

Canadian Hansard and Arctic Sovereignty: A Narrative Policy Framework Study

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(Received 24 May 2024; accepted in revised form 19 March 2025)

ABSTRACT. This paper demonstrates that Canadian Hansard, which represents an exact transcript of the debates conducted in the House of Commons of Canada, is a valuable source for analyzing political positions on Arctic sovereignty using the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF). Unlike sporadic official documents, Hansard offers a continuous empirical dataset. While our research supports the NPF postulates, it proposes a complementary methodological approach through a Canadian narrative case study. Our findings suggest that MPs' narratives align with those in official governmental publications and policy frameworks, reflecting the NPF's primacy of groups and networks and narrative cognition postulates. Even though small to moderate lexicon differences were found in debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty among the political parties, we observed a consistent lexicon across political affiliations. The period analysis demonstrated that Conservative MPs' narratives align with what is expected based on NPF postulates. However, the policy reorientation in terms of beliefs, values, and norms caused by the Northern Strategy in conjunction with wavering leadership and unclear Arctic priorities created internal inconsistencies within the Liberal and New Democratic Party (NDP) narratives. These observations suggest that MPs' narratives are more ambiguous than initially assumed, since they can deviate from official documents or publications because of current events before reverting to their core preferences. This study underscores the potential for continual empirical analysis of Hansard and the NPF's applicability in Canadian policy studies.

Keywords: Arctic; sovereignty; Hansard; debates; Canada; parliament; NPF

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article met en évidence la grande importance de la publication des *Débats* parlementaires canadiens (*Hansard*), qui reflètent fidèlement les échanges verbaux tenus à la Chambre des communes du Canada, dans l'étude des prises de position politiques sur la souveraineté arctique. Il s'appuie sur le concept du cadre narratif des politiques, correspondant au *Narrative Policy Framework* (NPF) en anglais. Les *Débats* constituent une source de données empiriques en continu, contrairement aux documents officiels de nature sporadique. Même si notre recherche appuie les postulats du NPF, elle propose une approche méthodologique complémentaire reposant sur l'étude de cas de discours canadiens. Nos constatations laissent entendre que les interventions orales des députés correspondent aux publications officielles du gouvernement et aux cadres de politiques, ce qui met en évidence la supériorité des postulats de NPF en matière de cognition narrative, de groupes et de réseaux. Bien que nous ayons constaté des écarts lexicaux allant de légers à modérés dans les débats sur la souveraineté dans l'Arctique canadien au sein même des partis politiques, nous avons remarqué une cohérence terminologique entre les affiliations politiques. L'analyse de la période visée a révélé que les interventions orales des députés du Parti conservateur s'alignent sur les prévisions concernant les postulats du NPF. Toutefois, la réorientation des politiques en fonction des croyances, des valeurs et des normes émanant de La Stratégie pour le Nord, combinée à l'instabilité du leadership et à des priorités floues pour l'Arctique, a entraîné des divergences internes dans les interventions orales du Parti libéral et du Nouveau Parti démocratique. Ces observations suggèrent que les interventions des députés sont plus ambiguës que ce qui était présumé initialement, car elles peuvent s'écarter des publications ou des documents officiels en raison de l'actualité, avant de reprendre les préférences fondamentales. Cette étude met de l'avant la possibilité d'effectuer une analyse empirique continue des *Débats* et d'appliquer le cadre du NPF aux études de politiques canadiennes.

Mots-clés : Arctique; souveraineté; *Débats* (*Hansard*); débats; Canada; parlement; NPF

Traduit pour la revue *Arctic* par Nicole Giguère.

INTRODUCTION

The Arctic region, a crucial and defining element of Canadian identity, has received varying attention from Canadian Members of Parliament (MPs) in recent decades. Despite some incidents that tested the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative in the latter half of the 20th century,

the topic has gradually faded from Canadian government decision making.

The transit of the tanker *Manhattan* in 1969 and the U.S. icebreaker *Polar Sea* in 1985 brought the Canadian Arctic region into the spotlight and triggered a national predicament. In both cases, a cautious Government of Canada sought to assert its position over the Northwest

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Passage, only to be confronted by a U.S. government defending its freedom of navigation stance (Huebert, 1995). This dispute, deeply rooted in the Law of the Sea, highlights the geopolitical gravity of the Northwest Passage. The Canadian government asserts it as internal waters based on straight baselines and traditional use. In contrast, the United States government sees it as an international strait because it connects two oceans. Moreover, recognizing Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage could incentivize other coastal states to initiate similar claims. Hence, such a precedent might negatively impact the interests of the United States around the world (Lalonde, 2020). Heated debates in the House of Commons followed after each incident, with the governing and opposition parties exchanging views. To this day, the two countries have agreed to disagree on the matter of the Northwest Passage.

Following those two sovereignty incidents, the Canadian government's attention waned. Investments in surveillance of the Canadian Arctic region also significantly decreased in the 1990s, as the federal government mandated spending cuts to pursue a balanced budget (Huebert, 2005). However, a significant turning point occurred in the early 2000s, with a resurgence of public attention on the Arctic region. This change was sparked by a confluence of factors, including the impacts of global warming, Canada's stance on the Northwest Passage, relations with Indigenous Peoples, and military activities and investments from Arctic nations (Arnold, 2012; Chapnick, 2012; Chater, 2018; Lackenbauer, 2021).

Global attention on the Arctic peaked in the late 2000s when various initiatives led by Arctic nations were unveiled (Landriault, 2016). The planting of a Russian flag at the bottom of the Arctic Ocean at the North Pole during the summer of 2007 made headlines worldwide, while being denounced and criticized by several governments including Canada's (Bartenstein, 2010). Investments in military capabilities by different Arctic nations, including Russia and Canada, and the modernization of military bases and airstrips in the Russian Arctic, contributed to the perception that competition was underway to assert control over different parts of the Arctic region. The Russian invasions of Ukraine heightened this sentiment in 2014 and 2022, significantly amplifying security and sovereignty concerns in the Arctic nations and necessitating a reassessment of their position in the region.

As Arctic nations signed treaties and agreements and adopted joint declarations in the 2010s, media attention deflated; governments continued to announce investments and publish official documents mentioning the Arctic region, however (Landriault, 2020). While it did not receive the same public attention as a similar document published in the late 2000s, the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF) encompassed governmental policies on Canada's Arctic sovereignty narratives. The sovereignty aspect is entrenched in its safety, security, and defence chapter, which mentions the importance of

Indigenous communities, strong economic development, and a sustainable environment. According to Global Affairs Canada, the ANPF represents a long-term vision of Canadian Arctic policy and should extend to 2030 and beyond (Government of Canada, 2019).

These recent geopolitical shifts, which have profound implications for the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative, underline the urgency and relevance of our research, which aims to provide unique insights into these evolving issues. Indeed, the events previously mentioned (including for example, transit of ships in and Canada's stance on the Northwest Passage; global warming; Russian flag; modernization of military bases; Russian invasion of Ukraine) prompted the Canadian federal government to reassess its stance on Canadian Arctic sovereignty, presenting a unique opportunity for a historical overview. However, most Canadian scholarly attention on the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative has focused on analyzing the prime ministers' and other ministers' announcements, statements, and official strategic documents (Dodds, 2011; Lackenbauer and Huebert, 2014; Genest and Lasserre, 2015). While these sources are invaluable, other critical political institutions and sources have not been extensively studied and demand further attention as they complement those previous sources. This is the gap in existing research that our study fills, offering a fresh perspective on the topic.

In this paper, we demonstrate that Canadian Hansard, a verbatim transcription of the debates held in the House of Commons of Canada, not only represents a valid source of information on the positioning of each political party vis-à-vis the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative but also broadens the scope of analysis and provides unique insights when combined with NPF.

Therefore, our approach not only pinpoints the different ideas and visions that affect the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative in the Canadian political landscape but also offers a unique understanding of the issues that capture political attention, the actors who champion these issues, and the timing of these discussions. It provides a deeper insight into how problems relating to the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative can be presented and framed.

Moreover, official documents and announcements are infrequent; sometimes several years go by between the release of official statements and the release of white papers. Therefore, studying political debates in the Canadian Parliament allows us to dissect a more continuous empirical data set and better represent the fluctuations in attention paid to Canadian Arctic sovereignty in parliament. Finally, our study promotes the NPF approach through a narrative case study that is not based in the United States and builds on new methodological propositions to diversify its analysis.

