les MRC pour établir un portrait local des besoins de main-d'œuvre et favoriser l'intégration et la rétention des immigrants dans les régions » - PLQ, 2018, a measure which was classified as neutral given that it does not specify any new criteria.

PLQ – Overall

Table 21: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PLQ – Total

		What is the position towards the issue?		
		Restrictive	Expansionist	Neutral
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	0	1	3
	1.2 Origins	0	0	0
	1.3 Category of entry	0	8	11
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	0	3	1
	2.2 Ability to stay	0	8	4

As we can see, the PLQ does not offer any restrictive positions regarding immigration. This is consistent with their positions of the previous years, where immigration is widely perceived as an economic policy tool rather than a policy issue in itself. This also further confirms the heavy reliance of the party on immigration as an economic tool given that most expansionist policies have to do with facilitating economic integration. Furthermore, the distribution of proposals and their stance is largely similar to the PQ's proposals, as shown below.

5.1.3 The PQ

PQ – 2012

Table 22: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PQ – 2012

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0

For 2012, the PQ presented immigration as a stand-alone issue. They offered two main proposals : obligatory francization (which was categorized as restrictive) and stricter selection criterion for labour integration. For the latter, they state that they want to « Resserrer les règles de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés et leur famille afin qu'ils puissent se trouver un emploi de qualité et bien s'intégrer à la société québécoise » - PQ, 2012. In this case, although the exact measures are not specified, the promise was still classified as restrictive given that they are talking about *stricter* criteria more specifically.

PQ – 2014

Table 23: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PQ – 2014

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 2
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0

	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 2	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 1	Neutral 1

In 2014, the PQ offered much more expansionist measures on immigration, focusing more on integration instead of selection criteria as a way to ensure francization of immigrants, with promises including “soutenir davantage les projets favorisant l’intégration et la francisation des parents immigrants” and “mettre en œuvre des pratiques novatrices de francisation des travailleurs étrangers temporaires.” Furthermore, the role of immigration as an economic tool is recognized, with a stated desire to « mobiliser les partenaires privés et publics afin d’augmenter la capacité d’attraction et de rétention des personnes immigrantes [...]» in Quebec City - PQ, 2014.

PQ – 2018

Table 24: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PQ – 2018

		What is the position towards the issue?		
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 2
	1.2 Origins	Restrictive 1	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
	1.3 Category of entry	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 0	Neutral 0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 1	Neutral 0
	2.2 Ability to stay	Restrictive 0	Expansionist 1	Neutral 0

For the first time in 2018, immigration is not presented as a separate issue. On that year the topic is bundled with broader concerns for diversity and “vivre-ensemble,” including regarding LGBTQ+ communities. Although stricter criteria regarding French knowledge is advanced, concerns for greater investment in francization is also present. They also argue that the question of immigration thresholds should be “depoliticized,” a position that was classified as “neutral.”

PQ – Overall

Table 25: Number of electoral promises on immigration, by category, PQ – Total

		What is the position towards the issue?		
		Restrictive	Expansionist	Neutral
IMMIGRATION POLICY	1.1 Volume	0	0	4
	1.2 Origins	1	0	0
	1.3 Category of entry	1	0	0
INTEGRATION POLICY	2.1 Access to services	0	3	0
	2.2 Ability to stay	1	2	1

As expected, the PQ does present some restrictive measures, more specifically in terms of selection criteria for both temporary and permanent residents. These criteria are mainly explained as having to do with language and employment, all under the argument of ensuring a better and easier integration for newcomers. However, the number of restrictive measures, similarly to the CAQ's remains somewhat low, and the majority of measures remains expansionist. It is the party which makes the most neutral (or unclear) declarations regarding immigration, a finding which again seems to support the party's ambiguous approach to the issue. Its stance also seems to change the most often across time, compared to the PLQ's and CAQ's relatively stable approach to the issue.

