

# **The Barriers to Canadian Electoral System Reform:**

*A Study into the Changing Positions & Motives of Political Elites*



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## **Abstract**

Taking an elite-centred approach, this paper analyses the recent attempted electoral reform initiative in Canada (national level), primarily focusing upon the most influential and powerful political actors throughout this process. In particular, the extent to which individual political elite motivations (both material and ideational) can help explain why reform attempts likely fail, will be of central interest. The theoretical framework, which is used to navigate this research puzzle, consists of the '*barriers model*' by Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), and the related, '*models of electoral system change*,' by Benoit (2004). By building upon '*barriers model*,' in particular, this project seeks to increase academic understanding of the relationship between both material and ideational motivations, how such motivation types might be recognised, and importantly, how both interact in the context of proposed electoral reform. By using an exploratory process tracing methodology, the complex mechanisms associated with both types of political elite motives are examined. Overall, this study seems to confirm majority academic opinion, that material motivations are the key driving incentives behind whether electoral reform is likely to fail or succeed. However, that being noted, evidence from this research paper does, nonetheless, appear to suggest strong ideational incentives for both the removal and retention of the status quo. While the relationship between both motive types is complex, the use of ideational argumentation to mask more salient material motives does appear present throughout.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Traditionally, academic studies into electoral systems have tended to focus upon how differing electoral rules affect governance and general political stability, treating electoral system design as an independent variable (Lijphart, 1994; Tagpeera and Shugart, 1989). However, following several successful major national electoral reforms in the 1990s (i.e., Japan, New Zealand, Israel, and Italy), greater explanation would also be sought in relation to when, why, and how, such institutional changes occur (Rahat, 2008; Rahat and Hazan 2009, 2011; Leyenaar and Hazan 2011; Benoit 2004). As a result, the study of electoral reform outcomes, were thus positioned as the main dependent variable, and would, over time, become an important, and highly relevant field for further academic research. In retrospect, however, notwithstanding notable examples in which reforms have successfully been achieved, this area of study has suffered from few contemporary observable cases of major electoral reform implementation (Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011; Leduc, 2009). Such limitations in case selection have gradually led to an attempted widening of the selection process itself, in which it was sought to include other potentially applicable cases, with a particular interest in seeking ways to further examine failed reform initiatives in greater detail (see Rahat, 2008; Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011; Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011). The work of Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), on the *'barriers model,'* is one such important attempted re-conceptualisation, in which two of the main approaches used in this field, that of rational choice and institutionalism (sociological institutionalist and normative institutionalist), are synthesised.

This mixed, almost all-encompassing type model, which offers an *'elite-centred'* analysis, would allow for a new theoretical approach in identifying the mechanisms which both encourage and impede reform. However, to date, the study of failed electoral reform initiatives remains largely overlooked, and thus fertile ground for further analysis (Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011). As such, by using the *'barriers'* model of Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), in conjunction with the related, *'models of electoral system change,'* by Benoit (2004), the aim of this paper is to greater comprehend the critical role played by key political actors throughout periods of proposed reform, but unlike previous research on electoral reform, the focus of this study, will be directed toward failed reform initiatives. Given the *'barriers'* model of Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011) is a form of *'elite-centred'* analysis, in which most identified barriers either address the interests of elites directly or require the institutional power of elites to be overcome, attention quickly focuses upon the type of motivations which ultimately influence political elite decision making. For example, material driven motivations, which fall under the rational choice approach, or ideational motivations, associated with that of the sociological institutionalist or the normative institutionalist approach. It is important to try to comprehend the type of motivations at play, which ultimately lead to political elites either supporting, or obstructing, the attempted implementation of new electoral systems. The main independent variables which will thus be proposed for this study, are that of political elite material and ideational motivations (a less salient independent variable includes static institutional barriers), with the dependent variable remaining electoral system reform outcome.

Material political elite motivations, which are often described as individual or partisan vested interests, will likely concern motives relating to vote and seat share, and the general influence over law making (Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011; Benoit, 2004). Conversely, ideationally driven political elite motivations, commonly referred to as being value based, or in the general interest, most often concern motives relating to various aspects of representativeness, accountability, societal stability, and electoral simplicity (ibid). While both motivation types will at times be independently examined, the intimate and intertwined relationship between both is of course acknowledged, and thus, careful consideration will be given when attempting to identify, for example, instances in which ideational argumentation is presented, which in large part is likely intended to mask more salient material motivation barriers. Moreover, given the dominant position currently held by the rational choice approach, as offering the most convincing explanation regarding why we might expect electoral reform initiatives to fail, any interesting observations which appear to show strong ideationally driven incentives, equal to, or more powerful than, material motivations, will be of particular academic relevance. In respect to the social relevance of this paper, it is thought that those who are actively engaged in electoral reform campaigns, particularly where the status quo is first-past-the-post (FPTP), will benefit the most. Active reform campaigns of this nature have been most active across North America, particularly on the municipality and state/provincial level, with growing momentum to adopt instant-runoff voting (IRV) in the United States, and various form of proportional representation (PR) in Canada (including national level)

Finally, it is important to re-emphasise that this study is exploratory in nature, taking on both an inductive and deductive form, in conceptualising existing theories across rational choice and institutionalist approaches, not in an attempt to prove causality, but instead, to better understand the mechanisms which likely lead to certain electoral reform outcomes. The niche within the academic literature which is examined by this paper is that of electoral non-reform (failed reform proposal leading to status quo), in which the positions of powerful political actors have shifted over time, in large part initially favouring major electoral reform, but ultimately reversing these proposals due to lack of consensus. Canada (national level) makes for a particularly interesting case study in this regard, given the apparent majority parliamentary support in favour of electoral reform in 2016, only to be reversed the following year by the same party who proposed the initiative (Liberal Party). By expanding the scope of the electoral reform puzzle beyond instances of successful electoral system reform, and instead focusing upon cases where major reform initiatives have failed, following initial high levels of political elite support, it is hoped to further help contribute toward existing theoretical explanations in this field. The central research question for this paper which will thus sought to be answered is as follows:

*“To what extent can material and ideational political elite motivations explain the failure of electoral system reform initiatives?”*