Using an NPF approach brings forward the importance of developing alternate ways to study the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative between official strategic documents, announcements, and statements made by government

officials. Therefore, this paper focuses on debates that took place in the House of Commons from the 37th Parliament (29 January 2001–23 May 2004) to the 44th Parliament (22 November 2021–28 March 2023), observing MPs' interventions (times when MPs speak during debates in the House of Commons) and narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty in the House. While we are writing this article, the 44th Parliament is ongoing. The 28 March 2023 date reflects where we chose to stop collecting data.

The Canadian Narrative on Arctic Sovereignty

The NPF was developed to highlight the importance of narratives in the policy process (Jones and McBeth, 2010). Because of its relatively new nature, the NPF remains highly flexible and allows for further diversifications of statistical analysis methods (Schlaufer et al., 2022). Fundamentally, the NPF has five core assumptions (Shanahan et al., 2018; Schlaufer et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2023):

Social construction matters in the contextualization of public policy because individuals observe events through different interpretations of the world around them, which, in turn, shapes public policies.

Bounded relativity is intrinsically linked to the social construction assumption because each representation of reality is produced through beliefs, ideologies, strategies, norms, and their context. Nonetheless, while constructed realities may fluctuate over time, policy realities are not haphazard—they are rooted and steered within bounded relativity.

Policy narratives have generalizable structural elements that can be divided into form and content (Jones and McBeth, 2010). Form refers to the structural components that make up a narrative, such as the settings (space, time), the characters (heroes, villains, victims, and others), the plot (actions), and the moral of the story (policy solution). On the other hand, content focuses on structure and substructure: it observes the displays of belief system and strategies of individuals or groups in the policy process.

Policy narratives operate at three levels of analysis: the micro level focuses on the influence of narratives on individuals in the decision-making process; the meso level is centred on how groups shape policy narratives; and the macro level prioritizes narratives enclosed in cultural and institutional contexts.

The *homo narrans* assumption stipulates that individuals tend to instrumentalize narrative to facilitate information processing. In other words, to ease communication and reasoning among individuals, we opt to create stories.

The Canadian government constructed its national identity through foreign policy and international engagement (Turenne Sjolander, 2014). Throughout our defined timeline, we identified three distinct discourses each succeeding Canadian government used to promote Canadian Arctic sovereignty narratives. From the 37th Parliament (29 January 2001–23 May 2004) to the 38th Parliament (4 October 2004–29 November 2005),

the narrative promoted by the Liberal Party of Canada (governing party) was highly influenced by the vision of Lloyd Axworthy (former minister of Foreign Affairs): that the concept of sovereignty was of declining importance. Instead of promoting Canadian Arctic sovereignty, Axworthy focused on collaboration and co-operation with other Arctic countries, non-government actors, and local Indigenous Nations through the Arctic Council (Chapnick, 2012).

From the 39th Parliament (3 April 2006–7 September 2008) to the 41st Parliament (2 June 2011–2 August 2015), the Conservative Party of Canada (governing party) separated itself from the collaborative regional approach preached by Axworthy and placed further emphasis on protecting Canadian Arctic sovereignty. This shift occurred as foreign countries violated Canadian Arctic sovereignty. When Russia dropped an encapsulated flag on the bottom of the Arctic Ocean, it also violated Canadian airspace. This was perceived by the Canadian government and other countries around the world as an aggressive attempt to bolster its claim over part of the Arctic (Chapnick, 2012). Moreover, the Canadian government also adopted a sterner attitude toward the United States regarding the Northwest Passage, creating diplomatic friction between the two allies. Overall, this period's narrative promotes a reconstruction of the importance of security issues in the Canadian Arctic.

From the 42nd Parliament (3 December 2015–18 August 2019) to the 44th Parliament (22 November 2021–28 March 2023), the Liberal Party of Canada (the governing party) promoted a new strategy for the Arctic dubbed Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. In doing so, Canada's government returned to the Axworthy vision of a collaborative and co-operative approach among the Arctic countries, non-governmental actors, and local Indigenous Nations. Moreover, it also dissociated itself from the securitization issues at the forefront of the Harper Conservative government (Dean, 2022).

Succeeding governing parties perceived Canadian Arctic sovereignty issues through different beliefs, norms, ideas, strategies, or even contexts, which were reflected in their narratives emerging from parliamentary debates. While the Liberal Party of Canada promotes a narrative based on collaboration and co-operation, the Conservative Party of Canada reorients the narrative toward securitization and rejects the narrative advocating for more collaboration and co-operation with non-Canadian entities. Those observations highlight two specific theoretical anchors in public policy analysis. First, cognitive models stipulate that political actors promote their ideas or beliefs through public issue discussions to gain oversight on the political agenda—that is, on the ensemble of issues up for debate and decision making at a specific moment—and to make their self-interest converge into public policy (Weible, 2014). In that context, narratives have a powerful impact on framing the political agenda (Shanahan et al., 2011a, 2011b). Second, functional theory—which addresses the pursuit of social consensus, order, and stability within society—specifies

that a change of government actors induces alterations in the policy context but might also instigate a reorganization of issues' priority. Although political alternation (the change of governing power between political parties) reconfigures preferences based on values and beliefs, a crisis can also be a catalyst that modifies political agendas by creating new windows of opportunity to push forward issues or policy changes (Howlett et al., 2014). Political parties have defined preferences; we can assess that "... these belief and value orientations are not generated spontaneously, but, rather, that people are more or less stable in their orientations towards values (e.g., equality, liberty, security)" (Shanahan et al., 2018:336).

As mentioned, narratives can be separated into two main components: form and content (Jones and McBeth, 2010). Although both aspects are essential when analyzing a specific policy, this article focuses solely on the content of the policy narratives over time. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that political debates in the Canadian Parliament offer continuous empirical data reflecting the positioning of each political party on Canadian Arctic sovereignty issues.

Following the Westminster tradition, the Hansard are verbatim transcription of the debates (or proceedings) of Canada's House of Commons. According to the NPF assumptions, research based on Hansard would operate best at the meso level of analysis, since Hansard illustrates how groups (political parties) construct their policy narratives and impact the policy process. Among all Canadian government publications, Hansard holds a singular place in terms of public debate and participatory democracy. It allows citizens to observe discussions on public issues and permits monitoring of MPs' values, beliefs, and ideas directly, in contrast to how the public is often informed of such things: through the press and political science research (Strøm, 1997).

Scientific papers using Hansard are rather eclectic. While some try to demonstrate MPs' influence in the policy-making process through their interventions during the debates (Strøm, 1997; Soroka et al., 2009; Blidook, 2010; Blidook and Kerby, 2011), others focus on the convergence of priorities on policy issues between MPs and public opinion (Soroka and Wlezien, 2004; Penner et al., 2006). Furthermore, some researchers concentrate their attention on the lexicon used by MPs when referring to specific thematics or bills (Philips and McDougall, 2007; Yu et al., 2008; Verbora, 2012; Dominique-Legault, 2013; Kronick and Rousseau, 2015; Savard, 2016; Beelen et al., 2017). Others prefer to closely examine the lexicon used by MPs during debates (Bara et al., 2007; Hillard et al., 2008; Naderi and Hirst, 2015; Duthie and Reed, 2016; Rheault et al., 2016; Whyte, 2017). Ultimately, we also observed digital initiatives such as the Linked Parliamentary Data Project or LiPaD (Beelen et al., 2017). However, no research has yet used the NPF with Hansard, although Canadian parliamentary committee hearings have been analyzed with the NPF (Williams and Kuzma, 2022).

Finally, NPF is concerned with how individuals process information, communicate it, and reflect upon it: "The *homo narrans* model is best understood as an evolving psychological model of the individual that acknowledges and tests the primacy of affect and narration in human decision making and cognitive processes" (McBeth et al., 2014:230). Even though NPF constructs its *homo narrans* model based on ten assumptions, we will focus our attention on the primacy of groups and networks and the narrative cognition elements (McBeth et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2023). The primacy of groups and networks postulates that individuals do not process information independently but construct their points of view based on the opinions of people they associate with. Narrative cognition implies that individuals have cognitive difficulties remembering information and so ease comprehension by creating or remembering stories.

