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# Keeping Tabs on Partners: The Logic of Delegation in Coalition Governments

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Parties in coalition governments must delegate to each other. Can coalition partners hold each other's ministers accountable, or must collective government degenerate to ministerial government? In this article, I theorize about the conditions under which coalition partners should make efforts to keep tabs on each other's ministers and the ways in which they might do so. I show that parties in Italian, Dutch, and multiparty Japanese coalitions used their allotments of junior ministerial positions to shadow each other's ministers, while parties in German coalitions relied instead on institutional devices to tie ministers' hands. I also find that during the LDP's long reign as a majority party in Japan, its *factions* kept tabs on each other's ministers in this same way. Finally, I demonstrate that parties were more likely to keep tabs on each other's ministers for the most important ministerial portfolios.

**T**he study of executive coalitions in multiparty parliamentary governments is one of the richest subfields in comparative politics. To date, however, this literature has focused almost exclusively on coalition formation and dissolution, while the study of what coalitions do between formation and dissolution has been largely ignored. How do coalitions govern?

Government requires delegation. A distinctive feature of parliamentary government is delegation from elected parliamentarians to an appointed executive, the cabinet. When a majority party is present, it almost always forms the government alone, so all delegation to cabinet ministers is essentially intraparty delegation. In multiparty coalitions, by contrast, delegation must cross party lines. Parliamentary supporters of a coalition must agree to delegate not only to their own party's cabinet representatives, but to ministers from their party's coalition partners as well. And while parties should be able to monitor and control the delegation to "their" cabinet ministers, they enjoy no such control over ministers from other parties.

So how do multiparty governments overcome interparty delegation problems? Sometimes, they might not be able to. This might cause them to do less while in office than single-party governments, other things equal (Tsebelis 1995), and might be part of the reason that multiparty cabinets tend to have shorter life spans than do single-majority-party cabinets (Lijphart 1984). It might also explain why coalitions containing parties with similar policy preferences ("connected" coalitions) are more likely to form and are likely to survive longer than coalitions of parties with widely divergent preferences (Axelrod 1970).

Instead of fatalistically awaiting the day that a divisive issue fractures the coalition, can coalition partners find a way to combat the risks inherent in delegating to each other's ministers? Since not delegating at all is impractical, there are two options: (1) abdicate control over a policy area to each

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minister and hope for the best or (2) take steps to manage that delegation.

The first solution is often called “ministerial government.” This characterization holds that parties form coalitions with the understanding that the policies emanating from each ministry will more or less match the preferences of whichever party receives the portfolio. Each minister enjoys virtual dictatorship over a particular jurisdiction or at least the exclusive right to propose policies within that area. Policy is predictable because extensive delegation to agents with well-known preferences is coupled with mutual deference among these agents.<sup>1</sup>

In this article, I explain that the ministerial government model represents a worst-case scenario in the face of interparty delegation problems, for two reasons. First, it is risky in the presence of *ex ante* uncertainty about the full range of decisions that ministers will make during the life of the government. Second, it is suboptimal, in that all coalition partners can benefit more from delegation if each party’s ministers can be reined in; they can implement a policy package that is Pareto superior to that implied by ministerial government.

An alternative approach to ministerial government is to *manage* delegation to ministers through any of a variety of means. Governing parties might be able to enjoy gains from specialization and still sleep well at night, confident that the costs of extensive delegation will not outweigh the benefits due to some unexpected (and possibly undetectable) change in circumstances. In order to delegate without abdicating, parties must first be able to discover whether or not each others’ ministers are implementing the coalition’s agreed-upon policies, and, second, be able to do something about it if they find that ministers are not faithful.

I investigate the nature of delegation in multiparty governments, to determine whether “ministerial government” reflects reality, or whether coalition partners attempt to manage their delegations to each other by employing one or more “control mechanisms.” The literature on delegation suggests several such control mechanisms. These will be discussed more thoroughly in the next section, but in brief, they entail: (1) monitoring what agents

are doing, and what they know; and (2) “checking” the ability of each agent to act. I will search both for monitoring devices built into coalition arrangements, and for structural checks designed to vet agency proposals or actions. Because the ministerial government model requires that ministers be autonomous over exclusive jurisdictions, the existence of *either* type of control mechanism is inconsistent with that model. But a model of managed delegation, in which wary coalition partners keep tabs on each other’s ministers, would predict the existence of control mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>

In the next section, I review the theory of delegation and apply it to the particular problem of multiparty government. The following three sections reframe the ministerial government model in light of the theory of delegation, derive competing hypotheses concerning the use of delegation-control devices, and then compare these predictions to evidence from Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Netherlands. I then analyze the results and examine several alternative hypotheses before concluding.

To anticipate, I find evidence that coalition partners “keep tabs” on each other’s ministers through monitoring. Here, I focus on monitoring through the appointment of junior ministers from different parties than corresponding ministers. I find that this practice is most in use in countries that have few institutional checks on ministerial discretion and is least prominent where ministers are already highly constrained. Finally, I find that this monitoring is most prevalent for the most important departments, presumably because these are the areas in which parties that do not hold the ministerial portfolio have the most to lose from abdication.

