Polarization and Campaign Dynamics

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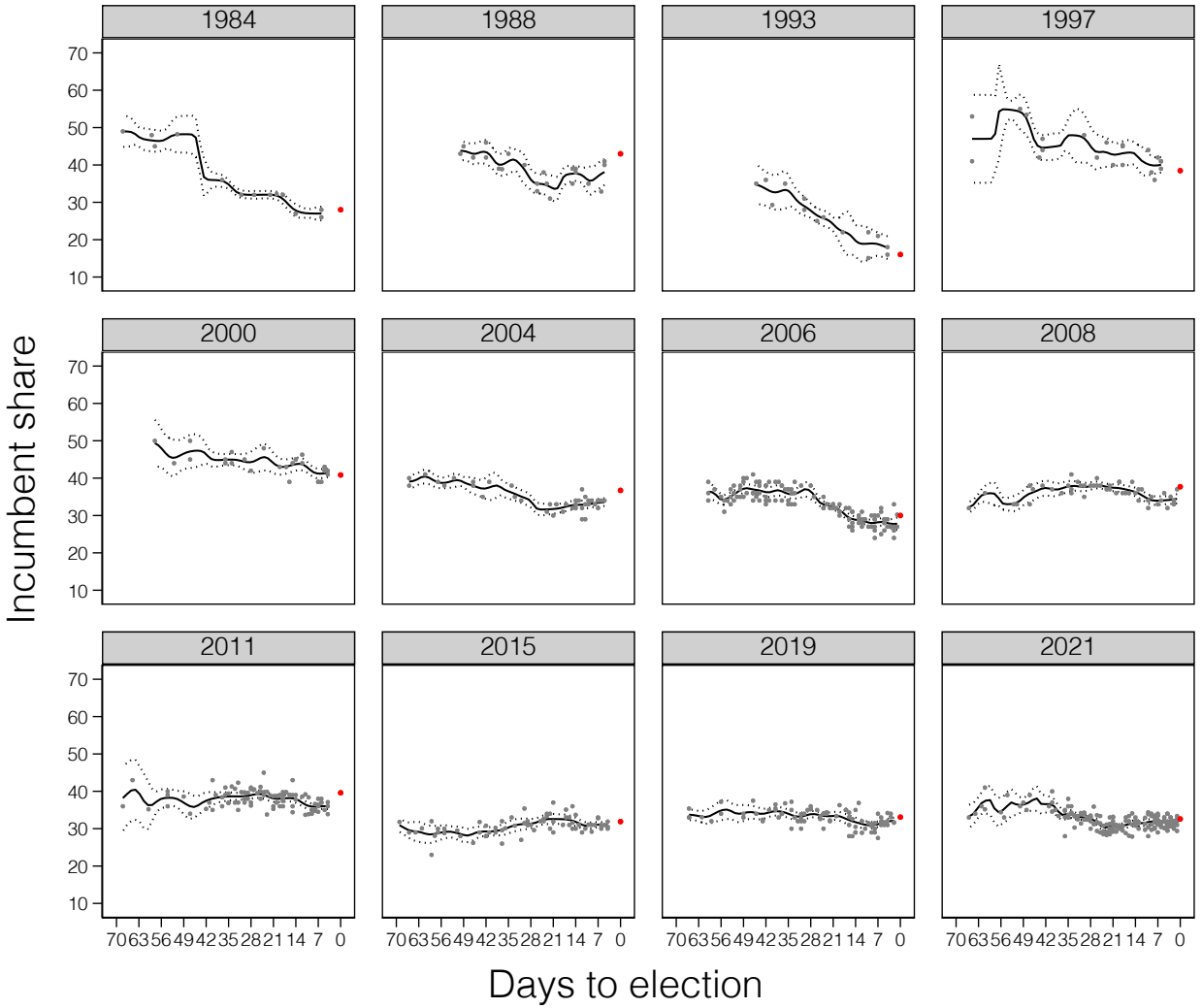
APSA 2022

- Volatility has shrunk in US elections, both within and between campaigns – polarization the key
- Similar in Canada? Incumbent shares:



- Has affective polarization increased?
- Does affective polarization decrease campaign volatility?
- Complications:
  - Multi-party system
    - Some dyads have polarized, others have depolarized
    - Shifting menu of parties
    - coordination imperatives between adjacent parties
  - Electorate is segmented: Quebec *v* rest of Canada (ROC)
    - Different menu of parties
    - QC: additional dimension -- “National Question”

Hypotheses:

1. As polarization increases, movement *within* ideological blocks *decreases*

   Flattening the dimensionality confines movement to adjacent parties In the single dominant dimension – hinders performance judgments