**2.0 Literature Review - Approaches to the Study of Electoral System Reform**

In general, there are three main theoretical approaches which are said to help explain why, when, and how, major electoral system reform initiatives are most likely to succeed, or indeed fail. Namely, the rational choice approach (rational choice institutionalism), the institutional approach, and the comparative historical approach (Rahat, 2008). Importantly, however, it is widely understood that no single approach can satisfactorily explain the determinants of electoral reform (ibid). In recognising this reality, authors such as Rahat and Hazan (2009), have synthesised several approaches, and, in so doing, have attempted to create a comprehensive framework for analysis. This approach, which is associated with the comparative historical categorisation, identifies known impedances to electoral reform, and presents them in the form of so-called ‘barriers,’ which if not satisfactorily overcome, will result in the retention of the status quo. The barriers model of Rahat and Hazan (2009), which is understood as being ‘elite-centred,’ is particularly helpful in allowing for a greater understanding of failed reform initiatives, and indeed instances of non-reform. Given ‘barriers model’ (comparative historical approach) is the chosen approach for this paper, and already includes within it, both the rational choice and institutional approaches, it is sufficient to detail this model alone, rather than isolate and detail each approach separately. The barriers framework, which was built upon the analyses of Rahat (2008), identifies seven so called ‘barriers’ to electoral reform (see Table 1.0 below), four from among the various forms of institutionalism, and three taken from the rational choice approach (Rahat and Hazan, 2009).

Table 1: The Barriers to Electoral Reform in Democracies

The Barrier	➔	The Approach
Procedural superiority of the institutional status quo	➔	“Old” institutionalism
Political tradition	➔	Cultural institutionalism
Societal structure	➔	Sociological institutionalism
Systemic rationale	➔	New institutionalism
Actors’ vested interests	➔	Rational choice (group/individual level)
Coalition politics	➔	Rational choice (game theory)
A majority for change; disagreement over content	➔	Rational choice (game theory)

Source: Elaborated from Rahat (2008).

Importantly, not all barriers are thought to be equally as challenging to overcome, for example, tradition, social structure, and system-level rationale barriers (institutionalist approaches), are said to be the least problematic obstacles to change, while the vested interests barrier (rational choice approach), particularly within a single member plurality (SMP) system (first-past-the-post, FPTP), is understood to create the most difficulties for reformers. Nonetheless, according to Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), “a reform initiative will be blocked if it cannot cope with each and every barrier” (pp. 22-23).

As observed in Table 1.0 above, institutional approaches to electoral reform can be broken down into four different areas of study (Rahat and Hazan, 2009). The first, old institutionalism, focuses upon required reform procedures, and may include barriers such as constitutional amendments and several forms of legislative procedural impedances (see Gallagher, 1996; Hooghe and Deschouwer, 2011). Secondly, the cultural and sociological institutionalist approach examines the interactions between culture, society, and political institutions, and may, for example, include barriers such as traditional political values and societal norms. And finally, the new institutionalist approach, looks at the role of political party structures and the effects of electoral systems themselves, in helping to provide explanation for why such institutional change may occur. From the above listed institutional barriers, *'procedural superiority of institutional status quo,'* is said to offer the greatest impedance, with many, even broadly popular reforms initiatives, being derailed due to so-called minority *'veto players,'* legal challenges, or major constitutional obstacles such as referenda (see Hooghe and Deschouwer, 2011; Gallagher, 1996). Elite ideational motives stemming from the *'barriers models'* (Rahat and Hazan, 2009) include that of *'political tradition,'* *'societal structure,'* and *'systemic rationale.'* In addition, so-called *'general interest derived explanations'* of electoral system adoption, as detailed by Benoit (2004), will also be used, these include elite concerns relating to, for example, representation, governability, social and political engineering, electoral simplicity and efficiency, and historical precedent.

Again, as observed in Table 1.0 (see above), Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011) identify a further three barrier types, this time listed under the rational choice approach (rational choice institutionalism). The first, *'actors' vested interests,'* largely describes individual elite self-interest and partisan electoral incentives, in other words, as it relates to vote and seat maximising strategies, and general influence and control over the executive. This particular barrier will remain a considerable obstacle to electoral reform, unless or until majority consensus on an agreed way forward can be reached. The second listed barrier under the rational choice approach, as identified by Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), is that of *'Coalition Politics,'* with a particular interest in the ways in which leaders of minor parties or indeed factions within parties, may influence the national policy direction on such matters as electoral reform (Rahat, 2008; Renwick, 2008). The final identified potential barrier to electoral system reform, and again listed under the rational choice approach, is that of *'Disagreement Over Content'* (Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011). This barrier essentially focuses upon the ultimate need for some form of consensus among a required majority of political elites if such reforms are to move forward. Elite-level material motivations are likewise identified within Rahat and Hazan (2009) and Benoit (2004). Material motivatives stemming from *'barriers model'* and all falling within the rational choice approach, include that of, *'actors vested interests,'* *'coalition politics,'* and *'disagreement over content.'* Benoit (2004) breaks down, in greater detail, the type of material motivations associated with self-interest derived preferences, categorising that of policy-seeking, office-seeking, and personal gain, as the three key driving factors.

## **4.0 Research Method**

A qualitative single case approach is the dominant methodology used in the field of electoral system reform (see Leyenaar and Hazan, 2011). The case study method, which often offers a more detailed analysis of the most significant contributing factors thought to lead to such institutional change, is preferred over comparative research, given a scarcity in ‘major’ electoral reform cases, and an underdeveloped theory. A ‘small-N’ design is thus the most popular choice among scholars of electoral reform and can help to develop explanatory models of electoral system change, with ‘large-N’ quantitative studies remaining the exception rather than the rule (ibid). For this particular research paper, a qualitative single case approach is likewise adopted. In this instance, the most important argument in favour of studying a single case in depth, is to allow for a more detailed comprehension of the potential causal mechanisms themselves, and thus, developing a greater clarity of how such complex ‘processes’ influence political elite motivations (on electoral reform). Moreover, while also of interest to this paper, identifying correlates or causes of successful reform, will not be of primary focus. In outlining the wider research methodology, this section will detail the case selection process, the qualitative analysis methodology of choice, and lastly, the methods of data collection and operationalization.

### **4.1 Case Selection**

As earlier referenced in the research question, this paper will seek to examine to what extent material and ideational political elite motivations can help explain the failure of electoral system reform (primary focus on the processes/mechanisms). In selecting possible case studies which may help address this question, attention was first directed toward failed cases of major electoral reform. From among such cases, a distinction was then made between formal citizen led legally instigated reform initiatives (common in US), which largely tend to bypass the legislative process, and that of political elite driven reforms. Moreover, a further distinction was also made regarding how such reform measures ultimately failed adoption, namely, by voters themselves via referendum, or by members of a legislative body who either decided to block or perpetually delay/ignore reform proposals. Two forms of electoral reform have been identified by Renwick (2009), so-called ‘*elite majority imposition*,’ in which elites use their power and influence to manipulate future electoral results (i.e., France 1951, 1984, 1986 and Italy 1953, 2005), and ‘*elite-mass interaction*,’ in which reforms are adopted against the will of elites (i.e., Italy 1993, New Zealand 1993, Japan 1992 and arguably Israel 1992). Given this study holds a particular interest in the motivations of political elites themselves, rather than why referenda pass or fail, the former, ‘*elite majority imposition*,’ was found to be of far greater relevance to this project.