## Delegation in Coalitions

Scholarship on the dangers of delegation is voluminous.<sup>3</sup> In politics, those endowed with the authority to make decisions often delegate that authority, as well as resources, to others. They do so to divide labor, so that more might be accomplished at once, and to take advantage of agents’ expertise. The complexity of modern government obliges elected politicians to delegate ever

<sup>1</sup>The most recent, prominent use of the ministerial-government assumption appears in the work of Laver and Shepsle, who use it to predict government formation down to the level of which parties will control which ministries (Laver and Shepsle 1990, 1996). Laver and Shepsle recognize that ministers are not dictators, and the purpose of their model is to predict government formation, not policy, so as long as ministers have disproportionate influence over the decisions that *are* expected at the time of coalition formation, and as long as coalition formation proceeds on the basis of these expectations, the abstraction of “policy dictators” is not overly problematic (Laver and Shepsle 1996, 36–39).

<sup>2</sup>Students of American politics will recognize the resemblance of the distinction drawn here between ministerial government and managed delegation to that between “committee government” and “partisan government” as applied to the U.S. House and to discussions of Congress’s ability to control the executive agencies to which it delegates.

<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991) or Epstein and O’Halloran (1999).

more extensive authority to bureaucratic agents, *and to each other*, and the risks of that delegation increase as the complexity increases (Lowi 1979; McCubbins 1985; Bawn 1995). Those risks stem from two roots. First, expert agents have knowledge unavailable to those delegating. Much of what agents *do* might also be hidden from principals. Second, agents might not share the principals' goals, at least not exactly. Herein lies the risk: when one delegates, one empowers agents who might want something different than oneself, and who, by virtue of that delegation, might have the ability to undermine one's own preferences.

In parliamentary governments, intraexecutive delegation occurs even before bureaucrats enter the picture. While the cabinet is collectively responsible to the parliament for the sum total of governmental policies, it must delegate responsibility for specific areas of policy to individual ministers. It is this level of delegation that is the focus of the present article.<sup>4</sup>

Multiparty governments face greater delegation problems than single-party governments for at least two reasons: *divergence of preferences and difficulty of sanctions*.<sup>5</sup> First, because the ministers in a single-party cabinet are all members of the same political party, they are likely to have less divergent policy preferences than are ministers in a multiparty government, other things equal.<sup>6</sup> This means that decision making should be easier, and that delegation of collective responsibilities to an individual minister, even if poorly controlled, is less likely to cause problems (because an individual minister, even if he runs amok, is unlikely to prefer a policy that differs much from the preferences of his copartisan cabinet colleagues).

<sup>4</sup>Thus, while the agency problems inherent in delegation to unelected bureaucrats are important, I will abstract away from that level of delegation for purposes of exposition. The reader might assume that bureaucrats are faithful agents to the minister (which would make intracabinet delegation the sole source of agency risk) or that controlling bureaucrats is just one more policy-related task delegated by the cabinet to ministers (see Huber and Lupia 2001).

<sup>5</sup>A third difficulty for multiparty governments will be to overturn through legislation decisions taken by the executive bureaucracy. Just as an *ex post* Congressional attempt to overturn a bureaucratic agent's action might fail due to a presidential veto, a cabinet's ability to overturn the decisions taken by bureaucrats within a particular ministry can be held hostage by one veto-wielding coalition partner who is unwilling to go along. Clearly, this is most likely when the agent in question belongs to a ministry controlled by one of the parties to the coalition, and when that party prefers the agent's policy choice to the policy choice originally demanded by the governing coalition. That party will stand in the way of efforts by its coalition partners to undo the agent's "mistake."

<sup>6</sup>They are copartisans because they agree on a core set of policy issues, even if they disagree on more peripheral matters. See Thies (2000) for more on the "core" of a party.

Second, delegation to individual ministers is easier to control in single-party governments (to make sure that a minister does *not* run amok) because sanctions and rewards can be administered within the party caucus. A recalcitrant minister might be threatened with a reduction in campaign support, denial of the official party endorsement, or a lower position on the party list, among other punishments. In multiparty governments, a troublesome minister faces no such threats from his coalition mates and might be troublesome in the first place *because* he is placing the wishes of his party over the policy of the cabinet.<sup>7</sup>

Fortunately, all is not lost. A principal may employ various mechanisms to manage delegations of authority, and while not costless, these devices might suffice to ensure that the principal ends up better off from having delegated (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991). In general terms, there are at least four types of mechanisms that principals might choose to control their delegations. The first entails choosing agents whose preferences align with the principal's. But the problem for multiparty governments is precisely the inevitable divergence of preferences. The second involves writing contracts that specify the responsibilities of principals and agents. But in the face of *ex ante* uncertainty about the future, fully contingent contracts are impossible to write, let alone enforce.<sup>8</sup>

Third, the principal might require that important agency actions be submitted for approval (e.g., in meetings of the full cabinet). But for such an *ex post* check to work, the principal must have some way of overcoming the agent's informational advantage about the policy implications of its proposals. Hence, the principal would be wise to expend resources to *monitor* the activities of the agent, to follow paper trails, and to demand that the agent justify its actions or recommendations in reports

<sup>7</sup>It should be noted that the above contrasts assume each party is relatively homogeneous and cohesive and that its leaders wield ample carrots and sticks to control the behavior of backbenchers. Of course, to the extent that parties are unable to control the electoral fortunes of their own members, this distinction between single-party and multiparty governments will be less sharp. In highly factionalized parties, single-party government might even begin to resemble multiparty coalitions. I will examine this last prediction below.

