

**Sandra Breux**

Professor  
Institut National de Recherche Scientifique  
Centre Urbanisation Culture et Société  
385, rue Sherbrooke Est  
Montréal (Québec)  
H2X 1E3 Canada

Email: [sandra.breux@ucs.inrs.ca](mailto:sandra.breux@ucs.inrs.ca)  
Tel: 514-499-4059

**Jérôme Couture**

Postdoctoral researcher  
Institut National de Recherche Scientifique  
Centre Urbanisation Culture et Société  
385, rue Sherbrooke Est  
Montréal (Québec)  
H2X 1E3 Canada

Email: [jerome.couture@pol.ulaval.ca](mailto:jerome.couture@pol.ulaval.ca)  
Tel: 514-499-4059

**Anne Mévellec**

Associate professor  
Études politiques  
Faculté des sciences sociales  
Université d'Ottawa

Email: [Anne.Mevelllec@uottawa.ca](mailto:Anne.Mevelllec@uottawa.ca)  
Tel:

**DRAFT VERSION – PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE**

**ABSTRACT**

This paper will examine the relevance of the right-left axis in the last municipal election in Quebec City and Montreal. It locates itself within the literature on the role of ideological preferences at the municipal level. This literature generally shows that classic ideological cleavages are of little importance in municipal elections. Yet, in both Quebec City and Montreal, municipal political parties self-identify as either belonging on the right of the political spectrum (Quebec 21) or on the left (Projet Montréal). And as for other parties, one can easily locate them at a particular place on the political spectrum. Our research question, therefore, is as follows: did left-right ideology have an impact on voting behaviour in Quebec City and Montreal in 2017? To answer this question, we will use data from the Canadian Municipal Election Study. We will confront ideology with other explanatory factors of the vote such as partisan attachment and socio-demographic factors.

## INTRODUCTION

In Quebec, in the mid-1970s, the Castonguay Report (1976) on urbanization initiated a reflection on municipal democracy. That working group advocated the creation of municipal political parties as a means to, among other things, revitalize local political life. For some, the reformist movements are indeed at the origin of the depoliticization of the Quebec municipal scene and the emergence of a form of apolitism that pushed for an business type of management of institutions (Bherer & Breux, 2012). The creation of municipal political parties is thus perceived as a means of re-politicizing the municipal scene, especially since the cities of Quebec and Montreal began developing such political organization in the early 1960s, namely the so-called “civic” parties and the so-called “popular” parties (Belley, 1992, Bherer & Breux, 2012).

The civic parties present “a technico-administrative conception of urban management and have a centralized organization with limited membership, while the ‘grassroots’ parties are [defined] by a socio-political conception of the city centered on citizen involvement and wide membership” (Quesnel, 1977).<sup>1</sup> Although these formations do not position themselves on the left-right axis, they bear—at least at their origins—specific ideological values that generate a political divide that facilitates the understanding of the municipal political spectrum. This opposition, however, faded over time to give way, following the municipal reorganizations of the 2000s, to a new split: that of the opposition between the city-centre and the suburbs. A refusal of political parties even emerged in the 2009 municipal elections, reinforcing both the city-centre/suburb duality and the apolitical attitude that these groups manifested (Breux & Bherer, 2011).

In Quebec, the municipal political parties rose primarily in the big and medium-sized cities,<sup>2</sup> with Montreal and Quebec City as pioneers. However, these parties presented a certain number of specificities (Couture et al., 2018; Mévellec and Tremblay, 2009). The absence of an ideological link with federal or provincial parties, the weak internal organization and the general absence of a militant life between the elections were all elements which question these parties’ relevance, names and real impact on the electorate.

This reality gave rise to two major types of work. First, the—mostly qualitative—works attempted to characterize the types of political parties (Belley, 1992; Quesnel, Belley & Léveillé, 1991) or create typologies (Couture et al., 2018). In the same line of thought, some tried to qualify the ideology of these parties, trying to grasp what is covered by the apoliticalism claimed by these parties (Belley, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Bherer & Breux, 2012; Elmendorf & Schleicher, 2012a; Saiz & Geser, 1999) and their effects in the conquest and exercise of power (Chiasson, Gauthier & Andrew, 2014; Mévellec and Tremblay, 2009 and 2016; Mévellec et al., 2017). Second, in keeping with North American work, some attempted to capture political parties’ influence on voter turnout (Adrian, 1959; Breux, Couture, & Goodman, forthcoming).

Due to the absence of a clear ideological claim of these political parties, no study has—to our knowledge at least—analyzed the influence of ideology on the choice of voters, even though we know that this variable—one among others—is likely to be taken into account in the choice made

---

<sup>1</sup> The possibility of having political parties at the municipal level was then officially recognized after the adoption of the 1978 *Elections and Referendums Act*.

<sup>2</sup> There are 150 political parties today across Quebec. This number does not take into account the number of political teams.

at the polls—this being the case, at least, for other levels of government (Blais, Gidgendil, Nadeau, & Nevitte, 2002). Making such a study seems all the more important since in the last municipal elections of 2017 several parties could easily be positioned on a right-left spectrum: in Quebec City, the Québec 21 party, a new player on the municipal scene, did not try to hide its right wing values, while in Montreal, Projet Montréal is an ecological party on the left of the political spectrum. Faced with such a context, do voters feel close to these municipal political parties? Do these municipal political parties' values influence voters?

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the following question: does ideology influence voters choice at the municipal level? To answer this question, we will return first to the explanatory variables of the individual electoral choice in relation to the presence of political parties: we will detail the importance of socio-demographic variables, ideology as well as partisan attachment in electoral choices. This overview will be realized in light of the specificity of municipal political parties in Quebec. In a second step, we will present our methodology, then we will detail our results based on the municipal elections for the position of mayor of Montreal and Quebec City. We will show—and contrary to what is often asserted about municipal elections—that ideology played a major role in voter choice. We will then continue our reflection on the importance of political parties and the specific relationship between voters and these organizations.

