

# Candidate Ideology and Positioning in the 2022 Conservative Leadership Race

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## What is Ideology & Positioning?

Ideologies are competing sets of philosophical principles that can guide the policy preferences of different actors. Most political parties are coalitions of different ideological factions. In leadership races and general elections, candidates will take 'positions' on values, policies, and other actors to appeal to a specific coalition of voters.

## Research Question

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To what extent can the ideology of leadership candidates explain their positioning on broad values, specific issues, and the other candidates?

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## Methods

The Dow Jones Factiva media database was used to obtain all media articles related to the 2022 Conservative leadership race published in the *National Post*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Star* during the race (2 February–10 September). The articles were analysed and coded in terms of how ideological divisions within the party, and across each candidate, were portrayed and on how each candidate positioned themselves on broad values, specific issues, and in relation to the other candidates.



NATIONAL POST

TORONTO STAR

## Discussion & Next Steps

- The findings show the importance of ideological divisions within political parties and the utility of party ideological factions as an explanatory unit of analysis.
- Ranked ballot voting results will be analysed to determine the extent to which ideology explains voters' second choices.
- The coalition of voters put together by the eventual winner may help to explain party positioning in the next federal election.

## Findings

The ideology of each candidate does help to explain candidate positioning on general values, specific issues, and the other candidates. The top four candidates, from the political left to the political right, included:

### Patrick Brown



Described as a 'red Tory', 'moderate', and 'progressive conservative'. This explains his emphasis on inclusion and his moderate positions on abortion, climate policy, and economic issues. It also explains his opposition to the freedom convoy and his attacks on Poilievre but not Charest and his eventual endorsement of Charest.

### Jean Charest



Described as a 'red Tory', 'moderate', and 'progressive conservative'. This explains his moderate positions on abortion, climate policy, and economic issues and his opposition to the freedom convoy. It also explains his attacks on Poilievre but not Brown and the links between many of his supporters and the moderate group Centre Ice Conservatives.

### Pierre Poilievre



Described as 'true blue', a 'strong conservative', and a 'populist'. This explains his strongly conservative, but not social conservative positions on abortion, vaccines and the freedom convoy, and various economic issues. It also explains his attacks on Charest and Brown but not Lewis and his endorsement by former PM Harper.

### Leslyn Lewis



Consistently described as a 'social conservative'. This explains her farther right positions on abortion, vaccines and the freedom convoy, and various international institutions. It also explains her being endorsed by key social conservative NGOs such as the Campaign Life Coalition and RightNow.