<sup>8</sup>A "coalition agreement," which includes the government policy platform, might be viewed as an attempt to write just such a contract. But whether a minister is charged to implement the policies specified in the coalition agreement, to recommend legislation to the full cabinet to deal with some unforeseen policy issue, or only to keep the full cabinet apprised of changes in objective circumstances so that the cabinet might formulate a new policy itself, the minister's own preferred outcome almost certainly diverges from the outcome that the full coalition would choose in the absence of delegation. Without other constraints, the contract will not be self-enforcing.

or testimony. The principal might perform this oversight directly or empower third parties to do it (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Aberbach 1990).

Fourth, the principal might choose to constrain an individual agent's ability to act or even to propose policy changes by delegating responsibility jointly to two or more agents, each with different interests. Two or more ministries, headed by different parties, might share authority over economic policy. Line ministries can be required to submit proposals that would require expenditure of public funds to a "gatekeeping" finance ministry. And so on. The aim in establishing such *institutional checks* is to reduce the probability that the principal will be misled or presented with a *fait accompli* by a single agent.

## Ministerial Dominance or Managed Delegation?

In this section, I apply the logic of delegation to the case of multiparty government and use a spatial model to describe the risks and opportunity costs inherent in abdication to ministers. I then derive several hypotheses concerning the use of delegation-control mechanisms.

### Ministerial Government: Policy Making Through Abdication

Ministerial government requires that parties construct the coalitional contract *not* as a set of *issue-by-issue compromises*, whose implementation is subject to the delegation problems described here, but as a *logroll of party ideal points across issues*. In this model, parties divide up ministerial portfolios and then expect each minister to implement his party's ideal policy in the jurisdiction he controls. As long as each minister is deferred to in full cabinet meetings (or, at the very least, allowed the *exclusive* right to present take-it-or-leave-it offers), this solution is self-enforcing, because each minister is expected to propose his (party's) ideal policy. But there are two types of problems with ministerial government: downside risks due to uncertainty and opportunity costs.

**The risks of ministerial government.** For ministerial government to work, it must be the case that each party can calculate that the net benefits it expects to receive from each policy jurisdiction, weighted by the importance that it attaches to each issue area, are greater than those it would receive from the any other feasible allocation of portfolios.<sup>9</sup> Naturally, it will receive the greatest benefits

from those portfolios that it controls and will endeavor to secure the portfolios of greatest importance to it. For all other policy issues, controlled by its coalition partners, a party must be willing to accept its partners' ideal policies and the consequent loss of utility implied by its own lack of control.

Figure 1 demonstrates spatially the policy implications of ministerial government.<sup>10</sup> The figure shows two policy dimensions, Defense and Welfare. Points AA and BB represent the ideal policy packages for coalition partners A and B, respectively (any other parties in the system are assumed to be ruled out as coalition partners in this round of government formation). Under ministerial government, the party that controls the Defense portfolio will be able to implement its ideal defense policy, and the same goes for Welfare. In this hypothetical two-party, two-portfolio coalition, there are only four possible portfolio distributions (and hence policy packages): one where A controls Defense and B Welfare (point AB), one where the opposite is the case (point BA), and one each where both portfolios are controlled by a single party (points AA and BB, respectively). The circles are indifference curves; for example, the (lighter) circle centered on AA, and passing through point BB shows all of the packages of defense and welfare policies that party A (dis)likes just as much as point it (dis)likes party B's ideal point. In this example, each party prefers either coalition package to single-party government by the other party. So a coalition between A and B will form, either AB or BA.