2. As polarization increases, movement *within* ideological blocks *increases*

   Performance judgments confined within blocks

3. As polarization increases, electoral *coordination* within blocks *increases*

   FPP – strategic imperative to consolidate the vote

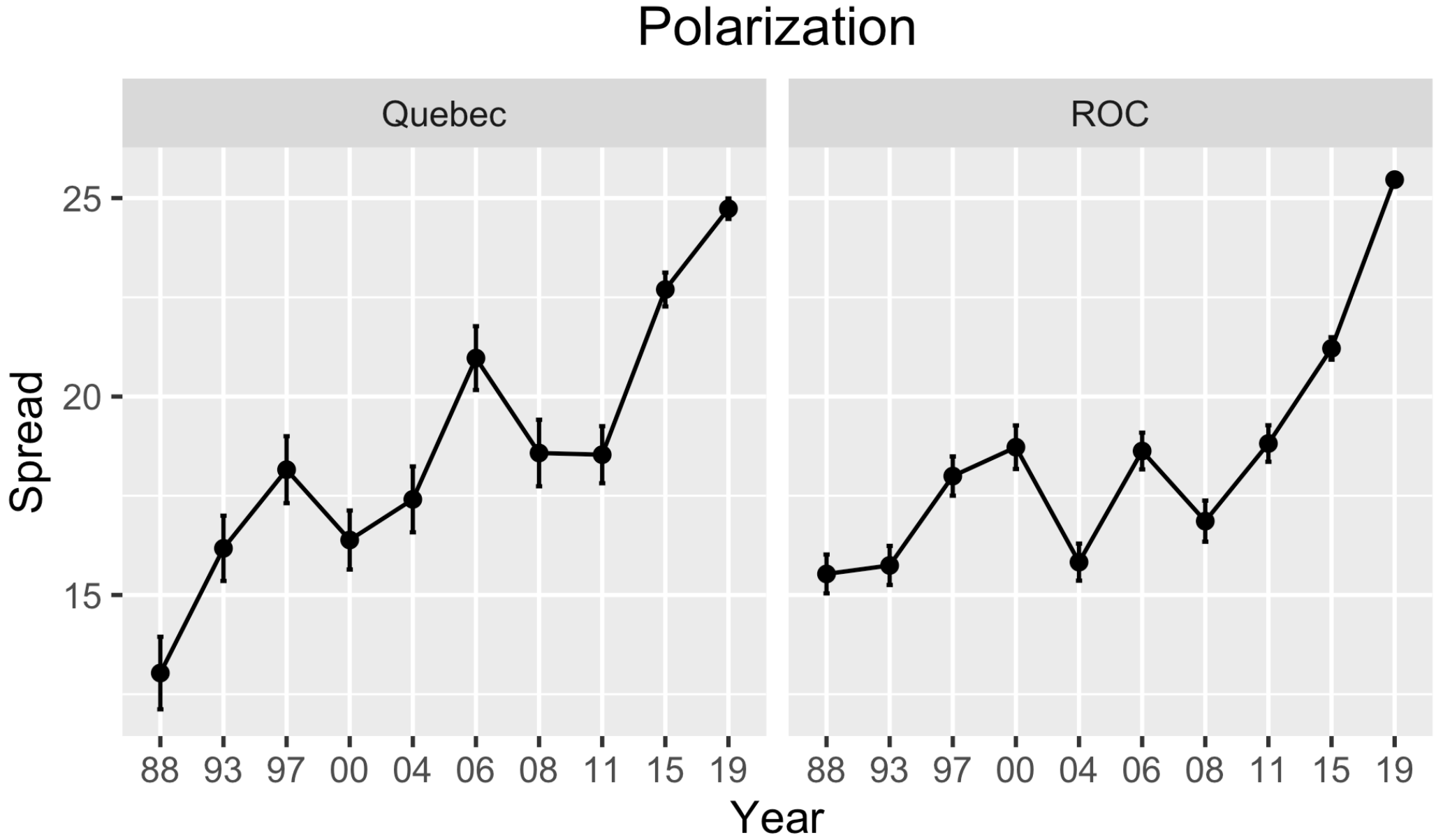
- Polarization indicator should include
  - All (non-minuscule) parties
  - Non-partisans as well as partisans

- Volatility indicators should separate movement *between* ‘blocks’ from movement *within* ‘blocks’.

- Consolidation indicator should reflect number and relative size of parties within a block

Polarization indicator

- Feeling thermometer scores for *parties*
- Indexed by *spread* (Wagner 2021) – sum of squared deviations from average rating
  - Average and deviations *weighted* for vote shares in the current election
  - Premium on feelings toward larger parties


Polarization
Quebec
ROC
Spread
25
20
15
88
93
97
00
04
06
08
11
15
19
Year

Volatility indicators

- Based on Volatility index (Pedersen 1979):
- Volatility for the system = *Total Volatility = TV* (Bartolini and Mair 1990 [2007])
- *Block Volatility* = BV.
- *WBV = TV - BV*

Consolidation

- Effective number of parties (Laakso & Taagepera 1979)

