Party Representation on Government Advisory Commissions

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Abstract

The recommendations of government advisory commissions are a crucial source of expert knowledge and legitimacy for policy-making. In democracies with highly meritocratic bureaucracies, commissions have largely been presumed to be composed of non-partisan experts and representatives of diverse political and societal interests. This paper argues that the composition of these commissions is more partisan than previously thought. Linking data on more than 15,000 members of commissions with data on all candidates for local and national elections in Norway (1972-2023), the extent of party representation on commissions is assessed. Findings reveal that 25% of commission members are party affiliated and that, while baseline representation tracks parliamentary seat shares, these members are more likely to be co-partisans than counter-partisans. Moreover, representatives from government parties are more prone to be present on commissions following cabinet formation and for government parties with more intense ideological preferences. These findings reveal that even in highly meritocratic democracies, partisan considerations shape appointments to supposedly neutral expert bodies, with implications for the independence of policy advice.

Keywords: political appointments, bureaucracy, delegation, advisory commissions, politicization, expert knowledge

1 Introduction

Ad-hoc government advisory commissions are important temporary bureaucratic structures set-up for governments to gain expert knowledge and legitimacy for policy (Craft & Howlett, 2013) or to provide a credible source of information in the aftermath of national crises (Binningsbø et al., 2025; Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010a). The decision to form a commission and its design are of considerable political importance to both government and opposition parties. The Disagreement about the inclusion of (and phrasing of) an evaluation of oil investments and climate change in the mandate for a commission tasked with evaluating scenarios for change in the Norwegian economy almost resulted in the Green Party toppling the Støre-Government during budget negotiations in 2025, as the party left negotiations with the government, agreeing

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to support the governments budget only after receiving promises of changes to the commissions mandate (Rønnfeldt & Lægland, 2025). Once established, commissions are meant to be depoliticized bodies of experts that create an objective knowledge base on which all parties can agree. Accordingly, Commissions pose a delegation problem for governments because they involve external experts and stand outside the traditional bureaucratic chain of command. However, this delegation problem can be handled through the appointment of political allies to secure goal alignment between the commission and the government (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016; Geys et al., 2023). Whereas governments are often subject to strict formal rules against using political criteria when selecting senior bureaucrats (Bolton et al., 2021) or are restricted by ex-ante legislative conformation when selecting political appointees (Hollibaugh Jr. & Rothenberg, 2018), they typically wield great political discretion when selecting members for ad-hoc commissions. In the US, for instance, setting up the Department of Government Efficiency as a government commission through executive order allowed the Trump Administration to place one of its largest financial backers, Elon Musk, into a considerable position of power without the need for Senate approval that a political appointment to the bureaucracy would have required (Moynihan & Zuppke, 2025).

Against this backdrop, research on ad-hoc commissions in countries with more politicized bureaucracies has tended to view appointments to these commissions as just another part of the office spoils that governments can distribute to their supporters (Staronova et al., 2025), particularly to individuals who are unwilling or unfit for more important political appointments (Hollibaugh, 2017; Lewis, 2008). Taking partisan influence on appointments as a given. Conversely, in democracies with highly meritocratic bureaucracies, such as the Nordic and Westminster countries, appointees to commissions have largely been presumed to either be non-partisan experts or transparently appointed as representatives of diverse political and societal interests (Craft & Howlett, 2013). Attention has been directed toward commissions as corporatist institutions for negotiations and compromise between different societal and political interests, as well as the expertification of policy-making through a rising share of appointments of academics to commissions (J. Christensen & Holst, 2017; J. Christensen et al., 2025; Dahlström et al., 2021).

While a growing literature on the politics of appointments to the permanent bureaucracy (Askim et al., 2022; Bach & Veit, 2018; Bolton et al., 2021; Cooper, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019; Doherty et al., 2019; Geys et al., 2023) has shown that the staffing of merit bureaucracies is subject to change after partisan shifts, even in democracies with highly meritocratic bureaucracies, less attention has been paid to the political dynamics of appointments to *ad-hoc* commissions. Insofar as the political function of commissions has been considered, studies have focused on their design, examining how governments may appoint commissions to shift blame and avoid responsibility for unpopular measures (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010b) or to legitimize policy proposals (Hunter & Boswell, 2015). Member selection may be a key mechanism for governments to attempt to control the output of commissions (Hesstvedt, 2023; Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023b), but the partisanship of commission members, beyond their occupation at the time of appointment, has largely

remained unexplored (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2023). Scholars have noted that appointments of politicians to commissions constitute only a fraction of appointees and have decreased over time (Dahlström et al., 2021). Active politicians, cabinet members, and other formal loyalists to the government have been suggested not to play a significant role in the commission system (Hesstvedt, 2020). However, to date, these studies have not tracked the party affiliation and political careers of commission members, but merely draw on information regarding the members' current affiliations. Research has thus not been able to tap into the total extent of partisan appointments. Given the central position of commissions in the policy-making process in many democracies (Craft & Howlett, 2013), this is a crucial gap that requires addressing if we are to determine the extent to which partisan factors influence the government's selection of experts and the neutrality of the policy advice generated.

In this paper, we take a novel step to examine party representation on government advisory commissions. We ask: When do governments use their political discretion to appoint co-partisans to government advisory commissions? And do electoral and ideological factors moderate the degree to which parties are represented when they are part of the government versus the opposition? We answer these questions by analyzing patterns in the appointment of party members, and thus the representation of party interests, over a 50-year period in Norwegian commissions of inquiry. Norway is considered a least likely case for the existence of politicized appointments to commissions, as it has a long-standing and transparent meritocratic administrative system that is subject to yearly scrutiny by the parliament and a strong culture for a politically neutral bureaucracy (Bach et al., 2025). Moreover, the Norwegian commission system has been described as a largely predetermined system that retains the peaceful coexistence of major groups through incremental policy development by compromise and consensus – a system designed for "revolution in slow motion" (J. Olsen et al., 1982). This makes Norway an optimal environment for examining the dynamics of party representation in government commissions.

Theoretically, we argue that governments have incentives to represent both government and opposition parties on commissions, but they should favor the appointment of co-partisans for two reasons. Firstly, when the isolation of bureaucratic units from the political executive increases, the incentives for governments to appoint political allies to these units for political control also increase (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016). The autonomy of government commissions, once appointed, limits direct governmental control, leading governments to select co-partisans as members in order to influence the commissions' recommendations. Secondly, the formal rules and norms that restrain politicians from appointing political allies to government commissions are weaker than those for the recruitment of civil servants in highly meritocratic systems. If politicians want to appoint co-partisans to commissions, they can do so lawfully. Hence, we argue that governments have incentives to utilize their discretion to appoint co-partisans both to secure control over policy and to reward party supporters.

These incentives are not static; we expect them to vary with government strength, party ideology, and

the election cycle. First, these incentives are strongest when governments control larger parliamentary majorities, as greater legislative support provides more discretion to appoint co-partisans, reducing the need to strategically include opposition parties to secure majorities. Second, parties with more pronounced ideological preferences are expected to make more use of their appointment power to favor members of their own party as they face steeper electoral and policy trade-offs when entering government and must maximize both control over policy direction and office benefits to maintain party cohesion and voter support. Lastly, governments should appoint more co-partisans directly after elections to credibly reward party activists and secure control over commissions that will help deliver on their policy pledges while in office.

To test the expectations about the prevalence of the representation of parties on commissions empirically, we connect data on more than $15,124$ members of commissions (Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023a) with data on all candidates for local and national elections in Norway from 1972 to 2023 ($N = 244,430$) (Fiva et al., 2020, 2024; Forum, 2024). By doing this, we look beyond the formal association of commission members as described in the official report; we track the presence of not only active politicians but also individuals who have been officially appointed to the commission as independent experts, who are also members of a political party.[1]

The results show the following: descriptively, we show that 25% of the commission members have a party affiliation and that these members are equally likely to be co-partisans or counter-partisans. However, by constructing a balanced panel of the representation of party members from the 7 different political parties that held office during the period for all 1639 commissions, we employ a difference-in-differences design to demonstrate that when a party enters government, the probability that the government selects members from that party for commissions increases. This positive effect of entering government is robust to a range of different model specifications and robustness tests. However, we also demonstrate that the baseline representation of parties on commissions is closely tied to their share of parliamentary seats. When a party's parliamentary share increases or declines, so does the probability of their members being present on commissions. While we find only weak evidence that co-partisan appointments are more likely when the government holds a strong position in parliament. We find clear support for the expectation that cabinet parties with stronger ideological preferences are more likely to pursue co-partisan appointment strategies than more centrist parties, and that co-partisan appointments are pursued to a greater extent on commissions appointed directly after cabinet formation.

2 Previous research

One of the most consistent findings in the literature on public administration and party politics in recent decades is that merit bureaucracies are less insulated from political dynamics than previously theorized (Peters & Pierre, 2004; Staroňová & Knox, n.d.). Across different administrative traditions, regime types, and regions,

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[1]We identify the party affiliation of commission members by consulting lists of candidates for local and national elections as well as government positions.

politicization of various types and intensities appears – even in systems with institutions that were once considered immune, such as the Scandinavian and Westminster countries (Askim et al., 2022; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008). The toolbox available to governments to politicize bureaucratic organizations has grown over time, and so has the research that examines the various expressions of this strategy. While the common definition of politicization is "the substitution of political criteria for merit-based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards, and disciplining of members of the public service" (Peters & Pierre, 2004, p. 2). Research distinguishes between formal politicization (which involves legally applying political criteria in public service personnel decisions), functional politicization (i.e. that the tasks performed by public servants are political and not technical in nature), and administrative politicization (i.e. that more political advisors are hired in addition to the permanent bureaucracy) (Bach et al., 2020; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008; Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014). It is also often associated with patronage, defined as the "ability of political parties to appoint individuals to (non-elected) positions" (Kopecky et al., 2016, p. 418). In this paper, we consider government commissions as formally politicized and use politicization to denote any use of political criteria in the appointment of members to government commissions (both co-partisans and counter-partisans), and patronage as a more specific term for the government's ability to appoint co-partisans to commissions.

Politicization is generally lower in countries such as the UK, Norway, Sweden, Canada, and New Zealand, as these systems have clear legal limits on formal politicization and strict standards for the appointment and recruitment of bureaucrats based on expertise, professional experience, and educational background (Cooper, 2021; Forum et al., 2024). At the same time, despite a strong culture (and formal rules) against politicization, the bureaucracy is not independent of executive politicians in merit systems, and governments often seek to wield political influence on appointments within the bounds of the merit system when the opportunity arises – for instance, by changing the ranking order of proposed candidates or suggesting specific candidates early in the selection process (Allern, 2012). Governments have taken deliberate steps to make the bureaucracy more responsive: for example, administrative politicization has increased as more and more political advisors and permanent secretaries are employed in ministries (Askim et al., 2022; Craft & Howlett, 2013; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008). Several studies have analyzed and discussed the relationship between political change and administrative turnover (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Cooper, 2021; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019), which suggests that top bureaucrats are more likely to leave their posts after a change of government. Governments also provide newly appointed agency heads with a higher budget (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2021). Moreover, ideological alignment between top bureaucrats and politicians has a positive effect on top bureaucrats' wage growth (Fiva et al., 2021) as well as on bureaucrats' probability of promotion to higher public office (Bach & Veit, 2018; van Dorp, 2022; Veit & Vedder, 2024).

We argue that an important puzzle is missing in order to properly assess the degree of politicization in meritocratic bureaucracies: Namely, government inquiry commissions, also often called policy advisory commissions. This is an important gap to fill, as commissions are frequently utilized and play important roles

in the political process as an extension of merit bureaucracies. Commissions play a central role, as ministries often delegate policy formulation and analysis to external actors in commissions rather than carrying it out in-house. A large part of policy preparation is carried out by experts in commissions, and they often have serious influence on policy (J. Christensen & Hesstvedt, 2024a; Dahlström et al., 2020). Unlike permanent bureaucratic bodies, commissions are formally politicized, i.e. there are no laws prohibiting politicians from appointing co-partisans or shaping these bodies to their liking. However, the ways in which governments utilize this pocket of formal politicized discretion to appoint politicians remain largely unexplored. Dahlström and Holmgren (2023) has, as one of the few studies on the appointment of party members to commissions, found that governments over-sample co-partisans compared to counter-partisans from the pool of parliamentary politicians in the Swedish context – yet they also note the puzzling appointment of a large share of counter-partisans. However, this study is limited in the scope of political appointees included, as it only considers parliamentary politicians, which account for only a fraction of the potentially politically affiliated members that can be placed on such commissions. Moreover, theory of when governments pursue co-partisan or counter-partisan appointments to commissions is missing from the literature. The aim of this paper is to fill these gaps.

3 Party representation on commissions: Theory and hypotheses

In this section, we turn to theorizing and hypothesizing party representation on commissions. First, we lay out two overarching logics for party representation on commissions, namely consensus appointments (the representation of both government and opposition parties) versus patronage appointments (the preferential representation of government parties). Then, we turn to the five hypotheses regarding the two logics for party representation and the drivers that may increase the appointment of partisans to commissions.

3.1 Motivations for party representation: consensus and patronage

In a merit-system like Norway, we expect governments to appoint both fellow partisans and political contenders from opposition parties to commissions. This is due to two different logics that make it rational or appropriate to appoint both.

3.1.1 The consensus logic

The primary logic of political appointments is the selection of both co-partisans and opposing politicians based on a consensus logic. Many meritocratic administrative systems, like the Norwegian one, are often accompanied by political systems that are multiparty and proportional, and by a political culture oriented towards making compromises and finding consensus. This provides politicians with incentives, in certain situations, to appoint political contenders to commissions. On one hand, the government may find it necessary to garner support among political opponents for policy proposals in the commission and policy formulation phase to increase the chances that policies are subsequently passed in parliament. Appointing

members of opposition parties to formulate policy will ease the passage of the commission's recommendations in Parliament and increase the likelihood that bills based on the commissions' recommendations are passed.

On the other hand, appointing the opposition is also a way to avoid blame and criticism in the future. For example, in Westminster countries, Royal Commissions are often set up to shift blame and avoid responsibility for unpopular measures (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010b) and to legitimize policy proposals (Hunter & Boswell, 2015). In Sweden, commissions have become more important strategic tools over time to promote the government's agenda (Petersson, 2015). In Denmark and Norway, where minority governments have been the norm for decades, commissions are important for reaching a compromise with opposition parties and ensuring support for policy proposals in parliament (Hesstvedt & Christiansen, 2022). When co-opting members of opposition parties to serve on commissions to negotiate compromises or garner support for the governments pre-existing preferences, we would expect the government to also appoint members with ties to governing parties to hinder the counter-partisans from diverting commission recommendations away from the governments preferences.

3.1.2 The patronage logic

The second type of logic involves the appointment of fellow party members to ensure control over policy or to reward them for political support. We label appointments that follow either type of logic as patronage appointments. In a commission setting, patronage appointments may ensure government control over policy formulation (Kopecky et al., 2016). Parties enter government with ideological preferences for policy and seek expert advice that is as politically aligned as possible with their pre-existing preferences (Strom, 1990). There is a trade-off between acquiring knowledge and legitimacy for policy by delegating to commissions (outside of governmental control) and maintaining political control over policy recommendations. One way to maintain political control is to simply appoint co-partisans to the commission (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016). Placing a political ally on the commission may ensure that the government's agenda is reflected on the commission and increase the chances that its policy recommendations are formulated according to the governing parties' interests (see for example Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023b). Moreover, co-partisans with political experience and know-how can complement the technocratic experts on commissions (See Veit & Vedder, 2024), ensuring that policy is balanced and does justice to political realities.

Lastly, appointing fellow partisans may also be incentivized by rationales for rewarding political supporters. patronage appointments may be used to exchange public sector jobs for political support during the campaign (Lewis, 2008; Strom, 1990). While some individuals seeking patronage appointments have political or professional expertise that makes them well suited for important political appointments, others do not possess such expertise but are "necessary-to-place" individuals due to, for instance, their stature within the party (Hollibaugh, 2017). In countries with numerous political appointee positions within the permanent bureaucracy, such as the US, "necessary-to-place" individuals are appointed to non-career bureaucrat positions within the organizations where their lack of expertise can do the least harm (Hollibaugh, 2017). In countries

with few political appointee positions within the bureaucracy, such as Denmark or the UK, governments must find different ways to show deserved appreciation to party members for their contributions to the campaign. Appointments to government commissions may be a suitable alternative for "necessary-to-place" individuals in this context, as they provide moderate benefits for the party member in terms of monetary gains and prestige, while leaving limited room for the potential incompetence of the party member to hurt the performance of the government. Accordingly, commission appointments may, for instance, be used to satisfy patronage placements of older party members who are no longer suitable for appointment to higher political office.

3.2   Hypotheses: When are parties represented on commissions?

All in all, we expect to see both government co-partisans and counter-partisans on commissions. We now turn to when and why the two types of appointment strategies may come into play. First, regarding the consensus logic, we expect governments to take into account the parliamentary strength of parties when deciding when and how often the different parties should be represented on commissions. Previous research has found that governments moderate their appointment practices depending on their legislative support (Lewis, 2008) and that even when governments in multiparty systems have a parliamentary majority, they still typically appoint a large share of opposition politicians to commissions (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2023). In democracies where there is a culture of policy-making by consensus, the expectation is that commissions function as an extension of the legislative assembly, where governments view it as appropriate to represent parties based on their number of seats in the parliament (J. P. Olsen, 1983). If one government deviates from this pattern by only appointing co-partisans, future governments may do the same. This may, in turn, spawn a vicious cycle that ultimately undermines the legitimacy of commissions as a system for providing expert advice. Furthermore, if the government is policy-seeking in the long term, then including opposition parties in the commission stage can be beneficial for pursuing policies supported by an oversized majority and thus fortifying against reversal by future opposition governments (Askim et al., 2024). Hence, our baseline consensus hypothesis reads as:

Hypothesis 1: Party representation on government commissions is positively associated with parties' parliamentary seat shares.

