Ideological Insiders and Punishment of Coalitional Compromise

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Introduction

Motivation

The Electoral Cost of Coalition
  The Mechanism
  The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective
  The Heuristic Approach
  A Spatial Model with Two Heuristics

The EITM Framework
  Three Steps

Research Design

Findings and Conclusions
  Empirical Results

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Research Question

Do voters in coalitional systems punish political parties for joining coalition governments?
“Cost of coalition” is often assumed in the coalition governance literature.
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- Making policy compromise is an essential part in the coalition governing process, however, it undermines a party’s long established profile. Martin & Vanberg 2008, 2014
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- It leads supporters to believe that parties have changed their policy positions, and in the new ideological landscape parties are farther away from supporters than they were.
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- Making policy compromise is an essential part in the coalition governing process, however, it undermines a party’s long established profile. Martin & Vanberg 2008, 2014
- It leads supporters to believe that parties have changed their policy positions, and in the new ideological landscape parties are farther away from supporters than they were.
- Therefore, voters punish parties for ideologically moving away from them.
Driven by the assumption, the literature has shown:

1. Party elites know that there is a price for coalition participation and they desperately try to avoid it. For instance, they use legislative debate to differentiate themselves from their coalition partners. e.g., Martin & Vanberg 2008, Fortunato 2012 Ch4

2. In addition, they also know their partners will fight fiercely against the coalition cost, consequently they use legislative institutions to prevent potential deviating activities. e.g., Thies 2001, Kim & Loewenberg 2005, Martin & Vanberg 2013, Carroll & Cox 2012
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Introduction

Motivation

The Untested Assumption

- Surprisingly, this assumption has not received any empirical test, which leaves us several questions:
Introduction
Motivation

The Untested Assumption

- Surprisingly, this assumption has not received any empirical test, which leaves us several questions:
  - Do voters really punish parties for joining coalition and pursing policy compromise?
  - If they do, who are those voters more or less likely to do so?
The Electoral Cost of Coalition

Outline

1 Introduction
   Motivation

2 The Electoral Cost of Coalition
   The Mechanism
   The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective
   The Heuristic Approach
   A Spatial Model with Two Heuristics

3 The EITM Framework
   Three Steps

4 Research Design

5 Findings and Conclusions
   Empirical Results
The Electoral Cost of Coalition

The Mechanism

Why do voters punish parties for entering coalition governments?

- Forming a coalition government always involves policy compromise making.
- Policy compromise leads supporters to believe that parties have changed their policy positions, and in the new ideological landscape parties are farther away from supporters than they were.
- Therefore, punishment.
The above argument reveals the general mechanism and some requirements for voters to punish compromise making.

1. Voters have to observe the policy output of a coalition government.
2. Voters possess their own "model of coalition policy making", and use it to update their perceptions of government parties' new positions.
3. With the renewed perceptions, voters know whether these parties have changed positions after joining coalition governments.
4. They then simply calculate the ideological distance between their ideal points and parties' new positions to decide whether to vote for it again or not.
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In short, electoral punishment occurs when voters’ “calculation” tell them that political parties they support have shifted away from them, and moved toward their coalition partners.
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However, whether voters could effectively renew their perceptions through this updating process is questionable.
The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ P = \frac{A + B}{2} \]

Party Positions at \( t_1 \)

Observed Policy at \( t_2 \)

\( V_i \)

\( A_{t_1} \)

\( B_{t_1} \)

\( P_{t_2} \)
The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ P = \frac{A + B}{2} \]

\[ A_{t1} = t2 \]

\[ P_{t2} \]

\[ B_{t1} \]
The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ P = \frac{A + B}{2} \]

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Updating

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The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ P = \frac{A + B}{2} \]

\[ V_i \]

\[ A_{t1} \]

\[ P_{t2} \]

\[ B_{t1=t2} \]
The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ P = \frac{A + B}{2} \]

Updating

\( A_{t1} \)
\( P_{t2} \)
\( B_{t1=t2} \)
Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ A_{t1} \quad P_{t2} \quad B_{t1} \]
The Electoral Cost of Coalition

The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ A_t \quad P_t \quad B_t \]

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The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

\[ A_t1 \rightarrow P_t2 \rightarrow B_t1 \]

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Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

A_{t1} P_{t2} B_{t1}
The Electoral Cost of Coalition

The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

A_{t1} \quad P_{t2} \quad B_{t2}
The Electoral Cost of Coalition
The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective

Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

At1

Pt2

Bt1

A

Bt2

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Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

At1

Pt2

Bt1

Bt2

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Ideological Insiders and Punishment of Coalitional Compromise
Updating Beliefs and Perceiving Compromises

$A_{t2}$

$A_{t1}$

$P_{t2}$

$B_{t1}$

$B_{t2}$
In sum, the above traditional spatial voting perspective fails to show that voters perceive policy compromise in a systematic way.

- Thus it fails to confirm the relationship between perceiving compromise and punishing parties.
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- Thus it fails to confirm the relationship between perceiving compromise and punishing parties.

In addition, even if there is a way to do so, voters have to be incredibly informed and are unreasonably capable of doing complex calculation.

- Unrealistic in Downs’ (1957) perspective.
Instead of being highly informed and capable of doing complex calculation, a recent study suggests that voters use heuristics to help them comprehend the ideological landscape. Fortunato & Stevenson 2013

- Voters know joint-governing process involves policy compromise.
- Voters then take coalition membership as a heuristic with which they tend to perceive cabinet parties ideologically more similar.
Building on the above finding, Fortunato (2013) argues that voters punish coalition participation because they prefer conflicts among cabinet parties over compromises.
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- Unrealistically assuming voters are all alike in their distaste of policy compromise in a system where compromise is hardly to be avoided.
Research Question

Do voters really punish political parties for joining coalition governments and pursuing compromises?
Research Question

× Do voters really punish political parties for joining coalition governments and pursuing compromises?