We do not expect to decipher new policy orientations by using the NPF lens, but rather to confirm that Hansard reflects policy narratives and could be utilized as a continuous empirical dataset that reflects Canadian Arctic sovereignty issues. Moreover, our approach also allows us to examine the non-governing parties' values, beliefs, and ideas on the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative. Therefore, our paper raises two questions: (1) Does the MPs' narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty during debates match their policy orientations according to their party affiliations? We hypothesize that they do. (2) While we can assume that MPs share beliefs and priorities surrounding the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative based on party affiliation, are those differences significant during debates? We postulate that MPs' narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty tend to deviate from their core beliefs (rooted in bounded relativity) and priorities while focusing on conjunctural events and that they revert to their ideological preferences over extended periods.

METHOD

For a broader picture of the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative, we gathered Hansard records from the 37th Parliament to the 44th Parliament (roughly, from 2001 to 2023). As we write this article, the 44th Parliament is still ongoing. Therefore, the end date in 2023 reflects where we chose to stop collecting data. By spanning our analysis over more than 20 years of debates, we can observe the prominence of the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative across multiple governments and within political parties. This extensive period is significant, as it allows us to identify potential friction points in the policy-making process and potentially uncover long-term trends and patterns.

Our dataset was extracted using a custom-made code that allowed us to download our corpus directly from the House of Commons website; we used the "Discussed Topic" feature and selected interventions that were tagged

as tackling the topic of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Although multiple corpora are openly offered on the House of Commons of Canada website—namely the parliamentary journals, parliamentary committees, and Board of International Economy (BOIE)—we focused on Hansard, considering the importance of public debates in participatory democracy. While committees play a crucial role in the public policy process by allowing civil society to engage with decision makers in a neutral environment, they do not fit the scope of this paper: we focused solely on MPs' narratives. Journals only record decisions and other transactions of the House of Commons and the BOIE is a non-partisan decision board that records the expenditures of the House of Commons. Therefore, neither of these corpora relate to the studied subject.

As part of our data-cleaning process, we removed interventions made by members of Parliament associated with Independents and with the Progressive Conservative caucus, since that party ceased to exist in 2003. These interventions, which represented less than 1% of our corpus, were removed to maintain the focus on the main political parties in the House of Commons: the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party of Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada, and the New Democratic Party (NDP). We also removed Anthony Rota's intervention, which occurred on 11 April 2020, because it was an enumeration of questions (Question No. 260–368), and only one was directed toward our topic. This data-cleaning process ensured the integrity and validity of our findings over more than 20 years. Our finalized corpus comprised 424 interventions on Canadian Arctic sovereignty, as illustrated in Table 1. It is also worth noting that interventions made in French were translated into English by House of Commons staff members and are included in our final tally.

Based on the NPF methodological approach, our research anchors itself in quantitative textual analysis techniques relative to content analysis (McBeth et al., 2005). While most empirical papers using the NPF feature statistical analysis based on chi-squared distribution, regression models, or network analysis (Shanahan et al., 2018), we opted for a different approach. We created a thematic dictionary based on literature knowledge and a manual reading of a randomized sample of MPs' interventions (Crow and Wolton, 2020; Wolton et al., 2022). Our dictionary has four themes and a list of 214 words that reflect the beliefs and priorities of the policy frameworks on Canadian Arctic sovereignty previously observed in official documents, announcements, statements, and white papers. They include: environment and climate (39), military and security (92), Indigenous Peoples (58), and economy and resources (25). While we acknowledge a clear imbalance between the number of words in the military and security theme compared to the other themes, the military and security theme was predominant in the MPs' interventions. Moreover, we didn't thoroughly lemmatize the list, which would reduce our dictionary's total number of words. Furthermore, we recognize that our dictionary

is non-exhaustive, and that the choice of words included in each of our four themes was partially subjective. Appendix Table A1 provides a complete list of the words used in our thematic dictionary and a link to our dataset and code.

We performed a principal component analysis, or PCA (Dray and Dufour, 2007; Kassambara and Mundt, 2020) followed by a pairwise t-test coupled with an effect-size measurement using Cohen's *d* (Kassambara, 2023) on the lexicon of unique MPs. We only showcase statistically significant differences in our results to reduce our use of tables. Combining these methods allows us to pinpoint, as a part of the narrative, divergences in the lexicon among the political parties and quantify those differences. Moreover, to standardize our results across MPs, we transformed our data to obtain a ratio using this formula:

$$\frac{\text{number of words per theme}}{\text{total number of words}} \times 100$$

Our demonstration is twofold. First, we analyzed MPs' interventions on Canadian Arctic sovereignty between the 37th and 44th Parliament to pinpoint each political party's relative narrative position according to its determined set of values, beliefs, and ideas. Second, we analyzed MPs' interventions on Canadian Arctic sovereignty between three distinctive periods based on the governing party to observe changes in lexicon, values, beliefs, and ideas displayed in the narrative of each political party based on conjunctural events. Finally, a single person did all the data manipulations and coding as we proceeded with an automated approach. For more information on the general rules applied, the code book is in Appendix B along with a link to the R code and the dataset used in this paper.

RESULTS

Canadian Arctic Sovereignty Narratives in Hansard (37th–44th Parliaments)

Figure 1 depicts the relative positioning of the 157 unique MPs who intervened during debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty according to our thematic dictionary. The proximity in the placement of MPs on the factorial map indicates similar usage in the lexicon during the debates. Based on the primacy of groups and networks postulated in the NPF, we expected to observe proximity between MPs of similar political affiliations because they model their narratives according to beliefs, values, and norms defined in official documents published by their respective political party. Moreover, this postulate should be strengthened through party discipline in the Canadian political landscape. Indeed, MPs are expected to vote according to their respective political party positions, but also to remain coherent with their political party narratives during the debates (Flavelle and Kaye, 1986; Lecomte, 2018). Even though MPs' interventions related to Arctic sovereignty