Having thus adjusted the selection criteria based upon above mentioned distinctions, great restrictions in potentially applicable cases remained constant, with the following few example cases of national-level major electoral reform attempts, nonetheless standing out, namely, Canada (see Dias, 2017), the United Kingdom (see Dunleavy and Margetts, 2001), Belgium (see Hooghe and Deschouwer, 2011) and the Netherlands (see Van der Kolk, 2007). From the above listed cases of legislature-driven failed electoral reform proposals, Canada stood out as an interesting and relatively unique example, due in part to the apparent majority parliamentary support, electoral reform had initially enjoyed, before ultimately being rejected by the same parliament (Dias, 2017). Furthermore, preliminary studies into the Canadian case also suggested relatively low formal institutional barriers, (i.e., no constitutional amendment required), therefore leaving the focus of attention squarely upon the motives of political elites themselves (Dawood, 2016). Moreover, the clearly defined temporal structure of the electoral reform initiative (i.e., setting up of Special Committee on Electoral Reform, ERRE), the high level of national prominence this proposal would go on to enjoy, and the comparatively recent rejection of reform proposals (Dias, 2017), all strengthens the case for the selection of Canada (national level). Importantly, given the largely non-existent feature of the '*procedural superiority of the institutional status quo*' barrier (Rahat and Hazan, 2009) in the Canadian case (see Dawood, 2016; Marshall and McIntosh, 2021), this impedance to electoral reform can be regarded as largely overcome.

#### 4.2 Process-tracing within case

In the social sciences, process-tracing is most often defined by its ambition to trace causal mechanisms (Bennett, 2008a; Checkel, 2008; George and Bennett, 2005). According to Glennan (1996), causal mechanisms can be defined as “a complex system, which produces an outcome by the interaction of a number of parts” (p. 52). Process-tracing itself is understood to involve “attempts at identify the intervening causal process — the causal chain and causal mechanism — between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable” (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 206). This methodology can, under the right conditions, allow a researcher to make strong within-case inferences about the causal process. In respect to the use of process-tracing for this project, while it will be sought to shed some light on the process which may lead to electoral reform, the complex nature of human behaviour (of political actors/elites) makes demonstrating outright causality far too difficult to achieve. Hence, rather than proving causality, this study will instead focus upon the process-tracing element itself, seeking to greater understand how certain potential conceptualised theoretical mechanisms (political elite motivation types) may contribute toward, or in some way influence, the prospects for successful electoral reform outcomes (Canadian electoral reform initiative).



Again, due to the challenging nature of this area of study, this paper may be described as an example of exploratory process-tracing, which takes on elements of both '*theory-testing*' and '*theory-building*,' but not clearly defined as one or the other (Beach and Pedersen, 2013). Moreover, '*explaining-outcome*' process-tracing, which "attempts to craft a minimally sufficient explanation of a puzzling outcome in a specific historical case" (ibid, p. 3) (taking a case-centric rather than a theory-centric approach), while offering an interesting path, lacks the more general theoretical observations this study seeks to help contribute towards, namely, the interplay between ideational and material elite motivations. The exploratory process-tracing approach proposed for this research paper takes both an inductive and deductive path, in part testing mechanisms derived from existing and well-established theoretical concepts, whilst also recognising the clear limitations and shortfalls of this theory, with existing theorization not providing sufficient explanation. Potential mechanisms or processes (in this case, political elite material and ideational motivations) that may help explain electoral reform outcomes, as already earlier detailed, largely stem from the rational choice (i.e., rational choice institutionalism) and institutionalist approaches (i.e., sociological institutionalist and normative institutionalist).

#### 4.3 Methods of Data Collection and Operationalization

This research paper develops its main empirical findings through a qualitative triangulation technique. The rationale for adopting such a multi-method data collecting approach, is to help increase the credibility and validity of overall research findings. By making use of both primary and secondary sources in the form of one-on-one interviews, parliamentary speeches, committee contributions, press conferences, television and newspaper coverage, and town halls, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the various elements to this initiative can be formed. In respect to the temporal period under examination, this will run from June 2015 (early election campaigns) to June 2017 (discussion of pledged electoral reform proposal begins to die out). Points in time of particular interest, and when content was at its most concentrated, include the establishment of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE) (late June 2016), Prime Minister Trudeau appearing to back-track on electoral reform promise (early October 2016), the publication of the ERRE recommendation (December 1, 2016), and finally, the formal government announcement to abandon electoral reform (February 1, 2017). Influential political actors, or '*political elites*,' of most interest to this research project, include senior members of the Liberal Party, for example, the party leadership, ministers with responsibility for reform, and senior ERRE committee members (see Appendix, Table 2.0). Due to the limited scope of this project, however, political elites from other major political parties are not included in this research.

In terms of the content collection strategy, one-on-one interviews, official parliamentary records, and a series of media outlet publications were availed of. In respect to the former, two one-on-one interviews took place (online), which included the participation of an informed Liberal Party source (actively involved in the ERRE) who wishes to remain anonymous, and Althia Raj, a Canadian political journalist. Research contributions from the Liberal source (government), who was actively engaged in the ERRE committee process, is particularly important, given the central role of this party in both proposing and instigating major electoral reforms, only to be responsible for the reversal of this process a year later. Furthermore, research contributions by senior political journalist Althia Raj, allowed for a greater comprehension, not only of the political context as widely reported in the media, but also on matters relating to behind-the-scenes decision making, and all from a politically non-partisan perspective. Althia, who was the former Ottawa Bureau Chief for the Huffington Post Canada, is a regular panellist on CBC News Network's *'Power & Politics'* and *'At Issue,'* she has hosted a town hall with former Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef and has written and reported widely on the subject of Canadian electoral system reform (see Raj, 2017). Moreover, a further means of data collection included the use of official parliamentary records, which largely consisted of parliamentary speeches and committee contributions. The website of the Canadian Parliament was used to locate and examine contributions of interest (i.e., via Hanzard and committee records website).