Second, we expect that being in government versus in the opposition matters, as governing parties have incentives to over-sample partisans from their own ranks for both reward and policy control reasons – and they have the formal discretion to do so. Although previous studies have shown that governments exhibit restraint, rarely using this discretion to openly select co-partisans (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2023; Dahlström et al., 2021), we expect governments to favor the appointment of experts who also happen to be co-partisans for commissions. Our baseline patronage logic hypothesis thus reads:

Hypothesis 2: Parties are more likely to be represented on government commissions when they are in government compared to when they are in opposition.

Third, we expect that the government's support in parliament influences its likelihood of pursuing co-partisan appointments. Dahlström and Holmgren (2023) considers the legislature's ability to constrain the government's appointment of partisan commission members as a continuous function of the government's parliamentary strength, instead of as a dichotomy in which majority governments are unconstrained and minority governments are constrained. The logic is that governments that control a larger share of parliamentary seats enjoy more discretion to appoint partisans to commissions than governments with less legislative support. Previous research has examined the politics of commissions in various ways, including how different party affiliations, governmental characteristics, and political importance influence appointments and the composition of members (Hesstvedt, 2023; Hesstvedt & Christiansen, 2022). This research shows that commissions are important for finding support and majorities to pass legislation (Hesstvedt & Christiansen, 2022). To be effective in policy-making, minority governments need the support of opposition parties in parliament to pass bills (Strøm, 1990). To this end, minority governments can strategically include opposition parties in the pre-parliamentary policy development stage through positions on commissions.

In divided governments (in presidential systems) or minority governments (in parliamentary systems), the government needs to anticipate the reaction of the legislature when choosing whether to, and how much to, politicize appointments to the bureaucracy (Lewis, 2008). Similar considerations should exist for policy seeking governments of varying electoral strength when deciding on the composition of a commission. On the margin, each additional partisan member appointed to a commission should increase the governments control of the output of the commission. However, the government still needs to anticipate the reaction of parliament in the short-term when attempting to pass a bill based on the commissions proposal. The more partisan the commission underpinning a bill is, the more likely it is that the parliamentary opposition has amendment preferences during parliamentary treatment. The governments parliamentary strength is instrumental in the opposition's success in amending the bill in the short-term. Similarly, governments backed by a larger parliamentary fraction may also be more willing to appoint co-partisans to commissions for reward reasons, as securing the support of the parliamentary opposition matters less for the passage of the policy bill. We should thus expect that:

Hypothesis 3: The larger the fraction of parliamentary seats that a government controls, the more likely it is to appoint members affiliated with a government party to government commissions.

Fourth, we expect ideology to play a role in commission appointments. Parties continually face a trade-off between policy, office, and votes (Strom, 1990; Strøm & Müller, 1999). Participation in government, hence, comes at the cost of either policy, votes, or both. When parties choose to enter government, facing a potential trade-off between future election votes and policy concessions in parliament, they can be expected to use their political discretion to appoint members from their own party ranks to sit on commissions to attempt to minimize both risks. When parties have more intense ideological preferences relative to the ideological center

of the party system, they should be expected to appoint commission members from their own ranks more often for two reasons. First, parties are held accountable to their electorate for the policies they produce while in government. Barring the threat of government termination, the ability of parties further from the ideological center to veto the government's policy in parliament is lower when they are in government. Governing parties with stronger ideological preferences should hence be expected to be more likely to appoint partisans to seek control over policy direction in the policy development phase. This phenomenon should be common to both left- and right-wing parties (Yackee, 2023). Moreover, when parties have more ideologically intense preferences, they are less pivotal to represent on commissions when in the opposition, as compromises on policy should be easier to facilitate and closer to government preferences when negotiating with parties that are more central to the party system (Riker, 1962).

Secondly, for reasons of reward, as members of more ideologically extreme parties are less likely to be included when in opposition, they should be expected to maximize their control over political office benefits by using their political discretion to make patronage appointments of members from their own party ranks to sit on commissions (Panizza et al., 2019). Kopecký et al. (2022, p. 238) finds some evidence of patronage appointments of senior bureaucrats intensifying when more ideologically extreme parties entered government in Hungary, arguing that patronage is an important tool for such parties as it "allows parties to solidify their linkages to the groups of party voters and supporters and strengthens their likelihood to continue to identify affectively with the political party". We thus expect that:

Hypothesis 4: When parties' ideological preferences are more intense, they are more likely to be represented on government commissions while in government than while in opposition.

Finally, we expect that election cycle logics increase the likelihood that partisans are appointed to commissions. A patronage explanation for expecting the share of partisans to be higher right after elections is that this is the natural time for political parties that succeeded in achieving (or maintaining) office to reward party activists for their campaigning efforts or contributions that helped the party get elected (Strøm & Müller, 1999). A closer temporal connection between party activism and office rewards makes promises of such spoils to party activists credible and effective motivational tools. Governments also have greater incentives to appoint partisan commission members to control the policy advice when the commission is likely to finish their report while the government is still in office. Following government formation, governments have policy pledges to deliver on. Appointing commissions is a natural first step in fulfilling such pledges. In these situations, appointing co-partisans to control the direction of advice would be most beneficial for governments, helping them avoid letting their policy pledges trickle into the sand – or at least providing the best starting point to test the feasibility of their pledged policy solutions.

Installing commissions with heavily partisan mandates right before an election can be used by governments as landmines against a potential future opposition government. However, the overt politicization of many commissions nearing elections may rather hurt the incumbent government electorally, as heavily parti-

san commissions may incentivize more centrist voters to vote for the opposition, particularly if they are viewed as an illegitimate politicization of an expert advice system. Even if governments are willing to trade policy influence for the probability of reelection, it would still not be rational to extensively politicize commission appointments nearing elections, as future opposition governments can simply terminate these or change their mandate and member composition to fit their preferences when they enter office. Hence, effective partisan control of commissions must occur while the government is in office. We therefore only hypothesize a higher usage of government status to appoint members from governing parties to commissions directly after government formation:

Hypothesis 5: The likelihood of parties in government being represented on government commissions is at its highest directly after government formation and decreases over time.

4 Empirical context: Norwegian bureaucracy and commissions

In international comparisons, Norway is among the countries with the lowest level of politicization. For instance, according to the Quality of Government Institute's expert survey, Norway ranks highest worldwide in terms of the relevance of competence for the recruitment of candidates to positions in central government and lowest in terms of the relevance of candidates' political or personal connections (Nistotskaya et al., 2021). A similar picture of low levels of politicization also emerges in other comparative studies (Bach et al., 2020; Cooper, 2021; Kopecky et al., 2016). Overall, there is solid evidence of low levels of politicization in Norway. When it comes to formal politicization, the existence of positions within the permanent bureaucracy for which the explicit use of political criteria in recruitment is legitimate is comparatively rare, and the country has only witnessed a moderate increase in political appointees in the core executive over time (Bach et al., 2025). Furthermore, informal political influence on appointments to the civil service remains a marginal phenomenon limited to senior positions close to the core of government (ministries and agencies) (Askim & Bach, 2021; Askim et al., 2022; Forum, 2024).

Commissions play a central role in Norwegian policy-making (J. Christensen & Holst, 2017). Since the introduction of a formal commission system (*Norwegian Official Commissions*, in short, NOUs) in the early 1970s, governments have appointed more than 1600 commissions, 10,000 members, and 3000 secretaries to carry out policy analysis on their behalf. The stated aim of setting up commissions is to develop the knowledge base for policy and to propose concrete measures, for example, new laws, reforms, and policy initiatives (Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet, 2019). The recommendations of commissions have had a major influence on most important policy areas in Norway – ranging from tax, pension and benefit policy to environmental policy, civil and legal rights, and constitutional issues.

The primary reason for appointments to a commission also being considered a reward for the appointee is the centrality of commissions in policy development. This provides both a level of prestige and an

avenue for influence for individuals who are appointed to sit on government commissions (Backer et al., 2023). Commission membership also comes with a minor economic benefit; as of 2025, this amounts to 573 Norwegian kroner (around 50 euros) per hour spent on commission work.

Scholars studying government commissions have noted that politician appointments to commissions make up only a fraction of appointees and have decreased over time (Hesstvedt, 2018). There has been a strong norm to appoint experts of different sorts since the establishment of the commission system in the 1970s. Particularly over time, there has been a growing trend towards expertification of policy advice (J. Christensen & Holst, 2017). While commissions often include interest groups, bureaucrats, and other sector or professional experts, the number of academics has increased dramatically in recent decades: about 40 percent of commission members appointed in 2023 were academics. Active politicians, cabinet members, and other formal loyalists to the government have been suggested not to play a significant role in the commission system (Hesstvedt, 2020). However, to date, these studies have not tracked the party affiliation and political careers of commission members, but merely draw on information of the members' current affiliation. Research has thus not been able to tap the total extent of partisan appointments, which is a novel step forward and a contribution of this paper.

5 Empirical strategy

5.1 Identifying the political affiliation of commission members

Table 1 summarizes the datasets utilized to identify politicians in Norwegian government commissions from 1972 to 2023.[2] Our base dataset contains all members of commissions that were appointed by the government and delivered an Official Norwegian Report between 1972 and 2023 (Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023a). From this data, we select all members of the commission, discarding information about the members of the commissions' secretariat. Our data on commissions only contains the name of the person and their primary occupation (organizational affiliation and/or job title) at the time of appointment/delivery as provided in the Official Norwegian Report; it does not contain any further characteristics to identify individuals, such as their date of birth or further career or education information, which would be needed for strictly probabilistic matching of commission members and politicians (Geys, 2023). Hence, to code the political affiliation of commission members, we employed a three-step process in which we, in the first stage, performed the same pre-processing steps on the names of commission members and politicians in a dataset of Norwegian politicians that we constructed by merging the 4 datasets on national and local level politicians listed in Table 1. Next, we matched the names of commission members with the dataset on 244,430 politicians to machine code information about the party affiliation and type of political experience of commission members. Lastly, we employed two coders to manually check all potential matches in the data and against secondary sources such

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[2]See Appendix A for a detailed description of the steps in the dataset creation.

as party web pages and newspapers (N=2954 unique first name last name combinations, over 15011 rows).[3]

Table 1: Overview of datasets used to identify politicians in Norwegian government commissions

Dataset	Years	N (individuals)	Description	Variables
Hesstvedt and Christensen, 2023a	1972-2018	15,124[4]	All members of government commissions that delivered an Official Norwegian Report.	Name, occupation & organizational affiliation
Forum, 2024	1884-2024	1,763	All cabinet ministers, state secretaries, and political advisors in the ministries.	Name, birthyear, occupation & party
Fiva and Smith, 2017	1906-2021	41,846	All running and elected candidates in parliamentary elections.[5]	Name, birthyear, occupation, party & municipality
Fiva et al., 2024	1971-2023	27,374	All elected candidates in county elections and (deputy) mayors.[6]	Name, birthyear, occupation, party & municipality
Fiva et al., 2024	2003-2023	200,908	All running and elected candidates in local and county elections.	Name, birthyear, party & municipality

In total, 1917 of the unique first name last name combinations were correct matches, meaning that 24.7% (3742/15124) of appointed commission members had a political affiliation. The matched politician NOU-members have been categorized based on a variable of certainty regarding whether they are the same person. In total, 160 observations were marked as instances where we could not confirm that the politician and the matched politician are different individuals, and 58 observations had political experience from local politics that was not covered by our data on politicians (this constitutes 1.5% of all politically affiliated members, see Table B.1). We include these individuals in the descriptive statistics and the main analysis, but we also exclude commissions with uncertain politicians from the analysis as a robustness test (as can be seen in Appendix B.2 this does not alter the results).

Our dataset may still underestimate the number of appointees who have political experience and a political affiliation in Norway due to misspelled names, changed names, and appointees who have run for elections that are not covered (or are missing) in the politician data. However, this should not induce any systematic bias in the results from our statistical tests, as this should not be related to the party affiliation of the commission member, whether the party is in government or opposition, nor to the electoral cycle and parliamentary basis of governments.

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[3]The authors are grateful to Christine Brækkan for her superb research assistance in manually checking the data.

[4]Total number of appointees, not unique individuals

[5]The full name of non-elected candidates are only available for female candidates (and more prolific male candidates) until 1957. Birthyear is only available for the elected candidates.

[6]Incomplete list of non-elected candidates prior to 2003 (about 50% of candidates)
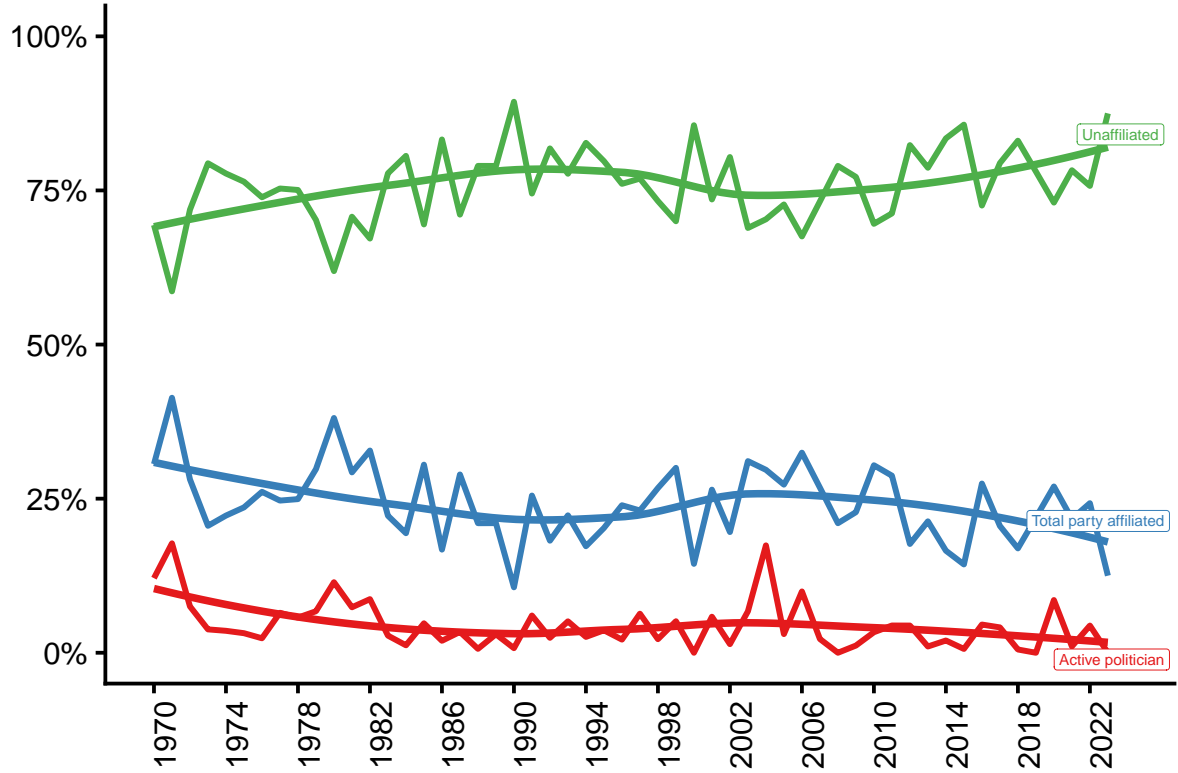
Figure 1: Trend in share of members that are unaffiliated with political parties compared to politicians and the total share of members with party affiliation.

5.2 Modeling strategy and operationalizations

Our data consist of individual members nested within government commissions of various sizes and functions, further nested within governments and ministerial portfolios. This individual-level data pose two main challenges for inference: appointments to the same commission are not independent of each other, and we do not observe non-selected candidates. Commissions vary in their political salience to governments and societal actors. Similarly, the pool of available experts may differ across commission topics. We do not observe the cabinet's actual reasoning behind appointments. It is thus unclear when individuals should enter or exit the candidate pool as we cannot observe the counterfactual outcome of a partisan commission member being appointed to the same commission in the absence of the member's party being in government, or if the commission were to be appointed at a different temporal point. Dahlström and Holmgren (2023) solves the counterfactual issue by constructing a panel at the individual-level of all parliamentary politicians with one observation per month that the politician had a seat in parliament, comparing the same individuals' likelihood of appointment to a commission in months when their party was in government vs. in opposition. We employ a similar modeling strategy; however, since we want to utilize information on the party affiliation of all commission members and not simply a well-defined subset of potential partisan appointees, such as active parliamentarians, which only constitutes about 7.5% of all politically affiliated commission members, we aggregate individuals to the party-level. Hence, to create a comparable contrast to selected members with

political affiliation at the same point in time, we consider the selected individuals as representatives of their parties, where the comparable contrast for a party being represented on commissions while in government is the same party's representation on commissions while in opposition. The focus is placed on the within-party variation. Similarly, aggregating the data to a panel of parliamentary parties for each commission handles the issue of appointments to the same commission not being independent, allowing for the comparison of the representation of parties within the same commission.

We estimate a series of linear probability models (LPM) of the following baseline specification by ordinary least squares regression (OLS)[7] to test our hypotheses:

$$\text{Party represented}_{it} = \alpha_i \text{Party}_i + \eta_t \text{Ministry}_t + \zeta_t \text{Cabinet}_t$$
$$+ \beta_1 \text{Party share of parliamentary seats}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Party in government}_{it}$$
$$+ \beta_3 \text{Moderator variable}_m + \beta_4 \text{Party in government}_{it} \times \text{Moderator variable}_m$$
$$+ \delta_v \text{Controls}_v + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

Where $\text{Party represented}_{it}$ is a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if any of the individuals appointed to a commission t are affiliated with party i, and 0 otherwise. The first independent variable $\text{Party share of parliamentary seats}_{it}$ has the straightforward operationalization of the number of seats party i holds when commission t is appointed, weighted by the total number of seats in the parliament, and is used to test H1. The second independent variable is $\text{Party in government}_{it}$, which denotes whether party i is in *government* or in the *opposition* at the date when commission t is appointed. $\theta_v \text{Party in government}_{it} \cdot$ Moderator variable represents the coefficients for the three different moderator variables m that we use to test H3-H5 that considers how the marginal effect of a party being in government may be moderated by party and government characteristics. The first moderator variable of interest considers the government's parliamentary strength as a continuous function of the share of parliamentary seats that the governing parties control.[8]

Next, to capture *ideological intensity*, we use data on parties' left-right positions from the Manifesto projects *rile* indicator of a party's ideological Left-Right placement (Lehmann et al., 2024).[9] The validity of the rile indicator for capturing parties' left-right positions has been criticized with respect to accounting for how parties position themselves relative to other parties, depending on election-specific factors (see e.g. Flentje et al., 2017; König et al., 2017). Since our hypotheses concern how changes in a party's ideology away from the

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[7]The results remain substantially similar when estimating the model with logistic regression (see Appendix B) and the results from the LPM are thus reported in the main analysis due to the "intuitive meaningfulness of the linear measures as differences in probabilities" (Hellevik, 2009, p. 59). Some of the hypothesis tests differ in significance levels between the two estimators and will be addressed under robustness checks. Table B.2 in Appendix B.1 shows descriptive statistics for the party-commission level data employed in the analysis.