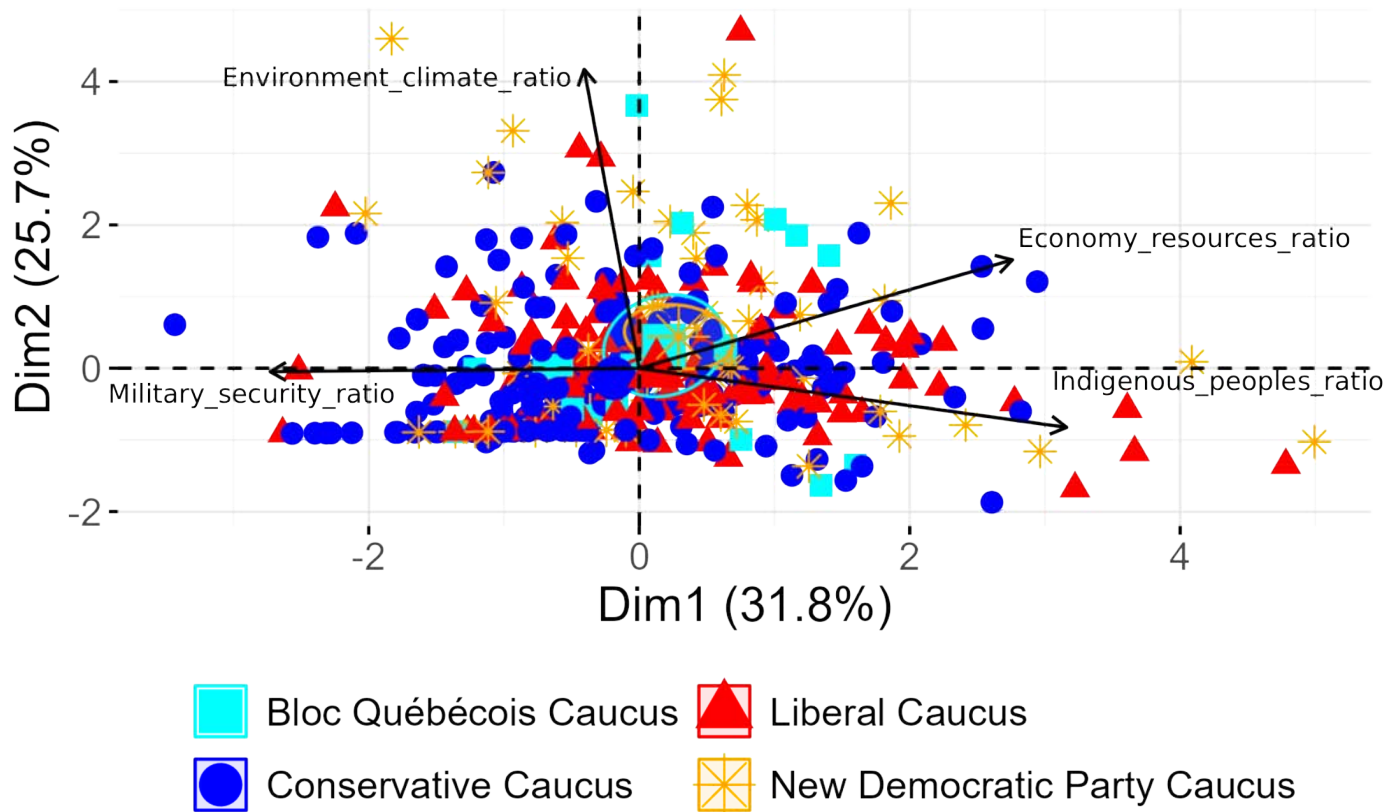


FIG. 1. Thematic analysis of MPs' interventions (37th – 44th Parliament).

are concentrated in sporadic and conjunctural events, party discipline is respected.

Most Conservative MPs focused their interventions on military and security issues. Another smaller cluster of Conservative MPs seemed to construct the narrative of their interventions around the themes of Indigenous Peoples and economy and resources. The presence of Conservative MPs intervening during the debates using a lexicon referencing environment and climate was scattered. Those results coincide with the beliefs, values, and norms published in official Conservative documents and policy frameworks on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Indeed, the clustering of Conservative MPs on the theme of military and security corresponds to the narrative of securitization depicted in the Northern Strategy.

The interventions of the Liberal MPs are less clustered on specific themes than that of their Conservative counterparts. Nonetheless, we can perceive small clusters of interventions emerging on the following themes: Indigenous Peoples, economy and resources, and environment and climate. While some Liberal MPs used a lexicon closer to the military and security theme, it doesn't seem to dominate the Liberal narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty during the debates. This aligns with official Liberal documents and policy frameworks on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. In concordance with the Liberal narrative focusing on collaboration and cooperation, the Liberal MPs' narrative during the debates is less concerned with the securitization issues and more on the Indigenous

Peoples, economy and resources, and environment and climate themes since they are more aligned with their beliefs, values, and norms.

We can see a significant scattering among the Bloc Québécois and the NDP MPs. While their narratives are not as cleanly defined as those of Conservative and Liberal MPs, Bloc Québécois and NDP MPs gravitate toward the theme of environment and climate. Although their interventions are scarce on Canadian Arctic sovereignty, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP published official documents discussing environmental issues. The narrative proposed in those documents refers to the predominant beliefs, values, and norms concerning social and environmental sustainability, awareness, and protection. Moreover, two elements can explain this scarcity of interventions by the Bloc Québécois and NDP MPs. On the one hand, they have fewer elected MPs, which translates to less time to speak during debates. Therefore, they might elect to intervene on issues more important to their core beliefs, values, and norms than Canadian Arctic sovereignty (see Table 1). On the other hand, the Bloc Québécois is a sovereigntist political party that aims to promote Québec's independence at the federal level. Therefore, it has little interest in Canadian sovereignty issues—except in 2009, when the Harper government published a new Northern Strategy.

So far, our approach has allowed us to observe MPs' values, beliefs, and norms according to their political affiliation through our thematic dictionary. However, such an approach does not specify if there is a statistically

TABLE 1. Number of interventions per parliament and session.

Parliament Session	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus	New Democratic Party Caucus	Total
37th 1st (29 January 2001 – 16 September 2002)	1	1	8	1	11
37th 2nd (30 September 2002 – 12 November 2003)	1	3	4	5	13
37th 3rd (02 February 2004 – 23 May 2004)	1	6	7	0	14
38th 1st (04 October 2004 – 29 November 2005)	1	6	10	0	17
39th 1st (03 April 2006 – 14 September 2007)	1	21	15	13	50
39th 2nd (16 October 2007 – 07 September 2008)	2	18	10	4	34
40th 1st (18 November 2008 – 04 December 2008)	0	10	1	1	12
40th 2nd (26 January 2009 – 30 December 2009)	12	36	22	21	91
40th 3rd (03 March 2010 – 26 March 2011)	2	14	6	2	24
41st 1st (02 June 2011 – 13 September 2013)	0	12	1	5	18
41st 2nd (16 October 2013 – 02 August 2015)	0	13	0	2	15
42nd 1st (03 December 2015 – 18 August 2019)	0	11	16	0	27
43rd 1st (05 December 2019 – 18 August 2020)	0	7	6	0	13
43rd 2nd (23 September 2020 – 15 August 2021)	0	2	1	0	3
44th 1st (22 November 2021 – ...)	0	47	28	7	82
Total	21 (4.95 %)	207 (48.82 %)	135 (31.84 %)	61 (14.39 %)	424

significant difference in the narrative of the MPs of the different political parties for each theme represented in our thematic dictionary. To rectify this situation, we conducted a pairwise t-test for each of our four themes and used Cohen's d to qualify the effect size on the differences we observed in the debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. In other words, performing a pairwise t-test allowed us to determine the existence of a statistically significant difference between the means of each of our four themes for all the possible combinations of political parties. As for the Cohen's d interpretation, the effect size characterizes the difference between the means of two political parties. We used the commonly accepted thresholds for Cohen's d: anything under a value of 0.2 was considered a trivial difference of means, values ranging from 0.2 to 0.5 were seen as a small difference of means, values between 0.5 to 0.8 were deemed of moderate difference of means, and

anything higher than 0.8 was taken as a large difference of means. We applied the same process to each distinctive period we analyzed.

Throughout our entire period, we identified statistically significant differences between the lexicon used by the Conservative and NPD MPs on the theme of environment and climate (Table 2), with a moderate effect, and the theme of military and security (Table 3), with a small effect. Our results indicate that NPD MPs are more prone to refer to an environmental lexicon than Conservative MPs during debates relating to Canadian Arctic sovereignty issues. This aligns with the NDP's core values of promoting the importance of environmental problems in the Arctic region. In a supplemental opinion from a committee report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, the NDP advocates that climate change represents the primordial threat to Arctic security:

TABLE 2. Pairwise t-test (environment and climate), first session of the 37th Parliament to the first session of the 44th Parliament (29 January 2001 to 28 March 2023).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.06	—	—
Liberal Caucus	0.14	0.30	—
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.70	0.00 (moderate)	0.02 (small)

TABLE 3. Pairwise t-test (military and security), first session of the 37th Parliament to the first session of the 44th Parliament (29 January 2001 to 28 March 2023).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.07	—	—
Liberal Caucus	0.40	0.16	—
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.65	0.00 (small)	0.10

The testimony heard at committee was rooted in the context of this increased activity caused by climate change, which is why the New Democratic Party is profoundly disappointed with the report's lack of climate policy. The New Democratic Party tried to push for the consideration of climate change as the existential threat to Arctic security, but unfortunately, the committee was opposed.

House of Commons, 2023:108

The Conservative MPs' narratives on the military and security (Table 3) theme proportionally contain more words related to securitization than the NDP MPs' narratives, with a small effect. Once again, this aligns with the emphasis on core values, beliefs, and norms promoted by the Conservatives through official documents and policy framework as they recentred the narrative of Canadian Arctic sovereignty during the Harper era on the importance of securitization and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples (Rangers). This is illustrated by interventions such as that of former national defense minister, Peter MacKay:

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces, including the air force, are preparing to exercise Canadian sovereignty in northern Operation Nunavut. The operation will highlight the unique capabilities of the Canadian Rangers, their ability to respond in the most remote areas of the north. The Rangers are an integral part of our Arctic policy, where we are increasing their numbers to a total of 5000. Our government has just announced the construction of two new satellite ground stations to enhance our surveillance and security there. Through investments under the Canada first defence strategy, we will acquire ships, a training centre in Resolute Bay, and a new deepwater facility in Nanisivik. Our government is leading and addressing the challenges and opportunities.