The Canadian House of Commons website allows users to find sought after content by entering dates, keywords, and the names of specific members of parliament, into a user-friendly search engine. For House of Commons addresses (speeches), the names of identified influential political actors of interest, alongside the text *'electoral reform,'* were entered into the search engine (42nd Parliament). 820 parliamentary contributions by political elites of interest were inspected. ERRE committee contributions would prove less fruitful, with the only significant meeting of interest, including the opening address and questions session with the Minister for Democratic Institutions (Meeting no. 3). Furthermore, in respect to the use of media content, several public and private outlets were utilised, with a particular focus placed upon press conferences, television and newspaper interviews and town halls. Beginning with the use of newspaper articles, two of Canada's most widely circulated and read papers, *The Globe and Mail* and *The Toronto Star* (Newspapers Canada, 2015) were decided upon. Using keyword searches on the newspaper websites, the wording *'electoral reform,'* under the Canadian politics section, and within the timeframe June 2015 to June 2017, were entered. All relevant available results content were examined. Unrelated publications, including instances of repetition, were disregarded. Likewise, in respect to televised news programmes, a similar approach was taken, with accessible online news archives from CBC News (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), the Global News (Canadian Global Television Network), and CPAC (Cable Public Affairs Channel), also being availed of.

*Ideational and Material Content:*

Lastly, in respect to the sought-after content itself, as earlier outlined, the focus of this study is that of political elite motivations, which may be categorised into both material and ideational incentives. Firstly, in determining whether elite motivations are likely *'self-interest'* driven (material motivations), certain terminology will be sought. For example, identified sources from among this motivation type will likely refer to seat share, vote share, potential future government coalition influence, and other general partisan-interests related to electoral advantage or disadvantage. Conversely, in respect to expressed *'general interest'* derived preferences (ideational motivations), identified sources will likely refer to democratic accountability, concerns surrounding electoral representation, proportionality, socio-political stability, political tradition, and electoral system simplicity (see Appendix Table 4.0). Challenges presented, however, in accurately analysing distinct ideational and material incentives are of course recognised. For example, as noted by Benoit (2004), while apparent ideational motivations are sometimes treated as being void of so-called partisan vest-interests, in many cases, “parties whose real concerns are with self-interest may defend their preferred institution with arguments about the general interest” (p. 368). According to Jacobs (2014), “Ideational mechanisms have characteristics that make them especially difficult to study, as compared to materially driven causal processes” (p. 2). This is, in large part, due to the *'unusual'* difficulties scholars experience in attempting to accurately measure ideas, which are often “highly correlated with other plausible causes of political outcomes” (ibid). Importantly, in attempting to overcome this challenge, particularly in respect of ideational effects, Jacobs (2014) stresses the need for a wider temporal range and level of analysis, rather than “a narrow focus on critical choice points” (pp. 2-3). In likewise adopting a similar approach, this study also considers previously held positions of key political elites in the run up to the electoral reform process, comparing earlier views points, with those expressed during so-called *'critical choice points.'*

## **5.0 Analysis of Case-specific Evidence**

### **5.1 Background to Canadian Case**

Before beginning to analyse the gathered content itself, it is important to firstly clarify several contextual details relating to this specific case. As alluded to earlier, the topic of major electoral reform in Canada (most recent initiative) would begin to gain significant political and public attention following a formal election campaign pledge by Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, in early June 2015, to bring an end to the status quo (FPTP), stating “that the 2015 election will be the last federal election using first-past-the-post” (LeBlanc, 2015, para, 5). Furthermore, Trudeau would also pledge a thorough study of potential alternative electoral systems, among which, instant-runoff voting (IRV) and proportional representation (PR), were specifically suggested (Dutil, 2017; Milner, 2017). In respect to the timeframe involved for the implementation of such a proposal, the Liberal Leader promised that within 18 months of forming government, he would bring forward legislation to enact electoral reform (ibid). It is important to note, however, that while the Liberals would traditionally have been considered as one of the two major parties of Canada (the other being the Conservatives), at the time of this electoral pledge, the Liberal Party was in fact in a far weaker position, having suffered heavily during the 2011 federal elections (ibid). As such, the party stood in third position, dwarfing its two new largest rivals, the Conservatives and the NDP, both in terms of seats and in polling numbers (Milner, 2017). Nonetheless, the Liberal Party would go on to secure an unexpected majority government in October 2015 (ibid).

While Trudeau did win a majority of seats in the 2015 poll, he did not win a majority of votes. However, if the votes of the NDP and Greens (both campaigned to change the electoral system), are also included, a clear majority (over 62%) in favour of electoral system reform would exist in the new parliament (ibid). As such, in early spring the following year (2016), the government, as promised, followed through on its commitment to change the electoral system, setting up a cross-party Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE). On December 1, 2016, the ERRE committee published its recommendations to the government (ibid). The recommendations, which were adopted by a majority of the committee (all of whom hailing from the opposition), recommended the holding of a public referendum, with the option between a specified form of PR and the status quo to be included on the ballot paper (ibid). The Liberals, however, did not support the majority committee recommendations (ibid). On February 1, 2017, the government announced that it would no longer be pursuing electoral system reform, pointing to, among other concerns, disagreements on the specific alternatives to the status quo, and opposition to holding a referendum (ibid). While scholars such as Dutil (2017), Milner (2017, 2019), and Dias (2017) have written about the context leading up to the proposed reform, the work of the ERRE committee, and the aftermath following ERRE recommendations to government, greater clarity and analysis regarding both material and ideational incentives appear missing.

### 5.3 Findings - Elite-level Ideational and Material Motivations

The following section identifies and examines potential ideational and material driven political elite motivations. Given the limited scope of this research, however, it was decided to primarily focus upon political actors from within the Liberal Party, and in particular, Justin Trudeau. This is due to the central role played by Trudeau, not only as leader of the Liberal Party, but also, as the person who would ultimately go on to lead the executive in a Liberal majority-controlled parliament. Moreover, while the Liberal position on the question of electoral reform would shift over time, the respective stances of the Conservatives and NDP would remain largely consistent, thus requiring less analysis. In presenting this content, likely motivation origins either leading to the removal or retention of the so-called ‘*barriers*’ to electoral reform (see Rahat and Hazan, 2009), are temporally detailed across four distinct stages. These stages include the 2015 federal election campaign, the first year of the 42nd Canadian Parliament, the period running from the publication of the ERRE committee recommendations (Dec 1, 2016), up to, but not including the formal government announcement to abandon electoral reform (Feb 1, 2017), and finally, the period immediately following the Liberal government U-turn. Across each distinct temporal stage, political elite position stances will be examined through the lens of potential motivation determinants (ideational and material), including, whether reform should take place at all, the specific alternative preferences to the status quo (if applicable) and, to a lesser extent, the process by which reform should be adopted (i.e., ordinary legislation, citizens assembly, and or referendum).