[8]This is the same operationalization as Dahlström and Holmgren (2023).

[9]For Norway, party manifestos are available for all parliamentary elections for the 7 parties that held executive office during the period 1945-2017; for appointments after the 2021 election, rile scores for 2017 are imputed. The rile indicator is computed by subtracting the total counts of quasi-sentences from 13 left ideology categories from a comparable set of counts from 13 right ideology categories and dividing by the sum of these counts. This yields a measure that ranges from -100 to 100, where -100 implies 100% left ideology statements in the party manifesto, 0 indicates the same amount of left and right ideology counts, and +100 implies 100% right ideology statements.

center moderate governing parties' tendencies to over-sample commission members from their own ranks, common shifts away from the center over time may be an issue. Hence, we consider the relative distance from the election-specific ideological center to address changes in parties on the left-right scale that are driven by influences common to all parties in the same election. For the purpose of the analysis, the rile indicator has also been scaled down by a factor of 10 and transformed to represent the parties' absolute distance from the election relative ideological center (0), where $|\pm 10|$ indicates that a party is as far away from the ideological center as possible. A one unit increase in *ideological intensity* implies a 10%pt. increase in ideological intensity.

The last moderator variable we consider to test our hypotheses about the conditional effects of the electoral cycle is *the number of years since cabinet formation*, which captures the years that have passed since the cabinet that appoints a commission was formed. The variable is constructed using the common operationalization of cabinets and cabinet duration (see e.g. Shomer et al., 2022) where a new government is formed when at least one of the following four conditions is met. Firstly, a new government is counted after a parliamentary election (hence, government duration in the Norwegian case has a maximum of four years). Second, the selection of a new prime minister constitutes the formation of a new government. Third, a change in the parliamentary basis of the government constitutes the formation of a new government; accordingly, the start of a new government is counted when the party composition of a government changes with the inclusion or departure of governing parties. This operationalization of election cycle dynamics is used as we expect governments to have greater incentives to appoint partisans when they first assume office. Other election cycle dynamics of party representation are explored in Appendix B.

As mentioned above, we deal with confounders related to the pool of potential commission members by aggregating the data to the party-level, and including party fixed effects α_i, assuming that the distribution of individual-level characteristics of potential political commission members is constant within parties when adjusting for temporal and policy factors. The supply of party members with professional expertise within a policy area should be independent of whether the party is in government or not. For instance, if a commission on environmental policy were to be appointed in 2012 when the Socialist Left Party was in government or in 2014 when the Socialist Left Party was out of government, it should have the same pool of members with expertise in environmental policy in both years; any difference in members from the Socialist Left Party represented on this commission should thus be attributed to a change in party- or government-level characteristics. Hence, we trade the loss of information about individual-level characteristics other than party affiliation that may cause a government to select a particular member for a commission, such as their professional competence, for clarity in identifying how changing party- and government-level characteristics impact the representation of party members on commissions. With the quantity of interest being the difference in the same party's likelihood of being represented on a commission when in office vs. in opposition, only the 7 political parties that have held office in Norway during the period are included in the analysis for all commissions after the first election in which a representative from the party was elected to parliament.

Ministry fixed effects ($\eta_t \text{Ministry}_t$) are included to adjust for the supply of members with relevant professional competence, which varies across policy areas and parties. Politicians may, for instance, be more suitable and legitimate appointees to commissions providing policy advice on local government and foreign affairs policy than, for example, financial policy. The different ministries and external stakeholders within a policy field may also have different evidence cultures regarding the appropriateness of suggesting the appointment of party members to commissions (J. Christensen & Hesstvedt, 2024b). In the data, we see, for instance, that 85.4% of commission members under the ministry of Finance have no partisan affiliation, compared to 59.8% under the ministry of local government. Holding the ministry area constant, changes in the pattern of which parties are represented on commissions should only reflect a change in the cabinet parties' preferences, all else equal.

$\zeta_t \text{Cabinet}_t$ denotes fixed effects for the appointing *Cabinet* that are added to the model to adjust for factors that are constant for all commissions appointed under the same cabinet. This adjusts for temporal factors (i.e. a party's pool of potential members changing over time, issues on the policy agenda, level of media and parliamentary scrutiny, etc.), as well as government-specific factors (such as the number of parties in government, its strength, ideology, and duration). The idea is that the effect of parties' parliamentary share, whether they are in government, and the moderator variables should, on average, be the same across all 32 cabinets during the period. Cabinet fixed effects are included in all models except for those that test the hypotheses on the government's legislative strength, as this is a fixed characteristic of a cabinet. In this instance, we instead use year fixed effects to limit comparisons of governments to years that saw multiple governments, as other temporal characteristics should remain the same barring the change of government.[10]

We cluster the error term ε_{it} by government commission to obtain cluster-robust standard errors that adjust for unobserved commission-level components that may introduce correlation between the error terms for the 7 parties to the same commissions (Abadie et al., 2022). Furthermore, a vector of control variables $\delta_v \text{Controls}_v$ is included to adjust for commission level confounders that are not captured by the fixed effects for ministry or cabinet. We include the following commission-level control variables, which may impact the likelihood that government and opposition politicians are appointed to the commission and the parties' pool of potential members. First, we adjust for whether the appointed commission is a standing government commission that delivers multiple reports to the government. Second, we control for the share of academics on the commission, as some parties may have more members who are academics than others. The presence of a large share of academics on a commission indicates that the commission is likely to provide more technical policy advice, making it less likely that the government appoints politically affiliated individuals to this commission (Lewis, 2008). Third, following the inverse of this logic, we include a control variable for the share of politician members to account for some commissions having a more explicit purpose of political consensus. An example of this is the 2003 commission on regional policy, where 14 of the 15 members had a partisan

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[10]In Appendix B.2, we also show that the results are similar both substantively and in terms of statistical significance in models with less restrictive adjustment for potential unobserved confounders.

affiliation and all 7 parliamentary parties were represented with at least 1 member. The government wanted a commission with "[...] broad party political representation [....] to clarify political agreement and disagreement on the direction of rural and regional policy [Authors' translation]" (NOU 2004:19, p. 10). Figure 2 shows that 75% of all commissions have at least one member with a political affiliation and that it is most common for only one party to be represented on a commission. However, when there is only one party represented on a commission, 47.9% of the time the party is an opposition party and not a governing party. When two or more parties are present on a commission, which accounts for about 50% of all appointed commissions, they are in 72.8% of instances (or higher) representatives for both parties in government and in the opposition. Finally, we adjust for the increased probability of chance party affiliation in larger commissions.
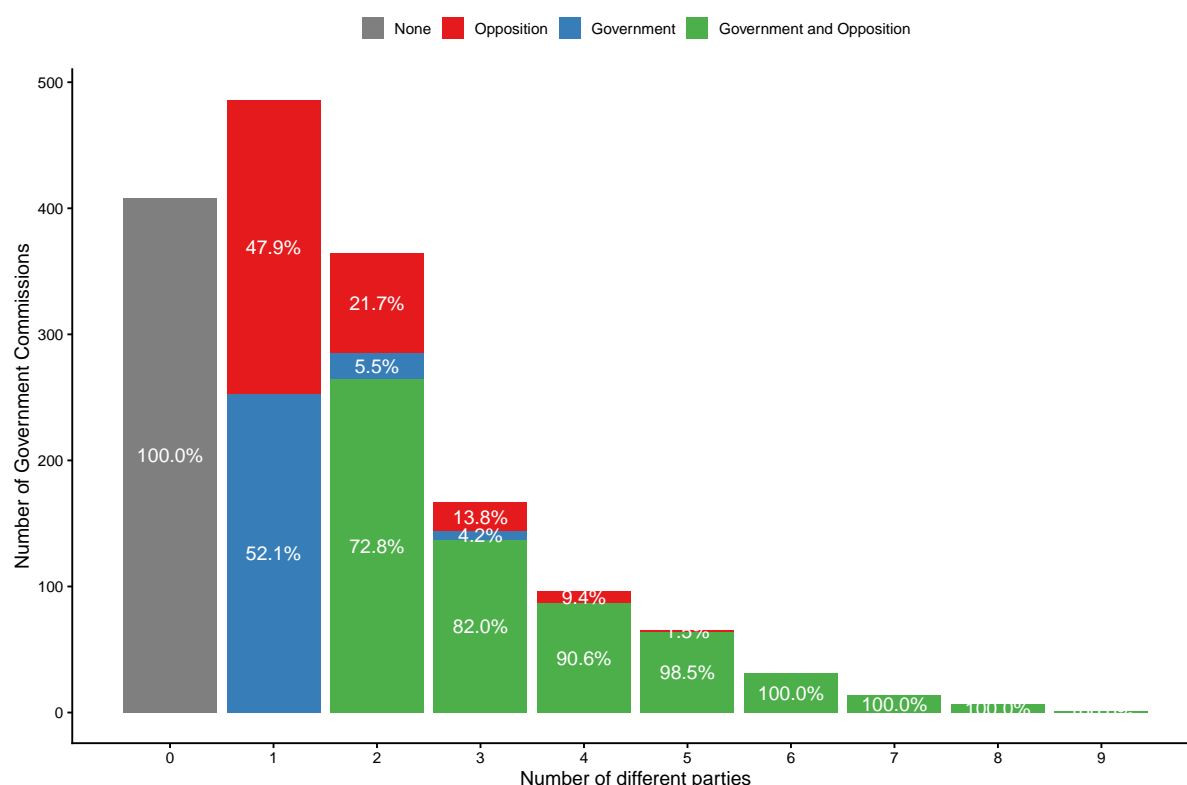

Figure 2: The number of parties represented on government commissions (N=1639) and wether the parties represented only belong to the government, the opposition or both.

6   Results

Before we present the regression results for the dynamics of party representation on government commissions at the aggregate level, it is useful to take a detour by looking at the descriptive statistics at the individual level. This allows us to assess the parallel trends assumption and see if the hypothesized patterns are also visible at the individual level.

Figure 1 shows that the total share of politically affiliated members appointed to sit on commissions has been relatively stable at around 25% of all appointees over time, even though only 5.1% of commission

members are appointed with reference to their occupation as politicians. In other words, the number of politically affiliated members appointed to commissions is higher than previous research has suggested, as members with a non-political occupation at the time of appointment often also have previous political experience. The share of commission members appointed each year with a political affiliation was at its highest between 1970 and 1982, after which the number of politicians declined slightly until 1997, whereupon the trend in the share of politically affiliated members saw a slight increase that lasted until 2012. In the last 12 years of the period there has again been a trend towards a slight decrease in the share of politically affiliated members.[11] It is worth noting that party membership in the Norwegian population has declined by about 50% from the 1980s to the early 2000s (Barstad & Hellevik, 2004), and is today around 7-8% (SSB, n.d.), so it is unlikely that the relatively stable pattern of politically affiliated members to commissions is a product of chance. Moreover, as the share of politically affiliated members is stable over time, using data from earlier periods when a party is not in government as counterfactuals for later periods when the party is in government should not be inappropriate.
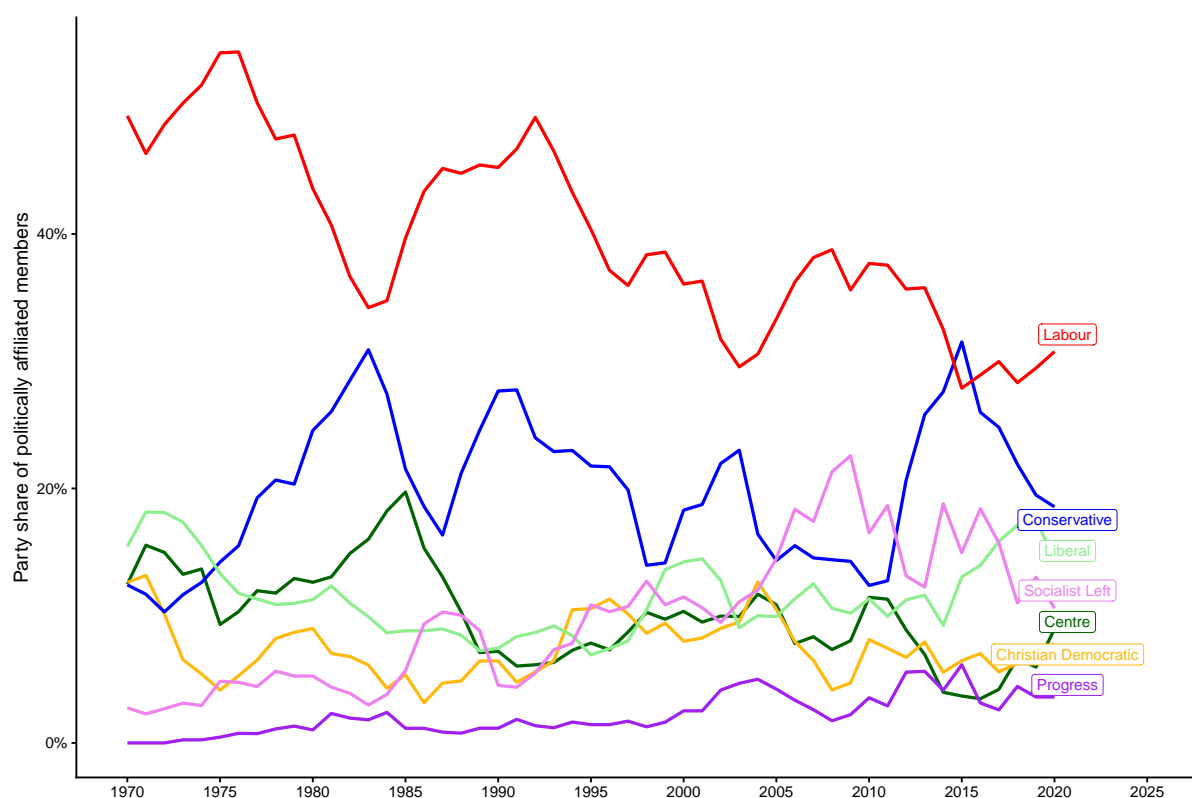

Figure 3: Percentage of politically affiliated members by party membership over time. 4 year moving averages.

Examining how the share of political party members appointed from different political parties changes over time (Figure 3), we see that the share of commission members from different parties is fairly stable. The Labour Party is the most common party affiliation, with 42.3% of political members being affiliated with

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[11]Note that the number of commissions appointed has also declined over time impacting the estimation of the share of politician members.

Labour; however, this share decreased from around 50% in 1970 to 30% in 2023. The conservative party is usually the second largest party, averaging 18.3% of appointments. The liberal party is the third largest with 12.4%, followed by the Centre party with 10.8%, The Christian Democrats with 8.4%, Socialist Left Party with 8.2% and the Progress party with 1.6% of appointments. Figure 3 also shows that there are some peaks and valleys in the representation of the different parties; particularly, we see that the average share of members from the Labour Party falls in the 1980s, the early 2000s and the mid 2010s, which corresponds to periods with a conservative government. Conversely, we see that the share of the Conservative party increases in the same periods, as they are in government.

Lastly, Figure 4 shows that while parties' share of commission members varies with government or opposition status, their' share also somewhat tend to follow the parties' parliamentary strength. However, the Progress party has been largely underrepresented since the 1990s; conversely, the liberal party is largely overrepresented during the entire period. With regards to the parallel trends assumption, the Labour party's over-time decline in share of commission members follows their over-time trend in parliamentary seat share; when adjusting for parliamentary seat share changes over time, only the Socialist Left party and the Conservative party deviate marginally, but significantly (with a threshold of $p < 0.05$) from the general time trend in party representation on commissions.
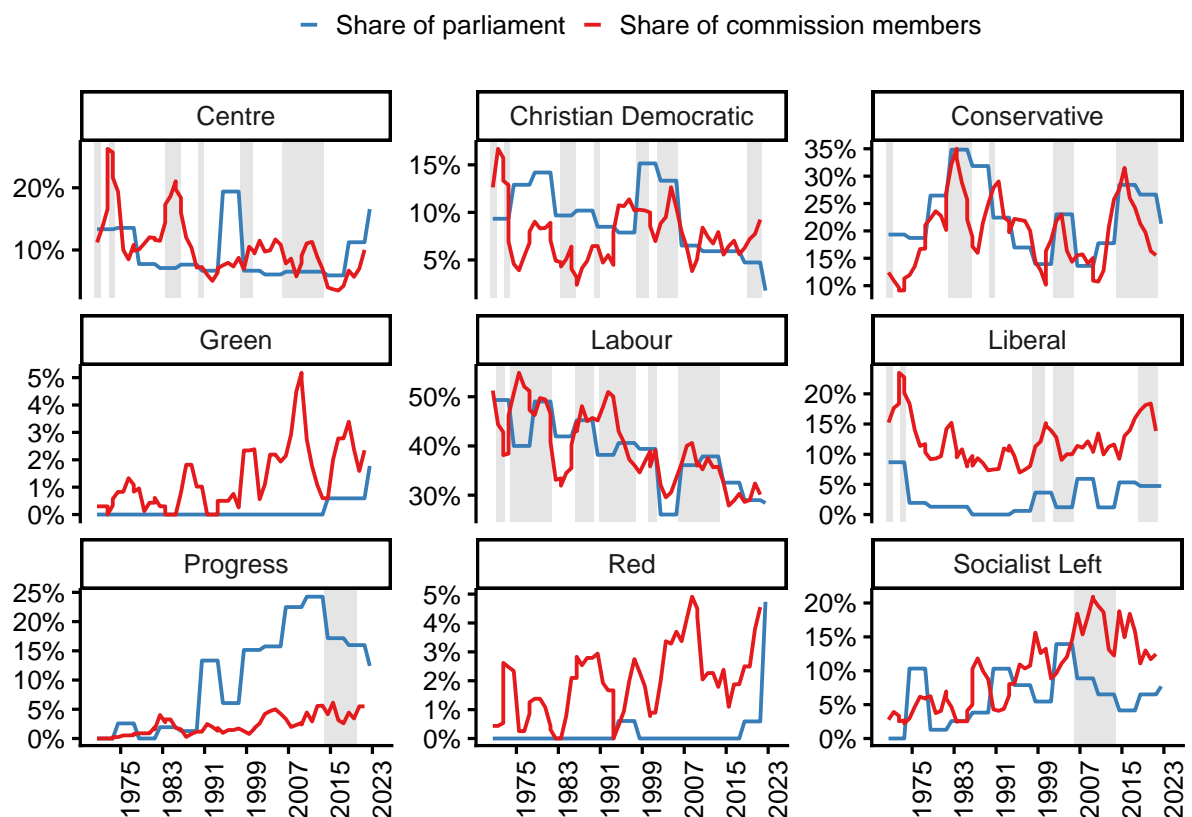

Figure 4: Parties' share of commission member appointments (4 year moving average) compared to their share of parliamentary seats. Shaded area marks periods where the party is in office.