MacKay, 2009

Moreover, we also found statistically significant differences in the lexicon used by Liberal and NDP MPs on the theme of environment and climate (Table 2), with a small effect. Our results indicate that NDP MPs proportionally used a richer lexicon based on words associated with our this theme than their Liberal counterparts. While we have already showcased the primacy of environmental issues in the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative for NDP MPs, we must consider the two factors that explain this observation. First, the NDP leans further left on the political spectrum than the centre/centre-left Liberals. Consequently, the Liberal narrative tends to tackle issues in a generalized form, since their core beliefs, values, and norms are formulated to reach a broader population to get elected and form the government. However, the NDP narrative concentrates on more precise core beliefs, values, and norms while targeting a narrower population. Second, the NDP was never the governing party, so it had no occasion to publish a policy framework with a more holistic approach to Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Therefore, the NDP can focus its narrative on specific areas within policies.

Additionally, we observed statistically significant differences in the lexicon used by Liberal and Conservative MPs on the theme of Indigenous Peoples (Table 4), with a small effect. Our results indicate that Liberal MPs' narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty involved more references to Indigenous Peoples than their Conservative counterparts. While the Conservative narrative includes Indigenous Peoples, it does so mainly through the lens of securitization. As for the Liberal narrative, it extends beyond the aspect of securitization and includes environmental and economic issues. This can be perceived in an intervention by Liberal MP Robert Oliphant, citing Mary Simon as a display of narrative cognition:

National Inuit leader Mary Simon recently commented, "Ultimately, sovereignty begins at home. Sovereignty is apparent and implemented with healthy communities, not just military hardware. It involves establishing constructive

TABLE 4. Pairwise t-test (Indigenous Peoples), first session of the 37th Parliament to the first session of the 44th Parliament (29 January 2001 to 28 March 2023).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.28	—	—
Liberal Caucus	0.93	0.03 (small)	—
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.84	0.07	0.68

partnerships with Inuit. Canada's position cannot be detached from full appreciation and respect for the rights, interests, and priorities of Inuit.

Oliphant, 2009:34

Our analysis of Canadian Arctic sovereignty narratives in Hansard from the 37th to the 44th Parliament showed that MPs gravitated toward the narrative depicted in official publications and policy frameworks. Therefore, our findings align with the primacy of groups and networks and the narrative cognition postulates from the NPF. Moreover, through our thematic dictionary, we determined whether statistically significant differences existed in the lexicon used to construct the narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Our results indicate the existence of some small to moderate statistically significant differences between the lexicon used by the MPs during the debates on specific themes and their political affiliations. Based on those results, we can confirm our first hypothesis: MPs' narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty align with their political party's policy orientations. Nonetheless, while they resemble official documents and policy frameworks of their own party, the lexicon they use to construct their narrative does not always convey statistically significant differences with other political affiliations. This means either that there is an overlap in beliefs, norms, and values shared across the political parties or that MPs use a commonly shared lexicon while diverging in beliefs, norms, and values in their respective narratives. In the following sections, we try to develop a satisfying explanation for this ambiguity.

Canadian Arctic Sovereignty Narratives in Hansard (37th – 38th Parliament)

As illustrated in Figure 2, our thematic dictionary allows us to observe the narrative positioning of 30 unique MPs discussing Canadian Arctic sovereignty during the debates. Our findings suggest the themes of environment and climate and economy and resources overlap in MPs' narratives throughout their interventions during that period. Moreover, our results indicate that MPs' narratives rarely included other themes when their interventions concerned Indigenous Peoples or military and security.

Liberal MPs tended to mainly articulate their narrative on the themes of environment and climate, economy and resources, and Indigenous Peoples. This concurs with Axworthy's approach to collaboration and co-operation. Conservative MPs favoured the themes of military and security and Indigenous Peoples. As we will demonstrate,

these results align with the significance of securitization as a core belief of the Conservative caucus.

Furthermore, we can decipher a narrative proximity between the MPs following their party association. Those observations support the importance of groups and networks postulated by the NPF, since MPs construct their narratives under political affiliations with predetermined values, beliefs, norms, and ideas. Consequently, MPs are not developing and processing their own perspective on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Instead, they construct their narratives based on their political affiliation's values, norms, and beliefs, which are then strengthened by party discipline. This is combined with narrative cognition through the retelling of stories to help assimilate information. This intervention made by Liberal MP Karen Kraft Sloan, for example, exemplifies Axworthy's approach to Canadian Arctic sovereignty:

Canada is a northern nation. The huge expanse of the Arctic which makes up 50 percent of our country's land mass is an integral part of our national identity and a strategic component of our country's future. Being a northern nation carries distinct responsibilities. These include respecting and responding to the needs of northerners, preserving northern ecosystems, safeguarding our sovereignty and taking leadership in circumpolar activities, particularly in areas of northern science and social development.

Kraft Sloan, 2004

This intervention reflects the Arctic region's importance in constructing the Canadian national identity through its foreign policies at the national and international levels. Moreover, it promotes a narrative emphasizing the importance of co-operation and collaboration with other Arctic governments and Indigenous Peoples, while pushing for the Canadian government to assume a leadership role. The reference to preserving ecosystems in the Arctic region is another element closely linked to the Liberal narrative's previously identified values.

During this parliamentary period, we found statistically significant differences between the lexicon used by the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals on the theme of environment and climate (Table 5) with a large effect, and the theme of Indigenous Peoples (Table 6), with a large effect. In both cases, the Liberal MPs used proportionally more words relating to the environment and climate and Indigenous Peoples themes than the Bloc Québécois MPs when talking

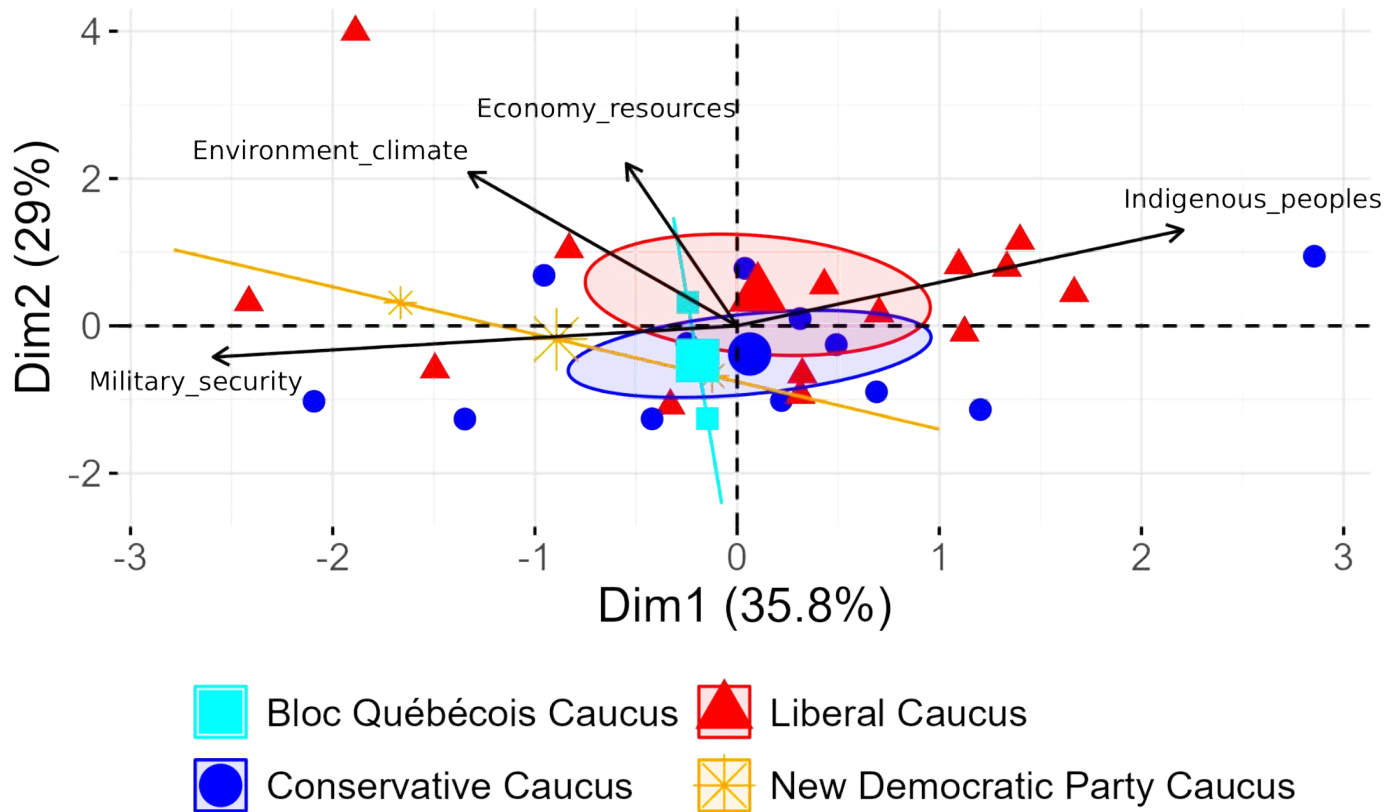


FIG. 2. Thematic analysis of MPs' interventions (37th – 38th Parliament).