Before beginning to analyse these four temporal stages in the attempted reform process, it is also important, however, to briefly describe the historic position of Trudeau on the question of electoral reform (in this case, two years prior to the election campaign), thus allowing for a wider temporal range and level of analysis, rather than “a narrow focus on critical choice points” (see Jacobs, 2014, pp. 2-3). Perhaps the clearest and best documented early pronouncements by Trudeau on this matter would first come to public attention during the 2013 Liberal Party leadership contest, in which the then contender for the top post made clear his opposition to proportional representation (PR), as a possible alternative to the status quo (FPTP) (Penstone, 2013; CPAC, 2013), instead, passionately advocating for the adoption of instant-runoff voting (IRV) (ibid). In making his initial case against FPTP, Trudeau appeared driven by the deficiencies and unfairness in which a multi-party system operating under plurality electoral rules tends to produce, for example, minority representation and governance (see Shugart, 2001). In this context, however, rather than refer to the uneven relationship between the overall national popular vote and the subsequent distribution of seats, the attention of Trudeau was instead centred upon local constituency representation, and how this may be improved. This particular position is a challenge to the ‘*systemic rationale*’ barrier (Rahat and Hazan, 2009), which falls under new institutionalism. According to this approach, continuous electoral system failures in translating the will of the majority into policy, be it at local constituency or national level, will likely result in increased calls for electoral reform, and thus weaken the resistance of this obstacle (Shugart, 2001; Rahat and Hazan, 2009).

Furthermore, in expressing a preference for IRV, while heavily criticising PR, Trudeau would also use argumentation associated with the barriers of *'political tradition'* and *'societal structure'* (see Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011), in what Benoit (2004) would likely describe as *'general interest derived preferences,'* in other words, motives based upon apparent wider societal concerns, such as representation, governability, political civility, and general stability. Clear example of which may include the following (also from 2013 Liberal Leadership contest), “The problem with proportional representation, is that every different model of proportional representation actually increases partisanship, not reduces it. What we need is a preferential ballot that causes politicians to have to reach out to be the second choice and, even the third choice, of different political parties. We need people who represent broader voices, not narrower interests” (see CPAC, 2013, 00:07). According to Canadian journalist Althia Raj (personal communication, April 30, 2021), this was a true concern that Trudeau held and would continue to hold. Moving forward to the 2015 federal election campaign itself, Liberal Party elites would make clear their commitment to reform the electoral system, however, the party offered little in the way of ideational argumentation in publicly advocating for an alternative replacement. Instead, the party would focus upon the weaknesses associated with FPTP and speak in more ambiguous terms surrounding what needed to change. The ideational barrier of *'systemic rationale,'* (see Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011; Shugart, 2001), again, appears to have been the area of particular attention, at least in terms of advocating against the retention of the status quo.

In analysing apparent elite-level material motivations among Liberals, what is most striking, is just how cognisant the party leadership appears to have been, in respect to public perception regarding political self-interest. This cognisance can in fact be observed from an early stage in the election campaign, with party leader Justin Trudeau giving the following response when asked if the Liberal Party had a personal preference for an alternative electoral system, stating, “We are not going to stand forward and tell people what the best solution is, because quite frankly the cynicism people have about parties self-interest will always colour any proposal that any particular party puts forward” (see CPAC, 2015, 00:29). This particular comment was made on the very day that the party would first commit to ensuring that the 2015 election would be the last under the first-past-the-post voting system and resulted in the Liberals maintaining a formal position of neutrality throughout the entire process on the question of specific alternative system preference (ibid). By refusing to publicly indicate any specific personal preference to FPTP, for fear of being perceived by the electorate as acting in the party’s own self-interest, and thus potentially suffering electorally, appears at least, to have been a strategic decision aimed at protecting partisan *'vested interests.'* Importantly, it should also be noted at this point, that the initial decision taken by the Liberal Party to campaign against FPTP, and to explicitly indicate, at least an openness in considering the adoption of some form of PR, was widely understood to have been a materially driven electoral strategy, the primary objective of which was to attract the support of left leaning NDP and Green Party voters (see CBC, 2017; CPAC, 2017c; Milner, 2019).

Following on from the 2015 election and analysing the first year of the newly elected 42nd Canadian Parliament, Liberal elites, whose party would move from third to first place (now forming a parliamentary majority), would continue to support electoral reform, and likewise, express a neutral yet open position on alternative systems. During this first year of the new parliament, the House of Commons cross-party Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE) would be established. It would be throughout this period, in which a more detailed discussion on electoral reform would begin to occur, particularly in stressing the inadequacies with the current system. In fact, the most detailed public criticism by the Liberal government against FPTP, would occur during the hearing of Minister for Democratic Institutions, Maryam Monsef, to the ERRE. During her opening address to the committee, the minister would point out, not only concerns surrounding minority representation at the local riding level (candidates winning election on less than 50 percent of the vote), but also, “disparities between votes gained and the number of seats secured,” in a clear reference to the national popular vote and the distribution of seats in parliament (Special Committee on Electoral Reform, 2016, 14:10). The minister would continue by detailing such disparities throughout Canadian history, noting how, “Since 1960, we’ve had ten elections which resulted in majority governments, but only in one case, in 1984, did the winning party receive more than 50 percent of the vote” (ibid, 14:10). Monsef would close this argument by emphasising the strong historical international precedence in favour of reform (ibid).

By expressing serious concerns regarding identified inefficiencies under FPTP (in translating votes into seats), and the potential for undermining the will of the majority, Liberal elites were once again referring to issues strongly associated with the barrier of ‘*systemic rationale*’ (see Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011). As such, listed as the first principle of the ERRE committee, as proposed by the Liberal government and adopted by the house, is the central ideational motive of seeking to restore “the effectiveness and legitimacy of the voting system, by reducing distortions and strengthening the link between voter intention and electoral result” (Special Committee on Electoral Reform, 2016, 14:15). Further important ideational motivations outlined by the minister, and apparently in the general public interest (see Benoit, 2004), include a desire to encourage “greater engagement and participation in the democratic process, including fostering civility, consensus building, and social cohesion...avoiding undue complexity in the voting process...[and] taking into consideration the accountability of local representation” (see Special Committee on Electoral Reform, 2016, 14:15). Moreover, reference would also be made to the barriers of ‘*political tradition*’ and ‘*societal structure*’ (Rahat and Hazan, 2009), with Minister Monsef appearing cognisant of the impedances relating to political and cultural norms and the ever heterogenous nature of Canadian society. Such barriers, however, would not feature strongly in the initial debate, but would prove far more problematic at a later stage in the attempted reform process.