The results from the LPMs displayed in Table 2 are largely consistent with the descriptive statistics. When it comes to the baseline consensus logic hypotheses (H1), all models in Table 2 show that the likelihood of parties being represented on commissions increases with their parliamentary strength. Specifically, model 2 shows that a party's share of parliamentary seats has a coefficient of 0.381 and a 95% confidence interval of 0.25 to 0.512. The coefficient can be interpreted as the percentage point increase in the probability of being represented for a 1%pt. increase in the parliamentary share of a party. In other words, when a party's parliamentary strength increases by 1%pt., they should, on average, be expected to be appointed to 0.38%pt. more commissions, and if it increases by 10 percentage points, the party's probability of being represented should increase by 3.81%pt. This 1 to 0.38 percentage point return on a party's parliamentary share and the share of commissions on which they are represented implies that the level of representation of parties on commissions is somewhat proportional to their parliamentary share, however, this is far from the only factor regulating party representation.

Table 2: OLS regression results.

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission				
	Main	TWFE	Parliamentary strength	Party ideology	Election cycle
Party in Government	0.068	0.068	0.014	0.047	0.104
	[0.048, 0.088] ***	[0.048, 0.088] ***	[-0.081, 0.108]	[0.019, 0.075] **	[0.073, 0.134] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.382	0.381	0.376	0.434	0.380
	[0.250, 0.513] ***	[0.250, 0.512] ***	[0.243, 0.508] ***	[0.290, 0.577] ***	[0.248, 0.512] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats			-0.043		
			[-0.242, 0.157]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			0.125		
			[-0.094, 0.344]		
Ideological Intensity				0.013	
				[0.004, 0.021] **	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.018	
				[-0.002, 0.037] +	
Years since cabinet formation					0.002
					[-0.006, 0.010]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.027
					[-0.044, -0.010] **
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X			
FE: Year			X		
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.34	0.39	0.34	0.34	0.34

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

When it comes to the general patronage logic hypotheses (H2) the main model shows that the effect of party in government has a positive effect on the probability that a party is represented on a commission. The coefficient of party in government is 0.068 and is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ or lower across all model specifications. In substantive terms, this translates to an average effect (ATT) of a 6.8%pt. increase in the probability of a party being represented on a commission when the party is in government compared to when it belongs to the opposition. This effect is also clearly visible descriptively for all parties in Figure 5 which simply plots the share of commissions that each party was represented on by government or opposition status. Moreover, the effect size and significance level of party in government is the same in the TWFE model, which estimates the coefficients with a two-way fixed effects model for party and commission, controlling for all commission and party specific confounders.
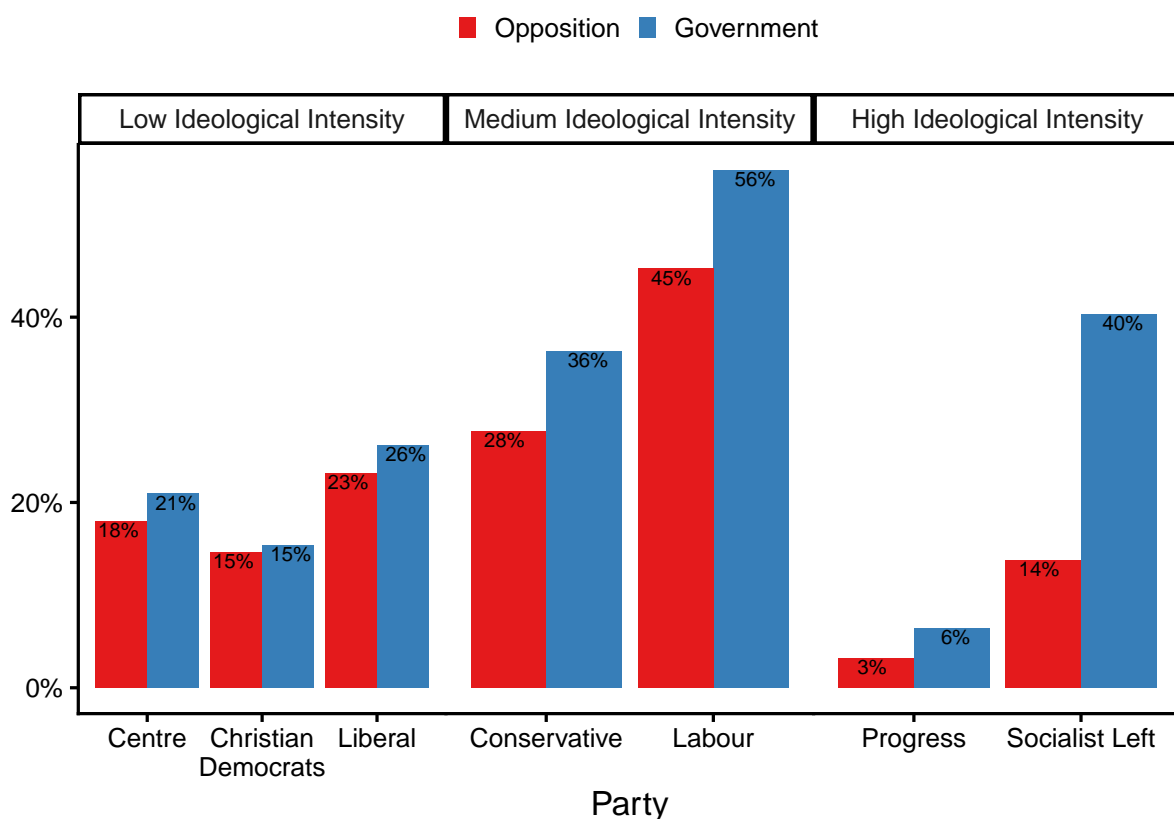

Figure 5: Share of government commissions parties are represented on when in opposition vs. in government.

Turning to the first moderator variable hypothesis (H3), the parliamentary strength model in Table 2 shows that the effect of the government's share of parliamentary seats is in the expected direction but not significant. Figure 6a shows evidence of a linear increase in the probability of government parties being represented on a commission when the cabinet's parliamentary strength increases; however, the p-value of the interaction effect is 0.21. This may be due to the moderating effect of majority government being too small to recover an accurate estimate of longitudinal data from just one country with limited variability in the parliamentary strength that parties have governed with.

Moving to the expectation that parties have a higher probability of appointing their own party members to commissions when they possess stronger ideological preferences (H4). The Party ideology model in Table 2 shows that the marginal effect of government status increases by 1.8%pt. when a party experiences an ideological intensity shift of 10%pt. away from the parliamentary center (significant at $p < 0.1$). In other words, the stronger (less centric) a party's ideological preferences are, the greater the probability that the party will be represented on commissions when it is in government. If we omit the party fixed effects from the model and compare the moderating effect of ideological intensity on the positive effect of party in government, this positive moderation effect becomes even stronger (see Table B.9 in Appendix B.2). Figure 6b maps the marginal effect of being in government, depending on the strength of the party's left-right orientation relative to the parliamentary average (ideological intensity). The figure shows that parties at the ideological center only experience a 2.5%pt. increase in the probability of being represented on commissions from being in government. The further away from the ideological center a governing party is, the larger the difference between the parties' presence on commissions when in government vs. in opposition. Parties that are, for instance, 30%pt. more left-wing or right-wing use their control over government to appoint commission members from their own ranks 10.8%pt. more often than parties in the center.
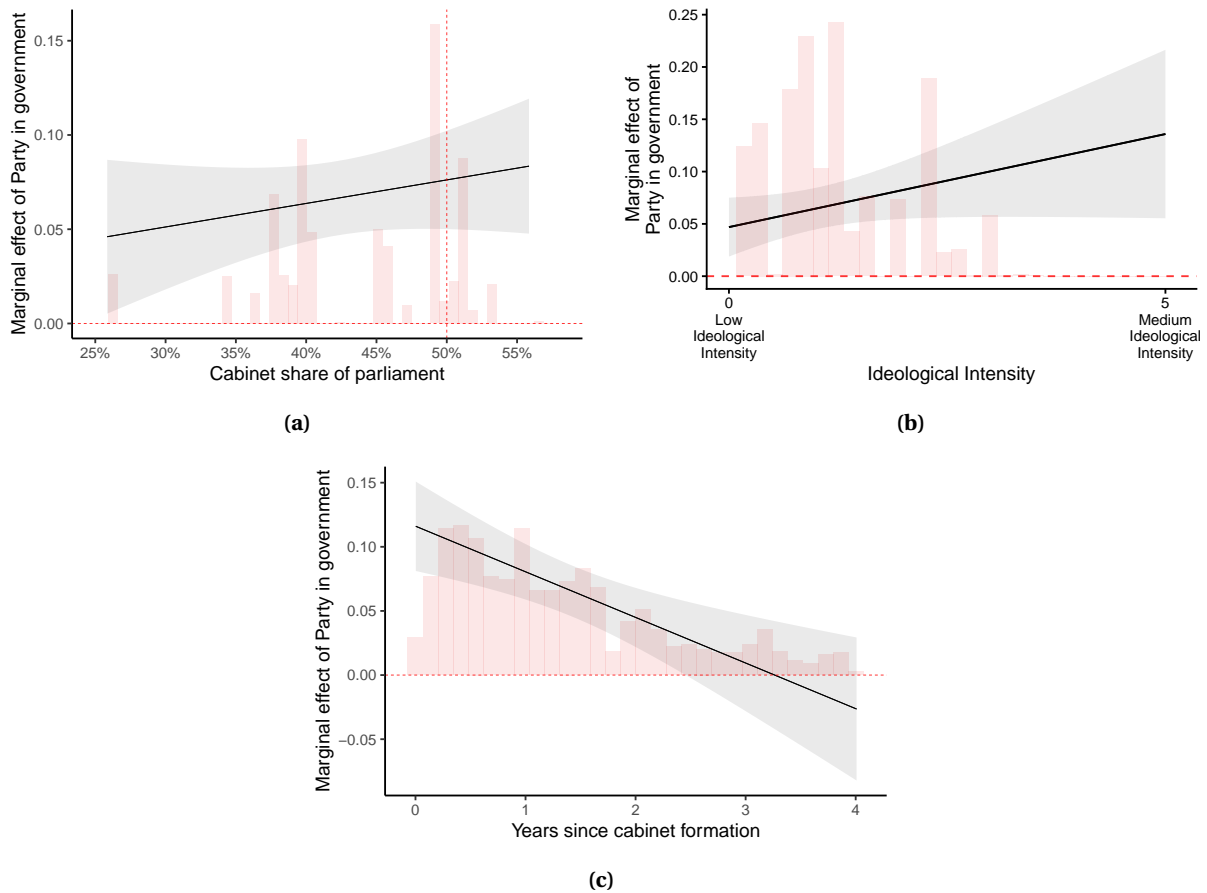

(a)

(b)

(c)

Figure 6: Marginal effect plots for interaction effects. Histograms show the distribution of observations on the moderating variable. For ideological intensity the histogram only shows the observations of government parties.

Finally, with regard to H5, the results in the election cycle model in Table 2 support the expectation that parties' are more likely to follow the patronage logic of appointing their own members to commissions when they first enter government and that this effect declines with time in government. The marginal effects plot in Figure 6c shows how the effect of being in government on the probability of a party being represented on commissions declines by 3.6%pt. each year ($p < 0.001$), starting at 14.3%pt. when a new government has just been formed, and that it is no longer different from opposition parties after about 2.5 years, when the 95% confidence interval for the marginal effect crosses zero.

6.1 Robustness checks

We conduct a series of tests to check the robustness of the main results. First, we re-estimate the regression results in Table 2 without commissions where there are uncertain politicians (Table B.4 in Appendix B.2); all results, barring the interaction effect between party in government and ideological intensity, remain statistically significant at conventional levels. This effect is also not significant at $p < 0.1$ in the models that do not adjust for election-specific ideological changes. A reason for this is that there is limited ideological diversity within parties, and parties with extreme ideological preferences are only in government in 2 different legislative periods. Focusing on the between-party ideological heterogeneity in utilizing the power of appointment for partisan reasons when in government, we find robust results showing that the more intense the ideological preferences of parties, the higher the marginal difference of commission representation between opposition and government status. Regarding the robustness tests for the moderating effect of a governments parliamentary strength, we find no significant effects in any of the robustness tests where we instead make a dichotomous separation of minority and majority governments.

A potential source of bias that could influence the results is if all partisan experiences of appointed members occur after their appointment to a commission. There could be reverse causation whereby an expert appointed to a commission comes to think favorably about the politics of governing parties, which may later result in their joining and running for office for one of these parties. Table B.5 in Appendix B.2 shows that all results remain when the 27.4% of appointed partisan commission members, for whom we only have recorded political experience after the date of appointment, are excluded from the dependent variable. Next, while governments are expected to be well informed about the partisanship of candidates for appointment, they may be less aware of the partisanship of candidates who have never held political office. Accordingly, we also run robustness checks on two subsets of members: those who have held office and those who only ran for office, as shown in Table B.6 in Appendix B.2. Comparing the models for the two subgroups of partisan members, we find that the party in government coefficient remains positive and statistically significant at the same level for both types of partisans. This implies that individuals who mainly hold non-partisan qualifications for being selected for commission work are also more likely to be chosen if they are members of a governing party versus an opposition party – providing evidence that governments likely take partisanship into account when selecting experts for government commissions. Notably, the effect of parties being more likely to be

represented on government commissions when they represent a larger share of the electorate seems to be driven by the appointment of partisans who have held office, as the coefficient is closer to zero and loses statistical significance in the models that only consider the partisans who have never held office. A possible explanation for this is that when governments follow the consensus logic of representing counter-partisans to reach partisan compromise on policy, they ensure that they appoint individuals who are clear representatives of those parties. Conversely, when it comes to representing members of their own party, it is beneficial to be more subtle to protect the legitimacy of government commissions; over-sampling experts who also happen to have the right partisanship allows governments to gain control while maintaining legitimacy.
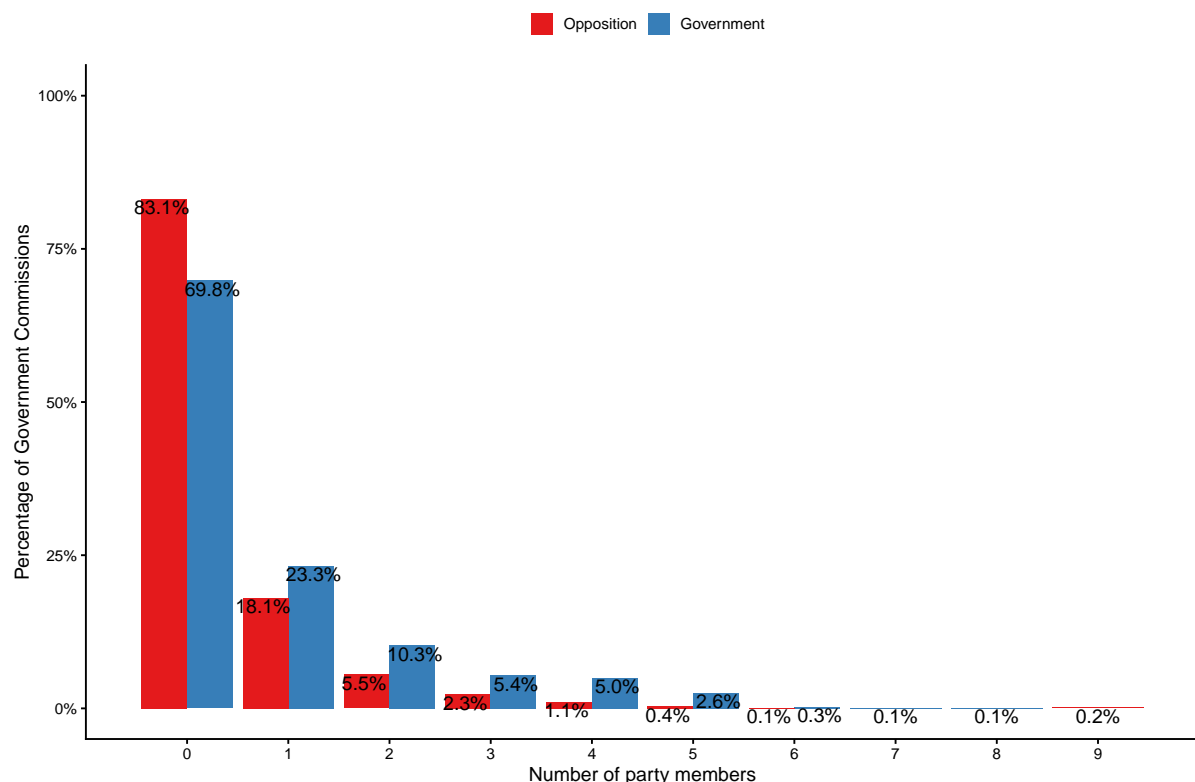

Figure 7: Percentage of government commissions with 0-9 members from the same party by wether or not the party is in government or in opposition.