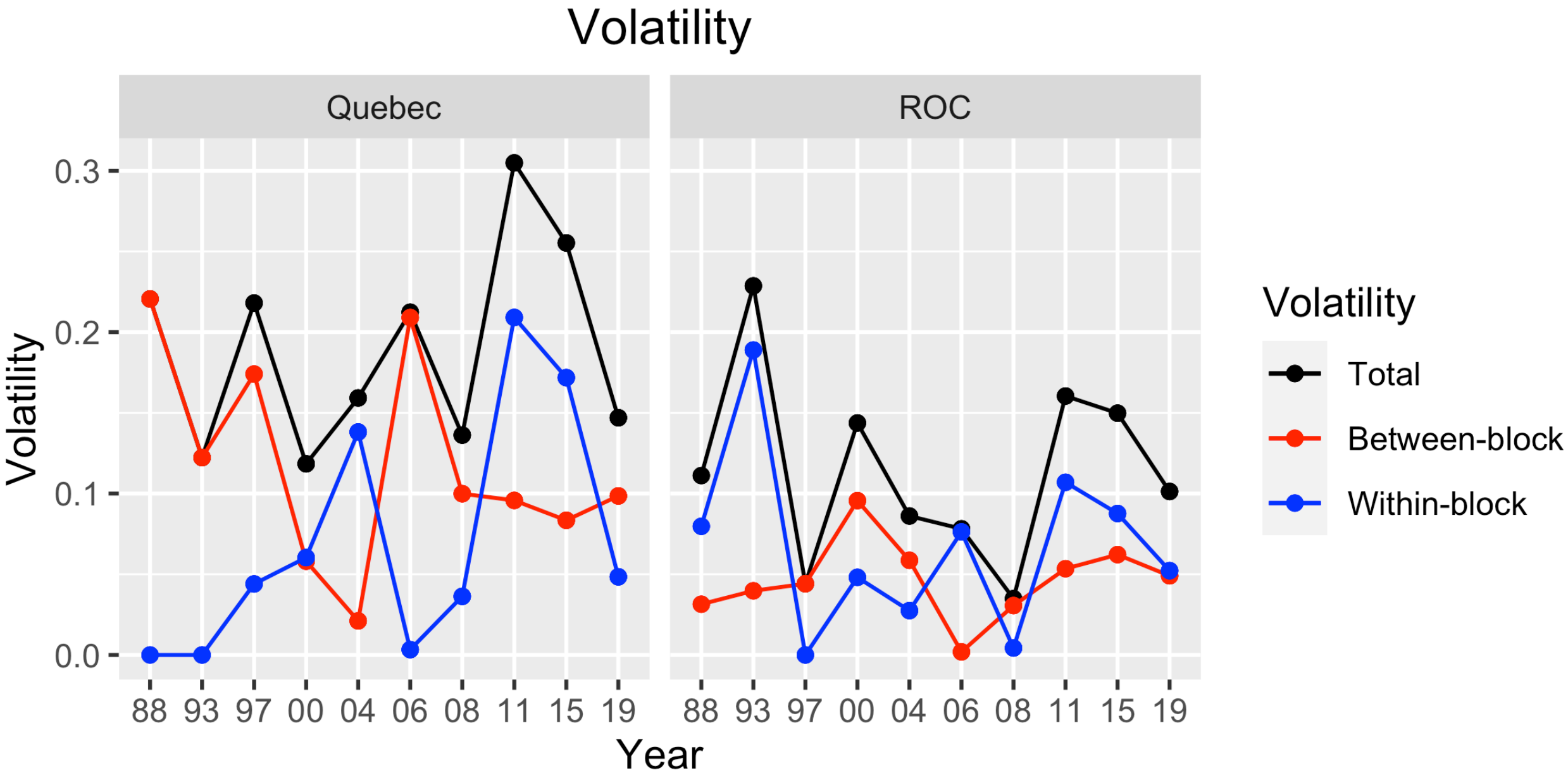
$$1/(1 - \text{HH index})$$

- Yields fractional number of “parties”
- Smaller value = more coordination
- Calculations within each block

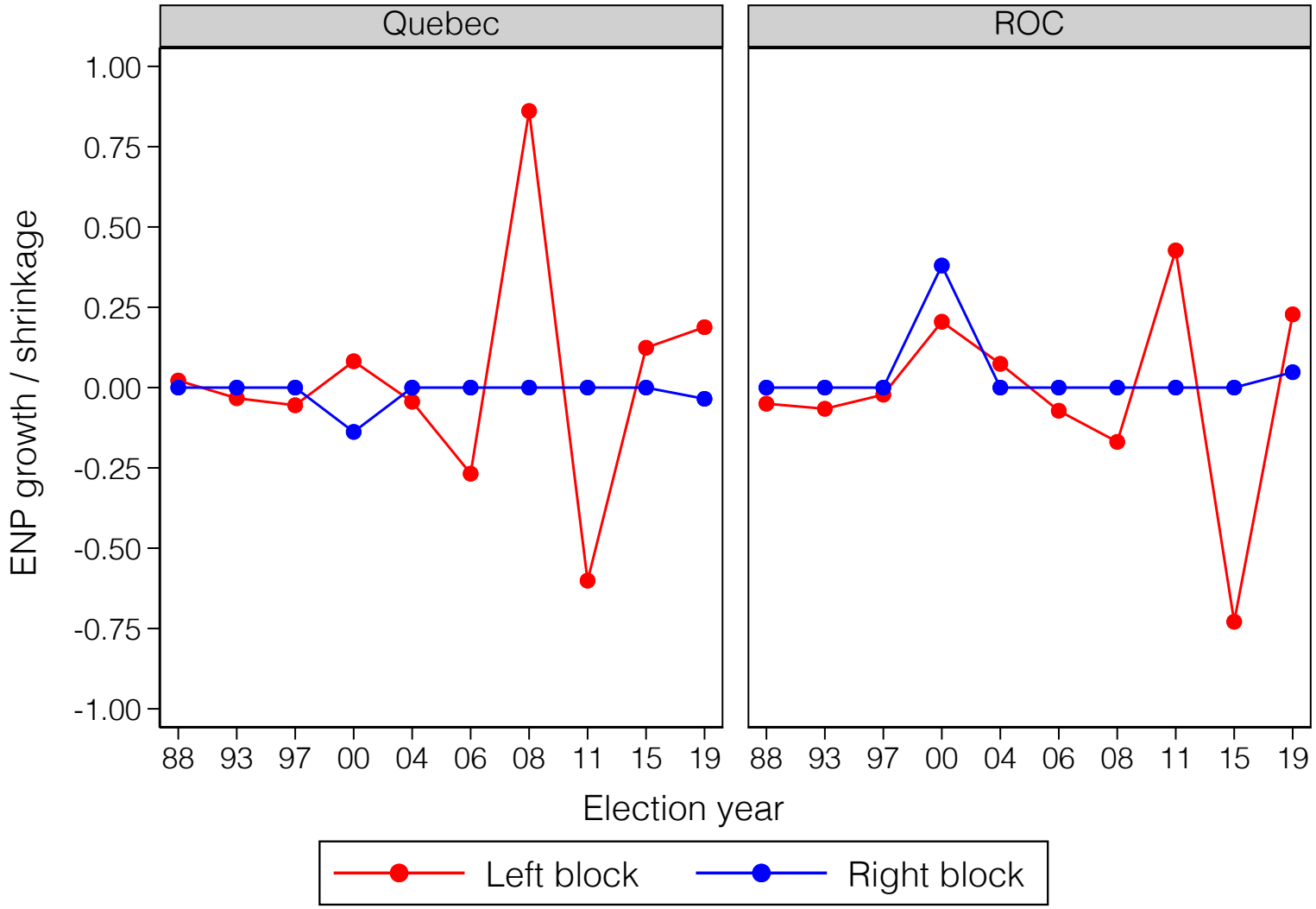
Identifying the end points

True RCS (Johnston & Brady 2002)

