

Urban and Suburban Conservatives:

The impact of residential location on the political attitudes of Conservative Party Members in Westmount - Ville-Marie

Tim Mak

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Department of Geography, McGill University

Montreal (Quebec) Canada

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Existing academic literature has shown that where one lives has profound implications on party affiliations and political attitudes. In particular, a pattern of suburban-urban political polarization has emerged, with the suburbs tending to be more conservative, and the inner-cities tending to be less conservative. Using Walks' 2006 case study as a model, this paper examines whether suburban-urban political polarization exists within a political party, specifically the Conservative Party. In order to look at political attitudes within the Conservative Party, I distinguish between fiscal and social conservatism and propose ways of measuring each. Using the Montreal-area riding Westmount – Ville-Marie as a case study, this study also looks at the possible mechanisms underlying political polarization. In particular, I examine the influence of different modes of consumption and the effect of housing tenure on the political attitudes of Conservatives. To see if my results have applicability beyond my case study area, I compare my sample demographics and political attitudes to those of populations at the national and provincial (Quebec) scales, as well as to Canadian Conservatives as a whole. Unfortunately, the data analysis in this thesis did not provide substantial support for my hypotheses, although some interesting statistically significant relationships were found.

Tim Mak (timothy.mak@mail.mcgill.ca)
Supervisor: Professor Benjamin Forest (benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca)
Reader: Professor Sébastien Breau (sebastien.breau@mcgill.ca)