Figure 7 highlights that parties are not always represented by one member on a commission; in 27.4% of instances when a party is represented on a commission, two or more members of the commission are affiliated with the party. Moreover, the figure shows that the difference between the average share of times parties in government vs. those in opposition are represented on a commission increases with the number of representatives the party obtains on the commission. This indicates that whereas both members of government and opposition parties are often represented on commissions, the cabinet uses its appointment powers to follow a patronage logic of stacking some commissions with multiple co-partisans. Following the logic outlined above, the findings for our hypotheses on the patronage logic should be even stronger when the dependent variable is operationalized as a count variable representing the number of party members on a

commission, and the regression models are re-estimated using Poisson-regression. Table B.12 in Appendix B.4 shows that this is the case.

To assess whether the difference between a party being in government vs. in opposition on the likelihood of being represented on a commission is strictly due to chance, we conducted a randomization analysis. We ran two placebo tests on the effect of being in government by substituting the party in government variable with a placebo party in government variable that is either constructed by stratifying by party and randomly sampling from the party-specific distribution of government status for each commission, or by selecting a random starting point in the party's sequence of being in government or opposition (as parties are in government/opposition for multiple commissions in a row). We repeated both placebo tests 10,000 times. Figure B.14 (Appendix B.5) compares the distribution of coefficients from the placebo tests with the estimates from model 2 in Table 2, showing that there is a large difference between the estimated effect of being in government and the placebo estimates. Hence, the effect of party in government on representation on commissions is likely not a product of chance.

To ensure that the main result is robust to changes over time in the parties' supply of potential commission members, we conducted additional analyzes on different subsets of the data. First, we removed the conservative party and the socialist party from the data, as these two parties marginally violate the parallel trends assumption, and re-estimated model 2 in Table 2; this yielded similar results in terms of statistical significance and effect size. Next, we split the data into two parts, estimating the model with all parties separately before and after 2000; this did not alter the results for the patronage logic, but it did for the consensus logic. Table B.7 in Appendix B shows that the coefficient for party share of parliamentary seats turns negative and non-significant in the model that only considers commissions appointed after 2000, indicating that using commissions for political compromise may have become less relevant over time. Lastly, we conducted a year-clustered and a party-clustered bootstrap analysis, where appointment years or parties are included and excluded in the analysis at random. Figure B.15 in Appendix B.5 shows that the coefficient of party in government is robustly higher than zero across all bootstrap samples. Hence, the effect of party in government on representation on commissions is likely not driven by the inclusion of particular parties or years.

Our main modeling approach weighs the observations for all parties outside of and within government equally, however, observations that are far away from when a party is in government may not be the best counterfactual for when it enters government. To more accurately capture the effect of a party transitioning from opposition to having control over commission member appointments in government, Figure 8 shows event study estimates of the effect of a party entering government on its representation on government commissions. The figure shows that the 95% confidence intervals for estimates prior to a party entering government all cross zero, indicating that there are no other cyclical patterns of party representation. There is a clear and statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$) jump in the representation of parties at t=0, the first year

in which they enter a government, for all three indicators of representation. For being represented vs. not being represented, the event study shows that government parties are only more likely, by 6 percentage points, to be represented on government commissions at the start of cabinets. However, when it comes to the size of this representation, we observe lasting positive effects on both the number and proportion of members that a party receives on government commissions. This lends further support to H2 and H5, governments strategically place members from their own party on government commissions, particularly at the start of a new cabinet.
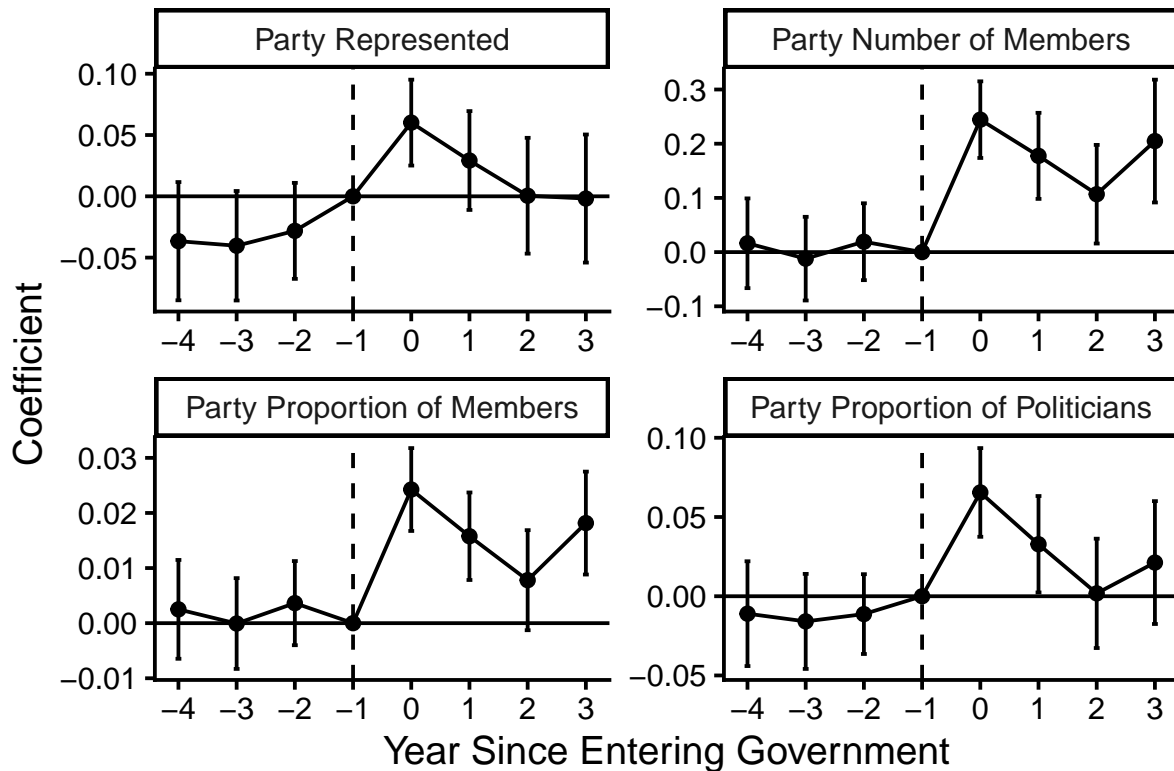

Figure 8: OLS estimates of the effect of a party entering into government on being represented (any members), number of members and proportion of members on government commissions, along with 95% confidence intervals. The estimation covers 1639 government commissions for the 7 parties that were in government within 8 years of a commission being appointed (N=5,966). Comparing the last four years prior to entering government (t=-4,-3,-2,-1), with the years after entering government (t=0, 1, 2, 3, 4). The model includes fixed effect for party, cabinet and ministry as well as the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. Standard errors are clustered at the Commission level. Complete regression tables are reported in Table B.13 in Appendix B

7 Conclusion

Our empirical analysis demonstrates a strikingly robust difference in the representation of political parties on government commissions when they are in government vs. in opposition. We showed that appointments to these temporary bureaucratic structures, which are outside the bureaucratic chain of delegation, are subject to patronage strategies even in Norway, a country where political appointees to the permanent bureaucracy are

virtually absent, and the political dynamics of staffing the bureaucracy are limited (Bach et al., 2025). In other words, even in countries with strong merit bureaucracies and norms against patronage logics in appointments to bureaucratic positions, and where the legitimacy of the expert advice of commissions hinges on it being seen as a depoliticized institution, if a bureaucratic position is open to the use of partisan criteria, governments will, to some extent, use their political discretion to make appointments to such positions according to patronage strategies. However, the increase in the representation of members of government political parties is substantively modest compared to positions that are formally politicized (Staronova & Rybar, 2021). This may partially be explained by the professional party system and state funding scheme for parties in the Norwegian context, as this should reduce the need to use commission positions to reward party activists for campaigning efforts (Strøm & Müller, 1999). An alternative explanation for why governments do not appoint even more co-partisan commission members for political control, is that such control is achievable through other mechanisms that are less politically costly (Peters & Pierre, 2004). For instance, to secure day-to-day control over the workings of commissions, governments can also appoint members who share their preferences to the secretariat of the commission, or simply place the secretariat-function within the Ministerial hierarchy (Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023b).

We also find a great deal of support for the logic of consensus policy-making steering a large share of the appointment pattern of members of political parties to commissions. About 50% of commission members hail from opposition parties, and governments largely appoint members from opposition and governing parties to the same commissions, indicative of a peaceful coexistence in line with the representation of other interests on commissions (J. Olsen et al., 1982). Moreover, we find that the level of representation of opposition parties on commissions is somewhat proportional to their parliamentary share. The consensus logic is substantively significant, as governments' preferences for appointing commission members with a political affiliation are not just a static function of the party and a dynamic function of the party composition and ideology of the appointing government; it is also dynamic with regard to the different parties' legislative strengths. When a party, regardless of its opposition or government status, accounts for a larger share of parliament, the government is more likely to appoint members from it to commissions, pointing towards an institutional logic where parties are representatives of societal interests and the larger their parliamentary share, the more democratically legitimate it is for these interests to be represented on commissions. A question for further research is whether the representation of opposition and government parties on commissions, including parties in pre-parliamentary policy-making, leads to less conflict over policy at the parliamentary stage.

Exploring the heterogeneous effects of how different governments and parties use their power to appoint partisan experts, we do not find strong support for majority governments increasing the level of politicization that previous studies have found in, for instance, the US (Lewis, 2008) or the Swedish context (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2023). Instead, we find that Norwegian governments across the entire spectrum of parliamentary support are more likely to appoint members of their own parties to sit on commissions, and that an increase in

the parliamentary support of the government only provides a weak, nonsignificant increase in the likelihood of representation. Moreover, we find no difference between the same party's probability of being present among appointed commission members when serving in majority vs. minority governments. Adding to the literature on how ideology affects the politicization of bureaucracy, we show that the difference in the likelihood of being represented on government commissions when in government vs. in opposition is largest for parties further away from the ideological center of the party system. Finally, we show that there are some levels of election cycle dynamics concerning the patronage logic of bureaucratic appointments. Primarily, we find that governments are more likely to appoint members from their own parties to commissions early in their governing terms.

Is it necessarily bad that commissions are more likely to contain representation from government parties? Its completely legitimate from a democratic point of view that governments get to choose their own advisers. A question for further research is whether and when it has a detrimental effect on the advice generated (Moynihan & Herd, 2025). Or does it help create more actionable policy advice; after all, governments are not required to put the recommendations of commissions into effect. Many a commission report is born kicking and screaming into the world and placed in the ministers arms, only to be quietly laid to rest in a drawer. Allowing governments to have some discretion to place political allies alongside non-partisan experts (and counter-partisans) may be a democratically legitimate action to lower the risk of advice being dead on arrival. However, in doing so, the rules governing the transparency of the interests that are present on commissions are paramount to prevent the scales from tipping over from politically actionable expert advice to politicized knowledge.

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Appendices

Contents

A   Dataset creation

A.1   Processing the government commissions data

Our base dataset contains all members of government commissions that were appointed by the government and delivered an Official Norwegian Report (NOU) between 1972-2023 (Hesstvedt & Christensen, 2023). From this dataset, we select all members of the commission, discarding information about the members of the commissions secretariat. Our data on Government Commissions only contains the name of the person and their primary occupation at time of appointment as provided in the Official Norwegian Report, it does not contain any further characteristics to identify individuals such as date of birth or further career or education information. 50 out of 13944 commission members did not have a name in the original dataset, except for one commission report that only had a public organization as the author, these have all been found by going back to the main source document of the dataset (the individual NOUs), from decisions by royal decree accessed through the government archives, or yearly white papers over all members of government commissions (until

2004).

The names of commission members are recorded from a standardized introductory section in the Official Norwegian Reports that contain information about how the commission was appointed, what its mandate was, and how it worked to execute on the mandate. This section provides the names of all appointed members of the commission and the secretariat is mentioned a long with a occupational title and/or organizational affiliation and/or the municipality they live in. Particularly for the 1970s and early 1980s only the last name and initials of some (n=134) members are recorded. Before matching the names of commission members with the politician datasets, a manual search was conducted to find the full names of these individuals, using the other government commissions in the dataset to look for partial matches, "Utvalgsarkivet", the yearly State calendars for government employees, the online archives of the parliament and the government, as well as bibliographic sources such as *Snl.no* and *Wikipedia* or local history books and newspapers (from nb.no). The key criteria for confirming the full name of the member was the congruence of the prosopographic information about the individual in the source and the main dataset. Using this technique, only n=6 individuals had missing information on the first name variable before matching with the politician datasets (these were checked against the politician datasets for first names that matched their initials with no probable matches; in other words, they are likely not hidden politicians).

Table A.1: The six persons with missing first name

	name_original	name_cleaned	affiliation_original	title_original	com_yearappoint	com_title
1	J.E. Jacobsen	j.e. jacobsen	Oslo	Skipsreder	1981	Reksten-saken.
2	J. Hidle	j. hidle	Ruteskibenes Rederiforening	Sjoekeptein	1975	Forurensning fra skip.
3	G. B. Mathisen	g. b. mathisen	Akergruppenn	forskningssjef	1972	Roerledninger paa dypt vann.
4	Th. Tollefsen	th. tollefsen	Norske boligbyggelags landsforbund	Arbeidskonsulent	1968	Boligformidling.
5	T. J. Jobin	t. j. jobin	Phillips petroleum company Norway	Direktoer	1970	Ilandfoering av petroleum.
6	P. W. Tucker	p. w. tucker	Phillips petroleum company Norway	Dr.	1970	Ilandfoering av petroleum.

We also use name data from Statistics Norway (SSB) (on the number of individuals with a given first name and their legal gender) to assign gender based on the first name of the member (for unisex names we use the most common gender based on data from 2021). 383 names where not in the SSB data due to being carried by less than 200 people in 2021, these where then manually checked (SSB, 2024). In manually checking these data, we uncovered 18 more instances of misspelled names in the government commission dataset. Moreover, we conducted a manual check of names within the dataset that was 1 Damerau–Levenshtein distance apart to recode misspelled names (about 160 names were recoded).

A.2 Processing the partisan affiliation data

We construct a dataset of Norwegian politicians (hence forth, referred to as the politician dataset) to find the partisanship of government commission members by merging data from different sources. Data on all cabinet ministers, state secretaries, and political advisors in the ministries 1884-2024 is sourced from Forum (2024). This dataset contains information on the full names of politicians, their birth-years, information about their

employment spells in the aforementioned political positions (as well as top bureaucrats in the ministries), and information about changes in the party makeup of the government (data also utilized in Askim et al., 2024). We merge this data with data on candidates for parliamentary (Fiva & Smith, 2017) and local (Fiva et al., 2024) elections (merged by using the id variable that exists in both datasets) or by joining the data on a standardized spelling of the first and last names of the politician and their birth year.

As one of the few parliamentary democracies in which the government does not have the power to dissolve the parliament and call early elections, elections in Norway happen at fixed intervals (Fiva & Smith, 2017). In the Post-World War II period, national elections have been held every 4 years since 1945; local elections were held at the same time in 1945 but have since occurred on a 2 year staggered timing, every 4 years starting with 1947. The parliamentary election dataset contains all running and elected candidates in the 31 elections between 1906 and 2021 and contains information on the listed occupation and hometown of the candidate, along-side information on the name, party, and electoral outcome of the candidate (Fiva & Smith, 2017). The full names of non-elected candidates are not available for all candidates until 1961. Between 1906 and 1957, the full names of all female candidates are available in the data, but for male candidates, this has only been recovered for the more prolific candidates Similarly, the birth-years are only available for elected candidates (Fiva & Smith, 2017).

Since the final matching is done on the name data, the lack of birth-year for non elected candidates is a minor issue that mainly affects the ease with which we can confirm if the politician and the commission member are the same person. The lack of first name for unelected candidates can result in some hidden political affiliation being missed by our identification strategy, but most commission members should be prolific enough to where their first name also should exist in the parliamentary candidates dataset, and most of the commission members should have their political experience from after 1961, as the covered period is 1972-2023, but this may result in an underestimation of politically affiliated members in the first couple of decades of observation.

The local elections dataset covers the highest number of individuals (219,993), but also the shortest time span (1971-2023) and the most variation in which positions and which biographical information are covered (Fiva et al., 2024). Local elections are held for two sub-central tiers in Norway, and the dataset covers the universe of county elections (regional government). County elections are held together with the municipal elections (local governments) starting from 1975. With 51,562 unique candidates all elected candidates are covered, all non-elected candidates are only covered from 2003, before this about half of the unelected candidates are covered (Fiva et al., 2024). For the municipal elections, complete information on candidates is only available after 2003; prior to this, only all (deputy) mayors are covered. The local government data provides the full name, year of birth, and place of residence for all candidates.

The politician dataset is structured in a wide format with one row for the political positions of the individual politician, per unique first name, last name and birth-year combination. This is an imperfect way of identifying

the same individuals across the data sources, so there may be some politicians that have multiple rows in this data (i.e. if the birth year is missing from one of the sources or if the politician changes their last name over time, or due to misspellings). This is not a problem since the main purpose of this data is to uncover the political affiliation of government commission members. These data are manually checked at a later stage, and any uncovered commission members with multiple rows in the politician dataset are combined into one at this stage.

A.3   Connecting the two datasets

To maximize the number of potential matches based on the name indicator – yet limit the need to manually check the potential partisanship of individual government commission appointees since we have too few individual characteristics recorded in the same way across the different datasets for strictly probabilistic matching of government commission members and politicians (Geys, 2023) – we pre-process the full name variables in all datasets in the same way. First, we only keep the first name and last name of individuals. this is done by splitting the first name and last name columns of the different datasets at the first space and taking the first elements. We then remove all special characters, transforms the text to lowercase, remove all diacritics, and change all non-Latin letters to a Latin representation (i.e. changing the Norwegian ø to oe etc.). We then proceeded to join the politician data with the government commission data using exact matching on the standardized spelling of their first and last names. Norway is a relatively small country with a population of around 5 million, as such the number of people that share the same first and last name is a lot smaller than in countries with larger populations[12], making the two-stage process a feasible approach.