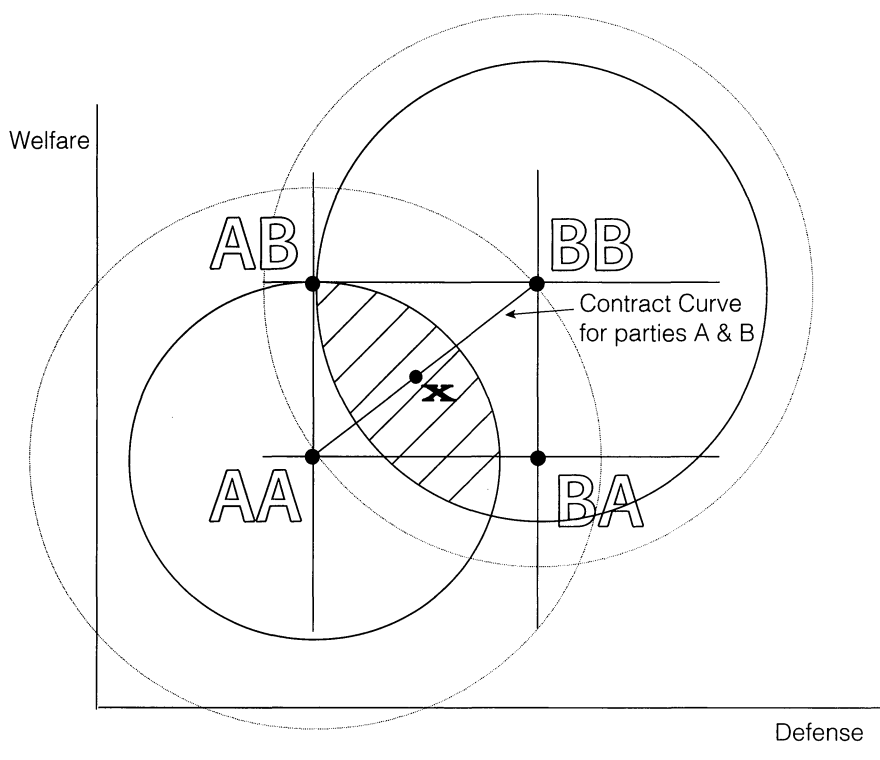
Somehow, the two parties will agree on one or the other allocation of portfolios; let us suppose they choose AB.<sup>11</sup> In this government, party A receives the Defense post and party B Welfare. The first sign of trouble for this model arises once the assumption of complete information is relaxed. When agreeing to cede the Welfare portfolio to party B, party A calculates the (dis)utility it will derive from party B's ideal welfare policies. It does this with some expectation about how many welfare-type issues will be decided during the life of the government, and thus how many times party B's welfare decisions will impact A's own utility.

But what if A has misperceived B's ideal point? Or, what if unforeseen welfare issues arise, and B's minister starts working his will, perhaps without even informing A of the new turn of events? For example, B's ideal point might have been acceptable when applied only to the annual budget, but what if regulatory or trade issues

<sup>9</sup> By "feasible" I mean "preferred by all prospective member parties to the reversionary outcome."

<sup>10</sup> Figures 1 and 2 adapt the lattice model introduced by Laver and Shepsle (1990, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> The choice will be governed partly by the location of the reversionary outcome and partly by bargaining.

**FIGURE 1** Portfolio “Lattice”

arise, about which A cares more, and for which B's likely preferences are anathema?<sup>12</sup> Or what if B's welfare program is acceptable to A under the assumption of a strong economy, but too extreme in the face of economic downturn, and then the economy stalls? Alternatively, what if the relative salience of the various jurisdictions were to shift for some exogenous reason (e.g., if the Welfare Ministry suddenly were to become a top priority due to an epidemic or scandal)?

Under ministerial government, if any of these changes were to occur after the coalition has taken office, the net “cost” to party A of having ceded the Welfare post to party B would rise, perhaps to the point where party A would wish it had not agreed to this coalitional structure (assuming party A even finds out from B about the new circumstances). Because the ministerial government model entails abdication of policy-making authority to the minister in charge, any changes in objective circumstances will create real problems for the parties who have abdicated. Without some management of delegation to ministers, the risks of delegation reappear, and the “equilibrium” of mutual deference becomes an unstable—or at least unpalatable—one.

<sup>12</sup> The spatial representation of this scenario would be an increase in the number of dimensions, with the Welfare ministry now covering two or more dimensions.

**The opportunity costs of ministerial government.** What about opportunity costs? Might there not be upside potential to a move away from abdication and mutual deference? Refer again to Figure 1. Note that both parties would prefer a compromise point, such as *x*, to AB (*x* lies within the diagonally striped overlap between the two parties' indifference curves through AB, along the “contract curve” connecting the two parties' ideal points). The difference between points *x* and AB, however, is important when one considers the logic of delegation. Under ministerial-government package AB, each party is expected to implement its own favorite policy in the area it controls, so this is incentive-compatible delegation. By contrast, point *x*, in which coalition partners A and B agree to compromise on both issues, is unstable. Party A will be tempted, once it gains control of the Defense Ministry, to shift policy away from point *x*, (leftward) toward the vertical line running through AA. Likewise, B will be tempted to direct “its” Welfare Minister to shift policy away from *x*, (upward) toward the horizontal line running through BB.

If both ministers were to succumb to these temptations and get away with it, the result would be a policy package of AB, the ministerial-government outcome (assuming away the problems due to uncertainty just discussed). If ministers were to succumb but *not* get away with it, the ensuing conflict might destroy the coalition.

## Managing Delegation to Ministers

A coalition agreement to implement a policy package of issue-by-issue compromises (e.g., point x), however, *need not* imply slippage to the abdication outcome (e.g., point AB). If delegation can be managed at relatively low cost to the coalition parties, then the coalition might be able to implement the compromise package to which it has agreed, making all coalition parties better off. As unanticipated problems arise, they can be tackled either by the full cabinet, or in such a way as to approximate what the full cabinet would have agreed to, instead of at the unfettered discretion of the minister.

**Monitoring ministers.** To accomplish this, the coalition must find ways either to counter a minister's *incentive* to push policy toward his party's ideal point or to reduce his *ability* to do so. For example, most line ministries in most countries must have their budgets approved by a Finance or Budget ministry before they are funded. Similarly, draft legislation that ministers submit to the cabinet runs the risk of being gutted or rejected, and ministers will be forced to justify their proposals. *Ex post* checks, however, are insufficient, since ministers might be able to deceive their cabinet colleagues into accepting proposals that make their colleagues worse off.