Discussion

Overall, we can see clearly that the parties adopt relatively similar approaches to immigration. While the CAQ adopts the most restrictive measures across the greatest number of categories, it nonetheless also views immigration as a key economic tool used to bolster the province's economic vitality and as such also seeks to expand it in some respects. The PLQ is also the only party which adopts explicitly expansionist positions in both integration and immigration measures. The party's heavy reliance on immigration as a tool for economic development is well demonstrated by statements such as « La grille de sélection des immigrants sera également révisée afin d'accorder davantage de points au demandeur qui détient une offre d'emploi validée » - PLQ, 2012 and that « pour faire face à la rareté de la main-d'œuvre [...] le chef du Parti libéral du Québec, Philippe Couillard, a un plan qui se résume en quatre mots : éducation, participation, automatiser, immigration » - PLQ, 2018

Similar sentiments are echoed across both the PQ's and the CAQ's electoral promises, with the CAQ's stating that « une meilleure régionalisation de l'immigration dans le but de combler la pénurie de main-d'œuvre seront parmi [nos] priorités » - CAQ, 2018 and that « le plan de la CAQ, notamment de mieux intégrer nos immigrants en fonction des besoins économiques et d'encourager la formation technique et professionnelle, permettra au Québec de relever [le] défi [des pénuries de main-d'œuvre] » - CAQ, 2018 and the PQ advancing that one of their goals is to « faire rayonner la capitale nationale » by « viser à ce qu'au moins 25 % des nouveaux arrivants s'installent à l'extérieur de la région de Montréal » - PQ, 2014. In other words, immigration is mainly discussed as a tool to attain other, secondary goals instead of discussed as a goal on its own.

Additionally, the goals being described have more to do with economic objectives than with cultural, social or humanitarian goals. When social or cultural goals are mentioned, they are more directly linked with concerns linked to integration rather than immigration itself. In other words: we welcome immigrants for economic purposes, and once they are here, we are concerned with their integration in order to preserve, protect or enrich our *existing* cultural and social identity. The idea of welcoming immigrants for the purpose of enriching our society culturally or augmenting diversity is never mentioned. On the opposite, both the PQ and the CAQ propose specific measures to restrict immigration by augmenting the strictness of language criteria in the province's selection grid, signalling a desire to have immigrants with a greater cultural proximity to the province.

However, it is worth mentioning that these desires to restrict are never described as being the result of explicit fears or concerns regarding the potential impact of immigration on the status quo. Rather, they are described as efforts to ensure a better and easier integration for newcomers. For example, the PQ states that they want to « mettre en œuvre des pratiques novatrices de francisation des travailleurs étrangers temporaires » - PQ, 2014 and the CAQ advancing the idea that 100% francisation will « [...] [donner] toutes les chances [aux personnes immigrantes] de travailler et de s'épanouir au Québec. » - CAQ, 2018.

They are also generally accompanied by expansionist proposals regarding the services offered to immigrants, especially regarding francization. These concerns reflect a legitimate, but ultimately restricted view of integration, focused by and large on economic and linguistic indicators rather than broader social ones, an arguable blind angle that is shared by all parties studied here. Ultimately, these results show that while the CAQ is not alone in advancing restrictive measures, it is the party that proposes the most restrictive measures, both in terms of numbers and scope, being the only party that proposes to restrict volume.

5.2 Saliience: Low across the board

Table 26: Percentage of electoral promises on immigration for each party & election

	2012			2014			2018			Average across the years
	%	T	I	%	T	I	%	T	I	
CAQ	6.5	592	39	0	231	0	1	514	6	2.5
PLQ	6.8	160	11	3.8	589	11	4.1	408	17	4.9
PQ	0.9	217	2	2.8	213	6	4.1	146	6	2.6
Average for all parties	4.7			2.2			3			

* I = Total of electoral promises related to immigration | T = total electoral promises

The internal salience of each party shows that they all give a very limited amount of attention to the issue compared to other issues, with no party giving more than 7% of space to the issue on average. The external salience allows us to see this salience remains similar across all parties, with the exception of the CAQ which gives even less space to the issue compared to the other parties, although this is partially explained by the lack of data for 2014. The PQ also gives a higher amount of space to the issue in 2012. These results demonstrate the overall low salience given by all major parties to the issue of immigration in their own party manifestos.