Again, returning to potential material motivations, the position of the Liberal Party to remain neutral on the question of which specific alternative electoral system they would most prefer, seems not to be based solely upon the negative self-serving perception such clarity may create among the public, but perhaps equally as important, among elements of the media and the political opposition (see Flanagan, 2016). Crucially, over time, the growing perception among all three of these groups, either rightly or wrongly, was that IRV (privately preferred by party leadership) would significantly advantage Liberals electorally at the expense of all other major parties, thus creating even less incentive for transparency (ibid). This point, in particular, seems to explain why Liberal Party elites decided against moving forward with IRV unilaterally. According to an anonymous senior member of the party (as cited in Raj, 2017a), “Tabling legislation to ram through a preferential ballot without parliamentary support would have been seen as transparently self-serving” (para. 5). Conversely, in respect to the potential retention of FPTP, an electoral system which, after all, had significantly benefited Liberals, evidence does appear to suggest that the weight of self-serving interests among the party leadership, would indeed begin to influence their judgement. For example, during a more candid and less publicised questions and answers sessions at the University of Ottawa, in April 2016, the prime minister stated:

*“I am very aware that the current electoral system [first-past-the-post, FPTP] worked out pretty good for me this time, you know, that’s certainly something that would be tempting to sort of say, oh you know what, it’s too complicated, and if I wanted to do that, then there’d be all sorts of push and motivation for me not to follow up on that [electoral reform]”* (see CPAC, 2016c, 1:12).

The Liberal leader would, however, close his answer by suggesting the contrary, emphasising instead, that he fundamentally believed that Canada could do better (than the status quo), and that electoral reform was still a priority for his government (CPAC, 2016c). These important and noteworthy remarks, which begin to reveal a pattern in the prime ministers thinking, are particularly relevant to this study, and will thus be further analysed in more detail throughout section 5.4, *‘Process Testing – Analysis.’* In moving forward to the third temporal stage in the attempted reform process, the period running from the publication of the ERRE committee recommendations (Dec 1, 2016), up to, but not including the formal government announcement to abandon electoral reform (Feb 1, 2017), a sea change in the Liberal Party position can be observed (CPAC, 2016b). While continuing in principle to support electoral reform, party elites would begin to distance themselves from two central aspects of the committee recommendations, namely, the proposed adoption of a form of proportional representation (PR) (not specified), and the holding of a public referendum to enact such change (ibid). Key reasons offered by Liberals for opposing the majority ERRE recommendations included, its overly complex nature (referring to use of Gallagher Index tool), concerns over local representation and accountability, and the lack of a specific proposed electoral system (Monsef, 2016a; CPAC, 2016b).



The alleged overly complex ERRE committee recommendation surrounding desired electoral proportionality was a point of particular criticism, with Minister Monsef appearing to openly mock and outright dismiss the proposal during a contentious exchange on the House of Commons floor, stating, “They offered us the Gallagher Index Mr. Speaker. So, the honourable member wants us to have a referendum of the following: Would Canadians like to take the square root of the sum of the squares of the difference between the percentage of the seats for each party and the percentage of the votes cast?” (Monsef, 2016a, p. 7513). Liberal ERRE committee member, Matt DeCoursey, would likewise, echo the same apparent concerns, suggesting, “It [the Gallagher Index] is a complicated tool, it is opaque, [and] it would be tough to explain to Canadians” (CPAC, 2016b). Electoral simplicity, while not neatly aligned with any one specific ideational barrier as identified by Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011) is, however, explicitly mentioned by Benoit (2004), in reference to so-called general interest driven preferences. Lastly, apparent key ideational and material Liberal elite motives throughout the fourth and final identified temporal stage of the reform initiative, namely, the period immediately following the Liberal government U-turn (6 months on from February 1, 2017 decision), will be detailed. On February 1, 2017, the Trudeau administration would formally announce its intent to abandon electoral system reform, with the prime minister stating, “There is no clear path forward. It would be irresponsible for us to do something that harms Canada's stability” (Trudeau, 2017, p. 8324). For Trudeau and his cabinet, the ideational motivations stemming from concerns relating to Canadian ‘*stability*’ were two-fold.

Firstly, pointing to the recent highly divisive vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (Brexit), the Liberals emphasised how holding a referendum in Canada, particularly within the context of a growingly unpredictable international political landscape (unexpected election of Trump), may potentially lead to similar societal divisions, and thus a real threat of political instability (Raj, 2017). The second risk to significant political instability, according to the government, relates to the proposed introduction of PR, a system Trudeau feared could allow the political extremities of Canada, for example the so-called ‘*alt-right*,’ not only an enhanced voice on the national stage, but also the possibility of becoming political kingmakers in a hung parliament (ibid). According to an informed anonymous Liberal source (personal communication, May 26, 2021), while this particular point also speaks to the leader’s material interests, Trudeau’s ideational concerns on this matter were understood to be sincerely held and not opportunistic in nature. In addition to the concerns surrounding a more ideologically diverse politics under PR, Liberals also expressed worry relating to how a more fragmented party system may likely result in the formation of distinct regional and even ethnic political groupings, further dividing Canadians rather than bringing them together (Raj, 2017). Emphasising this point, Trudeau noted, “As strongly and as passionately as I believed we could move forward on improving our electoral system...I recognize a higher responsibility even than that, and that is the responsibility every Canadian prime minister has to keep this country together and united” (as cited in Kirkup, 2017, para. 11).