As discussed above, *ex post* checks can be supplemented with *ex ante* controls designed to reduce a minister's informational advantage, to allow the cabinet as a whole to keep tabs on the activities within each ministry. First, the cabinet could establish *interministerial committees* to vet the proposals from individual ministries and to oversee their activities. Second, the cabinet could set up overlapping jurisdictions between ministries, forcing ministers to work together, or at least encouraging them to monitor each other's activities. Third, the cabinet could monitor ministers from within, by appointing *junior ministers* to shadow each minister. If junior ministers were appointed from different parties than the corresponding ministers, then their preferences would likely diverge from their ministers', and they would have ample incentive to report (at least to their own parties) any behavior within the ministry that deviated from the agreed-upon policy platform of the coalition, or any information that might help the cabinet to deal with forthcoming ministerial proposals.<sup>13</sup>

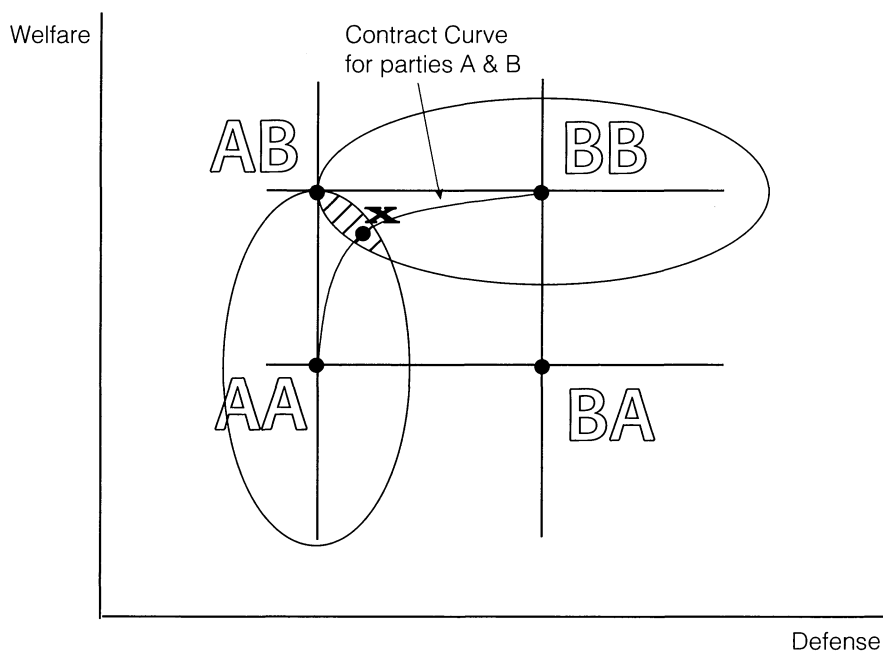
<sup>13</sup>Alternatively, coalition partners might choose to burden ministers with tedious *administrative procedures*, so that any time a ministry seeks to take action, it must meet evidentiary burdens, hold public hearings, and provide written justification (McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast 1987). Ministers might also have to testify before *legislative oversight committees*, if such committees have sufficient resources and independent expertise at their disposal.

## Testable Hypotheses

All of these *ex ante* control mechanisms are means to monitor the activities and uncover the knowledge of ministers, and in some cases, to slow down ministerial decision making long enough for the full cabinet to intervene if necessary. Insofar as these arrangements compromise a minister's ability to dictate policy in a given area, the effective use of *any* of them would violate the strictures of ministerial government. If a minister's cabinet colleagues can find out what he knows and what he is doing, and use that knowledge to reach and enforce coalitional policy bargains, then ministers will be obliged to act as loyal agents for the cabinet as a whole. My general hypothesis, therefore, is that these mechanisms will be used more extensively where the risks and opportunity costs of abdication are the greatest. In the context of multiparty government, this in turn implies at least the following four hypotheses.

*H1: Parties are more likely to monitor each other's ministers, the less constrained ministers are by other, "institutional" checks.* An assumption of the ministerial government model is that ministerial jurisdictions are nonoverlapping and collectively exhaustive of policy-making authority in the country. But any number of factors might impinge on the cabinet's domination of policy making, and, by extension, on individual ministers' autonomy. In federal systems, state governments enjoy constitutionally protected authority over some areas of policy making, and likely establish local bureaucracies that shadow federal ministries. In bicameral systems, the "governing" coalition that controls a Lower House majority might not control the Upper House. Any post-proposal bargaining between chambers would dilute a minister's control over the legislative agenda. In some systems, the prime minister might be granted the authority and resources to encroach upon the turf of individual ministries. Similarly, while all cabinets are ultimately responsible to the parliament, some parliaments are more active and obstreperous in overseeing ministries and in setting the legislative agenda themselves. If the costs of abdication to ministers are mitigated by the fact that ministers do not have very much autonomous policy-making authority to begin with, the need for monitoring will be much lower.