## **I. UNDERSTANDING THE VOTING ORIENTATION AT THE MUNICIPAL SCALE**

Understanding the elector's choice is a delicate operation. Indeed, just as the different models of electoral participation show, there is no single variable that can explain behaviour (Van Ham & Smets, 2012). In the more specific case of voting orientation, Blais et al. remind us of this: “No single factor can provide an explanation for why voters voted as they did” (Blais et al., 2002: 10). At higher levels of government, electoral sociology highlighted the influence of several variables that may be taken into account in this choice. Blais et al. (idem) have thus constructed an explanatory model comprising eight main variables, among which three are directly related to the presence of political parties: socio-demographic variables, ideology and partisan attachment. These three broad categories of variables are interesting because, to our knowledge, they have never been systematically tested at the municipal level in Quebec.

Socio-economic variables are traditionally used to understand the orientation of the vote. Blais et al. note, however, that in Canada these variables are generally considered to have little weight, but that some variables such as gender and region tend to have more weight in recent decades (Blais et al., 2002: 91). The authors then showed the weight of age and language in the 2000 Quebec Liberal victory. Unfortunately, such analyses have had little resonance at the municipal level. Not only are there very few studies on the subject, but in addition most surveys conducted so far are based on data that are not derived from survey data.

Moreover, most of the research has indeed tried to describe the voter, rather than trying to understand how he votes. We know that the municipal elector tends to be an owner, older, richer and more educated than the average electorate (Oliver, Ha, & Callen, 2012). It is also known that age plays an important role (Nakhaie, 2006), with young people tending to abstain more from this level of government than from other scales (Dostie-Goulet, Blais, Fournier, & Gidengil, 2013). In Quebec, in a rare study of survey data, Breux et al. (forthcoming) have downplayed the role of the ownership variable by pointing out that it is first and foremost information that seems to

influence the act of going to the polls: being an owner is only one additional pathway to information.

Nevertheless, all these surveys establish a profile of the voter yet tell us nothing about the orientation of the vote as such.<sup>3</sup> At the turn of the 2000s, however, several studies—often involving higher levels of government—showed that those living in the suburbs tended to vote more to the right while urban voters voted more to the left (Walks, 2004). Villeneuve et al. also compared voters choice at all three levels of government, concluding that: “place of residence is one of the factors that explains political orientations, regardless of the socio-demographic attributes of individuals. In other words, the vote is partly explained by neighbourhood effects. In a very clear way, suburban neighbourhoods vote more to the right than downtown neighbourhoods” (2007: 394). Belley (2003a) also pointed out a few years earlier this difference between the city centre and the suburbs for Quebec City. This specific ideological orientation according to the territory of residence calls on us to look at the way in which values manifest at the municipal level.

In Quebec, political ideology is often described in a binary way: “In Québec, the cleavage between sovereignists and federalists is so powerful that there is little room for other values to play a significant role” (Blais et al., 2002, p. 112). Such analyses have never been conducted at the municipal level, since there is a formal lack of partisan links between the municipal scene and other levels of government. Nevertheless, we know that some elected municipal politicians are affiliated with provincial or federal political parties. In their study, Mévellec and Tremblay (2016: 63) showed that 58% of the women and 70% of the men among their sample of elected municipal government officials had a provincial affiliation, and 35% of the women and 48% of the men had a federal partisan affiliation. This comes, several decades after the findings made by : “Whatever the spokespersons of the new organizations say, the provincial political parties are often quite close to the latter especially when it comes to particular situations created by a municipal group” (Quesnel or Baccigalouppo, to be verified). Although these elected representatives do not display this affiliation during their municipal campaigns and such information may be unequally known by voters, this affiliation may, however, be a shortcut for voters (Elmendorf & Schleicher, 2012b). However, such a study has not yet been conducted (check Mike’s text on Toronto, with Rob and Doug Ford).

There is a debate about the role of ideological preferences at the municipal level, with some arguing that municipal issues are too technical to generate political momentum (Peterson, 1981) while others argue that any choice leading to a policy public is ideological (Elmendorf & Schleicher, 2012c), including at the municipal level (Graham, Philipps and Maslove, 1998). While this debate is often used to argue for or against the existence of municipal political parties, when these formations exist, and despite their apolitical claim, they can be easily distinguished from one another.

In his study of the 1989 election in Quebec City, Belley highlights the presence of two political traditions (Belley, 1992: 200):

---

<sup>3</sup> Check US-American work. Hajnal / Trounstone worked on the race the ethnic vote?

The first, that of “municipal *affairism*,” embodied by the Progrès civique de Québec (PCQ) party created in 1962, in power from 1965 to 1989. The second, that of “municipal socialism” embodied, at least during its creation in 1977, by the Rassemblement populaire de Québec. A party of activists close to popular and union backgrounds and ardent defender of local democracy, social housing and urban development with a human dimension, the RPQ, although having given up, starting in the mid-1980s, the most “socializing” elements of its program and although the exercise of power led it from 1989 on to practice the art of compromise, it could still be considered, in 2001, an interventionist party of social-democratic inspiration.

The author also clearly highlighted the presence of different political cultures, oscillating between popular reformism and managerial populism. Over time, however, these differences were blurred, in the face of “the rise of neo-liberal ideas advocating the reduction of the size and role of the state, and the concerns of a growing part of the population towards the protection of the environment and heritage in urban areas” (Belley, 1992, 6). The episode of municipal mergers then shifted the left-right debate to a city-center/suburban debate, making it more difficult for parties and candidates to position themselves, which made for a more apolitical vision of the municipal scene. Bherer and Breux, however, emphasized that being apolitical “does not do away with the ideological question. Apolitical attitude can be found both on the right and on the left of the political spectrum. However, some studies, in a European context and in some local circles have shown that apoliticalism is sometimes a only a façade. Is it possible to make a similar finding in Quebec?” (2012, 171).

Supporters of political parties also emphasize their key role as informants. In fact, there is an information deficit at the municipal level in Canada (Cutler & Matthews, 2005). Having political parties could thus allow the elector to access a higher amount of information and help him in the orientation of his vote, especially since Breux et al. have shown that being informed was one of the most important variables in the decision to go to the polls (forthcoming).

