Prime Ministerial Leadership in Political Time: Stephen Skowronek's Framework in Canadian Context[1]

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Abstract: This paper uses Stephen Skowronek's framework for the study of presidential politics to detect recurrent leadership patterns in Canada. While institutional differences, most notably variation concerning the incumbent's time in office as well as the less fragmented institutional architecture of Canada's Westminster democracy, require some modifications, the paper demonstrates that prime ministers and presidents, in principle, face a similar leadership problem. Depending on the condition of the political regime (vulnerable or resilient) and the respective incumbent's political identity (opposed or affiliated), Canadian prime ministers – just as presidents in United States – tend to engage different leadership patterns. These insights, the paper concludes, open up interesting opportunities to put the American presidency into a comparative perspective.

Keywords: political leadership, American Political Development, prime ministers, Canadian political history, elections

Résumé: Cet article utilise le cadre de Stephen Skowronek pour l'étude de la politique présidentielle afin de détecter les modèles de leadership récurrents au Canada. Bien que les différences institutionnelles, notamment la variation concernant la durée du mandat des et l'architecture institutionnelle moins fragmentée de la démocratie canadienne de Westminster, exigent certaines modifications, le document démontre que les premiers ministres et les présidents sont en principe confrontés à un problème de leadership similaire. Selon la condition du régime politique (vulnérable ou résilient) et l'identité politique de l'intéressé (opposé ou affilié), les premiers ministres canadiens - tout comme les présidents aux États-Unis - ont tendance à adopter différents modèles de leadership. Ces conclusions ouvrent des perspectives intéressantes pour placer la présidence américaine dans une perspective comparative.

Mots-clés: leadership politique, Développement politique américain, premiers ministres, histoire politique canadienne, élections

Introduction

Canadian politics has undergone two remarkable transitions during the last decade, each following a very different pattern. The first transition unfolded rather incrementally. After the successful merger of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives in December 2003, the new "Harper Conservatives" set out to "transform the default thinking of the country" (Dornan, 2016: 8) through a sequence of four elections. Step-by-step, the Harper Conservatives rose to power, from official opposition status in 2004 to a solid majority in 2011. The 2011 election was believed to indicate a more robust and enduring Conservative era in Canadian politics than previous interludes: It revealed a "big shift", a seismic change in Canadian politics (Bricker and Ibbitson, 2013) or, in the words of Andrew Coyne (2011):

> "This is not like the sudden sweeps of John Diefenbaker and Mulroney, born of the collapse of previous Liberal governments, only to collapse of their own internal contradictions. This is one that has been built slowly, election after election, through defeat and victory."

In a similar incremental way, through an ambitious effort of social engineering, the Harper Conservatives attempted to expand and more firmly entrench their new conservative coalition and to dismantle public institutions, which they perceived as being infiltrated through decade-long Liberal rule (Jeffrey, 2015). The Canadian federal election of October 19, 2015, however, suddenly brought these efforts to a halt, initiating the second transition within the last decade. This transition followed an abrupt pattern. After a campaign that began with what looked like a three-way race between the incumbent Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP many observers were hit by surprise when the election results came in over the course of the evening, indicating a Liberal majority government. This second transition does not only differ in terms of how swiftly the Liberals got back to power from third-party status, but also how determined they are in changing again the practice of politics in Canada in terms of both, style and substance, aiming to revert the Conservative legacy. As Globe and Mail columnist Lawrence Martin (2015) has put it less than two months after the October 2015 election: "Some elections bring in governments with a major change of philosophy, some with a major change of style. But when have we ever seen both – at such a dizzying pace?"

Most accounts of political leadership and electoral politics in Canada analyze such dynamic patterns through a lens Stephen Skowronek (1997; 2008) has coined a *secular time perspective*. A secular time perspective confines itself to a chronological reconstruction of sequential periodization schemes. Changing political leadership styles are understood as evolving from one period to the next, and change in one period is measured against change in the previous period. Accordingly, the current discussion (both in academic circles and the broader public) has revolved around the question of whether or not the rise of the Harper Conservatives represents a

major departure from the previous (L)liberal era in Canadian politics. The sweeping victory of the Liberals on October 19 2015, then, is assumed to be either an accident (Bricker and Ibbitson, 2015) or to be indicative of the restoration of the status quo ante (Cohen, 2015).

In his landmark study on US presidential history, Skowronek shows that the secular time perspective fails to capture a deeper dynamic rhythm inherent to political leadership. Skowronek identifies recurrent – or cyclical – patterns that persist within and across different historical episodes. Such recurrent patterns only become visible through a *political time perspective*. By political time Skowronek means the interaction of structure and agency through two factors which, depending on their distinct combination, generate different types of leadership styles: The political "regime" of an era (i.e. the dominant, paradigmatic ideological orientations or "orthodoxies") and the political identity of the president (i.e. whether the president is affiliated with or opposed to the regime). Depending on how the incumbent situates himself (agency) within the political regime of the day (structure), Skowronek expects the emergence of one out of four possible leadership patterns.

The purpose of this paper is to probe the comparative potential of Skowronek's approach by applying it to the Canadian case. The study of political leadership has become an important subfield within comparative politics (de Clercy and Ferguson, 2016; Dion, 1968; Elgie, 2016; Helms, 2012; Masciulli, 2009; Rhodes and 't Hart, 2014). Especially the

rise of new institutionalism has encouraged scholars to pay closer attention to the question of how the broader cultural, economic and institutional environment shapes the leadership patterns executive actors adopt. As a consequence, political leadership is assumed to display certain regular and, to some extent, predictable patterns rather than being merely an idiosyncratic product of individual leadership skills of a person in power. Within this context, Skowronek's work, acknowledged by one of the leading contemporary scholars of comparative political leadership as a "rare masterpiece that seeks to systematically contextualize presidential leadership" (Helms, 2012: 8), stands out. On the one hand, Skowronek is a founder of the American Political Development (APD) approach, a subfield within American political science dedicated to theory-guided historical analysis of American politics (Orren and Skowronek, 2004). Accordingly, he does not aspire to make a comparative contribution. On the other hand, APD clearly is a subgenre of historical institutionalism. As such, conceptual and theoretical tools deployed in APD research have the potential to be applied in other contextual settings (Broschek, 2012; Lucas and Vipond, 2017).