5.3 Frames: Economic gain as most prevalent

The following results were obtained by calculating the percentage share of each frame identified, compared with the total number of frames identified (see supplementary materials for the full portrait of the frames and their usage across the corpus).

Table 27: Percentage of each frame mobilized by each party, expressed as a percentage of all frames mobilized

	Average across the years					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
CAQ	0,7	12,8	2,7	2,9	78,8	2,1
PLQ	0,5	9,1	1,9	9	69,6	9,8
PQ	3,2	9,7	4,3	36,2	27,6	18,9
Average for all parties	1,4	10,4	3,1	15	58,3	10,3

1 = LOSS | Identity
2 = LOSS | Economic
3 = LOSS | Social

4 = GAIN | Identity
5 = GAIN | Economic
6 = GAIN | Social

These results show that gain frames are overall more mobilized than loss frames for all parties, although the economic loss frame is still shown to hold some importance within the parties'

rhetoric. This shows a generally optimistic approach to immigration, where the benefits of various measures regarding immigration and integration are more heavily addressed than its potential drawbacks. What is also striking about these results is the relative similarity in the distribution of each frame across all parties, with the economic gain frame especially holding an important place in every party's justifications for their various measures. The notable exception is the PQ, which actually mobilizes the "GAIN | Identity" slightly more than the "GAIN | Economic" frame by the Parti Québécois, although that remains in line with the historically ambiguous position that the party has adopted towards immigration.

Furthermore, we see a strong preference from the CAQ for the economic gain frame, one that is similar to the PLQ's high mobilization of the same frame. In other words, the results show that the CAQ's use of specific frames when it comes to immigration is largely similar to that of the other main provincial parties.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Immigration in Quebec is becoming an increasingly politicized topic. Considering the complex and sensitive nature of the issues that this topic encompasses, and the very real impact that its policies have on people's lives, it is important to understand the space and form that the topic occupies within our political landscape. This thesis sought to contribute to such an understanding by asking: to what degree does the CAQ's position on the topic differ from that of the main other political parties? While the CAQ's position has been described as radical and compared to that of parties with restrictive and extreme views on the topic, there were reasons to question whether this perception was accurate or not.

Furthermore, this thesis situates itself within the broader approach of party categorization according to policy position. It sought to demonstrate some of the advantages and limits of categorizing parties when it comes to their positions on immigration more specifically, and what some of the needs are for further theorizing and analysis in this field. I now examine the results and explain how they answer this question and contemplate their implications for Quebec politics and research on immigration more broadly.

Implications for Quebec politics

Overall, the results show that the CAQ's position on immigration differs slightly from that of other parties. However, the difference in their position is limited to their stance. In terms of salience and discourse, the party's position remains largely similar to that of the province's other main political parties.

This conclusion was reached through three main steps. First, a comprehensive content analysis of electoral platforms for 2012, 2014 and 2018 showed that all parties associated immigration to broader social and economic goals. The CAQ was the party which offered the overall largest number of restrictive policies and was also the only party to suggest restrictive measures both in terms of integration and immigration. Nonetheless, it cannot be described as a party that *only* seeks to restrict immigration, as it also presented expansionist measures. However, these expansionist measures were limited to integration rather than immigration. Then, a content analysis of the party manifestos allowed us to see that all parties give a limited importance to the

topic, occupying at most 7% of a party's platform. Finally, a dictionary analysis of parliamentary debates showed that the CAQ's mobilizes similar frames to the other parties to advance and justify its position. Namely, it relies heavily on frames of economic gain, focusing on immigration in terms of labour force and a source of economic prosperity. Although the CAQ's positions do represent a rupture from the other parties and that the impact of these changes is not negligible (Paquet, 2020), it nonetheless remains largely aligned with existing – and well prevalent – discourses and ideas about immigration within the Quebec political landscape.

The results can also seem surprising, because they demonstrate a very limited saliency offered by parties to the topic of immigration. This could be viewed as contradicting other findings which have pointed to a growing politicization of the topic (Gagnon & Larios, 2021; Xhardez & Paquet, 2020).