Speaking of municipal political parties leads to an interest in the relationship that voters have with these organizations. The explanatory models of vote have already shown the importance of this variable on voters’ choice at other levels of government. These models have especially emphasized the fact that the electoral choice can be made before the beginning of the campaign due to the importance of their partisan attachment. Blais et al. (2002) explain that this concept seemed to explain Canadians’ choices too well: this is the reason why Clarke et al. developed the idea of a durable partisan attachment versus a flexible partisan attachment. While Blais et al. tend to think that flexible partisan attachment may lead to forgetting the strength of the durable partisan attachment, the fact remains that the concept of flexible partisan attachment seems particularly applicable at the municipal level, namely because of the nature of the political parties in the running.

In fact, municipal political parties in Quebec “are mostly more ephemeral political teams than highly organized partisan structures” (Bherer & Breux, 2012, 172). In addition, the average life of a municipal political party is 7 years. This limits the possible strength of partisan attachment. These general data must however be qualified in front of certain figures. Indeed, in cities with 20,000 to 500,000 inhabitants, there is a certain rootedness of parties (mainly victorious) from one election to another (Mévellec, 2014). Similarly, “at the municipal level, elected representatives do at times change parties, as happens at the provincial or federal levels, and there may be some instability of partisan attachment among elected municipal officials.” Bherer et al. (Bherer, Collin, Dubuc-Dumas, & Plourde, 2010) in 2010 noted an instability of partisan

attachment among elected officials. However, recent research on cities from 20,000 to 500,000 inhabitants tends to emphasize the permanence in partisan attachment among elected municipal officials (Chiasson, Gauthier, Mévellec, 2017).

However, to our knowledge, no study has measured the impact of defections among elected officials on voter choices. Finally, most municipal political parties bear the name of their leader or the city, which makes their ideological distinction difficult, at least for the neophyte. This tends to center these organizations around their leader more than around a corpus of ideas. These elements suggest that partisan attachment, if it exists in Quebec at the municipal level, is probably expressed differently than at other levels, because of the particularity of the political parties that form the political chessboard at this scale.

## **II. METHODOLOGY DESIGN AND ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION**

To answer our research question, two specific research designs were put in place. In the case of Montreal, our design is based on a logistic regression. The goal is to understand the support given to the incumbent candidate. In this sense, the dependent variable is coded as follows: 1 = Vote for Denis Coderre and 0 = Vote for Valérie Plante. We made three models. Model A measures the effect of ideology on voting. Model B measures the effect of ideology on voting when controlling for partisan attachment, and Model C measures the effect of ideology when controlling for the gap between ideology of the respondent and that of the candidates. Within the three models we find socio-economic control variables such as age, age squared, gender, education, home ownership, and mother tongue.

Our research design for Quebec City is based on a multinomial logistic regression. In this case, the dependent variable is a non-dichotomous dummy variable, i.e., the vote of the electors. The reference category is for respondents who voted for Régis Labeaume. We try to understand the support for the incumbent: the analysis compares those who voted for Gosselin vs. Labeaume and those who voted for Guérette vs. Labeaume. Subsequently, the three models as well as the socio-economic control variables are the same as for the city of Montreal.

## Montreal city

**Table 1. Descriptive analysis**

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Vote Denis Coderre (vs. Plante)	0	1	0.38	-
Age	18	89	50.0	14.89
Age <sup>2</sup>	324	7921	2724.7	1482.22
Male	0	1	0.44	-
French (First language)	0	1	0.56	-
University Degree	0	1	0.49	-
Completed High School (or less)	0	1	0.16	-
Owner	0	1	0.32	-
Ideology	0	10	4.99	2.14
Ideology Denis Coderre	0	10	5.98	2.39
Ideology Valérie Plante	0	10	4.26	2.19
No partisan attachment	0	1	0.19	-
Strong partisan Équipe Coderre	0	1	0.21	-
Strong partisan Projet Montreal	0	1	0.23	-
Perfect ideology fit Denis Coderre	0	1	0.21	-
Perfect ideology fit Valérie Plante	0	1	0.27	-
Outsider from the Left	0	1	0.19	-
Outsider from the Right	0	1	0.16	-

For the city of Montreal, the results show that 38% of respondents voted for Denis Coderre and 62% for Valérie Plante. For the purposes of analysis, we did not retain the 54 respondents who voted for another candidate or who preferred not to reveal their vote, since they are not numerous enough. In terms of ideology, the average of Montreal respondents is 4.99, which means a perfectly central distribution at the 0-10 scale, where 0 means left and 10 right.

Surprisingly, only 19% of respondents say they do not feel close to a municipal political party in Montreal,<sup>4</sup> which demonstrates the importance of political parties in understanding political dynamics in this city. This is in itself a first original result of this research. On the other hand, 21% of the respondents stated identifying fairly or very strongly with the Coderre team and 23% stated identifying fairly or very strongly with Projet Montréal (Variables Strong Team Coderre supporter and Strong Projet Montréal supporter). Each of the two parties can therefore count on a fairly comparable partisan basis. For the purposes of the analysis, the variables No partisan attachment, Strong Coderre team supporter and Strong Projet Montréal supporter must be interpreted in relation to the 39% of respondents who say report an affiliation with a Montreal municipal political party yet whose affiliation is essentially very little or hardly close.

Respondents were also asked to position candidates on the same left-right axis (0 to 10). Denis Coderre was positioned on the right with an average of 5.98 and Valérie Plante on the left with an average of 4.26. Some 21% of respondents positioned themselves in the same place that they positioned Denis Coderre (so a perfect fit with Denis Coderre) and 27% of respondents positioned themselves in the same place as Valérie Plante (so a perfect fit with Valérie Plante). Among the respondents, some positioned the two candidates more to the right than themselves,

<sup>4</sup> Variable No partisan attachment

namely 19%, and are thus outsiders to the left. Others position the two candidates more to the left than themselves, namely 16%, who are thus outsiders to the right. For the purposes of analysis, the variables Perfect ideology fit Denis Coderre, Perfect ideology fit Valérie Plante, Outsider from the Left and Outsider from the Right should be interpreted in relation to the 17% of respondents who are ideologically situated between the two candidates for mayor. We can call these respondents the insiders.