This paper suggests that the theoretical premise underlying Skowronek's work is not limited to the United States. While contextual differences warrant certain modifications, it argues that presidents and prime ministers encounter the leadership problem in similar ways. A cursory analysis of the Canadian case allows to identify recurring leadership patterns that bear resemblance to those revealed

in Skowronek's work. These insights open up interesting avenues for comparative research on the patterns of executive politics in presidential and parliamentary systems.

Comparative Political Leadership: Situating Skowronek's Approach

Stephen Skowronek's approach to the study of presidential politics is straightforward and fascinating: To uncover the recurrent, yet largely hidden patterns of leadership style across different historical periods. As Skowronek contends, research on presidential leadership in the United States has paid insufficient attention to these dynamics. With its primary focus set on the changing nature of the presidency from the pre-modern to the modern era, as represented in the path-breaking work of Richard Neustadt (1960) and Arthur Schlesinger (2004 [1973]), mainstream scholarship has remained biased towards change that emerges in a linear mode or, in Skowronek's terminology, in secular time. Presidential behavior is, accordingly, grouped into two main categories: The pre- and post-Roosevelt periods. The paradigmatic assumptions underlying the secular time framework, however, come at a price: Differences between presidents in the same time period are underestimated while similarities between presidents in different periods are obscured (Skowronek, 1997: 7).

To that end, Skowronek suggests to analytically blend the secular time perspective with what he calls the political time perspective. At the heart of his argument lies the assumption that all presidents, regardless of the specific historical context within which they operate, face a similar challenge – a challenge that is deeply rooted in the institutional logic of the presidency. Presidential leadership is about resolving a legitimation problem. While political circumstances change as they emerge in secular time, the general imperative of presidential leadership remains the same: It represents "an effort to resolve the disruptive consequences of executive action in the reproduction of legitimate political order [...] Somehow the order-shattering implications of the exercise of power have to be reconciled with the order affirming expectations of its use." (Skowronek, 1997: 20). Presidents, however, encounter this problem in different ways. Depending on the historically contingent circumstances at hand, presidents will variously balance contradictory imperatives inherent in the office. The political time framework seeks to detect how presidents are located at parallel moments in different historical periods as they encounter similar types of leadership challenges (Skowronek, 2008: 20). This allows identifying the contingent political conditions that prompt recurrent patterns of leadership styles.

Skowronek's starting point is therefore similar to most approaches to the study of political leadership. He conceptualizes political leadership as a reciprocal, interactive process between political leaders and followers. Accordingly, mobilizing power resources from followers requires that political leaders are able to define and interpret problems and to offer viable solutions by prescribing ends and means (Masciulli,

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2009: 7). The emergent leadership pattern, however, is not primarily a function of the personal attributes and skill of the political leader. Similar to other approaches inspired by new institutionalism, Skowronek's framework seeks to identify the structural conditions that limit and interact with agency. Rather than simply conceptualizing these constraints as the formal and informal rules of the game, however, Skowronek puts emphasis on their inherent temporal dimension. Presidents are situated within the two co-evolving yet interacting temporal dimensions of secular and political time. Secular time captures the emergence of five "regimes" in American political history. Each historical regime demarcates a period that is relatively coherent in terms of how policy problems, goals and solutions are broadly perceived over an extended period of time. The secular evolution of policy regimes resembles Thomas Kuhn's (1962) pattern of scientific revolutions and its political science adaptions (Hall, 1993). As new problems arise, traditional solutions turn out to be increasingly ineffective, prompting "anomalies" and thus generating crises of political legitimacy. Presidents are key actors in resolving such crises by introducing a new paradigmatic approach that establishes another emerging and relatively durable order. For the case of the United States, Skowronek distinguishes five periods (or "regimes"), each punctuated by brief transformative interludes: the Jeffersonian era (1800-1828), the Jacksonian era (1828-1860), the Republican era (1860-1932), the New Deal era (1932-1980), and the conservative era (since 1980).

While the evolution of secular time is linear, political time reveals cyclical patterns, expressed in reoccurring leadership styles within and across different historical periods. Different leadership styles are prompted by two conditions, one structural and one agency-related. First, regardless of their individual leadership skills and personal attributes, presidents are situated within a historically constructed political regime, which establishes the paradigmatic assumptions of a given era. The age and condition of the political regime, however, can vary: It can be vulnerable and in crisis, or resilient, imposing different degrees of constraints on the incumbent. Second, the role of agency is acknowledged by what Skowronek calls the political identity of the incumbent. He suggests that whether or not the incumbent is affiliated with the principles of the regime is a second factor that shapes the emerging political leadership style.

Building on this theoretical premise, Skowronek constructs a relatively parsimonious, but analytically powerful classification of recurrent leadership politics. Those presidents who became pivotal in establishing a new regime usually enter into office when an established regime has already become vulnerable. As entrepreneurial political actors, they are opposed to this historical legacy and exhibit *reconstructive leadership politics*, like Ronald Reagan or Franklin D. Roosevelt. In contrast, presidents who are elected at a time when the established regime is already in crisis, but who are affiliated with its ideological commitments, are likely to attempt to breathe new life into an old order through the *politics of disjunction*.