One possible explanation is the specific nature of immigration as a policy issue. As a complex and multi-levelled issue, parties are able to adopt what numerous scholars have described as a “piecemeal” approach to the issue. In turn, it becomes an interesting policy instrument to fulfill various electoral strategies. Although parties may not spend a lot of time on the issue, they may be seeking to adopt more controversial or at least differential positions from the other parties in order to gain issue ownership, which some research has shown to be a potentially fruitful electoral strategy (Fiřtová, 2019; Gaucher, 2020).

As such, certain aspects of the issue may become more polarized and gather more media coverage, even though the party itself is not extending considerably more efforts on this specific topic. In other words, politicization is not simply about the fact that we talk more about immigration (saliency), but also about how we talk about it and the extent to which it is contentious and debated (polarization) (Gagnon & Larios, 2021).

While the measures presented were still few in numbers compared to other, more key issues, they nonetheless presented new aspects of the question which had not previously been discussed or part of policy debates. One could very well see how the CAQ's decision to adopt measures that differed from the established consensus (to differentiate themselves from the other parties) while retaining the existing, hegemonic discursive frames on the topic (to avoid being too controversial) played into a specific, electoral instrumentalization of the immigration issue to advance electoral objectives. The fact that this study did not look at media coverage could also help explain this discrepancy. However, further study would be needed to confirm whether this is the case, and to better understand the impacts of parties' strategic mobilization on the issue for electoral gains. Furthermore, these results raise interesting questions regarding the possibility for political parties to adopt measures that break from the consensus, appealing to people unsatisfied with the status quo, all the while embedding them within a mainstream discourse that can also appeal to those satisfied with it. It also demonstrates the possibility of making previously unacceptable proposals seem more acceptable or reasonable by mobilizing well-established rhetoric and logic within a specific political environment.

These results also may lead us to question the intensity of the criticism and accusations that were (and continue to be) levelled at the CAQ. Why this perception if they appear, overall, so similar to the other parties? To answer this, it is important to put into context the significance of

the measures that they presented. It is arguably a limit of this study, which does not include a way to measure the *scale of change* that various measures represent.

It is possible that specific measures that were introduced by the party, albeit relatively “small,” hold a significant symbolic value because they break with a long-standing consensus (Paquet, 2022). Furthermore, issues related to identity occupy an increasingly important place in electoral and political considerations (Boily, 2018), which could explain an increased sensitivity to proposed changes. This is one possible explanation for the scale of the reaction to these measures, but the factors explaining how the party is perceived by various observers were beyond the scope of this study and would require further investigation to be better understood.

The second part of my research question had to do with the implications of the degree of differentiation between the CAQ and the other main political parties for our understanding of Quebec’s party politics and for the classification of parties according to their positions on immigration, which are numerous. The first important insight is the relative lack of diversity across the Quebec political landscape regarding immigration, which has also been shown elsewhere (Paquet, 2022). It is notable to see that all major parties overall hold very similar positions on the issue, viewing immigration largely through the lenses of economic development and cultural preservation only. The development of the dictionary and the extensive descriptive work that was required in order to find relevant words for some frames (e.g., security – gain) showcased their relative absence from the mainstream discourse on immigration.

Furthermore, the results also have implications for the understanding of Quebec as a “pro-immigration” space. The fact that the CAQ is able to advance restrictive measures by mobilizing already existing and well-established frames concerning immigration is significant. It shows that the idea of Quebec as a “pro-immigration” space is one where the province’s openness comes with clear caveats and limits. Although the CAQ’s electoral promises are more restrictive than that of other parties, in the end, they mobilize a similar logic and discourse: immigration is only useful and desirable so long as it serves the province economically.

The restrictiveness of the measures that the CAQ sends a specific message to the population that while immigration *can be* a gain from an economic and a cultural perspective, it also has the possibility of being a threat. As shown through the framing analysis, while the discourse may not explicitly state this, the positions expressed certainly signal towards *preventing* consequences (such as high costs, economic losses, linguistic erasure, etc.). Although the CAQ holds an overall supportive discourse towards immigration, its approach nonetheless establishes specific boundaries within which immigration remains acceptable and desirable, with the economic benefit of the province being at the forefront of these considerations. This concern is not surprising, given the well-documented focus of the party on economic prosperity (Bernatchez, 2019; Boily, 2018).