### *Quebec city*

**Table 2. Descriptive analysis**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
Vote Jean-François Gosselin	0	1	0.32	-
Vote Anne Guérette	0	1	0.20	-
Age	19	92	53.7	14.68
Age <sup>2</sup>	361	8464	3101.3	1544.53
Male	0	1	0.55	-
French (First language)	0	1	0.96	-
University Degree	0	1	0.47	-
Completed High School (or less)	0	1	0.13	-
Owner	0	1	0.74	-
Ideology	0	10	5.40	2.20
Ideology Anne Guérette	0	10	3.88	2.31
Ideology Régis Labeaume	0	10	5.53	2.33
Ideology Jean-François Gosselin	0	10	7.03	-
No partisan attachment	0	1	0.12	-
Strong partisan Démocratie Québec	0	1	0.09	-
Strong partisan Équipe Labeaume	0	1	0.27	-
Strong partisan QC21	0	1	0.17	-
Perfect ideology fit Anne Guérette	0	1	0.17	-
Perfect ideology fit Régis Labeaume	0	1	0.19	-
Perfect ideology fit Jean-François Gosselin	0	1	0.20	-
Outsider from the Left	0	1	0.20	-
Outsider from the Right	0	1	0.15	-

Some 48% of respondents voted for Régis Labeaume, 32% for Jean-François Gosselin and 20% for Anne Guérette. For the purpose of analysis, we did not retain the 56 respondents who voted for another candidate or who preferred not to reveal their vote since they are not numerous enough.

For the ideology, the average of the respondents of the city of Quebec is 5.40, which means a distribution slightly to the right of centre on the scale 0-10 where 0 means left and 10 right. Only 12% of respondents say they do not feel close to a municipal political party in Quebec City, which is even greater than for Montreal<sup>5</sup> (variable No partisan attachment). This once again demonstrates the importance of political parties in understanding political dynamics at the municipal level in Quebec's two largest cities.

A total of 9% of respondents say they are fairly or very close to the party Démocratie Québec, 27% to the Labeaume team and 17% say they are fairly or very close to QC21 (Variables Strong

<sup>5</sup> Variable No partisan attachment

Démocratie Québec supporter, Strong Team Labeaume supporter and Strong QC21 supporter). So the Labeaume team relies on a larger partisan base than its opponents; QC21, a brand new party, has a fairly large partisan base; and Démocratie Québec, the official opposition before the 2017 election, finds itself with a weak party base.

For analysis purposes, the variables Partisan attachment, Strong Démocratie Québec supporter, Strong Team Labeaume supporter and Strong QC21 supporter should be interpreted in relation to the 35% of respondents who say they are close to a municipal political party albeit very little or hardly at all.

Respondents were also asked to position candidates on the same left-right axis (0 to 10). Anne Guérette was positioned strongly to the left with an average of 3.88, Régis Labeaume slightly to the right of centre at 5.53 and Jean-François Gosselin strongly to the right with an average of 7.03. A total of 17% of respondents are positioned in the same place they positioned Anne Guérette (so a Perfect fit with Anne Guérette), 19% of respondents are positioned in the same place as Régis Labeaume (so Perfect fit with Régis Labeaume) and 20% of respondents have a perfect fit with Jean-François Gosselin. At this level, the three candidates have a fairly comparable position in terms of proportion of fit, with Jean-François Gosselin obtaining the highest score at this level.

Among the respondents, some position the two candidates more to the right than themselves, namely 20%, who are thus outsiders to the left. Others position the two candidates more to the left than themselves, namely 15%, who are thus outsiders to the right. For the purposes of analysis, the variables Perfect ideology fit Anne Guérette, Perfect ideology fit Régis Labeaume, Perfect ideology fit Jean-François Gosselin, Outsider to the Left and Outsider to the Right must be interpreted in relation to the 9% of respondents who situate themselves ideologically between the left-most candidate and the right-most candidate without having a fit with the candidate at the centre. These respondents can be called insiders.

### **III. RESULTS**

As we have done in the methodology section of this text, we will present the results by city.

#### **Montreal**

Our results show that ideology partly explains the vote of the respondents in the Montreal election: the more a respondent is on the right on the axis, the more likely he is to vote for Denis Coderre. Specifically, the marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) found in Model A shows that each additional point on the scale increases the probability of voting for Denis Coderre by 6 percentage points.

A part of the effect of the ideology seems to result from partisan attachment according to the B model. Indeed, the ideology variable remains significant, but its marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) on the vote decreases by about one half to 3 percentage points per additional point on the left-right scale.

**Table 3. Logistic Regression Montreal vote**

<i>Dependent variable:</i> 1 = Vote for Denis Coderre ; 0 = Vote for Valérie Plante	A) Ideology (Left-Right)		B) Ideology mediated by partisanship		C) Ideology mediated by the self-rated Ideology of Candidates	
	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/DX	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/DX	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/DX
Constant	0.05 (1.09)	-	-0.33 (0.56)	-	0.06 (1.25)	-
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Age	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.02	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.02	-0.06 (0.05)	n.s.
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.001** (0.0004)	0.0002	0.001** (0.0005)	0.0003	0.0007 (0.0004)	n.s.
Male	-0.12 (0.17)	n.s.	-0.43* (0.21)	-0.08	-0.06 (0.20)	n.s.
French (First language)	-0.42* (0.20)	-0.10	-0.22 (0.24)	n.s.	-0.29 (0.23)	n.s.
University Degree	0.38 (0.20)	n.s.	0.61* (0.25)	0.12	0.39 (0.22)	n.s.
Completed High School (or less)	-0.18 (0.30)	n.s.	-0.18 (0.30)	n.s.	-0.20 (0.35)	n.s.
Owner	0.003 (0.09)	n.s.	0.00006 (0.23)	n.s.	-0.13 (0.21)	n.s.
Ideology	0.25*** (0.04)	0.06	0.17** (0.04)	0.03	0.13* (0.06)	0.03
No partisan attachment			-0.36 (0.29)	n.s.		
Strong partisan Équipe Coderre			1.96*** (0.27)	0.43		
Strong partisan Projet Montreal			-2.69*** (0.40)	-0.41		
Perfect ideology fit Denis Coderre					0.86** (0.27)	0.20
Perfect ideology fit Valérie Plante					-1.07*** (0.26)	-0.20
Outsider from the Left					-0.68* (0.05)	-0.13
Outsider from the Right					0.02 (0.07)	n.s.
N	(653)		(653)		(582)	
Log Pseudolikelihood	-396.15		-282.22		-330.24	
LR Chi-square	59.81***		287.68***		85.85***	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.07		0.34		0.12	