✓ Who are more or less likely to punish parties for joining coalition governments and pursuing compromises?
Voters believe that parties in coalition government are ideologically converging (the first heuristic).

Punishment is conditioned on an additional heuristic – whether voters see themselves ideologically locating in between coalition parties.

- For “insiders”, their updated perceptions of parties are not only converging, but also moving toward their own ideal points.
  - Voters perceived a closer distance to parties they support, therefore less likely to punish.

- For “outsiders”, their updated perceptions of parties are not only converging, but moving away from their own ideal points.
  - Voters perceived a farer distance to parties they supported, therefore more likely to punish.
Converging
The Electoral Cost of Coalition

A Spatial Model with Two Heuristics

Converging

$v_j$  $P_A$  $v_k$  $P_B$
Hypotheses

H1: Ideological insiders (who locate in between a party dyad) are less likely to punish parties in coalition government than ideological outsiders.
Outline

1 Introduction
   Motivation

2 The Electoral Cost of Coalition
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   The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective
   The Heuristic Approach
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3 The EITM Framework
   Three Steps

4 Research Design

5 Findings and Conclusions
   Empirical Results
Three Steps:

1. Unifying theoretical concepts and applied statistical concepts.
2. Develop behavioral and statistical analogues.
3. Unite theoretical and statistical analogues in testable theory.
The EITM Framework

Three Steps

Step 1

- Theoretical concept: *Decision Making*
  - An individual voter decides whether to punish a party or not.
  - Such a decision involves calculation of certain benefits and costs.

- Statistical concept: *Discrete Choice*
  - The decision is a dichotomous action: voter can either punish the party (i.e., being abstain or vote for other parties), or reward the party (i.e., vote for it again)
Step II

- Behavioral analogue: *Decision Theory*, which involves utility calculation (marginal decision rule).

- Statistical analogue: *Discrete Choice Model* (i.e., probit or logit)

- Voter\(_i\)'s unobserved utility and his decision to punish party\(_j\) can be written as:

\[
Y^* = \beta' X + \varepsilon
\]

and

\[
Y = \begin{cases} 
1, & \text{if } Y^* < 0 \\
0, & \text{otherwise}.
\end{cases}
\]
Given the earlier discussion, a united model can be shown as:

\[ \Pr(y_i = 1) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \delta_i Z_i \]

- \( X_1 = \) ideological insider/outsider
- \( Z_i = \) other control variables

Empirical expectation \( \beta_1 < 0 \)
Outline

1. Introduction
   - Motivation

2. The Electoral Cost of Coalition
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   - The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective
   - The Heuristic Approach
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3. The EITM Framework
   - Three Steps

4. Research Design

5. Findings and Conclusions
   - Empirical Results
Research Design

Data and Measurements

- **Data:**
  - Unit of analysis: individual - party dyad.

- **Variables:**
  - DV: Vote choice change. (1=change, 0=else)
  - IV: Ideological insider/ousider (1=insider, 0=else)
  - Controls: Political interest, Insider X Interest, Government satisfaction, Party identity, Perceived distance (respondent-party, respondent-dyad), Age, and Gender.
Outline

1. Introduction
   Motivation

2. The Electoral Cost of Coalition
   The Mechanism
   The Traditional Spatial Voting Perspective
   The Heuristic Approach
   A Spatial Model with Two Heuristics

3. The EITM Framework
   Three Steps

4. Research Design

5. Findings and Conclusions
   Empirical Results
Table: Coalition Participation and Electoral Punishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside Supporters</td>
<td>-0.144**</td>
<td>-0.312**</td>
<td>-0.197**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
<td>(0.070)</td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
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<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.248*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.094)</td>
<td>(0.107)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insider X Interest</td>
<td>-0.205*</td>
<td>-0.206*</td>
<td>-0.224+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.094)</td>
<td>(0.097)</td>
<td>(0.133)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.687**</td>
<td>-0.681**</td>
<td>-0.461**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
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<td>Voter-Party Distance</td>
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<td>Party Identifier</td>
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<td>(0.062)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-0.019**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.085+</td>
<td>-0.122*</td>
<td>-0.181**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.045)</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.503**</td>
<td>2.707**</td>
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<td>(0.281)</td>
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<td>No. of Years</td>
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<td>No. of Party Dyads</td>
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<td>No. of Observations</td>
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<td>Log-Likelihood</td>
<td>-6052.923</td>
<td>-4120.707</td>
<td>-3355.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Conclusion and Discussion

1. There is an electoral price for entering coalition government.
   - It comes mainly from those “outside” party supporters.
   - “Inside” voters prefer to see parties they support to join coalitions.

2. The finding has implications on political elites’ behavior in coalitions.
   - It echoes Martin and Vanberg’s (2008) study, suggesting that these “outside” supporters are exactly those who political elites want to communicate with.
   - The size of “inside” supporters may condition a party’s strategies of forming/joining coalitions with other parties.
Findings and Conclusions
Empirical Results

Thank You.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Coalition Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>CDA, VVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>CDA, PvdA, D66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>CDA, VVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>CDA, VVD</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>CDA, PvdA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>PvdA, VVD, D66</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>PvdA, VVD, D66</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>CDA, LPF, VVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CDA, VVD, D66</td>
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