The results also have significant implications for what we view as a break from tradition or as a “radical” position. This in no way suggests that the CAQ’s proposals are not new or different from that of other parties. Simply, it helps to explain the relationship between the party and the broader political environment within which it evolved and allows us to see that the party’s position is, in many ways, the result of existing trends and dynamics that have long permeated Quebec’s policy discourse on immigration, including well-established tensions regarding cultural diversity and a strong utilitarian perception of immigration (Houle, 2014; Sarra-Bournet, 2017).

Such an insight matters, because it allows us to better grasp the impact that the CAQ's position may have on the future of Quebec's immigration politics. Although the party's approach to immigration was viewed by some as controversial and heavily criticized, the party remains widely popular, and prevailed with a high degree of popularity both in 2018 (Bélanger & Daoust, 2020) and in the latest elections of October 2022 (Bossé, 2022). Although this success is also explained by many other factors such as the COVID pandemic and other social and political trends, it nonetheless demonstrates that while some strongly disagree with their positions, they are nowhere near controversial enough to prevent the party from gaining widespread electoral support.

In other words, the CAQ's position and its restrictive proposals appear to be more the logical conclusion of long-existing claims and needs within the province than a complete novelty or oddity and can arguably be expected to continue occupying a significant space in the Quebec policy landscape. It will also be interesting to see how things evolve going forward. In the last Quebec elections, which unfortunately could not be added to this analysis, we saw the PQ adopt the CAQ's position on reducing immigration thresholds (Robillard, 2022). This arguably signals a normalization of more restrictive and controversial positions.

Although it is hard to know exactly how these positions will influence other parties' response, there is reason to believe that the high degree of success that the CAQ's balancing act between polarizing and consensual positioning has been able to garner might mark it as a viable strategy for other parties. We also saw the CAQ create controversy on the topic immigration, not through its official positions but instead through controversial declarations that shocked many observers, but which were mostly later apologized for and described as "mistakes" (Clermont-Goulet, 2020). Although this kind of discourse did not make its way to the party's official party platform, it could point towards a growing desire or tendency to introduce more negative frames within the Quebec political elite's discourse to continue introducing and justifying more restrictive measures. Overall, it seems clear that immigration will continue to occupy a significant space in our political landscape for the foreseeable future.

The impacts of this finding are wider than merely responding to a handful of observers comparing the party to the Front National. While we are indeed far from the overtly hostile discourse that we have seen rise in many places in Europe, this shows the subtle and sometimes unexpected ways in which pushback against immigration or integration can take place.

Notably, in this case, the results demonstrate the important limits that viewing and discussing immigration largely from a utilitarian point of view can bring. The fact that other forms of discourse such as identity and security gains are less mobilized to justify measures regarding immigration is very revealing and brings significant questions to our understanding of the Quebec electoral and political space. While Quebec has a strong infrastructure devoted to the support and integration of newcomers (Garon, 2015), this welcoming context appears to be framed within a specific ideology and delimited by particular boundaries.

Implications for research

Furthermore, the results presented have significant implications for our understanding of political parties and how they organize around the issue of immigration, and the gaps that political scientists have yet to address in how we can hope to better classify parties according to their

positions. Beyond the specific context of Quebec politics, the results of this thesis also invite us to consider the important limits of thinking in terms of “pro” or “anti” immigration. The terms have severe limits and cannot serve as the only analytical tools used to study parties and their positions. These results support the idea that we need to question the usefulness of the label ‘AIP’ as we currently understand it, and to conduct further research to better define and theorize it (van Spanje, 2011). As discussed above, it is currently the only available typology that we have when discussing political parties and how they view immigration, which brings important limits to our ability to classify parties and their positions on immigration correctly and accurately. Broadly speaking, the CAQ could not by any measure be classified in the same category as the Front National and other far-right parties. Yet, there are clearly elements to their positions that contrast with what we usually think of as a “pro-immigration” position.