To get a rough estimate of the sensitivity and specificity of the initial classification of partisans by first name and last name, we sampled 30 units from the pool of individuals who were classified as non-partisans and 30 units from the pool of individuals who were classified as potential partisans. 0% of the non-partisans were misclassified; for these, the year of birth was found for 26 out of 30. For the potential partisans, the true positive rate was 60% (18/30) with a 95% confidence interval of 41.4%-78.6%. Taken together, by matching on first name and last name between the commission members and politician datasets, we observe a sampling sensitivity of 1 (implying that our approach should be able to uncover partisanship for all members with the political experience covered in the politician dataset) and a sampling specificity of 71.4% (30/42), meaning that about 28.6% of commission members will be falsely classified as hidden politicians without the manual check.

The dataset with all potential matched NOU-member politicians contains 2954 unique first name and last name combinations, totaling 15011 rows. After removing impossible matches such as individuals with a negative age, and largely improbable matches such as individuals under the age of 18 and over the age of 90, all remaining rows have been manually checked. This has been done by manually checking the information

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[12]In the local politician dataset of around 170,000 politicians, 91.9% of first- and last-name combinations are unique (Fiva et al., 2024).

on occupation and place of residence in the two datasets, using the yearly state calendar or other sources to find the year of birth of the NOU-member and checking if it matches the year of birth of the politician, searching digital archives of newspapers with search terms such as "name + party name + occupation". As well as general google searches to find information about NOU-members on party websites, Wikipedia, the parliaments official webpages, Linkedin and so on.

The potential matched politician NOU-members have been categorized based on a variable of certainty regarding whether they are the same person, ranging from 0, where we found information confirming that the politician and the matched politician are not the same person, to 1, where we are uncertain whether the politician and the NOU member are the same person but cannot confirm that they are not (these observations will be removed from our analysis as a robustness test), and 2, where we have sources confirming that the appointee and the politician are the same person.

We also coded whether the electoral political experience was voluntary or not using news articles. Political parties in Norway can put any eligible candidate on their list provided that the candidate do not submit a written application for exemption from the list to the electoral authorities (Election Act §3.4). Until the Election Act was revised in 2002, an eligible candidate had to be nearing retirement or a proven member of a different party to be successfully exempted from being on a parties list. This was often abused by small radical parties to attempt to attract voters by putting non-political celebrities on their lists, as is the case for five people that have been appointed to one or more government commissions. These five people are not counted as politicians in our main analysis.

We employed two coders to manually check the data. In general, checking a potential matched name took 1-2 minutes; however, some government commission members had limited information about their careers in online or newspaper sources. finding enough information to make coding decisions on these cases could take upwards of 10-30 minutes in the most extreme cases. Any uncertain cases where checked by both coders.

A.4   Discussion of potential sources of bias in the identification of partisanship

Even with inconsistencies in which candidates are covered across time in the local data we utilize all available data when doing the initial pairing of the politician data with the commission member data to maximize the number of commission members that we are able to uncovered for descriptive purposes.

Our dataset may still underestimate the number of appointees that have political experience and a political affiliation in Norway, due to misspelled names, changed names, and appointees who have run for elections that are not covered (or missing) in the politician data. However, this should not induce any systematic bias on the results from our statistical tests as this should not be related to the party affiliation of the government commission member, whether it is partisan or not, nor to the electoral cycle and parliamentary basis of governments. Since the final matching is only done on the name data the lack of birth-year for non-elected candidates is a minor issue that mainly affects the ease at which we can confirm if the politician and the

commission member is the same person. Most commission members should be prolific enough for their first name to exist in the parliamentary candidates dataset, and most of the commission members should have their political experience after 1961, as the covered period is 1972-2018, but this may result in an underestimation of politically affiliated members in the first couple of decades of observation – as we also record the political experience of commission members not covered in the politician dataset, when uncovered during the manual checking this should only have a minor impact on our estimates of changes in the dynamics of politician appointments to government commissions over time in Norway (this only constitutes 1.9% of appointees).

People changing last names (or first names) throughout their life can be an issue when trying to uncover hidden partisanship by connecting the datasets on first name and last name. This may particularity be an issue for matching woman at different points in time between the two datasets as they traditionally more often than men take their partners last name if they get married. As members of government commissions are typically 30-70 years old, and the mean age for first time marriage in Norway in 2022 was 36.8 (men) and 34.6 (women) (SSB, 2023), this should mainly affect people who are appointed only before marriage/divorce and have a political career only after marriage/divorce (or vise versa). For matching politicians and NOU members at similar points in time, this should prove a non issue, but it may cause us to slightly underestimate hidden politicians where participation in government commissions and party political experience are far apart. In these cases, it is also unlikely that the political experience was relevant for the appointment; hence, even for non-name-changing individuals, it is difficult to argue a causal connection between these peoples political preferences and the governments decision to appoint them. In any case, when instances of name change have been discovered during the cleaning of the data—such as with "Tora Aasland (Houg)", who e.g. held positions as Minister, Parliamentarian, County Governor and participated in 10 government commissions between 1978 and 2010, but had a different last name before and after 1986—both the dataset on politicians and NOU members observations of this person have been changed to the most recent last name for all observations of this individual.

The first attempt to join the politician dataset with the NOU members data still resulted in 25 out of 650 (3.8%) known politician members being misclassified as non-politicians. Six of these were not misclassified but had never run for or held any of the political positions considered in the dataset [local politics before 1971 (5) or student politics (1)]. Another 2 people were misspelled in the local politicians dataset, leaving a total of 15/650 (2.3%) of unique known politician names in the dataset misspelled. These *firstname_lastname* id-vectors were subsequently fixed before joining the data again, with no known politicians (within the sample of potential politicians) being misclassified; however, there may still be other members with political experience, but not at the time of appointment, that were misclassified as non-politicians. However, there should be no systematic variance in which names have been wrongly spelled by the manual coders between hidden politicians and actual non-politicians, so this will mainly potentially skew the descriptive statistics towards a

slight underestimation of the hidden politicians, but it should not impact hypotheses tests as the reason for misspellings are unrelated to the individuals having political experience. There may be some overtime bias due to the ease of copying and pasting the names from the NOUs published as PDFs after 1994, compared with the NOUs from 1972 to 1994, which were published as e-books by the National Library of Norway. It is harder to access and copy the text from these earlier NOUs, so the coders may have done this to a lesser degree.

A potential source of bias that could influence the results is if all partisan experience of appointed members occurs after their appointment to a commission. For 27.4% of appointed partisan commission members, we only have recorded political experience after the date of appointment. There could be reverse causation whereby an expert appointed to a commission comes to think favorably about the politics of governing parties, which may later result in their joining and running for office for one of these parties. We concede that this could be the case for some individuals, but since we do not have full information about all the political experiences of candidates – particularly in local politics before 2003 – we choose to include such individuals in the main analysis to prioritize capturing the extent of partisanship. The first recorded political experience for 10.6% of the individuals who are active politicians at the point of appointment is after the appointment. However, as robustness checks, we run the analysis excluding individuals without recorded political experience before the time of appointment. Moreover, while governments are expected to be well informed about the partisanship of candidates for appointment, they may be less aware of the partisanship of candidates who have never held political office; accordingly, we also run robustness checks on two subsets of members, those who have held office and those who only ran for office.

A.5 Coding choices

- Members who had only stood for election against their will are coded as not having a political affiliation.

- There are 101 observations in which we are uncertain whether the member and the politician are the same person after the manual check. These are instances where it can neither be confirmed that the member and the politician are the same person, nor can it be confirmed that they are different people based on external sources. We choose to include these individuals in the main models for completeness, as robustness tests excluding these members or coding them as non-politicians do not significantly alter the results.

B   Supplementary analysis

B.1 Descriptive statistics

Table B.1 summarizes the individual characteristics of politically affiliated members of commissions, highlighting that only 21.1% of these commission members were appointed while they held political office.

The most common type of political experience that politician members had was experience as a political advisor (or state secretary) in a ministry department (28%), positions that are often in the hands of partisan professionals (Askim et al., 2017). 26.7% had political experience at the municipal level, 16.8% at the county level, 16.6% from the parliament, and 14.1% as a government minister. A further 29.8% of the appointees with political affiliation had only stood for election and never held elected or appointed office.[13]

Table B.1: Descriptiv statistics for individual members with party affiliation.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Density
Inactive politician	3762	79%	0.41	0	1	
multiple party affiliations	3762	6%	0.24	0	1	
Conservative Party	3762	18%	0.39	0	1	
Labour Party	3762	42%	0.49	0	1	
Centre Party	3762	11%	0.31	0	1	
Christian Democratic Party	3762	8%	0.28	0	1	
Liberal Party	3762	12%	0.33	0	1	
Socialist Left Party	3762	8%	0.28	0	1	
Green Party	3762	1%	0.1	0	1	
Red Party	3762	1%	0.12	0	1	
Progress Party	3762	2%	0.13	0	1	
Sámi parties	3762	1%	0.07	0	1	
Other parties	3762	2%	0.13	0	1	
Municipal level	3762	27%	0.44	0	1	
County level	3762	17%	0.37	0	1	
National Parliament	3762	17%	0.37	0	1	
Political Advisor (government)	3762	28%	0.45	0	1	
Minister	3762	14%	0.35	0	1	
Not in sample	3762	2%	0.12	0	1	
Only Ran for Election	3762	30%	0.46	0	1	
Recorded Political Experience Before Appointment	3762	73%	0.45	0	1	
Partisan Alignment	3762	48%	0.5	0	1	
Female	3762	34%	0.47	0	1	
Leader	3762	13%	0.34	0	1	
Age at Appointment	3684	47.96	10.52	17	80	

A preliminary answer to the question of whether governments use their formal discretion to follow a patronage strategy of appointing only members of their own political parties to commissions is that there is no clear evidence of this in the descriptive statistics. Table B.1 shows that 47.7% have partisan affiliation with a government party, while 52.3% of appointees are affiliated with an opposition party. Furthermore, figure B.1 which plots the percentage of partisan affiliated members each year with a trend line for the government's share of parliamentary seats, shows that in most years the share of government affiliated politicians does not

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[13]6% of appointees had been a member of multiple parties throughout their life.

exceed more than 50% of politician members. Moreover, the government's share of commission members largely correlates to its parliamentary strength. Between 1994 and 2005, and after 2014, the government's share of politically affiliated members is consistently lower than the opposition's at around 40%, falling as low as 24-26% in 1998 and 2016. Under the Labour party-led coalition majority government 2005-2013 the trend changed towards a 57-74% of appointed politician members being affiliated with the government. When simply comparing the share of individuals affiliated with a governing party under minority and majority governments, we find that 45.1% of politician members are affiliated with a party in government under minority government vs. 58.9% under majority governments.

Figure B.1: Government parties share of commission members with political affiliation by year. Solid line denotes the government's percentage of parliamentary seats (the average is used for years with multiple governments).

The general trend of parties receiving a higher share of politically affiliated members when in government vs. opposition is clearly visible in the differences in densities in figure B.2, which summarizes the trend in parties' share of yearly appointments. Here, we clearly see trends of members from all parties that have been in government constituting a larger share of politician members when their party is in government. For parties closer to the ideological center of the parliament – the Center Party, the Christian Democrats, and the Liberal Party – we observe a smaller difference between years when their party is in government compared to in opposition, in comparison with parties located further to the right or left. This is in line with the partisan appointment logic being stronger for more ideologically extreme parties.

Figure B.2: Ridge plot over parties' yearly percentage of politically affiliated members when they are in opposition vs. in government.

Table B.2: Descriptiv statistics

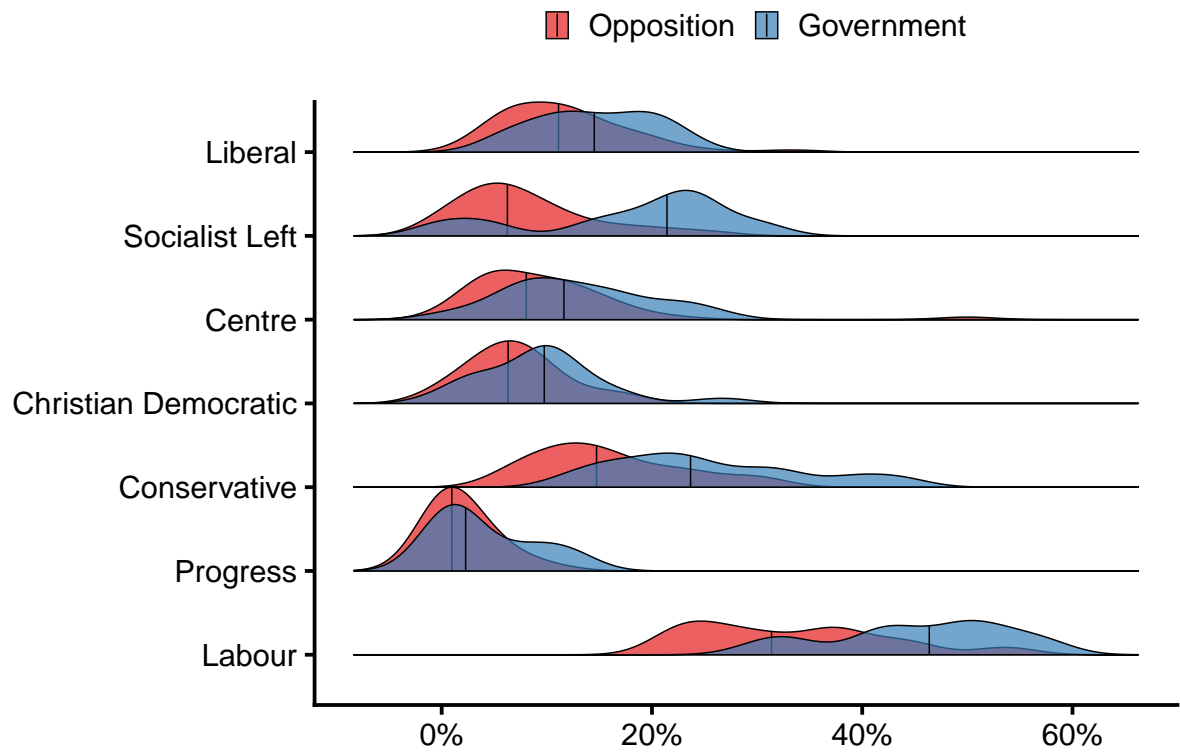| Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Density
Party Represented	14751	18%	0.39	0	1	
Party Share of Members	14751	3%	0.07	0	1	
Party Share of Politician Members	14751	9%	0.22	0	1	
Party in Government	14751	21%	0.41	0	1	
Majority Government	14751	18%	0.38	0	1	
Party share of parliamentary seats	14751	11%	0.13	0	0.57	
Standing Government Commission	14751	10%	0.3	0	1	
Share of Academics	14751	15%	0.2	0	1	
Share of Politician Members	14751	23%	0.21	0	1	
Any Politician Members	14751	75%	0.43	0	1	
Party_in_parliament_before	14751	88%	0.32	0	1	
Party ever in Government	14751	78%	0.42	0	1	
Prime Minister in period	14751	44%	0.5	0	1	
Any Uncertain Politicians	14751	9%	0.28	0	1	
Any Politicians not in sample	14751	4%	0.18	0	1	
Party Number of Members	14751	0.26	0.66	0	9	
Left-Right (expert)	12993	4.62	2.63	0.41	8.76	
Party Rile	12993	-1.73	2.32	-4.94	7.03	
Relative rile	12993	0	2.24	-3.78	8.33	
Years until Election	14751	2.02	1.17	0	4.01	
Years since cabinet formation	14751	1.31	0.96	0	4.01	
Number of Government Commission Members	14751	9.09	4.03	1	30	
Number of Politician Members	14751	2.24	2.48	0	18	
Year of Appointment	14751	1988.9	15.46	1946	2023	
Number of Unique Parties	14751	9	0	9	9	
Number of Commissions	14751	1639	0	1639	1639	

Table B.3: The number and percentage of government commission members affiliated with a political party in government or the opposition.

	Government Party	Opposition Party	Unaffiliated
1	1793 (11.9%)	1949 (12.9%)	11382 (75.3%)

Figure B.3: Total number of members by party.

Figure B.4: Share of politically affiliated members under minority and majority governments that hail from governing parties vs. opposition parties

Figure B.5: Average percentage of government commissions a party is represented on when in opposition vs. in government under minority and majority governments

Figure B.6: Share of government commissions parties are represented on when in opposition vs. in government.

Figure B.7: Average percentage of government commissions a party is represented on when in opposition vs. in government conditional on time since government formation.

Figure B.8: Average percentage of government commissions a party is represented on when in opposition vs. in government conditional on time until election.