Jimmy Carter is the most recent example representing this type of presidential leadership. If the political regime is resilient, and the president's political identity affiliated with its philosophy, "orthodox innovators" are likely to extend and further elaborate the inherited legacy through the *politics of articulation*. Skowronek identifies Lyndon B. Johnson and George W. Bush as prominent examples. Finally, a resilient political regime with a president who is opposed to its underlying principles will encourage the *politics of pre-emption*. Under these regime conditions, outright opposition is not an option. Therefore, the president will attempt to adjust and redefine the programmatic alternative within the established regime structure by making it more compatible with the "new political standards" (Skowronek, 2008: 105). Bill Clinton's third way politics represent an example of this type of presidential leadership.

The *Politics Presidents Make* found widespread acclaim within the United States, not only among scholars of American Political Development but also the larger public. Indeed, Skowronek's framework has been frequently quoted in major outlets such as the *Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post* or *The Nation*, since the election of Donald Trump more than ever before.[2] The question at stake, however, is whether the four leadership patterns are idiosyncrasies of the presidential system of the United States, or if the mechanisms identified in Skowronek's study can travel and operate in other institutional contexts like Canada's Westminster democracy.

Efforts to test the comparative potential of Skowronek's approach are rare: I found only two noteworthy articles that apply the political time thesis outside the United States, with profoundly diverging conclusions. While Matthew Laing and Bredan McCaffrie (2013) find evidence for similar leadership dynamics in Australia, Stephen Azzi (2017) is rather skeptical about the applicability of Skowronek's framework to the Canadian case. Although Azzi does not outright deny the usefulness of the concept of political time, he suggests that Skowronek's framework does not adequately capture the leadership styles of Canadian prime ministers. In particular, he casts doubt on the existence of political regimes in Canada similar to those identified by Skowronek. As a consequence, it is difficult to identify prime ministers who were either opposed or affiliated with those paradigmatic ideas that underpin a regime.

While it is true that certain key terms of Skowronek's approach are not readily accessible or even opaque, as Azzi points out, the comparative potential of the framework for the comparative study of political leadership should not be dismissed too easily. The notion of a political regime, for example, may be misleading. Such "reigning orthodoxies" composed of certain hegemonic ideas and interests, however, do not capture an American idiosyncrasy, but present themselves in contextual variations. Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl or Brian Mulroney can all be considered as potential reconstructive leaders as they rejected core principles underlying the established order and successfully asked for a mandate to entrench a new regime during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Although these newly elected governments implemented

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their agenda differently, being more radical in rhetoric and outcomes in the United Kingdom and the United States than in Germany and Canada, it is hardly contested that they reset the basic parameters of politics in all four countries.

Moreover, although presidential and parliamentary systems differ in important ways, one should expect that prime ministers, in principle, face a similar leadership problem like the presidents in the United States. The Canadian constitution itself does not entail much explicit detail about the role of the executive, but the prime minister turned out to become a cornerstone of the Canadian political system early on. Over the course of the twentieth century, prime ministers were able to further consolidate their central position. The creation of the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) in the late 1960s, for example, solidified the transition from cabinet to prime ministerial government and the ongoing concentration of power at the "centre" (Savoie, 1999). Given the prominence of the prime minister within Canadian politics, incumbents are confronted with similar expectations as presidents in the United States. More than any other institution within the polity, prime ministers need to attempt to resolve the authority-legitimation nexus on an ongoing basis. Just as presidents, Canadian prime ministers have to deploy their power resources to find a right balance of order-disruptive, order-affirming and order-creating actions so as to address and control the political expectations inherently tied to the office.

Two important differences pertaining to the authority structures in the presidential system of the United States and Canada's Westminster-style democracy, however, may limit the transferability of Skowronek's framework to Canada, or require some modifications. The first limitation results from significant variation concerning the respective incumbents' time in office. With the notable exception of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, no president has served for more than eight years. There is no temporal limit, however, to the length of Canadian prime ministers' term. Accordingly, the time span Canadian prime ministers have served in office ranges from 68 days (Sir Charles Tupper) to more than 21 years (William Lyon Mackenzie King). Especially those prime ministers who served for more than a decade might change their leadership pattern as a response to changing regime conditions.

Second, the Canadian political system is certainly not without institutional constraints for prime ministerial leadership. Stephen Harper frequently felt the authority of the Supreme Court as an important counterweight to federal power, especially after the 2011 federal election, just as Justin Trudeau will experience enormous difficulties in implementing promised changes given provincial ascendancy in crucial policy areas. If compared to the fragmented nature of the United States' system of checks and balances, however, Canada's Westminster democracy features a comparatively low degree of institutional rigidity. Unlike the president, who has to mobilize support against potential opposition from the states, the Supreme Court and, most importantly, Congress, Canadian prime ministers are vested with considerable

power resources to bypass institutional barriers to reform. These institutional differences might affect how they elaborate each leadership pattern in practice.

Secular and Political Time in Canada

Secular time is the predominant lens for analyzing electoral and party politics in Canada. A recent example is Darrel Bricker and John Ibbitson's "Big Shift" (2013). According to this interpretation, a big "seismic" shift has taken place in Canada (Bricker and Ibbitson, 2013). These tectonic changes became discernible in the electoral outcome of 2011, which reflected a deeper, structural transformation in the geo-political centre of gravity from the old "Laurentian region" to the West. A combination of long term factors, most notably the economic rise of the West and the decline of manufacturing in central Canada, the demographic composition of the provinces (young versus old) and a re-alignment of the immigrant vote in the suburban ridings of the Greater Toronto Area, are said to indicate a new Conservative era in Canadian politics.

Several other contributions have registered the multifaceted aspects of Stephen Harper's attempt to gradually consolidate his power, and to firmly entrench the Conservatives as the new "natural governing party" in Canada (Behiels, 2010; Jeffrey, 2015; Wells, 2008). These contributions have in common that they zoom in more recent developments, which are then analyzed against the backdrop of Canada's political history. In essence, these accounts cut

history into two different eras. They suggest that after a time span covering more than a century during which the "big red machine" (Clarkson, 2005) was able to dominate Canadian politics, we are now witnessing the emergence of a new period of Conservative rule.