In addition, respondents who do not have a partisan attachment are not more likely to vote for either candidate, as shown by the non-significant coefficient for the variable No partisan attachment. However, respondents who feel fairly or very close to one or the other of the political parties are more likely to vote for the party's mayoral candidate. More specifically, supporters of the Denis Coderre team have a 43-percentage-point higher probability of voting for Denis Coderre, while Projet Montréal supporters have a 41-percentage-point lower probability of voting for the latter according to the marginal effects reported in Model B of Table 2: the mobilization of the supporters was therefore quite comparable for both parties.

One part of the effect of the ideology also seems to derive from the candidate's positioning on the left-right scale according to Model C. The ideology variable remains significant, but its marginal effect (Dy/Dx) on the vote decreases once again by about half to 3 percentage points per additional point on the left-right scale.

Respondents who have positioned themselves in the same places ideologically as one or the other of the candidates are more likely to vote for them. More specifically, the marginal effect (Dy/Dx) shows that the probability of voting for Denis Coderre increases by 20 percentage points if the respondent positions himself ideologically in the same place that he also positioned Denis Coderre, while the probability of voting for this candidate decreases by 20 percentage points if

the respondent instead positioned himself in the same place he positioned Valérie Plante. Finally, with respect to the outsiders, it seems that Denis Coderre failed to attract the vote of voters who are more to the right than him. In fact, respondents who positioned themselves more to the right than both the two main candidates did not vote more for either of the candidates. However, the voters who situated the two candidates more to the right than themselves tended to vote for Valérie Plante. Indeed, the marginal effects of Model C show that left-wing outsiders had a probability of less than 13 percentage points to vote for Denis Coderre.

Given the interesting socio-economic variables, the results show that support for Denis Coderre is found among young people and very old people, since the age variable has a negative and significant coefficient in model A and B, whereas age squared also has a positive and significant coefficient in these two models. However, age is not significant in Model C. As for the other control variables, none show stable results in more than one model.

## QUÉBEC CITY

Once again, ideology explains in part the vote of respondents during the election in Quebec City, more so than in Montreal. The more a respondent is on the right side of the axis, the more likely he is to vote for Jean-François Gosselin, and the more he is on the left, the higher the probability of voting for Anne Guérette. More specifically, the marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) discovered in Model A shows that each additional point on the scale increases the probability of voting for Jean-François Gosselin rather than for Régis Labeaume by 10 percentage points. In the same vein, each additional point on the left-right axis decreases the probability of voting for Anne Guérette rather than for Régis Labeaume by 6 percentage points.

A small part of the effect of ideology seems to derive from partisan attachment according to Model B. Indeed, the ideology variable remains highly significant, but its marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) on the vote diminishes a little bit, decreasing to 9 percentage points per additional point on the left-right scale for a vote for Jean-François Gosselin. The effect is bigger for Anne Guérette, namely a decrease by half, which is 3 percentage points per point on the scale for Anne Guérette. The effect of mediation on ideology seems to have less effect on the vote for Jean-François Gosselin. Moreover, partisan mediation is somewhat less significant in Quebec than in Montreal.

Moreover, respondents who do not have a partisan attachment are not more likely to vote for either candidate, as shown by the non-significant coefficient for the variable No Partisan attachment. We obtain here a result similar to the one presented for the city of Montreal.

**Table 3. Results for Quebec City**

Reference : Vote for Labeaume	A) Ideology (Left-Right)				B) Ideology mediated by partisanship				C) Ideology mediated by the self-rated Ideology of Candidates			
	Guérette		Gosselin		Guérette		Gosselin		Guérette		Gosselin	
	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx	Coef. (S.E.)	Dy/Dx
Age	0.05 (0.04)	n.s.	0.07 (0.04)	n.s.	0.05 (0.05)	n.s.	0.06 (0.05)	n.s.	0.06 (0.05)	n.s.	0.08 (0.05)	n.s.
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.00 (0.00)	n.s.	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.001 *	0.00 (0.00)	n.s.	-0.00 (0.00)	n.s.	0.00 (0.00)	n.s.	-0.00 (0.00)	n.s.
Male	-0.18 (0.19)	n.s.	0.41 (0.16)	0.09 **	-0.18 (0.21)	n.s.	0.21 (0.20)	n.s.	-0.26 (0.21)	n.s.	0.39 (0.21)	n.s.
French (First language)	0.29 (0.52)	n.s.	1.00 (0.51)	0.15 *	0.03 (0.56)	n.s.	0.74 (0.62)	n.s.	-0.00 (0.58)	n.s.	1.52 (0.74)	0.21 ***
University Degree	0.61 (0.20)	0.09 ***	-0.49 (0.17)	-0.12 ***	0.24 (0.23)	n.s.	-0.61 (0.22)	-0.14 **	0.59 (0.23)	0.08 **	-0.29 (0.21)	n.s.
High School (or less)	-0.83 (0.42)	-0.10 *	-0.20 (0.24)	n.s.	-0.83 (0.46)	n.s.	-0.33 (0.30)	n.s.	-0.93 (0.58)	n.s.	-0.04 (0.32)	n.s.
Owner	-0.10 (0.21)	n.s.	0.19 (0.20)	n.s.	-0.35 (0.26)	n.s.	0.19 (0.25)	n.s.	-0.00 (0.26)	n.s.	-0.02 (0.25)	n.s.
Ideology	-0.39 (0.05)	-0.06 ***	0.43 (0.04)	0.10 ***	-0.26 (0.06)	-0.03 ***	0.39 (0.05)	0.09 ***	-0.24 (0.08)	-0.04 ***	0.30 (0.07)	0.07 ***
No partisan attachment					0.81 (0.27)	0.06 **	0.47 (0.28)	n.s.				
Strong partisan Dém. Québec					3.16 (0.41)	0.27 ***	0.61 (0.58)	n.s.				
Strong partisan É. Labeaume					-1.78 (0.32)	-0.12 ***	-2.07 (0.27)	-0.37 ***				
Strong partisan QC21					-3.12 (2.04)	n.s.	3.08 (0.38)	0.67 ***				
Perfect fit Guérette									0.99 (0.44)	0.14 ***	-0.84 (0.34)	-0.19 ***
Perfect fit Labeaume									-0.86 (0.28)	-0.08 *	-1.12 (0.29)	-0.17 ***
Perfect fit Gosselin									-0.20 (0.44)	n.s.	1.92 (0.26)	0.45 ***
Outsider from the Left									0.79 (0.31)	0.10 **	-0.17 (0.38)	n.s.
Outsider from the Right									-0.29 (0.67)	n.s.	1.05 (0.31)	0.25 **
N	1 051				1 051				828			
Log PLKH	-896.97				-635.65				-622.20			
LR Chi-square	390.673***				913.29***				502.32***			
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.18				0.42				0.29			