B.2 OLS regression tables

Table B.4: OLS regression results: excluding government commissions with uncertain politicians

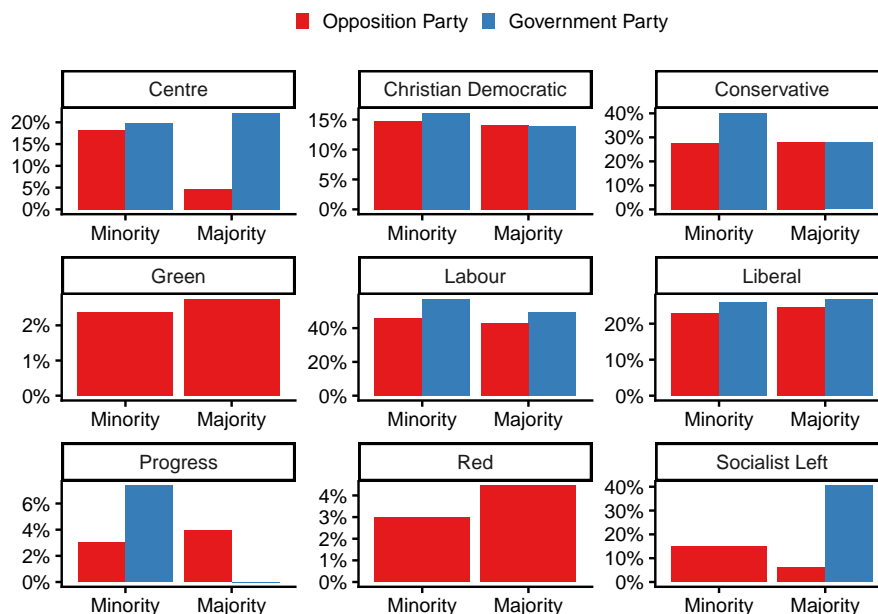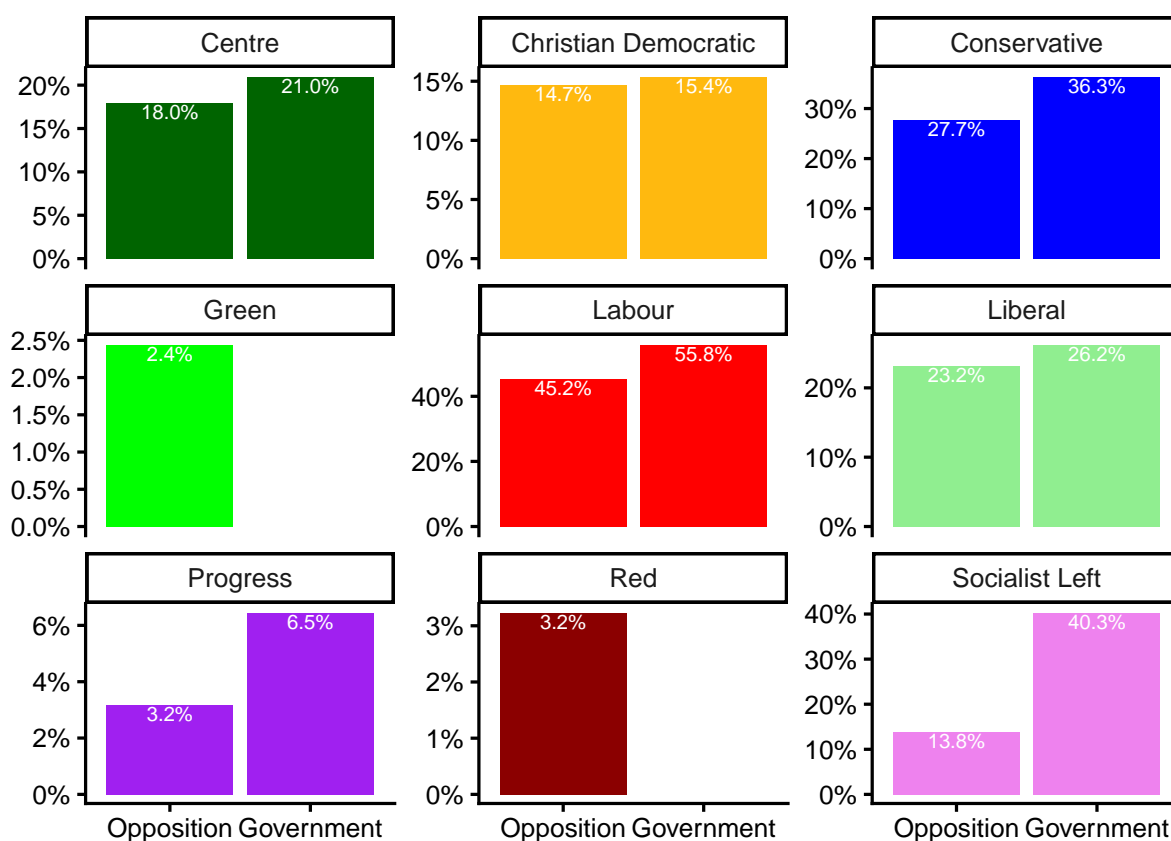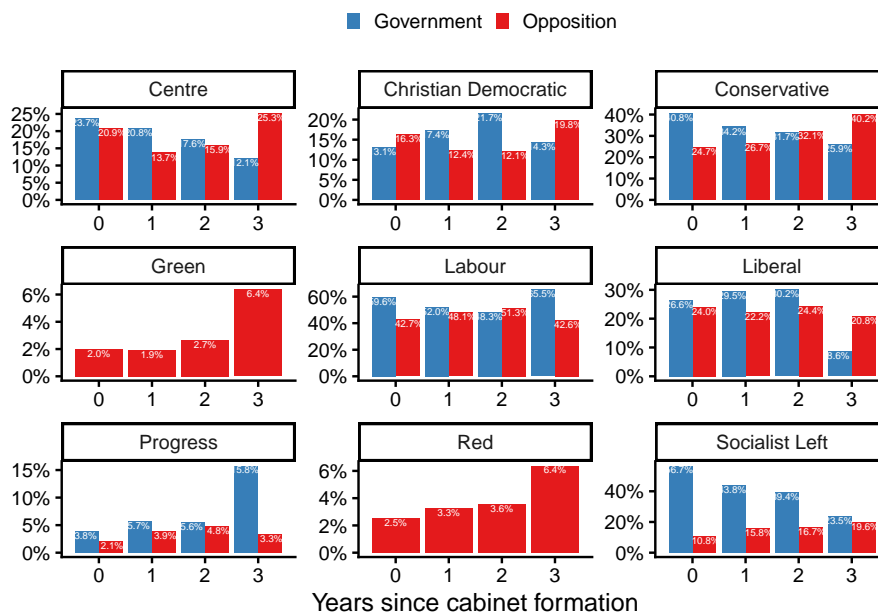|	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Party in Government	0.065	0.065	0.027	0.051	0.101
	[0.045, 0.086] ***	[0.045, 0.086] ***	[-0.073, 0.128]	[0.022, 0.080] ***	[0.069, 0.134] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.389	0.388	0.385	0.441	0.387
	[0.256, 0.522] ***	[0.255, 0.521] ***	[0.250, 0.519] ***	[0.295, 0.586] ***	[0.253, 0.520] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats			0.058		
			[-0.164, 0.280]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			0.087		
			[-0.146, 0.319]		
Ideological Intensity				0.012	
				[0.003, 0.021] **	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.012	
				[-0.008, 0.032]	
Years since cabinet formation					0.002
					[-0.006, 0.010]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.027
					[-0.044, -0.010] **
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X			
FE: Year			X		
N	10202	10202	10202	10202	10202
R2	0.34	0.40	0.34	0.34	0.34

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

Table B.5: OLS regression results. Only members with known political experience prior to appointment.

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission				
	Main	TWFE	Parliamentary strength	Party ideology	Election cycle
Party in Government	0.060	0.060	-0.017	0.039	0.078
	[0.041, 0.078] ***	[0.041, 0.078] ***	[-0.105, 0.071]	[0.013, 0.066] **	[0.048, 0.107] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.257	0.256	0.248	0.335	0.256
	[0.134, 0.380] ***	[0.133, 0.379] ***	[0.124, 0.372] ***	[0.200, 0.470] ***	[0.133, 0.379] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats			0.055		
			[-0.150, 0.259]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			0.178		
			[-0.027, 0.383] +		
Ideological Intensity				0.018	
				[0.010, 0.026] ***	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.017	
				[-0.002, 0.035] +	
Years since cabinet formation					-0.002
					[-0.010, 0.006]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.014
					[-0.029, 0.002] +
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X			
FE: Year			X		
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.34	0.41	0.34	0.34	0.34

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

Table B.6: OLS regression results. Elected vs. Never-Elected Partisans

Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission	Elected Partisans					Never-Elected Partisans				
	Main	TWFE	Parliamentary strength	Party ideology	Election cycle	Main	TWFE	Parliamentary strength	Party ideology	Election cycle
Party in Government	0.047	0.047	-0.020	0.030	0.060	0.042	0.042	0.027	0.034	0.062
	[0.029, 0.065] ***	[0.029, 0.065] ***	[-0.104, 0.065]	[0.005, 0.055] *	[0.031, 0.088] ***	[0.028, 0.057] ***	[0.028, 0.057] ***	[-0.042, 0.095]	[0.013, 0.056] **	[0.039, 0.085] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.344	0.344	0.337	0.389	0.344	0.071	0.070	0.068	0.091	0.070
	[0.223, 0.466] ***	[0.223, 0.466] ***	[0.215, 0.459] ***	[0.255, 0.523] ***	[0.222, 0.465] ***	[-0.019, 0.160]	[-0.019, 0.160]	[-0.022, 0.159]	[-0.008, 0.190] +	[-0.020, 0.159]
Government share of parliamentary seats			-0.006					-0.002		
			[-0.234, 0.223]					[-0.169, 0.166]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			0.154					0.037		
			[-0.040, 0.348]					[-0.121, 0.195]		
Ideological Intensity				0.011					0.005	
				[0.003, 0.019] **					[-0.000, 0.010] +	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.015					0.007	
				[-0.003, 0.032]					[-0.008, 0.022]	
Years since cabinet formation					0.002					-0.001
					[-0.007, 0.010]					[-0.007, 0.006]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.010					-0.015
					[-0.025, 0.005]					[-0.028, -0.002] *
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X					X			
FE: Year			X					X		
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.33	0.43	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.09	0.20	0.09	0.09	0.09

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

Table B.7: OLS regression results: before and after year 2000

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission	
	Before 2000	After 2000
Party in Government	0.051	0.087
	[0.025, 0.077] ***	[0.054, 0.119] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.393	-0.031
	[0.215, 0.570] ***	[-0.409, 0.347]
FE: Party	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X	X
FE: Ministry	X	X
N	8373	2807
R2	0.36	0.32

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

B.2.1 Different operationalizations of moderating variables

Table B.8: OLS regression results: Different models and operationalizations of majority government.

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Party in Government	0.014	0.029	0.060	0.067	0.058	0.076	0.052
	[-0.081, 0.108]	[-0.061, 0.120]	[0.038, 0.083] ***	[0.046, 0.089] ***	[0.036, 0.080] ***	[0.041, 0.111] ***	[0.026, 0.077] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats	-0.043	-0.041					
	[-0.242, 0.157]	[-0.146, 0.064]					
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.376	0.385	0.392	0.819	0.392	0.394	0.372
	[0.243, 0.508] ***	[0.254, 0.517] ***	[0.260, 0.523] ***	[0.756, 0.881] ***	[0.262, 0.522] ***	[0.259, 0.529] ***	[0.238, 0.506] ***
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats	0.125	0.071					
	[-0.094, 0.344]	[-0.138, 0.279]					
Majority Government			-0.044	-0.026	-0.028		
			[-0.084, -0.003] *	[-0.050, -0.003] *	[-0.052, -0.005] *		
Party in Government × Majority Government			0.024	0.018	0.021		
			[-0.020, 0.068]	[-0.025, 0.060]	[-0.021, 0.063]		
Party in Government × Party share of parliamentary seats						-0.039	0.043
						[-0.189, 0.111]	[-0.076, 0.163]
FE: Party	X	X	X		X	X	X
FE: Cabinet						X	
FE: Ministry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Year	X		X				
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.31	0.34	0.34	0.34

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

Table B.9: OLS regression results: Different operationalizations of ideologycal intensity.

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Party in Government	0.047	0.018	0.025	0.041	0.022
	[0.019, 0.075] **	[-0.013, 0.049]	[-0.003, 0.053] +	[0.003, 0.079] *	[-0.005, 0.049]
Ideological Intensity	0.013		-0.026		
	[0.004, 0.021] **		[-0.029, -0.022] ***		
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.434	0.821	0.767	0.421	0.443
	[0.290, 0.577] ***	[0.756, 0.887] ***	[0.701, 0.832] ***	[0.275, 0.567] ***	[0.341, 0.546] ***
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity	0.018		0.036		
	[-0.002, 0.037] +		[0.016, 0.056] ***		
Left-Right (expert) [absolute, 0 = center]		-0.029			
		[-0.034, -0.023] ***			
Party in Government × Left-Right (expert) [absolute, 0 = center]		0.027			
		[0.010, 0.044] **			
Party Rile [absolute, 0 = center]				0.007	
				[-0.001, 0.015] +	
Party in Government × Party Rile [absolute, 0 = center]				0.013	
				[-0.004, 0.031]	
Party_ideology_exMedium Ideological Intensity					0.070
					[0.041, 0.100] ***
Party_ideology_exHigh Ideological Intensity					-0.087
					[-0.104, -0.070] ***
Party in Government × Party_ideology_exMedium Ideological Intensity					0.082
					[0.038, 0.127] ***
Party in Government × Party_ideology_exHigh Ideological Intensity					0.103
					[0.040, 0.167] **
FE: Party	X			X	
FE: Cabinet	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Ministry	X	X	X	X	X
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.34	0.32	0.32	0.34	0.32

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Party in Government	0.104	0.128	0.062	0.074	0.143	0.169	0.158
	[0.073, 0.134] ***	[0.084, 0.172] ***	[0.026, 0.099] ***	[0.025, 0.124] **	[0.082, 0.204] ***	[0.096, 0.242] ***	[0.088, 0.227] ***
Years since cabinet formation	0.002	0.015			0.011	0.032	0.020
	[-0.006, 0.010]	[-0.011, 0.041]			[-0.000, 0.023] +	[0.002, 0.063] *	[0.004, 0.037] *
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.380	0.382	0.383	0.387	0.374	0.373	0.374
	[0.248, 0.512] ***	[0.250, 0.513] ***	[0.252, 0.515] ***	[0.256, 0.518] ***	[0.242, 0.506] ***	[0.241, 0.505] ***	[0.242, 0.506] ***
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation	-0.027	-0.072			-0.036	-0.092	-0.045
	[-0.044, -0.010] **	[-0.130, -0.014] *			[-0.056, -0.015] ***	[-0.163, -0.021] *	[-0.074, -0.017] **
I(Years since cabinet formation squared)		-0.004				-0.007	
		[-0.011, 0.003]				[-0.015, 0.002]	
Party in Government × I(Years since cabinet formation squared)		0.013				0.016	
		[-0.002, 0.028]				[-0.003, 0.034] +	
Years until Election			0.007	0.004	0.012	-0.004	0.019
			[-0.000, 0.014] +	[-0.024, 0.032]	[0.002, 0.022] *	[-0.038, 0.030]	[0.005, 0.033] **
Party in Government × Years until Election			0.003	-0.016	-0.013	-0.002	-0.021
			[-0.012, 0.017]	[-0.072, 0.039]	[-0.031, 0.004]	[-0.068, 0.065]	[-0.045, 0.003] +
I(Years until Election squared)				0.001		0.004	
				[-0.006, 0.007]		[-0.004, 0.012]	
Party in Government × I(Years until Election squared)				0.005		-0.003	
				[-0.009, 0.018]		[-0.020, 0.013]	
Years since cabinet formation × Years until Election							-0.005
							[-0.011, 0.002]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation × Years until Election							0.007
							[-0.006, 0.019]
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Ministry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
N	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180	11180
R2	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

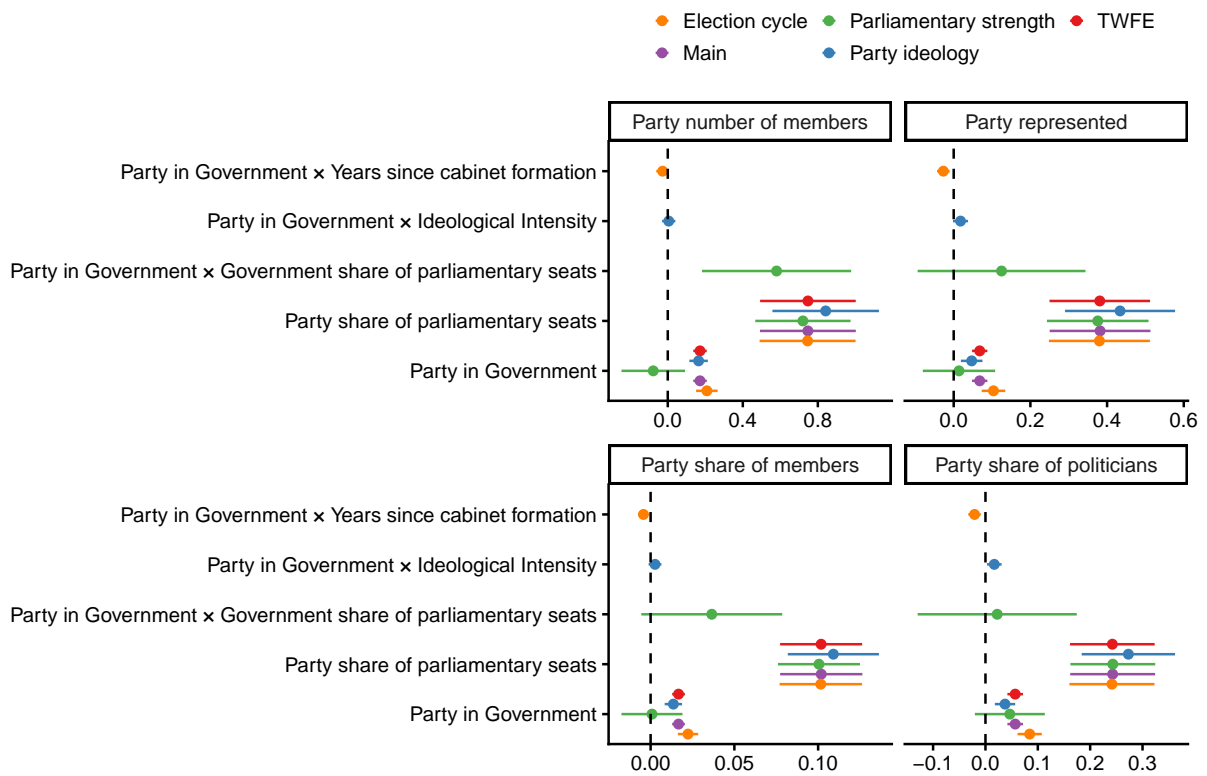### B.2.2 Different operationalizations of the dependent variable