Other authors situate prime ministerial politics and leaderships styles within the evolving structure of Canada's party systems. This approach seeks to identify sequences of functionally distinct party systems, separated from one another by punctuated transition periods. David E. Smith (1985), for example, traces the changing nature of prime ministers' approaches to national integration. He suggests that changes in leadership style have affected the structure of the party system, which is divided into three periods. The first party system reflects the nation-building approach of John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier (1867-1914), the second party system the accommodative approach of Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent (1914-1957) and the third party system the pan-Canadian approach of prime ministers such as John Diefenbaker, Lester B. Pearson and Pierre E. Trudeau (1957-1984). Looking at cleavage structures rather than leadership approaches, Richard Johnston et al. (1992) arrive at a similar periodization scheme. In this study, transitions from one party system to the next are driven by re-alignments of crucial voter segments. Finally, like Smith and Johnston et al., but using yet again a different set of variables, Kenneth Carty et al. (2000) consider the election of the Progressive Conservative Diefenbaker government (1957-1963) as a turning point, indicating the transition from the second to the third party system. In

addition, Carty et al. suggest the emergence of a fourth, highly regionalized multi-party system in the aftermath of the landmark 1993 election.[3]

While these interpretations adopt a secular time perspective, other studies acknowledge the importance of different, sometimes asynchronous temporal dynamics. Richard Johnston (2013), for example, provides an encompassing analysis of voting patterns using aggregate data. Johnston identifies patterns of relative stability over time, such as support for the Liberals and the NDP, that co-exist with fluctuation, like in case of voting patterns in the West and Quebec. He offers a systemic perspective across time and space, revealing the juxtaposition of orderly and disorderly components within the Canadian party system on the federal and provincial level. The pattern emerging in LeDuc et al. (2016) study of Canada's electoral history is one in which long periods of stability are punctuated by short periods of disruption. Political leaders such as John A. Macdonald or Pierre Trudeau successfully established enduring "dynasties", which are interrupted by so called "interludes", that means relatively short intervals during which governing prime ministers failed to entrench another dynasty. This secular evolution of five political dynasties and six interludes is, however, driven by a non-linear, cyclical mechanism. Considering the fragmentation and volatility of the Canadian electorate, so the argument goes, successful dynasties depend on whether or not party leaders are able to deploy the brokerage party model. Positioning themselves as credible brokers allows them to put together a voter collation across the diverse electorate, which has to be renewed from election to election. This recurrent pattern to "revert to the brokerage model" intersects with the secular and sequential evolution of dynasties and interludes over time.

In order to identify recurrent leadership patterns depending on how prime ministers are situated in secular time, I use a periodization scheme introduced by Rainer-Olaf Schultze (1997). Schultze suggests that the evolution of relatively coherent party system structures was largely a response to changes in Canada's policy paradigms. He traces the rise and fall of each policy paradigm in three dimensions: Political culture (change of intensity and forms of participation, often indicated through institutional reforms), actor configurations (new political actors entering the political arena, re-alignment among voters and new voting coalitions) and substantial changes in the direction of public policies, which are buttressed through a new basic consensus on the role of the state and its place in society. Schultze's model draws its inspiration from the literature on Canada's "national policies". National policies were consciously deployed by successive governments regardless of their partisan composition, to foster a collective identity and integration north of the 49th parallel (Fowke, 1952; Smiley, 1975; Eden and Molot, 1993). The first national policy, introduced by the Macdonald government in 1879 entailed three elements: railway construction, immigration policy and, most importantly, the protective tariff. Much more encompassing than the first national policy, the second national policy's core feature was a commitment to the creation and expansion of a pan-

Canadian welfare state and interventionist Keynesian macro-economic policies. Whether or not the emergence of a new "neo-conservative", market-driven paradigm in the 1980s deserves to be labeled as a "national" policy, as in Eden and Molot's (1993) study, is debatable. It is hardly contested, however, that this new paradigm has replaced the basic principles underlying the second national policy (Table 1).

Table 1: Secular Time: Canada's Political Regimes

First Regime (1867-1921):		
• (First) National Policy: agrarian frontier expansion, protective tariff • Two-Party System		
Formation	1867-1878	• "Confederation"
Paradigm Consolidation	1878-1911	• National Policy of 1879
Decay and Transition	1911-1930/35	• Free trade dispute, World war I and conscription crisis • Agrarian protest movements
Second Regime (1930/35-1984):		
• Second National Policy: Social democratic consensus in the welfare state and Keynesian macro-economics • Multi-Party System		
Formation	1930/35-1945	• Depression, World War II and the formulation of New Deal-Responses
Paradigm Consolidation	1945-mid 1970s	• Institutionalization of welfare state
Decay and Transition	mid-1970s-1988	• Experiment of a "Third National Policy" abandoned • Macdonald Commission
Third Regime (1988-)		
• Dismantling of Keynesian welfare state, the politics of "permanent austerity" (Paul Pierson) • Multi-Party System		
Formation	1988-1995	• FTA/NAFTA, privatization and modest retrenchment
Paradigm Consolidation	1995-	• 1995/96 Federal Budget • market-conform policy solutions to address major challenges like social investment and cap-and-trade

Source: Adapted from Schultze 1997: 272-73

This periodization scheme contrasts with other prominent interpretations of party system change in important respects. While all authors largely agree on the temporal boundaries of the first regime, the second regime in Schultze's account ranges from the early 1930s to 1984. Similar to LeDuc et al. (2016), Schultze considers the Diefenbaker government (1957-1963) as an interlude rather than a turning point. The Mulroney government (1984-1993),

which occurs as an interlude in LeDuc et al. (2016) as well, is both part of the transition from the second to the third regime (1984-1988) and indicative of the formation of the latter (1988-1993). Published 20 years ago, however, Schultze did not further discuss the nature of this unfolding regime. At the time of writing, he assumed the third regime still to be in its formative stage. From a present day perspective, it can be argued that the third regime became more fully entrenched during the 1990s and 2000s. The Canadian case is remarkable insofar as the third regime still seems to be resilient while recent developments in the United States and Europe, most notably the increasing polarization and party system fragmentation with a consolidation of right-wing anti-establishment parties, Brexit or the election of Donald Trump, indicate a growing crisis in confidence regarding the paradigmatic assumptions established in the late 1970s and 1980s. While anomalies are on the rise internationally, in Canada political responses so far have been largely consistent with the established paradigmatic order. In particular, the creation of market-conform cap-and trade models or new spending initiatives directed towards "social investment" policies have further consolidated rather than replaced the existing regime. The following section illustrates how recurrent leadership patterns emerging in secular time can contribute to test the accuracy of this periodization scheme.