Their strongly utilitarian view of immigration, one that carefully walks the balance between being “pro” and “anti” immigration, aptly demonstrates the importance of understanding the varied nuances that can make up parties and people’s positions on the issue. Accounting for a turn towards restrictiveness within a largely “open” and “welcoming” environment raises important questions which we currently do not have the tools to explain. Yet, it is extremely important that we do so because understanding where parties stand across the political chessboard on the issue of immigration sends important signals for voters to be able to make decisions about who they support. The findings made clear by disaggregation of position across the various dimensions of immigration in Chapter 4 clearly demonstrate the extent to which a more fine-grained understanding of a party’s approach to immigration is needed. Elements of “pro” and “anti” immigration stances can be mixed, and understanding how and why could also provide us significant insights into how and why truly radical and extreme positions come to be and gain popularity. While the literature has shown that policy issues with multiple dimensions can lead to specific forms of issue competition by parties (Elias et al., 2015), it would be interesting to dig deeper and to better understand how this coexists with the specific nature of immigration as a policy issue.

Framing and discourse also appear to be an especially valuable avenue to start understanding where and how the subtle nuances of immigration policy can take place. The frames and discourses mobilized by parties to push back against immigration have been studied far and wide across the political literature (Akbaba, 2018; Brown, 2016; Cap, 2018); yet there is a clear need to develop a more solid and systematized understanding of frames, and a deeper empirical exploration of the specific words associated with a variety of frames that relate to immigration, especially within the Québec context. One of the most notable findings that this research allowed me to make was the difficulty of developing a categorization of “frames” that would be able to capture a party’s position in a nuanced manner whilst still remaining feasible and useful. In the end, I believe that the frames I used were a good start, but further work needs to be done to better understand the subtle nuances that can exist in spaces such as Quebec politics.

Across the literature, two perspectives prevail: understanding what allows some political spaces to remain “pro-immigration” (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015; Bloemraad, 2012), and the other how “anti-immigration” ideas, discourses work to sow anti-immigration sentiment (Harell et al., 2012; van Heerden et al., 2014). But what about in between ? There needs to be a space carved out within framing and discourse analysis for how these two perspectives can enter in dialogue. Although the CAQ’s language revealed a vision of immigration as a source of economic gain, the

combination of this discourse with restrictive measures reveals a more insidious approach that was not necessarily captured by my dictionary: immigration, if handled correctly *can* be a source of economic vitality, but remains a risk that must be *carefully* handled in order not to become a problem. The fact that there are currently no tool that allows us to study a party's discourse on immigration whilst capturing these significant nuances (not only about what *dimensions* of immigration an actor is addressing, but also how the *narrative* that they are creating around it) in a systematic way proved to be one of the greatest difficulties in this work and provides an important signal for the need for further research on the topic.

We need to be able to study frames that relate to immigration but also how they may differ across a variety of contexts. The development of a much more extensive dictionary, built across a variety of political contexts, could allow us to create a more relevant and complete understanding of immigration frames.

This thesis demonstrates the importance of breaking down in a more detailed way a party's position on a subject as complex and multifaceted as immigration not just when it comes to discourse but also "positions" more broadly. A more precise typology which takes into account the various shades that exist between the extremes of an approach to immigration should be developed. This would allow us to better account for the existence of such position, and the classify parties accordingly. While the CAQ clearly takes a "piecemeal" approach to immigration, it is not the only part to do so, and the development of a tool that would allow us to recognize how and why parties do so and compare them across various political contexts would go a long way in helping study and understand the place of immigration in party and electoral politics. While typologies can never be completely exclusive and parties often have some features or actions which could belong to more than one category, the method developed in this work could be a first step in determining the specific thresholds which could help us to categorize parties accordingly.

Limits & Opportunities

This research presents notable limits regarding its presentation of the Quebec electoral space. While immigration is an important and complex policy issue, it is presented here in a relatively narrow perspective. Other broader issues, including nationalism, xenophobia and diversity management, are not considered in much depth. Although this was justified by the specific perspective chosen, a more holistic approach to the issue could have helped provide deeper insights in the reasoning behind the positions being studied or their impacts on society. Furthermore, a media analysis could have helped to present a more rounded and complete understanding of the various parties' approach to immigration. As demonstrated during the 2022 electoral campaign with the CAQ's numerous controversial comments regarding immigration (Bilodeau & Lamour, 2022) political parties can also use media interventions to provide additional and even contradictory dimensions to their positions, by making comments that go beyond the party's official stance. For example, while issues of language and concerns for language preservations have been present in both the CAQ and the PQ's political manifestos for many years, the CAQ has increasingly put it at the forefront of its media declarations regarding immigration, and it would be interesting to conduct more in-depth studies to understand the nature and ramifications of such a shift.