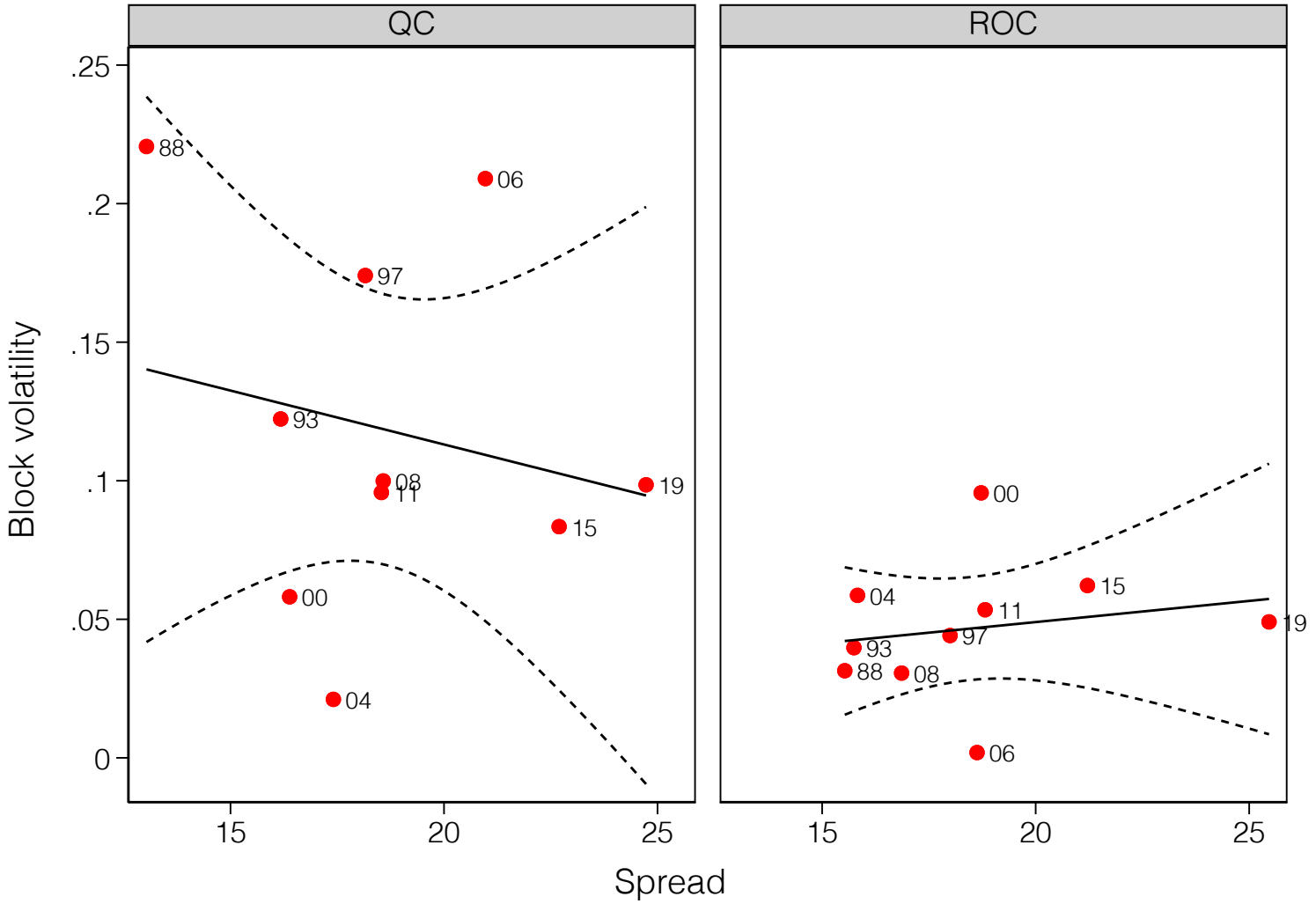
1. Remove earliest days
   - Clearance of sample
2. Smoothing of vote intentions
   - Remove sampling error
   - Method: Generalized additive model (GAM) with cubic splines
     - Estimation by cross-validation
3. Volatility and consolidation: difference between smoothed share of vote intentions at the end of the campaign and at the beginning


Volatility
Quebec
ROC
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
Volatility
88 93 97 00 04 06 08 11 15 19
Year
Volatility
Total
Between-block
Within-block