Recurrent Leadership Patterns in Canadian Political History

The Politics of Reconstruction

Pierre Elliott Trudeau or Stephen Harper are often portrayed as prime ministers whose leadership styles, at first glance, look like a reconstructive pattern. Trudeau won the Liberal Party's leadership in the 1968 contest as an outsider, having joined the Liberal Party less than three years earlier. Similarly, if one takes the traditional Progressive Conservative Party as the default condition for conservative politics in Canada, Harper needs to be considered as an outsider who had to forge a new political party to rise to power. Moreover, both were leaders with great ambition. Trudeau's rhetoric of a "Just Society", and his effort to adopt a more functional and rational governance approach, openly reflected a commitment to fundamentally change traditional patterns in politics (English, 2009). Stephen Harper's transformative aspirations were laid out somewhat more clandestine, but became more discernible over the long term (Jeffrey, 2015).

Moreover, both prime ministers undoubtedly left an imprint on the Canadian political landscape. According to LeDuc et al., both successfully established political dynasties in Canadian politics, albeit with significant differences in scope and duration (Leduc, et al., 2016; Leduc, 2015). Trudeau and Harper, however, did not inaugurate a new regime structure. Reconstructive leaders, in Skowronek's account, historically sit at the interface of two political regimes, with the old one in decay and the new one on the horizon, and emerge as pivotal actors to entrench the new regime. Provided the periodization scheme for Canada's secular time sketched in the previous section is correct, it should therefore be possible to

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detect reconstructive leadership patterns in the politics of John A. Macdonald (1867-73; 1878-1891), Mackenzie King (1921-1930; 1935-1948) and Brian Mulroney (1984-1993).

Compared to their presidential counterparts, reconstructive leaders in Canada appear less revolutionary and dramatic in impetus and tone (see also Azzi 2017). Moreover, Macdonald and King deviate from the patterns identified by Skowronek in several ways – King even more so than Macdonald. Both prime ministers did not enter office as reconstructive leaders. Instead, they adopted this style only after they had been defeated and relegated to the opposition benches for one legislative session. Also, unlike most American reconstructive leaders, Macdonald and King were neither great repudiators, nor great communicators. In both cases, the main feature of reconstructive leadership was more constructive rather than destructive as they orchestrated political change in a way that emphasized regime-building rather than regime-destroying.

The National Policy, or First National Policy as it was labeled retrospectively, became the vehicle for John A. Macdonald's politics of reconstruction. To be sure, in various ways, each of the three main components of the National Policy – railway construction, immigration policy and the protective tariff – had already been established.[4] While being in opposition between 1873 and 1878, however, Macdonald brought these existing traits together programmatically to craft a new coherent, paradigmatic future agenda. Political picnics were invented as a new campaigning method to disseminate this

plan: between July 1 and September 1876, the Conservatives held a number of such picnics all across Southern Ontario which became a "grand circuit of entertainment and a network of musters of the Conservative clans" (Creighton, 1998 [1955]: 224). What is more, the National Policy represented a major break with the ideological commitments of the past. Not only did the more systematic and deliberate adoption of protectionist measures contradict the free trade doctrine that still predominated economic discourses of the time. Moreover, advocating and, ultimately, implementing a program of this scale and depth presupposed a fundamentally new approach to and understanding of the role of the state. As historian and journalist Richard Gwyn (2012: 285-6) has put it in his biography of Macdonald:

"Macdonald's idea for a National Policy was even more ambitious than his commitment to a transcontinental railway. What this conservative, now in his mid-sixties, was proposing to do was something that had never been attempted before in Canada – nor would be again for another half-century [...]. The innovative idea that Macdonald accepted implicitly with his National Policy was that government should intervene in times of public need." And: "Intervention by government violated the conventional wisdom of the day".

The reconstructive leadership pattern re-emerged for a second time under Mackenzie King after he had become re-elected in 1935. While Canada was still struggling with the consequences of the Great Depression, and facing third

parties and movements as a profound electoral threat, King adopted – reluctantly – a number of measures that indicated again a significant shift in how the role of the state in society was perceived. The creation of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations in 1937 and the commissioning of the Report on Social Security for Canada in 1942 (Marsh Report) were important steps into this direction. In the first Keynesian' inspired budget of 1938, a "turning point in fiscal policy in Canada" (Neatby, 1972: 85), or the introduction of Unemployment Insurance in 1940, this changing ideational stance eventually became manifest. Unlike previous social policy reforms enacted on the federal level like the Old Age Pensions Act of 1927, which remained scattered and limited in scope, the measures initiated under King during the late 1930s and early 1940s signaled the formation of a "new" or "second" national policy (Fowke, 1952). Whereas King's electoral campaign slogan in the 1935 election – "King or Chaos" – had put emphasis on continuity rather than change, ten years later, in his last campaign in 1945, the slogan clearly reflected this new commitment for change: "Vote Liberal and Keep Building a New Social Order for Canada" (quoted in LeDuc, et al., 2016: 143).