Figure B.9: Coefficient plot, showing coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from OLS regressions of the five models in Table 2 (Labeled Party Represented in the figure), as well as 3 other specifications of the dependent variable(number of members and proportion of members on government commissions). Variables that are inconsequential for testing the hypotheses are omitted from the figure.
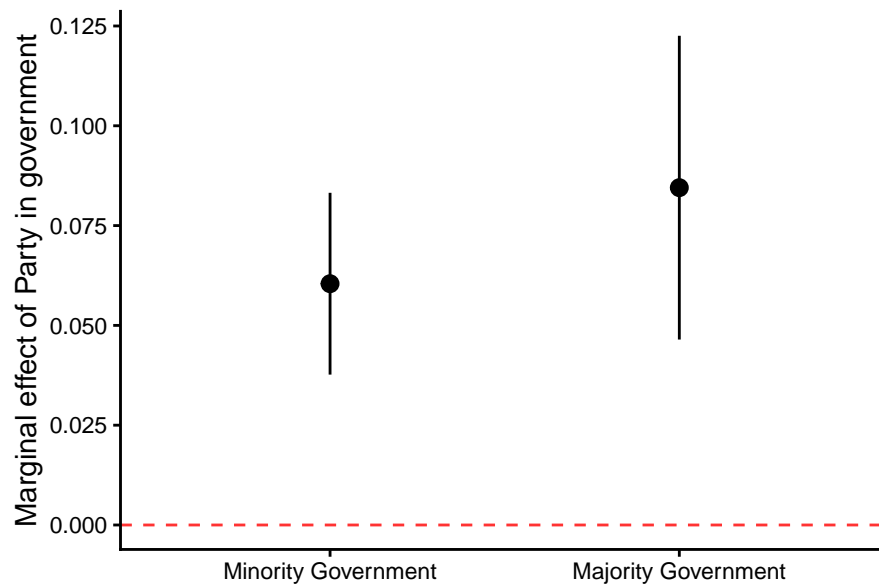
B.2.3 Marginal effect plots

Figure B.10: Marginal effect of party in government conditional on the parliamentary strength of the cabinet, majority vs. minority cabinets; Whether the appointing government controls a majority of seats in the parliament and is hence a *Majority Government* (17.9% of appointments), or otherwise a minority government (82.1% of appointments).
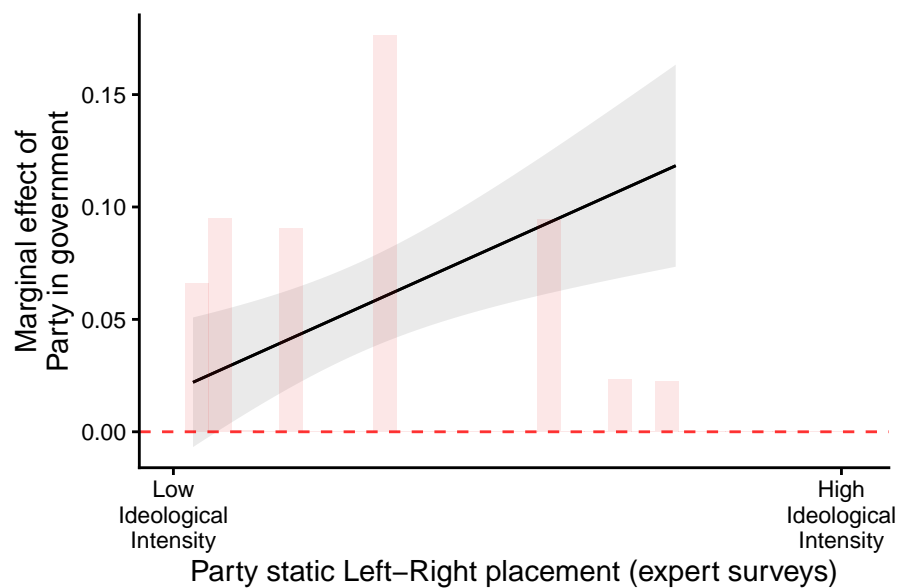

Figure B.11: The marginal effect of party in government conditional on parties' static average ideological placement in expert studies, data from Parlgov (Döring et al., 2023).
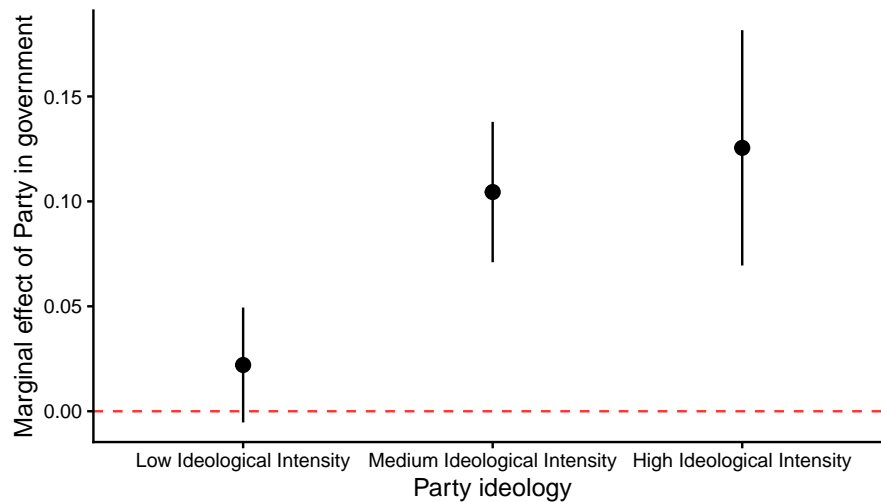
Figure B.12: The marginal effect of party in government conditional on parties' static average ideological placement based on the authors own classifications.

Norway is one of the few parliamentary democracies in which the government does not have the power to dissolve the parliament and call early elections; elections in Norway happen at fixed intervals every 4 years (Fiva & Smith, 2017). The government can thus choose to act precisely and strategically around election timings. *Years until election* simply measures the longitudinal distance to the next parliamentary election at the date of commission appointment, calculated from the number of days until the next election date. The variable ranges from 0, meaning that the commission was appointed on election day, to a maximum of 4.003 (1462 days), implying that the commission was appointed directly after election day. We include both *years until election* and *years since cabinet formation* in the same model, so years until election capture how governments take the election cycle into account when appointing commission members, adjusted for how their incentives may be higher when they have just entered government – and vise versa.

Concerning governments being more likely to stack commissions with partisans as elections approach, Figure B.13 shows that the marginal effect of party in government is at its highest in election years and declines by a magnitude of 1.3%pt. for each remaining year until the next election. The marginal effect of being in government is positive and significant at $p < 0.05$ in all years of the election cycle, all else equal. The interaction term of party in government and years until election is, however, not statistically significant at conventional p-levels ($p = 0.14$). In other words, both election timings and government formation appear to move government's probability of appointing their own party members to commissions in the expected direction.
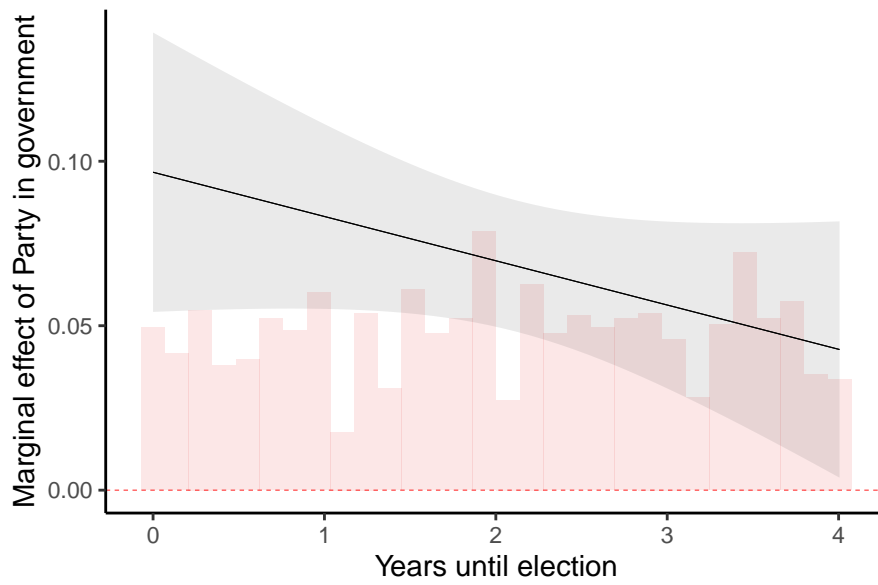
Figure B.13: The Marginal effect of party in government conditional on years until next election using. Histogram shows the distribution of observations on years until next election.

B.3 Logistic regression tables

Table B.11: Logistic regression results.

	Dependent Variable: Party represented on Commission				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Party in Government	0.429	0.519	0.035	0.156	0.690
	[0.280, 0.578] ***	[0.342, 0.697] ***	[-0.742, 0.812]	[-0.075, 0.387]	[0.463, 0.918] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	4.903	5.163	4.851	4.752	4.917
	[3.649, 6.158] ***	[3.664, 6.662] ***	[3.584, 6.117] ***	[3.412, 6.092] ***	[3.662, 6.172] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats			-0.818		
			[-2.584, 0.949]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			0.953		
			[-0.857, 2.762]		
Ideological Intensity				-0.036	
				[-0.159, 0.087]	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.245	
				[0.078, 0.413] **	
Years since cabinet formation					0.013
					[-0.063, 0.089]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.202
					[-0.330, -0.074] **
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X			
FE: Year			X		
N	11151	8081	11153	11151	11151
AIC	7973.12	9151.68	8000.18	7967.01	7964.09
R2	0.35	0.32	0.36	0.35	0.35

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

B.4 Poisson regression tables

Table B.12: Poisson regression results.

	Dependent Variable: Party number of members on Commission				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Party in Government	0.283	0.283	0.305	0.094	0.400
	[0.203, 0.363] ***	[0.204, 0.363] ***	[-0.136, 0.745]	[-0.040, 0.227]	[0.282, 0.519] ***
Party share of parliamentary seats	2.156	2.163	2.151	2.038	2.188
	[1.454, 2.857] ***	[1.465, 2.861] ***	[1.447, 2.854] ***	[1.297, 2.778] ***	[1.490, 2.885] ***
Government share of parliamentary seats			-0.029		
			[-0.953, 0.894]		
Party in Government × Government share of parliamentary seats			-0.050		
			[-1.065, 0.964]		
Ideological Intensity				-0.058	
				[-0.128, 0.013]	
Party in Government × Ideological Intensity				0.170	
				[0.073, 0.266] ***	
Years since cabinet formation					0.013
					[-0.030, 0.056]
Party in Government × Years since cabinet formation					-0.088
					[-0.154, -0.022] **
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X			X	X
FE: Ministry	X		X	X	X
FE: Commission		X			
FE: Year			X		
N	11151	8238	11153	11151	11151
AIC	12003.61	13458.33	12046.53	11995.59	11998.80
R2	0.33	0.29	0.33	0.33	0.33

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition in the period for all 1639 commissions (after the party achived a parliamentary seat). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001
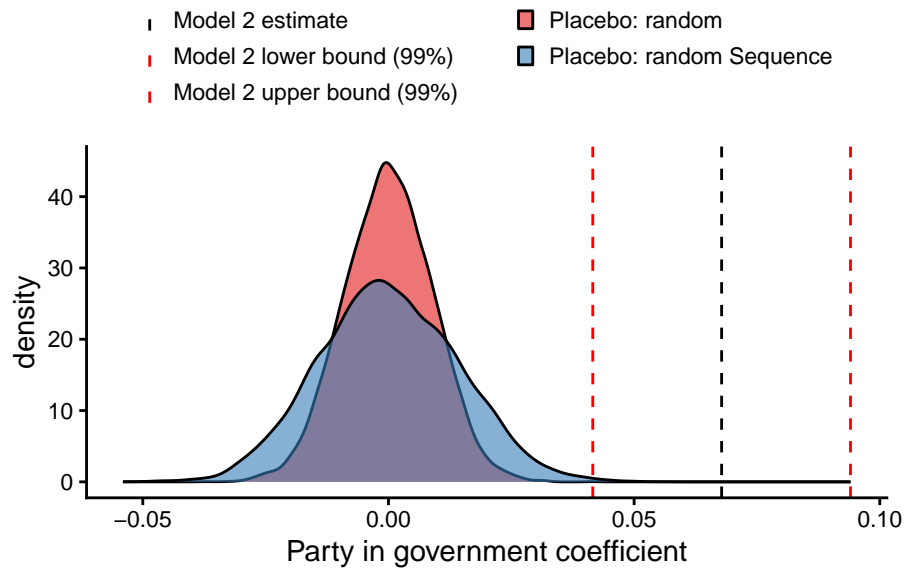
B.5 Placebo Tests

Figure B.14: Density plot showing the distribution of coefficients from 10,000 iterations of the two placebo tests for party in government. The dotted lines mark the 99% CI from model 2 in 2.
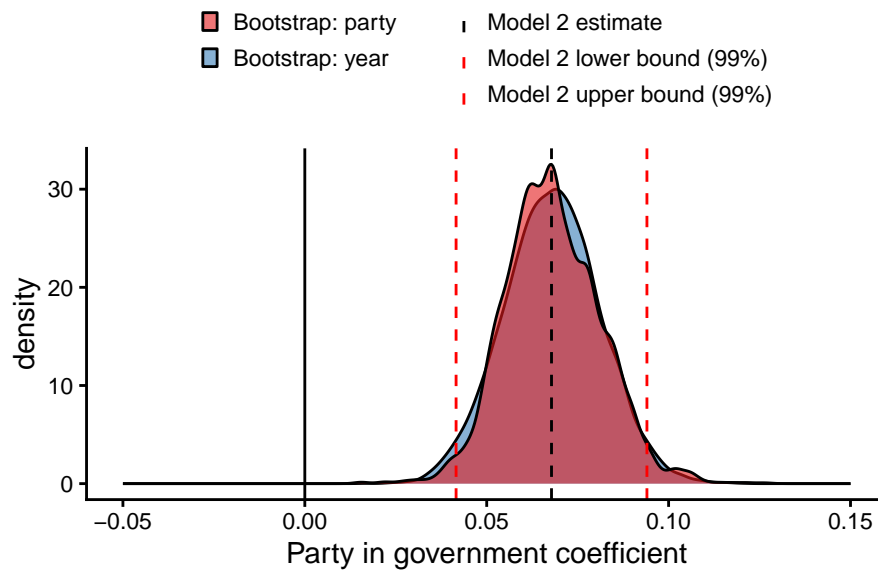

Figure B.15: Density plot showing the distribution of coefficients for party in government from 10,000 year clustered bootstraps of the full panel. The dotted lines mark the 99% CI from model 2 in table 2.

B.6 Event study regression tables

Table B.13: OLS regression results: Event study

Dependent Variable:	Party represented		Party number of members		Party proportion of members		Party proportion of members	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
t = -4	-0.037	-0.047	0.016	0.112	0.003	0.008	-0.011	-0.022
	[-0.085, 0.012]	[-0.111, 0.016]	[-0.066, 0.099]	[-0.009, 0.233] +	[-0.006, 0.011]	[-0.006, 0.021]	[-0.044, 0.022]	[-0.069, 0.024]
t = -3	-0.040	-0.043	-0.012	-0.006	-0.000	-0.002	-0.016	-0.033
	[-0.085, 0.004] +	[-0.102, 0.016]	[-0.089, 0.065]	[-0.118, 0.107]	[-0.008, 0.008]	[-0.014, 0.009]	[-0.046, 0.014]	[-0.075, 0.010]
t = -2	-0.028	-0.010	0.019	0.139	0.004	0.011	-0.011	-0.017
	[-0.067, 0.011]	[-0.073, 0.052]	[-0.052, 0.090]	[0.007, 0.271] *	[-0.004, 0.011]	[-0.002, 0.023]	[-0.036, 0.014]	[-0.063, 0.029]
t = 0	0.060	0.061	0.244	0.328	0.024	0.031	0.065	0.065
	[0.025, 0.095] ***	[0.014, 0.108] *	[0.174, 0.315] ***	[0.227, 0.430] ***	[0.017, 0.032] ***	[0.020, 0.042] ***	[0.038, 0.093] ***	[0.028, 0.103] ***
t = 1	0.029	0.014	0.178	0.151	0.016	0.010	0.033	0.013
	[-0.011, 0.070]	[-0.042, 0.070]	[0.098, 0.257] ***	[0.042, 0.260] **	[0.008, 0.024] ***	[-0.001, 0.021] +	[0.002, 0.063] *	[-0.029, 0.056]
t = 2	0.000	0.013	0.107	0.159	0.008	0.011	0.002	-0.010
	[-0.047, 0.048]	[-0.063, 0.089]	[0.016, 0.198] *	[0.007, 0.311] *	[-0.001, 0.017] +	[-0.005, 0.026]	[-0.033, 0.036]	[-0.066, 0.045]
t = 3	-0.002	0.028	0.205	0.228	0.018	0.019	0.021	0.028
	[-0.054, 0.050]	[-0.039, 0.095]	[0.092, 0.318] ***	[0.054, 0.402] *	[0.009, 0.028] ***	[0.006, 0.031] **	[-0.018, 0.060]	[-0.024, 0.081]
Party share of parliamentary seats	0.121	0.134	0.438	0.525	0.089	0.095	0.257	0.252
	[-0.119, 0.362]	[-0.109, 0.378]	[0.009, 0.867] *	[0.089, 0.961] *	[0.048, 0.131] ***	[0.053, 0.137] ***	[0.098, 0.416] **	[0.092, 0.412] **
FE: Party	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FE: Cabinet	X		X		X		X	
FE: Ministry	X		X		X		X	
FE: Commission		X		X		X		X
N	5965	5700	5965	5700	5965	5700	5965	5700
R2	0.38	0.47	0.45	0.53	0.42	0.48	0.20	0.31

Note: 95% CI calculated with robust standard errors clustered on commission reported in brackets. Panel includes all 7 parties that where both in government and in opposition (within 4 years of entering government) of a commission being appointed for all 1639 commissions. Comparing the last four years prior to entering government (t=-4,-3,-2,-1), with the years after entering government (t=0, 1, 2, 3, 4). Models without Commission FE also includes the following commission level control variables: Standing Government Commission, Share of Academics, Share of Politician Members, Number of Government Commission Members. +=.1, *=.05, **=.01, ***=0.001

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