This particular impedance to reform seems most heavily rooted in the '*societal structure*' barrier (Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011), with Trudeau using the complex heterogeneous nature of Canadian society as justification for the status quo, favouring larger broad church political groupings, over a more fragmented and potentially unstable party landscape. Furthermore, and likewise following on from the Liberal Party U-turn on electoral reform, Trudeau would bring an end to the party's formal position of neutrality in respect to alternative electoral system preferences. Speaking publicly on this matter on several occasions post the February 1 announcement, the Liberal leader described, in what appeared strongly ideationally driven, a desire to end the common practice of strategic voting under FPTP, suggesting instead, that a ranked ballot (under IRV) would offer voters more freedom to choose their actual preferred candidates (CPAC, 2017a, 3:04). Trudeau, in openly advocating in favour of instant-runoff voting (IRV), believed that such an electoral system could foster a more moderate politics, one which, instead of relying upon narrower constituency interests, required the building of voter coalitions. The barrier of '*systemic rationale*' (Rahat and Hazan, 2009, 2011; Shugart, 2001) can thus be applied in favouring IRV over FPTP, with such a system, even though majoritarian in nature, arguably leading to the election of candidates who hold wider constituency appeal, as opposed to those who win election under simple plurality rules. Moreover, the identified ideational, or so-called general interest driven motives, such as political moderation and stability are likewise recognised by Benoit (2004).

Lastly, in returning to apparent material elite motives, when asked directly why electoral reform had been abandoned, Trudeau would make his position clear, that although he had always favoured the adoption of IRV, the negative perception associated with this system as one which offered significant electoral advantage to the Liberal Party, resulted in this option becoming politically unviable, stating, "I'm not going near it [IRV], because I am not going to do something that everyone is convinced is going to favour one party over another" (CPAC, 2017a, 3:45). Moreover, and using a similar logic, Liberal members of the ERRE committee, undirected by the party leadership, also decided against openly advocating in favour of IRV, likewise, due to the prevalent public and political perception that such a position stance would almost certainly be driven by the party's own narrow self-serving interests (Anonymous Liberal source, personal communication, May 26, 2021). This particular point, in reference to the likely Liberal Party electoral advantage under instant-runoff voting (IRV), would clearly and explicitly be outlined by Conservative Party critic for Democratic Institutions, Scott Reid (as cited in CPAC, 2017b). Reading from the ERRE committee report itself, in an address to the media, Reid noted, "There's a good reason why Justin Trudeau likes a preferential ballot [IRV]. Let me quote from the report [ERRE], page 69 in the English edition: 'The most striking result of a preferential ballot, is that the Liberals would have won a larger number of seats in every election over the past 20 years, 15 additional seats in 1997, 17 additional seats in 2000, 25 additional seats in 2004, 22 additional seats in 2006, 11 additional seats in 2008, 13 additional seats in 2011, and 31 additional seats in 2015.' That is why Justin Trudeau regarded [IRV] as the only acceptable alternative to the status quo" (1:44).

#### 5.4 Process Testing - Analysis of Political Elite Motivations

Using content gathered from the two respective conducted interviews, this section primarily attempts to analyse the interplay between both material and ideational motivations, seeking both to corroborate earlier described parliamentary and media sources, and to a lesser extent, help explain overall case outcome. Firstly, however, given the majoritarian nature of the current Canadian political system, there were two identified routes to electoral reform, the first, through a unilateral process instigated by the majority holding Liberal government, and the second, through an inter-party consensus. Both potential routes are described below through the lens of political elite motivations. Before addressing either route however, it is important to firstly examine the potential motives leading to the initial pledge to reform the electoral system (made during 2015 election campaign). While ideational concerns mainly relating to the '*systemic rationale*' barrier (electoral inefficiencies) are known to have been sincere, the most salient motives behind proposed electoral reform are nonetheless understood to have been materially driven, with '*vested interests*' explaining an intentional ambiguity surrounding alternative electoral system preferences (Raj, personal communication, April 30, 2021; Anonymous Liberal source, personal communication, May 26, 2021; Milner, 2019; CBC, 2017). In other words, pursuing an electoral strategy which at least appeared open to the adoption of proportional representation (PR), while in all reality, never truly considering this as a viable option, in what may be described as a blatant attempt to attract more left-leaning New Democratic Party and Green voters.

Secondarily, in respect to the route by which electoral reform may have been implemented (unilaterally or through consensus), reasoning for the party not to have acted alone appears clear, with powerful material driven incentives acting as the determining factor. This position stance can be observed through the comments of an anonymous member of the government (as cited in Raj, 2017a), noting how, "Tabling legislation to ram through a preferential ballot [IRV] without parliamentary support would have been seen as transparently self-serving" (para. 5). Moreover, a further impedance to unilateral action concerns respected political norms in Canada, with major democratic changes, such as electoral system reform, requiring inter-party consensus (CBC, 2016b). Given this reality, a consensus approach by the Liberal government would, in principal, be adopted (i.e., establishment of cross-party ERRE). Throughout the first year of the new parliament, again, the barrier of '*systemic rationale*' would come under most strain, with the party leadership openly advocating against the status quo (FPTP system). However, Liberal elite material motives would begin to gradually intensify, particularly towards the end of 2016, when the direction of the ERRE was becoming increasingly clearer (moving toward PR recommendation) (Raj, personal communication, April 30, 2021; Anonymous Liberal source, personal communication, May 26, 2021). In respect to the interplay between both ideational and material political elite motivations, perhaps the most interestingly example of where ideational concerns have been presented, when in fact material incentives were the driving force, relate to the publication of ERRE committee recommendations to government (December 1).

The committee recommendations (favouring a choice between PR and FPTP in a referendum), which the government had fundamentally opposed, resulted in Liberal Party elites using apparent '*general interest*' derived argumentation (ideational), focusing in particular, on the overly complex nature of the report proposals (proportionality tool) (see Monsef, 2016a, p. 7513; CPAC, 2016b). However, according to an anonymous Liberal source (personal communication, May 26, 2021), initial government ideational argumentation against the ERRE recommendations were largely disingenuous, candidly stating, "There was certainly politics at play, and the minister and the government had to do what they had to do to try and discredit the committee report" (17:22). While this admittedly intentional mischaracterization of the committee report by Liberals, would appear to somewhat discredit their overall genuine ideational concerns, later general interest driven opposition, particularly following the formal government U-turn on February 1, 2017 (to abandon electoral reform), would nonetheless speak to sincere apprehensions and unease among elites (in respect to with what had been proposals). According to both Raj (personal communication, April 30, 2021) and an informed anonymous Liberal source (personal communication, May 26, 2021), while Liberal material interests were the most significant factor in leading to electoral reform abandonment, Trudeau did hold and continues to hold sincere ideational concerns surrounding the introduction of PR, particularly in respect to a potential threat to national stability and an increase in political polarisation. Significantly, this viewpoint is almost identical to the earlier position held by Trudeau during the 2013 Liberal Leadership race.