Less fuzzy and more clearly discernible than during the Macdonald and King incumbencies, the reconstructive leadership pattern surfaced for a third time under Brian Mulroney in 1984. Although most observers agree that his agenda was more pragmatist and less ideology-driven than the Reagan Revolution or Thatcher's premiership (Blake, 2007), the Mulroney incumbency fits the reconstructive

pattern as defined by Skowronek quite well. Unlike Macdonald and King, Mulroney became elected as a reconstructive leader rather than turning into one. He entered the political arena asking for a mandate for change that promised to be equally repudiative and constructive. Mulroney's first electoral victory in 1984 was of historic proportions: It was the third earned majority since 1921 (after 1940 and 1958) and the largest landslide majority in Canadian history. This electoral success was made possible through a historically unprecedented voting coalition including not only Ontario, but also Quebec and the West. The subsequent reversals of policies representing central planks of the Second National Policy indicate the repudiative element of Mulroney's leadership. The termination of the National Energy Program (NEP), the replacement of the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) with Investment Canada, the privatization of high-profile Crown Corporations carrying symbolic value for national unity (e.g. Air Canada, Teleglobe) and, ultimately, the creation of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement in 1989 are the most visible examples indicating the transformative nature of Mulroney's incumbency. On the ideational level, Mulroney invoked neo-conservatism to buttress the rejection of the "old" regime of the Second National Policy and the formation and establishment of a new paradigm for Canada. Although infused with less ideological commitment than in the United States and the United Kingdom under Reagan and Thatcher, Mulroney's agenda was inspired and driven by the same intellectual framework:

"Although arguably not as ideological in thinking as Thatcher's and Reagan's, Mulroney's policy agenda had a striking resemblance to theirs. There is little doubt that when Mulroney came to office in 1984, he looked to these two conservative soul mates for inspiration. [...] Thus Thatcher, Reagan and Mulroney held similar views not only what was wrong with government but also on how to make things right." (Savoie, 1994: 10)

The Politics of Disjunction

If reconstructive leaders are most effective in addressing the legitimation problem inherent in the presidency, the opposite holds true for presidents who are affiliated with the established order, but come to power when it is already in decay. Late regime affiliates are extremely vulnerable: breathing new life into an old, sometimes even collapsing order confronts them with an "impossible leadership situation" (Skowronek, 2008: 90). They engage into a politics of disjunction in order to re-establish credibility for a regime in crisis, attempting to rescue the old order through an adaptation of instruments. The growing number of anomalies, however, has already weakened the paradigmatic assumptions underlying the old regime in such a way that they can no longer be effectively brushed away.

Again, such patterns can be found in Canadian political history, albeit with some modifications. Mackenzie King, for example, successfully managed the transition from the politics of disjunction to the politics of reconstruction. It was not until the late 1930s that he seems to have realized the necessity to adopt a more reconstructive leadership style. Prior to that, King's approach largely reflected the logic of disjunctive politics. While acknowledging that some form of government activity was necessary to deal with the Great Depression, he did not believe radical measures would be warranted. Rather, he considered the crisis as a temporary recession which could best be fixed through the economic system itself, most notably through lowering the protective tariff. Even after his re-election in 1935 he initially rejected the far reaching proposals of the National Employment Commission, which he himself had appointed immediately after taking office. The recommendations included, among other things, a federal unemployment scheme and increased federal expenditures, but King responded to Keynes arrival in Canada with outright hostility (Neatby, 1972: 83-4).[5]

While King successfully switched from a disjunctive to a reconstructive leadership pattern, making the seemingly impossible possible, Pierre E. Trudeau's efforts to rescue the increasingly crisis-prone regime of the second national policy failed, paving the way for Mulroney's politics of reconstruction after 1984. In fact, the measures undertaken by Trudeau over the course of the 1970s and 1980s almost perfectly match Skowronek's description. Trudeau attempted to fix a number of virulent problems, most notably Canada's weak economic performance and centrifugal dynamics resulting from a new wave of province-building and Quebec's aspirations to become a sovereign state,

by developing an ambitious strategy Donald Smiley (1987) has portrayed as the "Third National Policy". The purpose of this strategy was to re-establish credibility for the principles underpinning the old order through a modernized version of the second national policy, inspired by social-democratic ideas and implemented through a highly visible, interventionist federal government (Leslie, 1987; Smiley, 1987). This policy shift included, among other things, the aforementioned FIRA in 1973, wage and price controls introduced in 1975, the creation of Petro Canada as a crown corporation in 1975, tax reforms and the so called Third Option, a new diversification strategy. When Trudeau was re-elected in 1980, after the brief interlude under Progressive Conservative Joe Clark (1979-80), the inadequacy of this approach became more visible in light of enduring weak economic performance and aggravating contestation. As a response, his approach became more contradictory. While the federal government increasingly lost control over the process of economic development, Trudeau, on the one hand, stuck to and even radicalized the nationalization of energy policy, and merged existing programs into the National Energy Program (NEP), one of the most ambitious policy projects in Canadian history. On the other hand, reinforced through declining oil prices on the world market which torpedoed the NEP shortly after its introduction, he abandoned the interventionist approach in a number of crucial areas such as regional industrial policy, and turned to a policy of fiscal restraint. Perhaps more importantly, he created the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and

Development Prospects for Canada (Macdonald Commission), whose recommendations outlined the contours of the new long-term, neo-liberal economic order underlying the new political regime (Inwood 2005). The consolidation of the old regime eventually failed, and the Liberals were defeated by reconstructive leader Brain Mulroney in the landmark 1984 election.

The Politics of Articulation

Affiliates who enter office in a fully unfolding and maturing political regime are likely to adopt a leadership style Skowronek has defined as the politics of articulation. They are often "orthodox innovators", seeking to create a better fit between the regime and its underpinning philosophy and to erase existing inconsistencies. In Canada, prime ministers as diverse as Lester B. Pearson, Stephen Harper or the early Pierre Trudeau fall into this category.