Additionally, it is important to recognize the impact that the change from an opposition party to a government could have had on the results, especially due to the use of parliamentary

debates as a source of data. For example, it is plausible that opposition parties could mobilize loss frames more frequently as they tend to criticize the status quo more heavily, and governments could emphasize gain frames in a greater manner. However, it is not always the case that attaining power will have a marked effect on its main discursive tools (Bobba & McDonnell, 2016). Further analysis would be needed in order to determine the nature and scale of the impact that shifting from opposition to government has on Quebec's political parties and their positions.

Despite these limits, this work contributes to several gaps in the migration literature, by studying subnational migration policies and outside of the European context (Xhardez & Paquet, 2020). It also represents a significant and much needed advancement towards a fuller document of the CAQ's ideology (Boily, 2018; Xhardez & Paquet, 2020). Additionally, it provides additional documentation of the PLQ and PQ's approach to the topic. I hope that it can bring important nuances to how we understand policies and ideas that are refractory towards immigration and enable us to articulate critiques and responses that are more appropriate and productive.

My goal was not to diminish the significance of the CAQ's and other Quebec parties' approach to minorities and cultural diversity. The very real, lived experiences that these policies and the discourse surrounding them bring to newcomers, their communities and their descendants are not to be dismissed. Yet the best way to fully understand how and why certain discourses take place is to understand the context within which they take place, and the institutional and political dynamics that surround them. In other words, understanding how the CAQ's position differs but also resembles that of other parties can help us understand its underlying logics, which in turn can help us respond to it in a more appropriate manner.

Arriving at a clearer conceptualization and operationalization of a political party's position on immigration would make a significant contribution to the field of migration studies. This work provides useful guidelines for future research to advance towards a more detailed and developed categorization of parties according to their positions on immigration. As one of the most politicized issues of our time, immigration must be considered with greater concern for nuance and exactitude. Political parties and their role in articulating their vision about this issue should also be given greater attention, and this study is an important step in that direction. While this thesis does not fully answer the question of how exactly we can measure and classify parties' positions on the subject, it provides starting points to consider, and hopefully points us towards research avenues for a more helpful and exact categorization of parties, including across various and very different political contexts, to serve as a strong and empirically based analytical tool.

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Appendix A

List of KWIC analyses conducted on corpus :

accueil*	immigrants	stab*
accueillir	inclusifs	surqualifi*
adequation	inclusion	terroris*
apport	inclusive	travailleurs
arrim*	inclusive	trop cher
attir*	integration	valeurs
attire	intégrer	valeurs communes
attraction	intégrisme	valeurs québécoises
besoin	intercultur*	vigilance
besoins du marché	islamis*	vitalité économique
capacité	langue française	vivre-ensemble
capacité d'absorption	mal intégrés	
chômage	manque de reconnaissance	
cohesion	marché	
compassion	marché du travail	
compéti*	mauvaise integration	
contribu*	mieux intégrer	
coûts	multicultur*	
crim*	non-francophonisables	
culture Québécoise	pas français	
défense", 'défendre'	pénurie	
démocrat*	perdre	
dépassé	perte	
devoir	preserver	
dignité	productivité	
discrimin*	protection	
diversité	protection	
droit	protéger	
droits humains	protéger	
échec d'intégration	providence	
empathie	reconnai*	
enricher	recrut*	
entre les hommes et les	recul	
femmes	réfugié*	
envahi*	répondre aux besoins de	
extremism	main-d'œuvre	
faible francisation	respect	
francisation	riche*	
harmonie	sécuri*	
hommes-femmes	seuil	
hospitalité	société ouverte	
humani*	société ouverte	
identit*	souverain*	