In summary, with no other major party willing to consider IRV as a viable alternative, Liberals would soon find themselves isolated in their personal preference choice. When it became clear that the ERRE was not heading in a direction considered favourable by the Liberal leadership, ultimate government withdrawal from the process was almost a certainty (anonymous Liberal source, personal communication, May 26, 2021). In using the rational choice approach, the Liberal Party U-turn could easily be regarded as an act of blatant partisan self-interest, however, the long-standing position of Trudeau, in favour of IRV and strong opposition to PR, would also appear to neatly align both ideational and material elite motivations. Moreover, in this particular case, the proposed holding of a public referendum, would act as a significant impedance, according to Raj (personal communication, April 30, 2021), "more than anything, the decision at the end to abandon the issue [electoral reform] was because they [the Liberals] did not want to spend capital and energy on a referendum that they did not really care about and that they were probably going to lose" (04:26). Furthermore, important case-specific points of note, include the lack of direction and oversight from the Liberal Party leadership (government) to the ERRE (i.e., never pushing for their desired outcome [IRV], and never instructing Liberal caucus members of the committee to invite certain expert witnesses or to adopt specific positions), explanation for which, it has been suggested, was largely due to the unexpected election of Donald Trump, resulting in the redirection of attention and resources within the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) (Anonymous Liberal source, personal communication, May 26, 2021).

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Overall, this study seems to confirm majority academic opinion, that material motivations are the key driving incentives behind whether electoral reform is likely to fail or succeed. However, that being noted, evidence from this research paper does, nonetheless, appear to suggest strong ideational incentives for both the removal and retention of the status quo. While the relationship between both motivation types is complex, the use of ideational argumentation to mask more salient material motives does appear present throughout. By conducting interviews with professionals who were directly and indirectly engaged with the electoral reform file (politician and political journalist), this paper identifies instances whereby material and ideational motives neatly align, and perhaps of most significance, also pinpoints specific examples whereby general interest derived argumentation (ideational) has, self-admittedly, been used in a disingenuous manner, in an blatant attempt to discredit political opponents and protect partisan vested interests. Moreover, by allowing for a wider temporal range and level of analysis (i.e., inclusion of content from 2013 Liberal Leadership contest), rather than a narrow focus on critical choice points, this study was better equipped at distinguishing between sincere ideational concerns and those of a more politically opportunistic nature. While focused empirically on the Canadian case, earlier described research findings, nonetheless, also contribute toward the broader academic literature, by helping scholars to identify and distinguish between motivation types, and whether apparent incentives are sincerely held or adopted for short term political gain.

The use of interviews, which formed part of the multimethod triangulation approach, was particularly important in corroborating earlier described parliamentary and media sources, and specifically, in seeking to accurately determine political elite sincerity. Furthermore, in reflecting upon the theoretical framework used for this study, the *'barriers model'* of Rahat and Hazan (2009, 2011), and the related, *'models of electoral system change,'* by Benoit (2004), while proving useful in navigating likely determinants to electoral reform, also exposed clear limitations. Such limitations may include, for example, the rigidity of both explanatory models, which fail to truly appreciate the often fluid nature of political elite decision making and the shifting interconnectedness of different political incentives. In terms of the wider limitations of this study, time and resource constraints prevented a more thorough cross-party analysis, and the conducting of further interviews. Moreover, given the political sensitivities surrounding this file, securing interviews in which politicians could speak openly without the need for guarded language, also proved rather problematic. Lastly, in emphasising the overly complex nature of this area of study, any number of diverse exogenous factors may also have influenced Liberal political elite decision making. One such external shock, for example, likely included the unexpected electoral success of Donald Trump south of the border, forcing a shift in overall attention focus and resources at the PMO, and thus, according to both interviewees (Anonymous Liberal source and Althia Raj), resulted in the downgrading of electoral reform as a government priority.

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## Appendix

Table 2.0: List of political actors (elites) of most interest

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
Justin Trudeau MP	Prime Minister, Liberal Leader	Liberal Party
Maryam Monsef MP	Minister of Democratic Institutions (2015-2017)	
Karina Gould MP	Minister of Democratic Institutions (2017-)	
Francis Scarpaleggia MP	ERRE Chair	
John Aldag MP	ERRE member	
Matt DeCoursey MP	ERRE member	
Sherry Romanado MP	ERRE member	
Ruby Sahota MP	ERRE member	

Table 3.0: Overview of content collected per media source

<b>Media Outlet</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Items Inspected</b>	<b>Items Used</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
The Globe and Mail (Newspaper)	<a href="https://www.theglobeandmail.com/">https://www.theglobeandmail.com/</a>	2973	68	<i>‘Electoral Reform’</i>
The Toronto Star (Newspaper)	<a href="https://www.thestar.com/">https://www.thestar.com/</a>	640	20	
CPAC (Televised News)	<a href="https://www.cpac.ca/en/">https://www.cpac.ca/en/</a>	300	40	
CBC News (Televised News)	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news">https://www.cbc.ca/news</a>	1,372	8	

Table 4.0: Examples of selected content from both motivation types

<i>Motivation type and expected content</i>	<i>Source type and data</i>	<i>Political Elite of interest/other</i>	<i>Example text</i>
<p><b>Material Motivations:</b></p> <p><i>Expected terminology might refer to seat share, vote share, potential future government coalition influence, and other general self/partisan interests related to electoral advantage/disadvantage and winners/losers.</i></p>	<p><b>CBC News town hall:</b></p> <p><i>Title: ‘Trudeau explains his electoral reform U-turn’</i></p> <p><i>Feb 10, 2017</i></p>	<p><b>Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada:</b></p> <p><i>Justin Trudeau MP</i></p>	<p><b>Reference to electoral advantage:</b></p> <p><i>“They think it [preferential voting] will favour Liberals too much, and therefore I’m not going near it, because I am not going to do something that everyone is convinced is going to favour one party over another.”</i></p>
<p><b>Ideational Motivations:</b></p> <p><i>Expected terminology might refer to democratic accountability, concerns surrounding electoral representation, proportionality, social/political stability, political tradition, and electoral system simplicity.</i></p>	<p><b>House of Commons debate:</b></p> <p><i>Title: ‘Speech on Electoral Reform’</i></p> <p><i>June 2, 2016</i></p>	<p><b>Parliamentary Secretary, International Development:</b></p> <p><i>Karina Gould MP (Liberal)</i></p>	<p><b>Reference to electoral representation and proportionality:</b></p> <p><i>“Electoral reform is the next step in this evolution towards a more inclusive system. We can build a better system that provides a stronger link between the democratic will of Canadians and the election result.”</i></p>