The premiership of Pearson and his successor Trudeau differed in many respects. Pearson represented the "old guard" within the Liberal Party's establishment. As the father of modern peace-keeping and a diplomat par excellence, he also adhered to an accommodative approach in domestic politics to cope with Quebec's demands and the rise of regionalism more generally. Trudeau, in contrast, is often portrayed as a highly charismatic leader; the handing-over of the office to him, and the subsequent federal election of 1968, as heralding the beginning of a new political era in the country (English, 2009). Most importantly, Trudeau's

governing philosophy to encounter the challenges stemming from Canada's diversity and growing centrifugal forces stands in striking contrast to the Pearson'ian diplomacy:

> "My political action, or my theory – insomuch as I can be said to have one – can be expressed very simply: create counterweights. As I have explained, it was because of the federal government's weakness that I allowed myself to be catapulted into it" (Trudeau, 1968: xxiii)

Although their views on substantial issues like national unity differed, the early Trudeau resembled Pearson still much more than the late Trudeau, when his leadership style turned into the politics of disjunction. For example, the Victoria Charter of 1971, a proposed constitutional amendment, entailed a revised provision for the division of powers which would have acknowledged provincial supremacy in important areas of social policy. Even the Established Programs Financing Act of 1977, which signaled the decline of the second regime given Ottawa's more limited financial commitment to fund core welfare state programs, was still negotiated in a cooperative spirit. This pattern was in stark contrast to the unilateral imposition of the NEP or the Canada Health Act in the 1980s. What is more, continuity rather than change characterizes Pearson's and Trudeau's efforts to complete the architecture of the post-war welfare state. During Pearson's five year tenure, one of the most talented cabinets in Canadian history mastered the enactment of core pan-Canadian programs such as the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, Medicare and the Canada

Assistance Plan (Kent, 1988). Trudeau's landmark reform of Unemployment Insurance in 1971 and the comprehensive reform of the Family Allowances Program in 1974 completed the creation of a grand social security system as outlined in pioneering studies like the Marsh Report in the 1940s (Rice and Prince, 2013).

According to Skowronek (2008: 100), the temporal distance between the reconstructive leader and the orthodox innovator can affect the leadership problem of the latter. In the United States, temporal distance between both presidential types – like in case of Reagan and Bush junior - furnished the latter with better opportunities to emerge as a leader in his own right compared to a president who merely turns his predecessor's "legacy into a workable system of government" because he stands directly in the shadow of the reconstructive leader. Likewise, in Canada, the commitment to fully entrench the second regime's principles was much more clearly discernible in the politics of Pearson and Trudeau compared to Mackenzie King's successor Louis St Laurent. And the same applies to Stephen Harper, who came to power 13 years after Brian Mulroney had successfully managed the transition from the second to the third regime.

Perhaps more than any other prime minister, Harper almost perfectly matches Skowronek's depiction of the orthodox innovator. Not only was his ideological thinking much more steady, consistent and directly inspired by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan than Mulroney's rather pragmatic approach. Moreover, at the heart of Harper's "Canadian Revolution" (Wells,

2008) was his determination to make the Conservatives the natural governing party. And although he demonstrated remarkable flexibility and caution in consolidating this strategy, his long-term goal was to complete the paradigmatic turn Mulroney had initiated: Through a renewed, powerful Conservative Party and, ultimately, with the goal to transform the ideological makeup of Canadian society (Jeffrey, 2015). "There is a constant tension in his politics between a short-term impulse to hug the centre and a long-term determination to move it - to transform Canadian society", writes Paul Wells in a 2008 portrait of Stephen Harper. This required, according to Harper, two things:

> "One thing you do is you have to pull conservatives, to pull the party, to the centre of the political spectrum. But what you also have to do, if you're really serious about making transformation, is you have to pull the centre of the political spectrum toward conservatism…We're […] building the country towards a definition of itself that is more in line with conservatism." (Harper, quoted in Wells, 2008).

The Politics of Pre-emption

Political leaders who are not affiliated with a resilient regime structure may entertain the politics of pre-emption as a way out to encounter the dilemma this configuration imposes on them. As outright rejection of the political legacy is not a viable option, the challenge is to adjust the own programmatic agenda in a way that makes it somehow compatible with the premises underpinning the existing regime. Wilfrid Laurier's (1896-1911) leadership style is somewhat reminiscent of this pattern.

A central plank of the Liberal's programmatic agenda of the day was free trade. Their staunch opposition to the protective tariff of the National Policy and advocacy of a reciprocity treaty with the United States constituted one of the major programmatic differences between the two parties. In light of the National Policy's resilience, however, the Liberals under Laurier began to water down their proposals, without entirely jettisoning their position on trade policy. The politics of pre-emption became manifest through a rhetorical redesignation of the tariff's policy goal: The Liberals simply framed and justified the continuation of the tariff as a necessary revenue measure rather than a protective economic tool, which would be maintained as long as it is "necessary to carry on the business of the Government" (quoted in LeDuc, et al., 2016: 74).

The Liberal government under Jean Chrétien (1993-2003) provides another, even better, example for the politics of pre-emption in Canadian politics. The Liberals entered the 1993 election campaign with a historically unpreceded comprehensive platform, the so called Red Book. Under the headline "Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada", they outlined a detailed "third way" agenda. At first glance, the deep budget cuts of 1995-96, along with the 1996 reform of Unemployment Insurance, which were far more draconian than any policy reform introduced by Mulroney during the 1980s, do not seem to be entirely consistent with, or even contradict, the

muddling through, "third way" logic of this leadership pattern. In fact, however, this unexpected move was an almost inevitable response to Canada's worsening economic and fiscal situation rather than an ideologically motivated effort to more firmly entrench a more market-oriented regime (Jeffrey, 2010). Entering the post-deficit era less than three years after the landmark budget furnished the Chrétien government with resources to slowly relaunch spending initiatives, and to deliver on at least some of the promises made in the Red Book. The purpose was not only to restore the fiscal foundations of programs of highly symbolic value and middle class appeal, most notably health care, but also to align the welfare state with the new regime by prioritizing programs consistent with the "social investment" paradigm (Jenson, 2013).