*H2: Parties are more likely to monitor partner parties' ministers who hold portfolios of greater salience.* This follows straightforwardly from the logic of delegation and can be represented by modifying the spatial model. Note that the spatial-modeling representation of "coalition partners caring about the policies emanating from ministries controlled by their partners" is the shape of the

**FIGURE 2** Portfolio “Lattice” with Elliptical Indifference Contours

indifference contours (that they are circles implies that each party cares equally about the two policy dimensions). Figure 2 shows the implications of allowing each party to care more about one issue than the other (here, Defense is more salient to party A, and Welfare to B). Note that the win-set of AB has shrunk and moved up and to the left. The contract curve between the parties' ideal points has become a curve that bows toward AB. Accordingly, a compromise point such as  $x$  has shifted a good deal of the distance from its position in Figure 1 toward AB. When each party cares much more about the jurisdictions it controls and much less about the jurisdictions controlled by its partners, there is not much difference between an issue-by-issue compromise ( $x$ ) and ministerial government (AB)—the opportunity costs of AB relative to  $x$  are much smaller. At the extreme, if each party cares *only* about the ministry it controls, the ellipses in Figure 2 collapse to straight lines, and AB no longer has a win-set. Abdication is costless and monitoring pointless in areas of zero salience.

*H3: Parties are more likely to monitor partner party ministers whose preferences are more extreme.* This is also fairly straightforward: the more extreme the minister, the greater the risks and opportunity costs of abdication. Imagine modifying Figure 1 by increasing the vertical distance between AA and BB. This would put point AB at a more distant indifference curve for A and greatly increase the size of the win-set of AB. Accordingly, the dis-

tance between a compromise package and AB would be larger, and monitoring would be more important.

*H4: Parties are more likely to monitor each others' ministers when uncertainty is greater.* This is due to the increase in the downside risk of abdication. Absent monitoring, greater uncertainty means greater information asymmetry between a minister and his colleagues.

Each of these four hypotheses is testable in principle, against cross-national data, and across parties or time within single countries. As the relative salience of issues, the relative preferences of coalition partners, and the level of uncertainty vary across time and place, so too should the extent to which parties take care to keep tabs on their coalition partners. When ministers are otherwise unconstrained by the institutional structure of government, monitoring should be especially important to other parties. Institutional change within a country that affects the scope or extent of ministerial authority should affect the level of monitoring as well.

Ideally, one would test all four of these hypotheses in a “large-N” regression analysis, in which such concepts as salience, preference gaps, and uncertainty were operationalized for many multiparty governments over many years, and used to predict the level of interparty monitoring. Unfortunately, such an approach will have to wait until political scientists have devised better measures of the critical concepts. Also problematic is the state of data collection on the various dependent variables. Almost no



work has been done on administrative structure and process outside the United States. The literature and data on junior ministers are underdeveloped.<sup>14</sup> The extent to which ministerial jurisdictions overlap is difficult to quantify.

Accordingly, I leave most of the empirical heavy lifting to future work. In the remainder of the current article, I focus my search on one type of monitoring—the appointment of junior ministers from different parties than the corresponding minister. I confine my investigation to the first two hypotheses laid out above. Finally, I concentrate on five cases: Italy 1970–1989, Germany 1966–1990, the Netherlands 1971–1994, Japan 1993–1996, and Japan 1965–1990.<sup>15</sup>

## Evidence of Cross-Party Monitoring

### Dependent Variable: The Partisanship of Junior Ministers

Junior ministerships typically are characterized as opportunities for politicians early in their careers to observe policy making and perhaps gain some expertise in particular issue areas. No one holds a post for long, and a promising politician may be rotated through several postings before eventual promotion to the cabinet (see, e.g., Theakston 1987, 47; Criscitiello 1994, 191). It is generally agreed that junior ministers (JMs) do not share power with ministers, that they do not vote in the cabinet, and that they only occasionally participate in cabinet meetings.<sup>16</sup>

As with cabinet posts, it is generally the case that each governing party receives its “fair share” of JM jobs (see, e.g., Gamsom 1961).<sup>17</sup> But which parties get which junior posts? If junior ministerships are merely patronage positions doled out to governing parties to satisfy their members’ need for the benefits of office (Riker 1962; Strøm 1990), then parties should not particularly care whether JMs for each ministry come from the same party as corresponding ministers. In this case, the relative partisanship of ministers and their JMs will be random,

subject to the constraint that each party gets its fair share of each.

The ministerial government model, however, is premised on the notion that policy considerations determine the specific allocation of cabinet posts. If there is any danger at all that JMs could affect policy making within a ministry, even by reporting on it to their own parties, then *the logic of the ministerial government model implies that parties should take care to ensure that JMs will be appointed from the same parties as corresponding ministers.*

By contrast, I argue that one way to rein in ministers, to oblige them to toe the coalition line, is to appoint junior ministers as monitors. With access to the goings-on within a ministry, JMs have the *ability* to reduce the minister’s informational advantage vis-à-vis the rest of the cabinet. If JMs are appointed from different parties than their ministers, they also have the *incentive* to reveal that information, at least to their own party leaders. Thus, in circumstances (outlined above) in which such monitoring would be valuable, *the theory of managed delegation predicts that JMs should come from different parties than corresponding ministers.*<sup>18</sup>

### Monitoring versus Institutional checks (Keeping tabs versus tying hands)

Hypothesis 1 stated that parties are more likely to monitor each others’ ministers, the less constrained ministers are by other, “institutional” checks. In other words, we should expect to find less monitoring, through “hostile” junior ministers or other means, of ministers who are otherwise constrained. Generally, such institutional variation is most likely to be found at the country level, but as I will discuss below, we also might find intracoalitional variation in the extent to which institutional checks constrain the ministers of different parties.