TABLE 5. Pairwise t-test (Environment and Climate), first session of the 37th Parliament to the first session of the 38th Parliament (29 January 2001 to 29 November 2005).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.06	–	–
Liberal Caucus	0.05 (large)	0.32	–
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.59	0.73	0.93

about Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Moreover, we found lexicon differences on the theme of Indigenous Peoples (Table 6) between the Liberal MPs and the NDP MPs, with a large effect. Again, the Liberal MPs used a lexicon that included proportionally more Indigenous Peoples–related words than the NDP MPs did during the debates.

Canadian Arctic Sovereignty Narratives in Hansard (39th – 41st Parliament)

As depicted in Figure 3, our thematic dictionary allows us to observe the narrative positioning of 94 unique MPs discussing Canadian Arctic sovereignty during the debates. Compared to the previous period, our results show less correlation between our defined theme (the arrows in the PCA are further apart). This indicates that MPs' narratives focused on a specific theme instead of mixing multiple themes during their interventions in the debates. Therefore, the linkage between the themes observed during that period was not as strong.

The newly elected Conservative Party of Canada separated itself from the co-operative and collaborative regional approach narrative defended by Axworthy and the Liberals. Instead, they promoted another narrative, through the Northern Strategy, which was based on the importance of securitization and helping Indigenous Peoples. Harper's Conservative narrative also rekindled the debate with the United States on the Northwest Passage through Bill C-3, *An Act to amend the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act*, Motion 387 *That, in the opinion of the House, as the various waterways known as the 'Northwest Passage' are historic internal waters of Canada, the government should endeavour to refer to these waters as the 'Canadian Northwest Passage,'* and Canada's Northern Strategy. Compared to the previous period, this was a critical government narrative shift in values, beliefs, and norms in both national and foreign policy.

Based on our results, we observe two distinct Conservative MP clusters: one surrounding the military and security theme, the other on the Indigenous Peoples

TABLE 6. Pairwise t-test (Indigenous Peoples), first session of the 37th Parliament to the first session of the 38th Parliament (29 January 2001 to 29 November 2005).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.07	–	–
Liberal Caucus	0.00 (large)	0.35	–
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.86	0.08	0.00 (large)

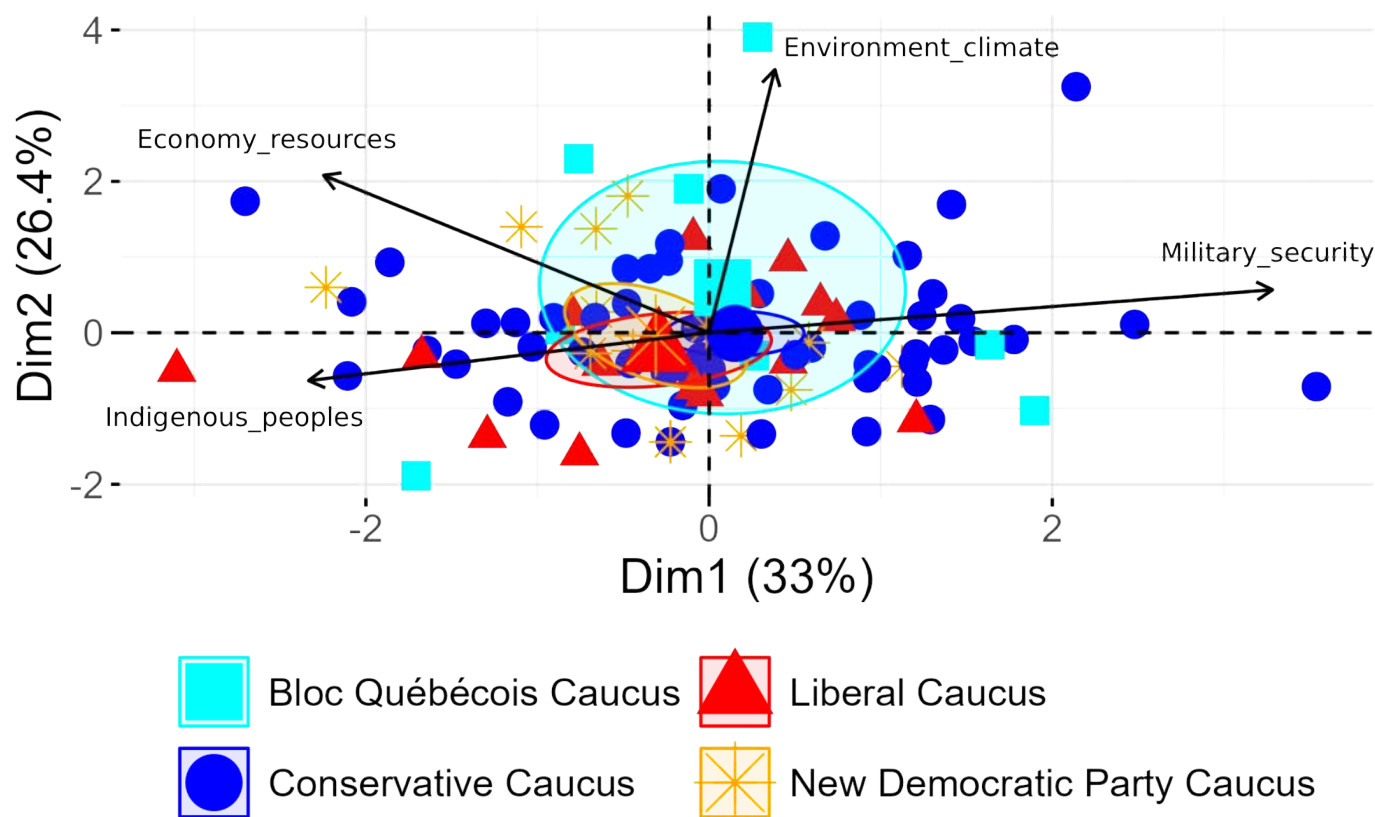


FIG. 3. Thematic analysis of MPs' interventions (39th – 41st Parliament).

theme. Indeed, Conservative MPs seemingly follow a predefined narrative based on the values, beliefs, norms, and ideas developed in their party's platforms and official documents—their narrative is strongly coherent. In comparison, the drastic narrative shift in policies and the lack of predefined positioning regarding the Arctic region determined by their respective political affiliations seem to have left the opposition parties disoriented. As the Conservative narrative strayed further from the known guidelines of the Axworthy approach, the opposition party MPs had no clear guidance on their own stand. This contrasts with the primacy of groups and networks postulates, in which individuals are forced to process information independently without a straightforward predefined narrative based on party values, beliefs, and norms. However, it aligns with functional theory, since the change from a Liberal to a Conservative government created a drastic change in policy on the Arctic region and reoriented the issues from collaboration and co-operation toward securitization.