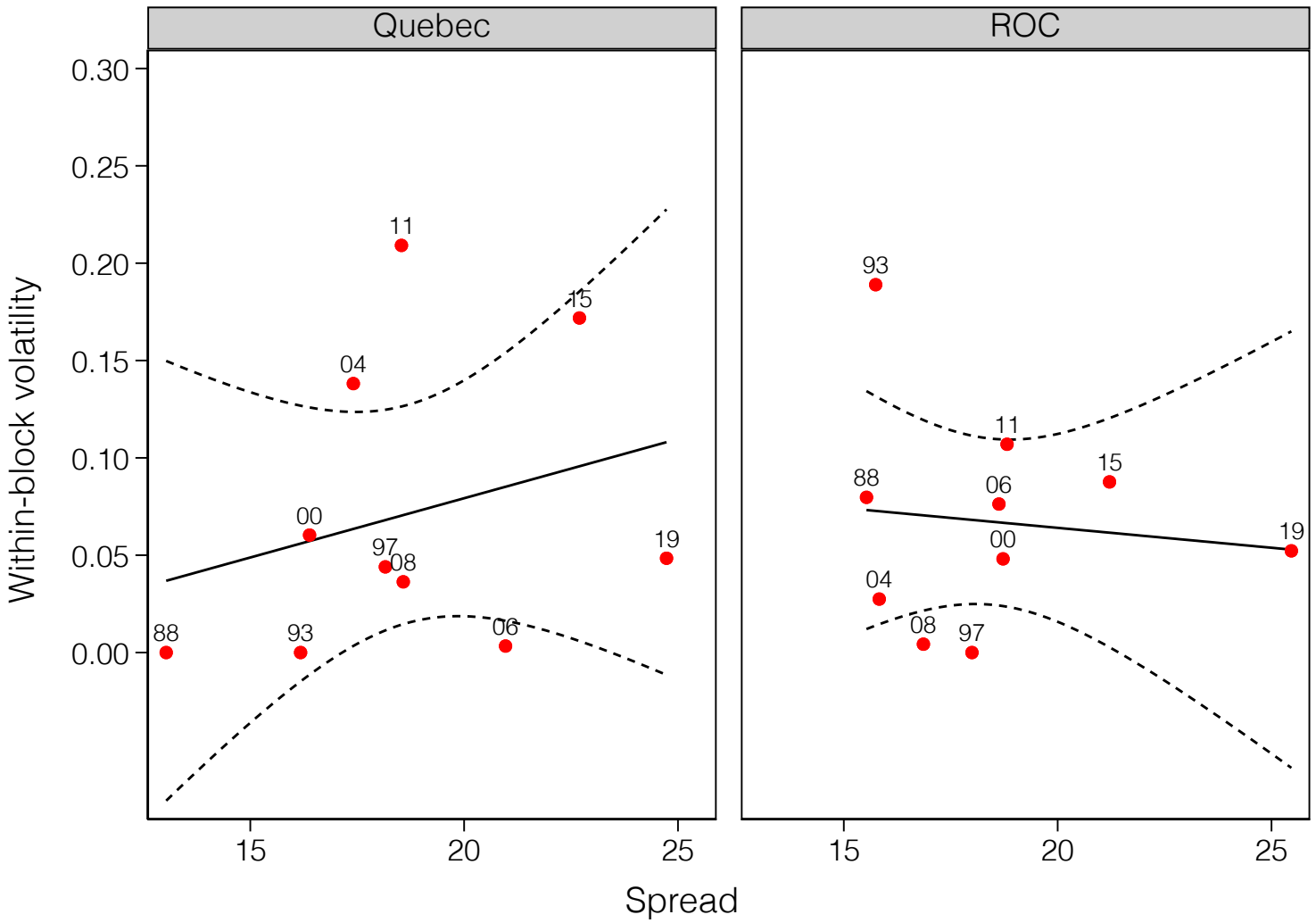
Consolidation



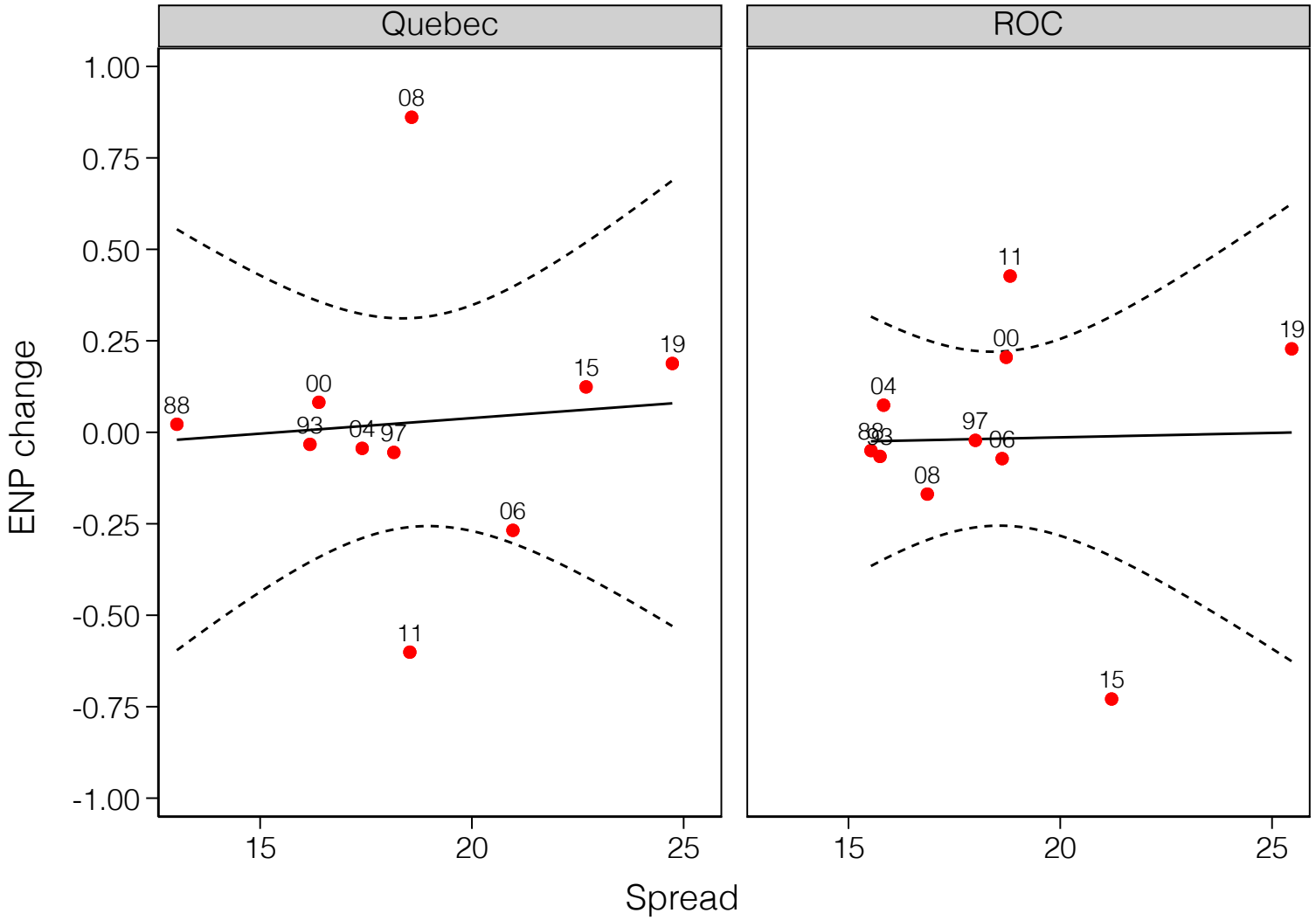
Spread and Block Volatility



Spread and Within-Block Volatility



Spread and Left Consolidation

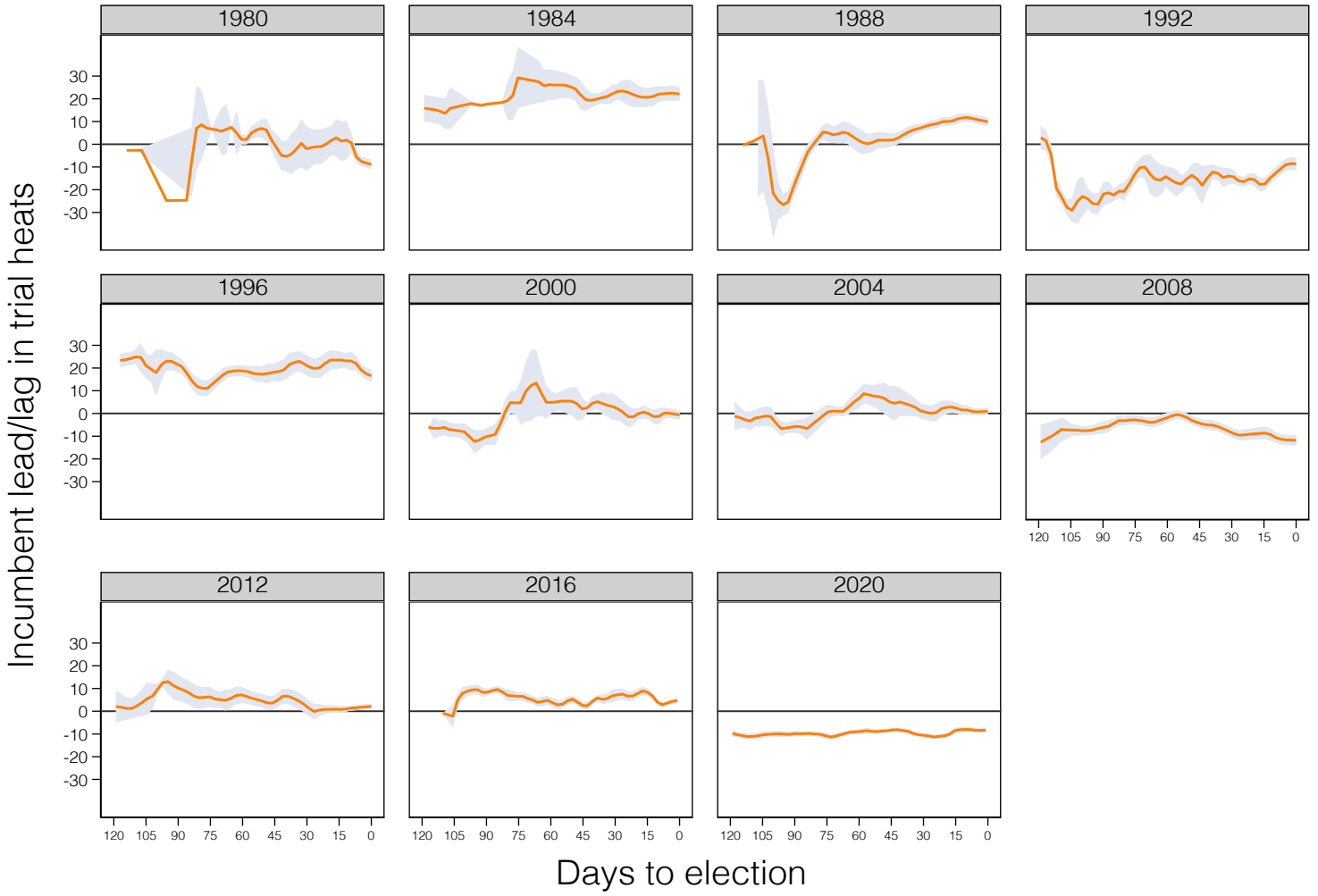


Discussion

- Dimensionality
  - ROC: may have shrunk but still not unidimensional
  - QC: may actually have increased – Bloc v Liberals + expansion of L-R
- Liberals still occupy the centre – scope for opportunism (e.g. 90s)
- Party splits and fusion – PID not a constant, esp on the right
- Compensation voting?
- Strategic manoeuvre more between than within campaigns
  - context dependency
  - cf 1993 & 2011

Extras

- In the US, polarization has made elections less variable, including in campaigns:

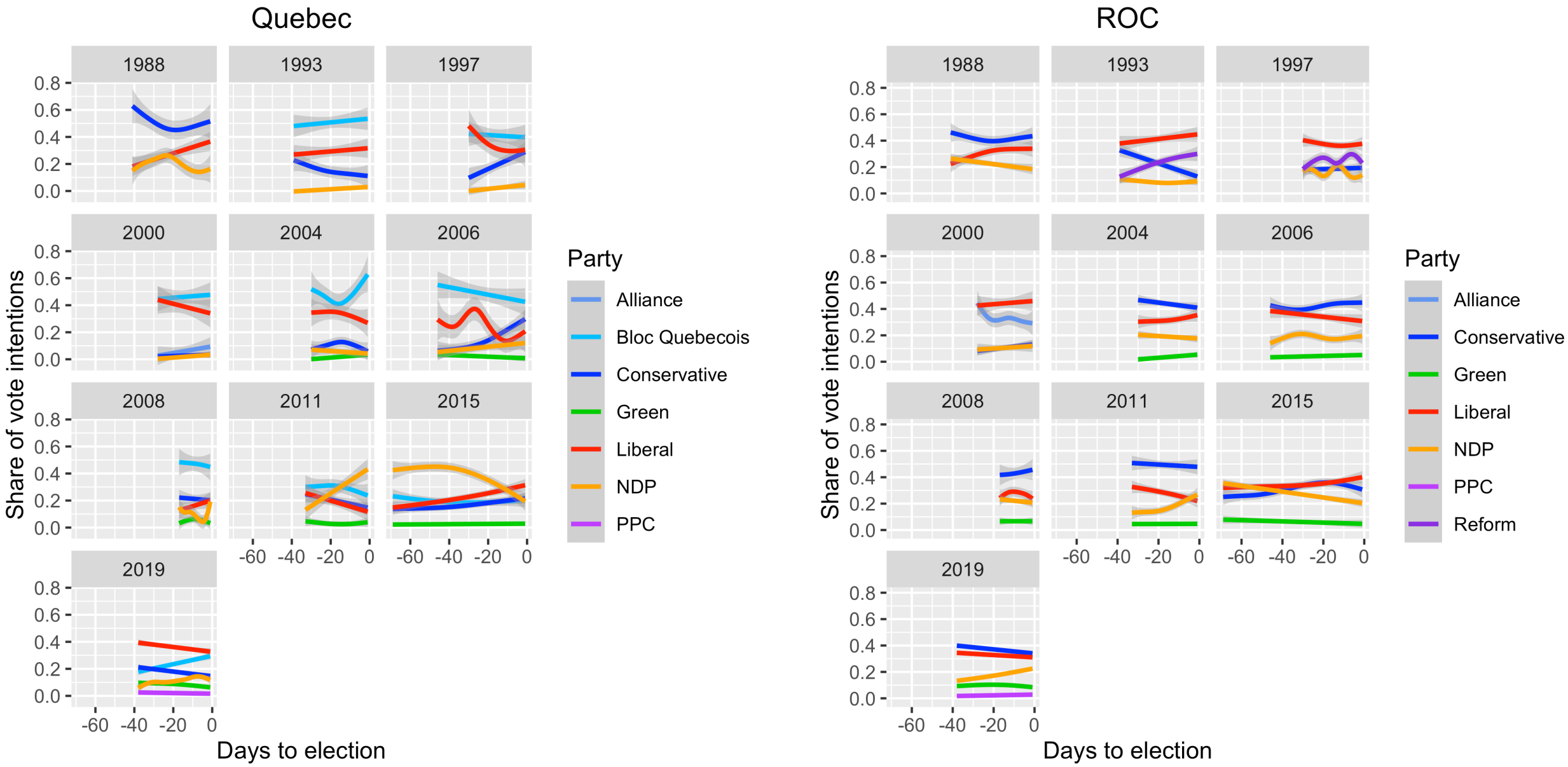


Volatility indicators

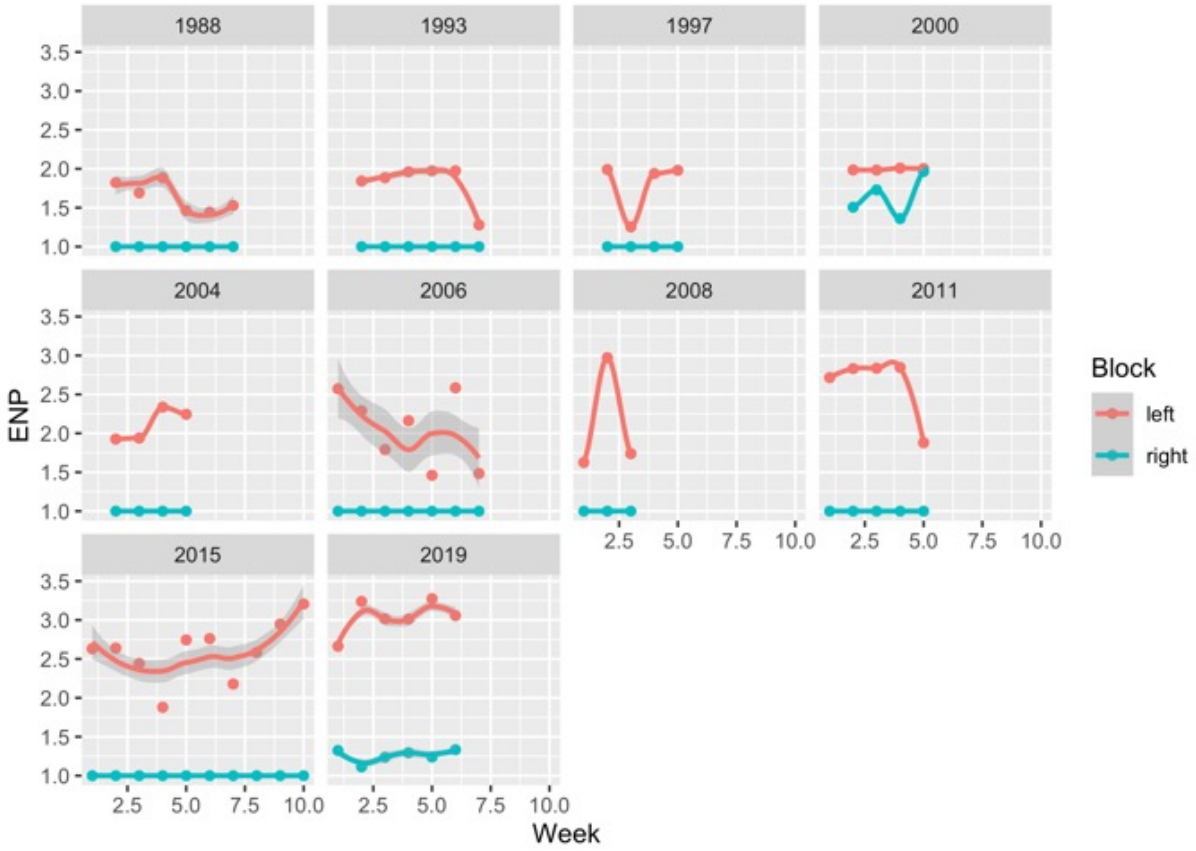
- Volatility index (Pedersen 1973, 1983):
  - Where Volatility for *party*$_i$ (V_i) = $P_{it} - P_{it(0)}$, where P_{it} is the i^{th} party's share at *t.*
  - Volatility for the system = $\frac{\sum_i |V_i|}{2}$. Call this *Total Volatility = TV* (Bartolini and Mair 1990 [2007])

- Where parties grouped in blocks:
  - *Block Volatility* = $\frac{|V_a+V_b+V_c|+|V_d+V_e|}{2}$, by way of illustration, where V_a, V_b, V_c are one block and V_d and V_e, the other block in a system with two blocks.