**Expectations.** At the country level, German ministers appear to be much more constrained than ministers in the other countries under examination here, in at least four ways. First, the German chancellor is the prototype for a “strong” prime minister, considerably more than first among equals within his cabinet. Indeed, German democracy is often called “chancellor democracy”

<sup>14</sup>An exception is a recent German-language edited volume, in which each country-chapter author was asked to allude to the appointment of junior ministers (Müller and Strøm 1997).

<sup>15</sup>I explain below why I treat Japan as two separate cases.

<sup>16</sup>See e.g., Cotta (1988, 129) on Italian undersecretaries, Paterson and Southern (1991, 100) on German state secretaries, and Andeweg and Irwin (1993, 127) on Dutch state secretaries.

<sup>17</sup>In Italy, for example, the correlation between the party shares of ministerial and JM appointments is 0.998.

<sup>18</sup>Readers familiar with the literature on committees in the U.S. House will note the similarity between the sort of monitoring I predict and the assertion that the House appoints committees that are ideologically “representative” of the general membership, in order to maximize the quality of information emanating from the committees (Krehbiel 1991). This is not surprising, given the similarity of ministerial government to the “committee government” model that Krehbiel challenges (Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Weingast and Marshall 1988).

(Thiébault 1993, 96). The chancellor alone commands a large staff; line ministers have very little staff support, and each ministry is “shadowed” by a section of the chancellor’s office. By contrast, the Italian, Japanese, and Dutch prime ministers are much weaker. Coalitions in Japan and Italy frequently have changed prime ministers without altering the partisan composition of government, and PMs while in office do not dominate their cabinets in terms of resources or decision-making authority.<sup>19</sup>

Second, and perhaps more importantly, Germany is the only federal system in my sample, and the state governments enjoy considerable authority. State bureaucracies duplicate the federal executive in function and outman federal agencies ten to one (Katzenstein 1987, 16, 19–23). By contrast, Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands are all unitary states. Each evinces some measure of decentralization, but all authority exercised by local governments is delegated by the national government, and not constitutionally protected.

Third, German state governments are also represented directly in the upper chamber of the federal legislature, the Bundesrat, making bicameralism a more important constraint on ministerial authority there than elsewhere. State governments appoint Bundesrat members, and state bureaucrats compose Bundesrat committees.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, while Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands all have bicameral legislatures, only Japan after 1989 had an Upper House with some constitutional authority and a *different* partisan composition than the Lower House (so-called “incongruent bicameralism”; see Lijphart 1984; Tsebelis and Rasch 1995). Moreover, unique among the cases examined here (and to my knowledge, among democracies generally), Germany’s Bundesrat performs a direct check on federal ministers not just as a veto-wielding legislative chamber, but also with its authority to vet federal agency *implementing* orders. That is, any ministerial orders necessary to implement legislation that will affect the states must be pre-approved by the Bundesrat—federal ministers must contend with the intervention of state governments both coming and going (Alter 1999).

Fourth, Bundestag (Lower House) committees are much more prominent legislative and oversight bodies than is common in parliamentary systems. Committee memberships have been extremely stable over time, allowing committees to develop the expertise necessary to oversee bureaucratic activities. Civil servants are obliged

regularly to testify in committee proceedings. Legislative parties also pay close attention to government activities: “parliamentary groups of the coalition parties do not accept uncritically government proposals, *particularly when such proposals derive from ministries held by another party to the coalition*” (Paterson and Southern 1991, 120–123, emphasis added).<sup>21</sup> Legislative committees in Japan enjoy none of the agenda-setting authority or oversight abilities of German committees.<sup>22</sup> Dutch committees are somewhat more important. Committee chairs are allocated proportionately to each party in the chamber and tend to be appointed from different parties than the corresponding minister (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 141). But they may not demand testimony or documents from ministers and may not redraft government bills. Italian committees, by contrast, may redraft government bills, and may even pass (minor) legislation,<sup>23</sup> without sending it to the plenary session of parliament (Mattson and Strøm 1995, 285–295). However, their oversight powers are fairly weak as well.

Table 1 summarizes these factors. All told, the risk of agency loss in delegation to ministers is reduced in Germany by their poverty of resources, and by multiple institutional checks that reduce their autonomy. We should therefore expect to find less JM monitoring of German ministers. There is less need to keep tabs on agents whose hands are already tied.

Of course, the extent to which institutional checks will actually constrain a minister might depend on whether the “checking” institutions are controlled by parties other than that of the minister in question.<sup>24</sup> For example, “chancellor democracy” should frustrate the policy aims of ministers from the chancellor’s own party less than it will ministers from partner parties. In Ger-

<sup>19</sup>See, e.g., Sartori (1994) on Italy, Hayao (1993) on Japan, and Andeweg and Irwin (1993) on the Netherlands.