Fumbling to establish a new narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty, opposition party MPs focused the debates on broken promises made by the Conservatives during elections, such as getting three icebreakers and establishing a deepwater port, which were nowhere to be found in the budget. Moreover, the narrative was essentially blame-shifting on the issues of border security and defence strategy. Compared to the previous period, we can observe a change in the narrative of Liberal MPs through their lexicon usage. It was now centred on the theme of Indigenous Peoples in contrast to the more encompassing narrative of the previous period. A similar narrative shift can be observed in the interventions of NDP MPs: they redirected their narrative from an environmental perspective to a lexicon favouring the theme of economy and resources.

These observations allowed us to determine that the election of the Conservatives was a key moment in the narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. The change from a co-operative and collaborative approach to a

TABLE 7. Pairwise t-test (military and security), first session of the 39th Parliament to the second session of the 41st Parliament (3 April 2006 to 2 August 2015).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.64	—	—
Liberal Caucus	0.34	0.01 (moderate)	—
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.24	0.00 (moderate)	0.63

TABLE 8. Pairwise t-test (economy and resources) first session of the 39th Parliament to the second session of the 41st Parliament (3 April 2006 to 2 August 2015).

	Bloc Québécois Caucus	Conservative Caucus	Liberal Caucus
Conservative Caucus	0.88	—	—
Liberal Caucus	0.37	0.04 (small)	—
New Democratic Party Caucus	0.96	0.77	0.24

securitization approach shook the pillars of narrative stability, strength, and cohesion within the Liberal and NDP parties. As this policy shift happened, both narratives presented signs of instability: “Thus stability and instability may prove to be strong indicators of whether or not a coalition or group is engaging in strategy or if the stories it emits are reliable indicators of the group’s beliefs” (Shanahan et al., 2011a:547). The strength of the official narrative also wavered as more Liberal and NDP MPs discussed securitization issues during the debates. As for the cohesion within those political parties, we observed a fragmentation in the distribution of the narratives delivered during the debates. Furthermore, looking at the overlap of the mean circle in Figure 3, we conclude that Liberal and NDP MPs tackled similar issues during the debates, which implies they share beliefs on the issue of Canadian Arctic sovereignty.

In this period, we also found statistically significant differences between the lexicons used by the Conservatives and Liberals on the theme of military and security (Table 7), with a moderate effect, and the theme of economy and resources (Table 8), with a small effect. In both instances, Conservative MPs used proportionally more words centred on military and security and economy and resources than Liberal MPs during the debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Additionally, we observed statistically significant differences between Conservative and NDP MPs on the military and security (Table 7) theme, with a moderate effect. Consistently, our results indicated that Conservative MPs used more words related to military and security than NDP MPs during their interventions in the debates.

Canadian Arctic Sovereignty Narratives in Hansard (42nd – 44th Parliament)

Figure 4 allows us to visualize the narrative positioning of the 46 unique MPs debating Canadian Arctic sovereignty during this period, based on our thematic dictionary. At first glance, it appears the narrative is reorganized compared to the previous period. Indeed, there is now a

correlation between the themes of military and security and environment and climate change. Moreover, we can also observe a strengthening relative to the correlation between the themes of economy and resources and Indigenous Peoples.

The Liberals’ return to the governing party of Canada also marks a shift in policy regarding Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Their Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF) replaced the Northern Strategy deployed under Harper’s Conservative government. These observable changes are consistent with cognitive models and functional theory, since the Liberals’ narrative reframes and reorganizes the political agenda based on their beliefs, values, and norms. Again, the ANPF drew inspiration from Axworthy’s vision and recentred the narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty toward collaboration and co-operation instead of securitization.

We can discern that Conservative MPs still gravitated toward the military and security theme. This was constant throughout our observations, meaning Conservative MPs’ narrative about Canadian Arctic sovereignty did not waver over time and remained constant concerning securitization issues. The Liberal MPs’ narrative remains anchored to the importance of collaboration and co-operation within the Indigenous Peoples theme but also incorporates a strong linkage with the economy and resources theme. Their narrative evolved slightly to include the social and economic development of Northerners. Moreover, NDP MPs’ narrative changed slightly to include more of the lexicon of the Indigenous Peoples theme while maintaining a strong focus on the economy and resources theme. This somewhat contradicts the NDP stance developed in their official documents and publications on the importance of environmental issues and the threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Therefore, the primacy of groups and networks effect seems weaker within the NDP than in other political affiliations. Another explanation could be related to narrative cognition. As stories on Canadian Arctic sovereignty evolve into complex or undefined narratives, it becomes harder for NDP MPs to position themselves on the issue. Indeed, there seems to be a disconnect between the

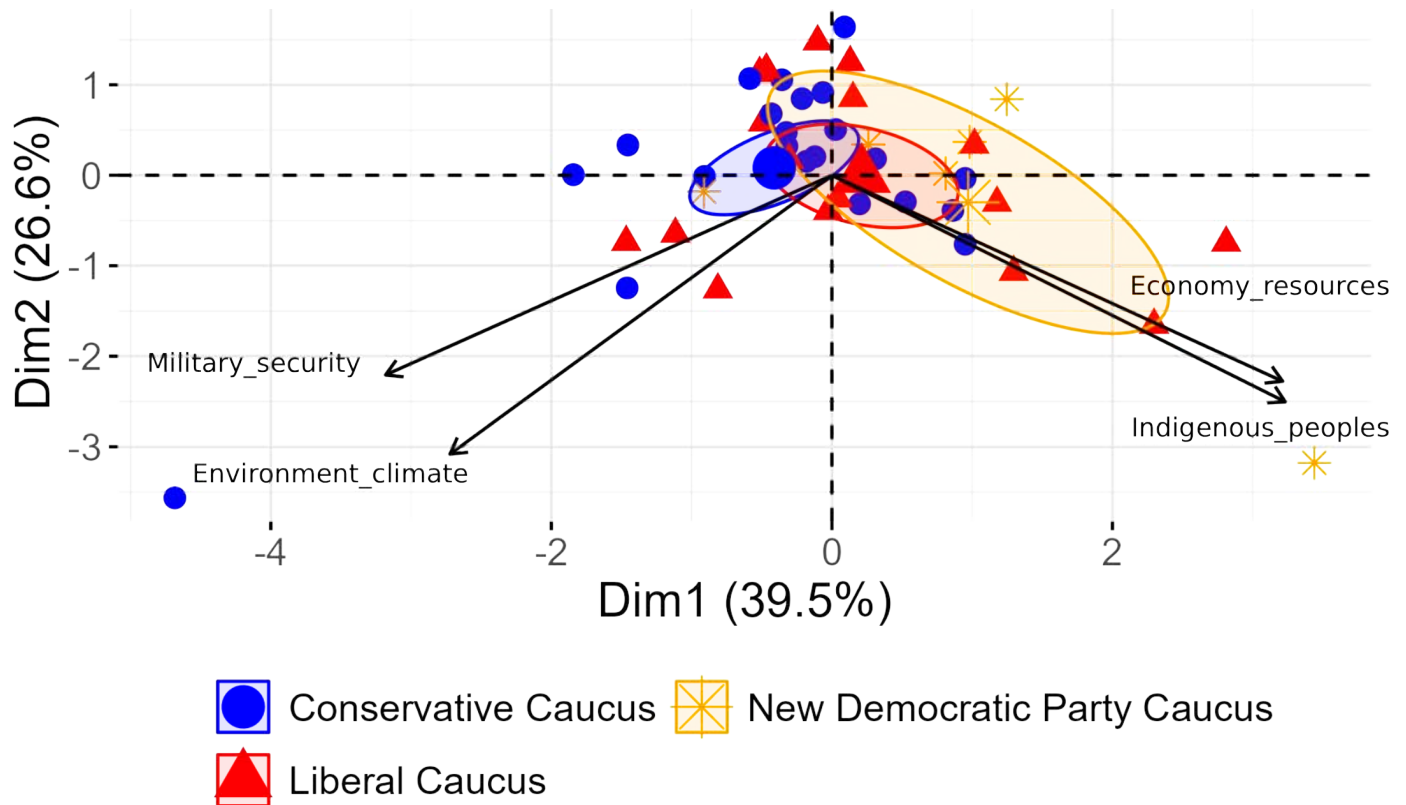


FIG. 4. Thematic analysis of MPs' interventions (42nd – 44th Parliament).

party's official stance and the MPs' positions on the issue. To ease their members' comprehension and retention of the official narrative, the NDP should probably reframe or simplify their narrative to improve MPs' cohesion during the debates.