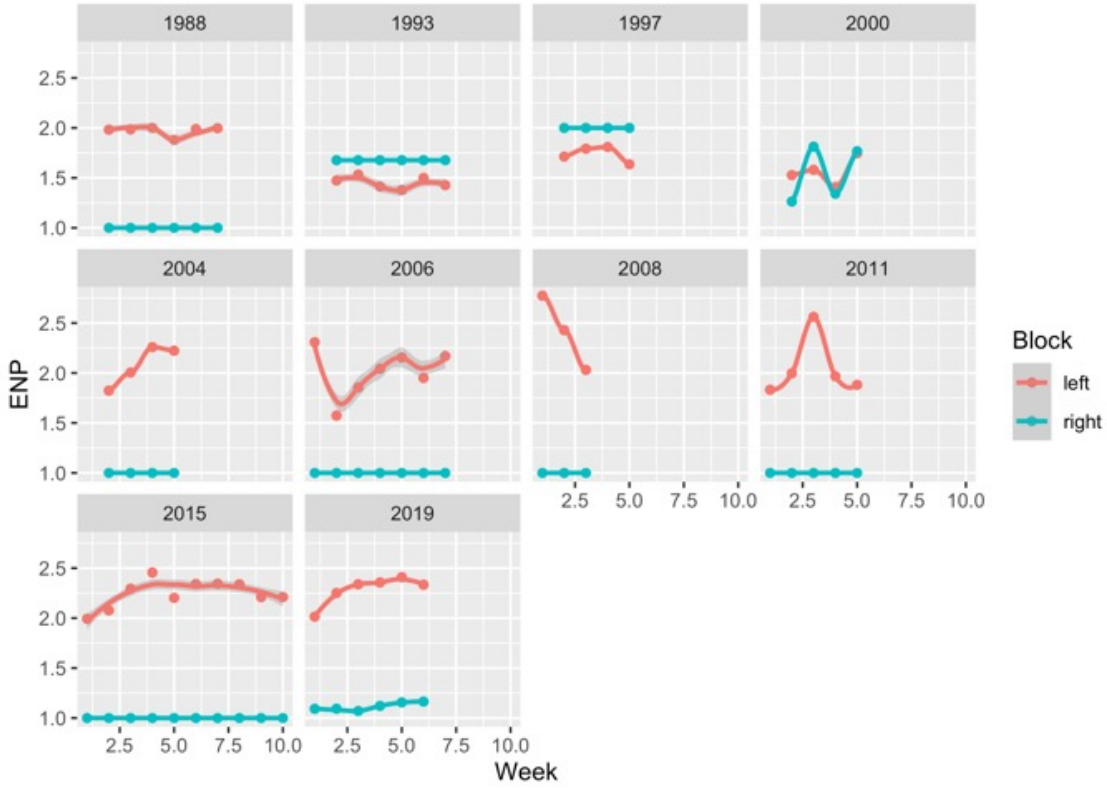
- Call *Within-Bloc* Volatility WBV.
  - *TV = BV + WBV*


Quebec
ROC
1988
1993
1997
2000
2004
2006
2008
2011
2015
2019
Share of vote intentions
Days to election
0.0
0.2
0.4
0.6
0.8
-60
-40
-20
0
Party
Alliance
Bloc Quebecois
Conservative
Green
Liberal
NDP
PPC
Reform

Quebec


1988
1993
1997
2000
2004
2006
2008
2011
2015
2019
ENP
Week
Block
left
right

ROC


1988
1993
1997
2000
2004
2006
2008
2011
2015
2019
ENP
Week
Block
left
right