However, respondents who feel fairly or very close to one or the other of the political parties are more likely to vote for the party's mayoral candidate. Specifically, supporters of Démocratie Québec have a 27-percentage-point higher probability of voting for Anne Guérette, while supporters of Québec 21 have a 67-percentage-point higher probability of voting for Jean-François Gosselin, according to the marginal effects reported in Model B of Table 2. So, the mobilization of supporters was stronger for QC21 than for Démocratie Québec. In the same vein, supporters of the Labeaume team have a probability of less than 37 percentage points to vote for

Jean-François Gosselin and of less than 12 percentage points to vote for Anne Guérette. The most interesting effect is that Strong Démocratie Québec supporter is not negatively and statistically related to a vote for Jean-François Gosselin and that Strong QC21 supporter is also not negatively correlated with a vote for Anne Guérette. This is an indication that the vote for these two candidates is not transferable. There were indeed too few voters for whom the choice was between Guérette and Gosselin. There were therefore two electoral contests for some voters: the election was between Guérette versus Labeaume for some and between Gosselin and Labeaume for the others.

One part of the effect of ideology also seems to derive from the candidate's positioning on the left-right scale according to Model C. The ideology variable remains significant, but its marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) on the vote decreases approximately by one third, dropping to 4 percentage points per additional point on the left-right scale for Guérette and 7 percentage points per point on the scale for Gosselin. This means that mediation by ideology is less significant than it is for the city of Montreal (see previous section).

Respondents who positioned themselves in the same place ideologically as one or the other of the candidates are more likely to vote for that candidate. More specifically, the marginal effect ( $Dy/Dx$ ) shows that the probability of voting for Jean-François Gosselin increases by 45 percentage points if the respondent positions himself ideologically in the same place that he positioned Gosselin, while the probability of voting for this candidate decreases by 19 percentage points if the respondent instead positioned himself in the same place as he positioned Anne Guérette, and decreases by 17 points if he positioned himself at the same place as Régis Labeaume. In terms of the effect on Anne Guérette's vote, those who positioned themselves in the same place had a higher probability of only 14% of voting for Anne Guérette. Gosselin did even better than Guérette in this regard to attract voters with a fit.

Finally, for the outsiders, it seems that the candidates on the left and on the right managed to attract this vote. In fact, respondents who positioned themselves more to the right of the top three candidates have a 25-percentage-point higher probability of voting for Jean-François Gosselin, and outsiders who positioned themselves more to the left a 10-percentage-point higher probability of voting for Anne Guérette. Again, Model C shows that a vote for Gosselin or Guérette is not transferable from one to the other since the left-wing outsiders are not negatively correlated with a vote for Gosselin and the right-wing outsiders are not negatively correlated with a vote for Guérette.

Given the interesting socio-economic variables, the results show that support for Jean-François Gosselin is found among men, mother-tongue Francophones and those with vocational or technical education. Support for Anne Guérette is mainly found among academics. Régis Labeaume seems to rake across the board, since the coefficients are inverted for a number of variables between the Guérette-versus-Labeaume models and the Gosselin-versus-Labeaume models. It should be noted that he seems to have made more gains with very old people and people with a high school degree or less.

#### IV. Discussion

These different results allow us to contribute to the reflections of Canadian and, more specifically, Quebec municipal electoral sociology. More specifically, two important results emerge from our analysis. First, ideology played a major role in the election results in Montreal and Quebec City. In Montreal, right-wing voters voted more for Denis Coderre and left-wing voters voted more for Valérie Plante. The victory of Valérie Plante can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that she was perceived more at the centre of the political spectrum than Denis Coderre. As a result, her positioning was more in line with that of Montrealers. In addition, she was able to attract the vote of the left-most voters, while Denis Coderre was not able to do the same with the most right-wing voters. In Quebec City, the situation is the same. Voters on the right voted more for Gosselin, voters on the left for Anne Guérette, and voters in the centre—many—voted for Régis Labeaume. In this sense, Régis Labeaume's victory can be explained by the fact that he was perceived more at the centre of the political spectrum than the other candidates. His positioning in the centre-right was almost perfectly aligned with that of the voters of Quebec City. This position allowed him to attract the votes of the voters to his right *and* to his left, which the other two candidates do not seem to have been able to do.