In contrast with the other periods we observed, we found no statistically significant differences in any of the themes during this one. Nonetheless, we observed that securitization questions were still relevant to the narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Those interventions were mainly based on two events.

First, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo refused to recognize Canada's Arctic sovereignty over the Arctic waters, going as far as referring to Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage as being illegitimate. This comment made by Pompeo led to further debates when Prime Minister Trudeau omitted to rectify Canada's sovereignty status in Arctic waters while meeting with United States officials, as demonstrated by Erin O'Toole's intervention:

Mr. Speaker, in his meeting with the U.S. vice-president, the Prime Minister did not raise Canada's Arctic sovereignty despite the fact that two weeks ago, Secretary of State Pompeo questioned our sovereignty in the Arctic. At a time when Russia and China are showing ambitions there, the Prime Minister is failing our north. We know they signed away our sovereignty in the

trade deal. Why are they not standing up for it in our Arctic?

O'Toole, 2019

This intervention illustrates the sterner attitude of the Conservative narrative, as their members opted to antagonize their American ally over a question on which both countries had agreed to disagree in previous discussions. It also showcases the more supple viewpoint of Liberals and NPD MPs, as they chose not to intervene in response to Pompeo's comment. Either they didn't care about the former United States Secretary of State's remark, which would be surprising considering their stance on Motion 387, or they chose to forgo antagonizing their American ally because collaboration and co-operation in the region was paramount in their narrative.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was the second event that led to an increase in defence and security concerns. Most of the interventions were targeted toward increasing Canada's military budget. On the one hand, as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Canada is expected to contribute 2% of its gross domestic product to national defence. However, spending has consistently been under that threshold since the 1980s. On the other hand, while some announcements were made about the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), notably about the North Warning System, some MPs advocated for the modernization of Canada's role in NORAD because they saw the looming threat of Russia

in the Arctic region. These elements can be observed in interventions, such as this one by Conservative MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay:

What will Canada do when Russia turns its sights even further onto our Arctic and puts its 40 polar icebreakers against our one? Russia is aware that Canada has let its northern warning systems lapse, and NORAD modernization has to be elevated to urgent status, with the funds necessary to combat and detect modern warfare tactics and equipment. Canada has chronically underfunded NATO, something that should be corrected immediately. We are well below the 2 percent commitment made years ago and repeated currently.

Findlay, 2022

While primarily instigated by Conservative MPs, these concerns resonated with the Liberals' narrative. Indeed, the (Justin) Trudeau administration vowed to review Canada's defence spending. However, the willingness to increase Canada's military spending arose primarily because of pressure from its NATO allies, not from the Conservatives' securitization narrative. Since the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, insecurity has loomed larger on the world stage and NATO allies have increased their military spending. Therefore, the Liberals' narrative is being reflected in the distinct values of collaboration and co-operation with its strategic allies.

DISCUSSION

We established that the primacy of groups and networks and the narrative cognition postulates from the NPF concur with the narrative of Conservative MPs. We perceived some inconsistencies in Liberal MPs' narratives, mainly between the 39th and 41st Parliament. As functional theory specifies, the changes induced by the Northern Strategy and the predominance of securitization issues reconfigured the beliefs, values, and norms of the narrative on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. That sudden shift in policy—combined with a wavering leadership and the absence of a straightforward narrative or priorities for the Arctic region—impacted the Liberal MPs' narrative. Additionally, it appears that the narrative deviates between the official documents and publications and the interventions of NDP MPs during the debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. The weakness of their narrative cognition could explain this observation. Indeed, it seems that official NDP documentation could not develop a clear enough narrative that engaged their core beliefs, values, and norms to frame their MPs' perceptions on the issue of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. This would also explain the lack of cohesion in narrative during the debates, since NDP MPs seem to process information independently instead of resonating with the party's official stance.

While we observe that MPs share different beliefs and priorities on the Canadian Arctic sovereignty narrative, based on their party affiliation, these differences are not as pronounced as we initially thought. Therefore, we must be cautious and judge our second hypothesis to be only partially validated. MPs' narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty tended to deviate from their core beliefs and priorities while they were focused on conjunctural events; it reverted to their ideological preferences over extended periods. However, even though conjunctural events played a decisive role in the debates' agenda setting and priorities, we observed several other factors that influenced our results: instability due to drastic policy changes, leadership instability, and the absence of a straightforward narrative.

CONCLUSION

Our paper demonstrates that the Canadian Hansard represents a valid source of information on the positioning of each political affiliation regarding the Canadian Arctic sovereignty through the NPF. Indeed, Hansard provides a continuous empirical dataset compared to the relatively sparse and infrequent release of official documents, publications, and other frameworks. Furthermore, through a Canadian-based narrative case study, our research explores the NPF, providing an example outside the typical U.S. political system and building on new methodological propositions.

Our results indicate that according to their political affiliation, MPs lean toward the narrative depicted in official publications and policy frameworks. This aligns with the primacy of groups and networks and the narrative cognition postulates from the NPF. Moreover, we also found some small to moderate statistically significant differences in the lexicon used by MPs during debates on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Likewise, although they align with official documents and policy frameworks, debate speeches made by MPs from the different political parties were worded similarly enough to indicate no statistically significant differences in most cases. This suggests an overlap in the vocabulary used during the debates across the political parties.

Subsequently, our period analysis indicated that the primacy of groups and networks and the narrative cognition postulates from the NPF align with the narrative of Conservative MPs. However, as stipulated within the functional theory, the significant changes brought about by the Northern Strategy reshaped the beliefs, values, and norms within the narrative of Canadian Arctic sovereignty, creating inconsistencies in Liberal and NDP MPs' narratives. Other factors also contributed to those inconsistencies, such as a wavering leadership and the absence of a straightforward narrative or priorities regarding the Arctic region within official documents or publications. Narratives used by MPs during the debates

tend to deviate from the official stance of their political party when they are focused on conjunctural events. Over time or through a reframing of the issue, MPs tend to realign themselves with their political party's position.

Overall, our results indicate that the stances of MPs are much less clear than initially assumed. Indeed, we've demonstrated that the sudden policy shift from co-operation and collaboration to securitization created problems for the pillars of stability, strength, and cohesion in the narratives of Liberals and NDP MPs. While we observed a return to a more co-operative and collaborative approach with Justin Trudeau and his administration, we can also discern a repositioning of beliefs within the narratives of Liberal and NDP MPs. Indeed, with increased conflicts and instability worldwide, securitization gained traction in their narrative. During the debates, MPs have identified Russia and China as potential threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty, which prompted more interventions on the military and security theme. Although this indicates a shift in narrative for Liberal and NDP MPs, it doesn't indicate a willingness to distance themselves from the co-operative and collaborative approach. Rather, it now focuses on including securitization as a core issue in uncertain times.

Moreover, the election of Donald Trump has soured the long-lasting relationship between the United States and Canada. That event has also marked by the retrenchment policies of the United States worldwide, namely potential shifts in its participation in NATO. These events could spark an increase in securitization narratives in Canada. As for Conservative MPs, they remain relatively stable

in their beliefs related to the pillars of stability, strength, and cohesion of their narrative on Canadian Arctic issues. The realignment in narrative from Liberal and NDP MPs explains the absence of statistically significant difference in the military and security theme between the 42nd and 44th Parliaments.

Although this article showcases the pertinence and potential of Hansard as an empirically continuous dataset to follow the discussion on Canadian Arctic sovereignty, we identified some flaws that could be alleviated in subsequent work. On the one hand, while our statistical analysis reflects word usage through the narrative of MPs during the debates, it does not fully convey the nuances of their interventions. An in-depth qualitative analysis would help solve this problem by thoroughly contextualizing their narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. On the other hand, there is some subjectivity in the proposed thematic dictionary. However, it remains flexible and could be appended with new words or themes.

Finally, this article demonstrates that the NPF works with a Canadian-based case study using Hansard. Further research could be conducted relative to the periods we identified by focusing more on the qualitative aspects, for example, to offer a more nuanced interpretation of the MPs' interventions. Additional research could also focus on combining the form and content of narratives. Such an endeavour would define the setting, characters, plot, and moral of the story and join them with the narratives on Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Another perspective could also include committees as part of the dataset.

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