Conclusion: The Comparative Potential of the "The Politics Presidents Make"

The "The Politics Presidents Make" has not revealed idiosyncrasies of the American presidency. Skowronek's theoretical argument is quite robust, bearing considerable potential for comparative analysis. The leadership problem is not a peculiarity of the presidential system in the United States. While institutional differences between the fragmented nature of the presidential system on the one, the power-concentrating architecture of Canada's Westminster democracy warrant certain

modifications, prime ministers, in essence, need to resolve the problem of balancing contradictory implications of political authority in a similar way as presidents. Depending on their political affiliation and how they are situated historically at the intersection of secular and political time, prime ministers, just as their American counterparts, tend to engage in distinct, recurring leadership styles.

Differences between both systems matter, and reveal certain limitations. It is difficult, for example, to attribute Mackenzie King or Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who have occupied the office of the prime ministers for an extended period, one clear-cut leadership pattern. Rather, in both cases the leadership pattern seems to have changed as a response to shifting contextual conditions. In addition, Canadian prime ministers do not have to mobilize, in a similar way, broad public support as mandate for change against retarding forces in the powerful Congress. This puts less pressure on reconstructive leaders to perform publicly as "great communicators".

These limitations, however, to not diminish the comparative potential of Skowronek's approach. A cursory comparative summary between presidents and prime ministers points to interesting similarities (Table 2). As the secular evolution of regimes in both countries has elapsed almost simultaneously since the 1930s, as a fairly parallel process, several leaders have found themselves coping with similar leadership problems.

Table 2: Presidents, Prime Ministers and Leadership Patterns Compared: Examples

Franklin D. Roosevelt 1933-45: Politics of Reconstruction	Mackenzie King 1935-49 (Term: IV, V, VI): Politics of Reconstruction
Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-69: Politics of Articulation	Lester B. Pearson 1963-68: Politics of Articulation
Jimmy Carter 1977-81: Politics of Disjunction	Pierre Elliott Trudeau 1980-84(Term: IV): Politics of Disjunction
Ronald Reagan 1981-89: Politics of Reconstruction	Brian Mulroney 1984-1993: Politics of Reconstruction
Bill Clinton 1993-2001: Politics of Pre-emption	Jean Chretien: 1993-2003: Politics of Pre-emption
George W. Bush 2001-2009: Politics of Articulation	Stephen Harper: 2006-2015: Politics of Articulation
Barack Obama (2009-2017): Politics of Pre-emption	Justin Trudeau (2015 -): Politics of Pre-emption

While Skowronek's approach should not be understood deterministically, it offers interesting insight into mechanisms working at a deeper level of the polity, which are responsible for prompting recurrent leadership patterns. This opens up a fascinating research agenda at the intersection between history and political science. In particular, case studies on the remarkable coincidence of similar patterns since the late 1970s, or the politics of articulation of Johnson and Pearson during the 1960s, promise interesting insights. Moreover, the political time framework offers a powerful analytical lens to compare and situate historically the rhetoric and politics of change utilized by different political leaders. For example, the rhetoric deployed by Barak Obama and

Justin Trudeau, at first glance, seems to point towards new reconstructive leaders. Obama's 2008 platform promised to renew America's promise, announcing that "we are at the crossroads. As we meet, we are in the sixth year of a two-front war. Our economy is struggling. Our planet is in peril.... It is time for a change. We can do better" (Democratic National Committee 2008: 5). Likewise, the Liberal 2015 platform's slogan "Real Change" was turned into "Making Real Change Happen" in the Speech from the Throne in December 2015. Behind this rhetoric of change in both cases, however, has emerged a pre-emptive leadership style. Without understating the major achievement of implementing Obamacare, Obama clearly worked within the confines of the existing political regime. He never effectively challenged its

foundational pillars, not even when the 2008 financial crisis opened up a critical juncture. As for Trudeau, if Skowronek's framework has any predictive power in Canada, and provided the periodization scheme capturing the secular time dimension is accurate, the most likely scenario to expect is a preemptive pattern as well. Most importantly, and unlike in the United States and many European countries, the conditions for regime change are barely existent in Canada. With the Third Regime still being remarkably resilient, Canadian politics lack the contextual conditions that prompt the emergence of reconstructive leaders, at least for the time being. Despite his credible commitment to "Make Real Change Happen", we should expect that Justin Trudeau won't attempt to challenge the predominant order, and, ultimately, resume the preemptive politics of Jean Chrétien.

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Endnotes

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[2] See for example: Kreitner, Richard: "What Time is it? Here's What the 2016 Election tells us about Obama, Trump, and what comes Next" In: *The Nation* November 22, 2016; Franklin, Daniel P: "Trump could be a 'Reconstructive President', completely transforming the U.S. for 40 Years" In: *The Huffington Post* February 10, 2017; Skowronek, Stephen: "Is Trump the Great Disruptor? Probably not" In: *The Washington Post* April 24, 2017; Lemieux, Scott: "Is Donald Trump the next Jimmy Carter?" In: *New Republic* January 23, 2017.

[3] For a pointed critique see Clarkson (2005: 206ff.).

[4] Authors like Vernon Fowke (1952), for example, argue that national policy has evolved in an incremental process reaching back to 1825.

[5] In a similar way, but within the much shorter time span of less than five years, R.B. Bennett's (1930-35) response to the crisis shifted, all of a sudden and unexpectedly at the end of his term, from a disjunctive (e.g. increasing the tariff) to a reconstructive pattern (the so called Bennett "New Deal": the Employment and Social Insurance Act of 1935).