This role of ideology tends to put forward, as emphasized earlier, the idea that apoliticalism is not the equivalent of ideological neutrality. However, one can hypothesize that it is at the centre that the election is won, which possibly echoes a certain apolitical view of things: “apolitism reflects the communitarian ideal represented by the municipal level, an ideal that should not tolerate any obstacle between the mayor and his citizens, no conflict or debate of ideas. The municipal scale would by definition be harmonious and consensual. In this context, apoliticalism alone constitutes a political project that allows the person claiming to represent it to speak on behalf of all” (Bherer & Breux, 2012, 180). This hypothesis challenges the definition of the centre in politics, both at the municipal level and at other levels of government. The fact remains that Valérie Plante's victory in Montreal is due to the fact that she also convinced the left-most voters. Therefore, as part of this investigation it seems possible to say that the neutrality of the municipal scene no longer holds.

Secondly, we have shown that one part of the effect of ideology on voting relates to partisan attachment. For this election, the role of political parties—whose relevance is frequently questioned in the media—seems to be one of the driving forces behind the electoral behaviour for this election. Political parties seem indeed to create links with voters: few voters say they are independent in both Montreal and Quebec. This result is significant because for the moment the main studies showed the contradictory role of municipal political parties on electoral participation. Our study clearly underlines that parties, by creating links with the electorate, participate in structuring electoral behaviour, ensuring a readable offer to voters. Moreover, in Montreal both parties had a strong and comparable support base. They also got very strong and comparable support from their supporters. This is new information for the understanding of the elections in Montreal and Quebec City. In the case of Montreal, this result contradicts with one of Projet Montréal's statements, which in its April 2018 congress attributed its victory to the greater mobilization of its supporters (source). In Quebec City, the effect of ideology on voting was stronger for Québec 21 than for the other parties. The same applied for the effect of the ideological “fit” and the ability to attract the vote of outsiders. Thus, while Régis Labeaume had a

larger partisan base than his opponents, he was more efficient than Anne Guérette, but less effective than Gosselin in attracting his fans. Proponents of Labeaume were, however, much more numerous than those of Gosselin.

The nature of the links between the municipal parties and the electorate, however, remains to be explored. Does standing under the banner of a political party allow the elector to read the municipal political scene more easily? The question of partisan attachment raises several methodological and theoretical challenges. The survey question asked the following question: Do you usually think of yourself as a... ? One could wonder what does this proximity cover : what does it mean concretely to be attached to a party that has only existed for a few months? It is difficult here to answer this question. Table 5 below shows the dates of the creation of the political parties competing in 2017 in Quebec City and Montreal. Some of them (Quebec 21) have never been in power, preventing voters to base their party identification with past party performance evaluations”

**Table 5. Date of creation of the main municipal political parties competing in Quebec City and Montreal in 2017**

<b>Name of party</b>	<b>Date of creation</b>
Équipe Denis Coderre (currently Ensemble Montréal)	2013
Projet Montréal	2004
Équipe Labeaume	2007
Québec 21	2017
Démocratie Québec	2012

Rather than discussing the durable or flexible nature of partisan attachment, the municipal scene illustrates a form of sensitive/personalized attachment sought by the parties. Indeed, beyond the ideological platforms put forward by each organization, it is clear that the parties play the card of sensitivity by extensively personalizing the electoral fight. Thus one can wonder if in the end this partisan proximity is not merely a proximity with the candidates. This could be confirmed by a usual strategy of municipal political parties to include the name of the candidate for mayor in their party name. According to some observers, these “alphabet” parties, devoid of ideology, would boil down to campaign organizations. However, it is also possible that the presence of the names of candidates could serve to arouse a more sensitive attachment to the political party. This is implied by the practices of the already established political parties of Gatineau and Sherbrooke which have, only for the time of the electoral campaign of 2017, added the name of the incumbent mayor to their party name (Action Gatineau— Équipe Pedneau Jobin; Renouveau Sherbrookois – Équipe Savigny). More generally, Quebec municipal election campaigns take the form of a “quasi-presidential election” (Bherer & Breux, 2012: 173) to which all eyes and spotlight are turned in a nearly-exclusive manner on the race for mayor. For example, although Projet Montréal has been in existence since 2004, it is very much the campaign of Valérie Plante that has prominence.

The municipal level provides an opportunity to question the notion of partisan attachment in a context that is less standardized by the presence of these parties than are the federal or provincial levels. As we have seen, partisan attachment can be explored in connection with the proximity

felt by voters with their candidate for mayor. It also appears that another way of deepening the partisan attachment would be to verify whether voters who felt close to the party voted not only for the party's mayoral candidate but also aligned their vote to the candidate in their district (see text Mike McGregor & Tessier). In contrast to provincial and federal voting patterns, the municipal level allows to examine voters' loyalty to their party.

Moreover, Elmendorf and Schleicher point out that "partisanship for some voters is more affective than informational. These 'Michigan voters,' we have elsewhere dubbed them, tend to conform their comments and beliefs to their party identification rather than the other way around" (page). This explanation would appear to be quite satisfactory in terms of how voters position themselves on the left-right axis and how they position candidates, given the nature of municipal political parties and the fact that they are centered around their boss.

Our analysis, however, leaves a number of elements unresolved. With regard to socio-demographic variables, if no clear profile seems to emerge, analyzing ideology by place of residence would probably be an interesting avenue of research. Similarly, the other explanatory variables of the electoral choice that Blais et al. present in their work would also need to be observed in more detail (economic perceptions, issues opinions, evaluations of government performance, leader evaluations, strategic considerations). In this sense, it would be interesting for future surveys to integrate the "incumbent" variable into the models presented, in order to see how partisan proximity is negotiated when an incumbent candidate is present, particularly when he or she is not re-elected, as was the case in Montreal.

Together these results invite us to question once again the specificity of the municipal political scene. From the moment when we consider that the municipal scene is ideological, it loses some of its specificity. This first work therefore opens up a new research project: Is there continuity between ideological choices at the municipal level and those made at other levels of government? Moreover, does the positioning on the left-right axis by the voters correspond to the values of the party? In terms of political attachment, is there a link between flexible partisan attachment at the municipal level and the presence of the same type of attachment to the other levels of government (Giasson et al., 2005).<sup>6</sup>?

### **References (Attention all references and citations need to be carefully verified)**

- Adrian, C. R. (1959). A Typology for Nonpartisan Elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, 12(2), 449-458. doi:10.1177/106591295901200206
- Belley, S. (1992). Les partis politiques municipaux et les élections municipales de 1986 à Montréal et de 1989 à Québec. *Politique*(21), 5-35.

---

<sup>6</sup> "According to data from the 2000 Canadian Election Study, 44% of electors did not have a strong partisan attachment when the campaign was launched ~ Blais et al., 2002: 116. This large cohort of flexible Canadian voters has grown in importance over the past 25 years. Clarke and his colleagues ~ 1996! argue that the Canadian partisan system of "brokerage" has made the electorate more cynical towards political actors and organizations. Parties then no longer try to retain strong partisan foundations. Instead, they seek, from one election to another, to form electoral coalitions that are more and more extensive and disparate in their composition. As a result, Canadian voters view political parties as interchangeable and become more critical of elected politicians who fail to meet their election commitments ~ Clarke et al., 1996: 176-182 !." cited in Giasson, Nadeau, Bélanger, 2005, Televised debates and evaluations of candidates. RCSP

- Belley, S. (2003a). Forces et faiblesses des acteurs de la nouvelle scène municipale. *Télescope*, 10(2), 24-34.
- Belley, S. (2003b). L'élection municipale de 2001 à Québec : l'interventionnisme municipal de la ville-centre contre le populisme fiscal des banlieues. *Recherches sociographiques*, 44(2), 217-238.
- Belley, S. (2003c). La politique municipale à Montréal dans les années 1990: du "réformisme populaire" au "populisme gestionnaire". *Politique et Société*, 22(1), 99-118.
- Bherer, L., & Breux, S. (2012). L'apolitisme municipal. *Bulletin d'Histoire politique*, 21(1), 170-184.
- Bherer, L., Collin, J.-P., Dubuc-Dumas, É., & Plourde, J.-S. (2010). *Le financement des partis politiques et des candidats indépendants à l'échelle municipale : l'exemple de Montréal*. Retrieved from Montréal:
- Blais, A., Gidgendil, E., Nadeau, R., & Nevitte, N. (2002). *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory : Making Sense of the Vote in the 2000 Canadian Election*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Breux, S., & Bherer, L. (2011). *Les élections municipales au Québec : enjeux et perspectives*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Breux, S., Couture, J., & Goodman, N. (forthcoming). Fewer voters, higher stakes? The applicability of rational choice for voter turnout in Quebec municipalities. *Environment and planning C : Government and Policy*.
- Chiasson, G., M. Gauthier and C. Andrew (2014). « Municipal Political Parties and Politicization : the Case of Gatineau Elections », *Canadian Journal of Urban Research /Revue Canadienne de Recherche Urbaine*, 23 (2) : 79-99.
- Chiasson G, Gauthier M, Mévellec A. (2017). *Partisanisation ou politisation des municipalités québécoises ?* ST 36 Le pouvoir local, entre politisation et dépolitisation. Congrès de l'association française de science politique, Montpellier, France.
- Cutler, F., & Matthews, J. S. (2005). The Challenge of Municipal Voting : Vancouver 2002. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 38(2), 359-382.
- Dostie-Goulet, E., Blais, A., Fournier, P., & Gidengil, E. (2013). L'abstention sélective, ou pourquoi certains jeunes qui votent au fédéral boudent les élections municipales. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 909-927.
- Elmendorf, C., & Schleicher, D. (2012a). *Districting for a low-information electorate*. Retrieved from Davis:
- Elmendorf, C., & Schleicher, D. (2012b). Districting for a Low-Information Electorate. *Yale Law Journal*, 121(7), 1846-1886.
- Elmendorf, C., & Schleicher, D. (2012c). Informing consent : Voter Ignorance, Political Parties and Election Law. *UC Davis Legal Studies Research Paper no 285*, 1-70.
- Graham, K., S.D. Philips et A. Maslove (1998). *Urban Governance in Canada*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company.
- Mévellec A. (2014). Did the 2013 municipal elections destabilize municipal politics in Quebec?. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research/Revue canadienne de recherche urbaine*, 23(2), 18-37.
- Mévellec A, Tremblay M. (2013). Les partis politiques municipaux : la "Westminsterisation" des villes du Québec ? *Recherches sociographiques*, LIV (2), 325-347.
- Mévellec A, Tremblay M. (2016). *Genre et professionnalisation de la politique municipale*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'université du Québec.
- Nakhaie, M. R. (2006). Electoral participation in municipal, provincial and federal elections in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 39(2), 363.

- Oliver, E. J., Ha, S., & Callen, Z. (2012). *Local Elections and the Politics of Small Scale Democracy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Peterson, P. E. (1981). *City Limits*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Quesnel, L. (1977). Partis politiques municipaux. *Municipalité*, 2, 49-52.
- Quesnel, L., Belley, S., & Léveillé, J. (1991). *Partis politiques municipaux. Une étude de sociologie électorale*. Montréal: Éditions Agence d'ARC.
- Saiz, M., & Geser, H. (1999). *Local Parties in Political and Organizational Perspective* (M. Saiz & H. Geser Eds.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
- Van Ham, C., & Smets, K. (2012). *The Embarrassment of Riches ? A Meta-Analysis of Individual-Level Research on Voter Turnout*. Paper presented at the ELECDEM Closing Conference, European University Institute.
- Villeneuve, P., Jodoin, Y., & Thériault, M. (2007). L'énigme de Québec...ou de ses banlieues : une analyse de géographie électorale. *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, 51(144), 375-397.
- Walks, R. A. (2004). Suburbanization, the Vote, and Changes in Federal and Provincial Political Representation and Influence Between Inner Cities and Suburbs in Large Canadian Urban Regions, 1945-1999. *Urban Affairs Review*, 39(4), 411-440.