<sup>20</sup>Officially, state government members serve on these committees, but they usually delegate to their bureaucrats.

<sup>21</sup>“While party loyalty is high and overall party discipline is great, support for the government is not automatically forthcoming. On the contrary, party caucuses in Germany can be quite assertive toward their own leaders in the executive branch. Like American caucuses, they have their own elected leaders who have a personal stake in distinguishing the position of the caucus from the position of the cabinet” (Loewenberg and Patterson 1979, 257).

<sup>22</sup>Japanese Diet committees are of very little consequence. They can have bills discharged by only twenty members of parliament and can even be bypassed in the legislative process. Other than the Budget Committee, they do not require testimony by cabinet ministers, and they engage in very little bureaucratic oversight (Baerwald 1986).

<sup>23</sup>These so-called “little laws” are generally pork-barrel type items. Any group of twenty members of parliament can call these matters to the floor, as can the government, so committees certainly are not autonomous (Cotta 1994).

<sup>24</sup>I thank an anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft for clarification on this point.

**TABLE 1** Institutional Checks and Expectations Concerning “Hostile” Junior Ministers

Country	Germany	Italy	Japan	Japan II	Netherlands
Years	1966–1990	1970–1989	1993–1996	1965–1990	1971–1994
Coalition Gov'ts <sup>†</sup>	9	18	4	32	10
Bicameralism <sup>††</sup>	Incongruent, Strong Upper House	Congruent	Incongruent, Medium- strong UH	Congruent	Congruent
Federalism	Yes, strong state governments	No	No	No	No
Prime Minister	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
Legislative Oversight	Strong legislative and oversight committees	Fairly Strong legislative, fairly weak oversight	Very Weak legislative and oversight committees	Very Weak legislative and oversight committees	Fairly Weak legislative and oversight committees
Prediction on Monitoring	Not much needed, especially for big parties	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed

<sup>†</sup> “Multi-factional” governments in the case of Japan II, “Multiparty” governments otherwise.

<sup>††</sup> Congruent legislatures are those in which the partisan composition of the two chambers is essentially the same, rendering the Upper House an ineffective check on the Lower House (Lijphart 1984; Tsebelis and Rasch 1995).

many between 1969 and 1990, every coalition was comprised by one large party (either the CDU/CSU or the SPD) and one much smaller one (always the FDP), with the former always holding the chancellorship, so it is fair to say that the strong German chancellor represented a constraint mostly for FDP ministers.

On the other hand, federalism and bicameralism likely did constrain the chancellor's party, in that both the FDP and the parliamentary opposition played a vital role in many state governments (which, recall, also compose the Bundesrat's membership). In fact, the Bundesrat sometimes has been controlled by the big party *not* in government. Similarly, while it is true that the FDP always was outnumbered by its coalition partner in legislative committees, it is also the case that the parliamentary opposition in Germany always chairs its “fair share” of committees. We also know that party discipline tends to be much weaker across institutions than within them. Even if a state government or Bundesrat committee is controlled by a particular minister's party, this is no guarantee that it will act as a rubber stamp. Thus, while the “weaker” FDP might not have dominated the checking institutions itself, the point remains that ministerial discretion is diminished by the fact that ministers must share authority with other institutional actors.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> I will return to this distinction in the final section of the article.

**Evidence.** There are two ways to assess whether or not parties are purposely assigning their JMs to ministries headed by their partners. The first is to determine the relative number of ministers saddled with JMs from other parties, and the relative importance of the departments headed by monitored vs. unmonitored ministers. If ministers—especially those in the most important departments—nearly always have to contend with JMs from other parties, this will provide evidence that parties do make an effort to keep tabs on each other.

However, this measure alone is insufficient, because it is biased against finding cross-party monitoring when one party dominates a coalition. If—as was usually the case in Italy, Germany, and Japan—one party contributes more parliamentary support to a coalition than do all of its partners combined, and thereby receives more than half of all ministerial and junior-ministerial slots, there may not be enough JMs from other parties to assign to each of the dominant party's ministers. In this case, the dominant party will have some “unmonitored” ministers, despite the best efforts of its partners. Hence, the second measurement tactic is to determine whether parties are using their allotment of JMs to do as much monitoring as they can. In that case, H2 predicts that smaller parties will assign their JMs to monitor hostile ministers in the most important ministries first and leave unmonitored ministers in only the least important

**TABLE 2 Junior Ministers as Monitors**

	Party or Faction	Ministers w/ Hostile JMs	%	Monitorable Ministers w/ Hostile JMs <sup>†</sup>	%	JMs	Watchdog JM Chances Taken	%	Wasted JMs <sup>*</sup>
Italian Parties 1970–1989	DC	167 of 186	89.8	167 of 175	95.7	530	153 of 154	99.3	1
	PSI	73 of 73	100.0	73 of 73	100.0	209	182 of 186	97.8	4
	PRI	25 of 25	100.0	25 of 25	100.0	46	40 of 41	97.6	1
	PSDI	41 of 42	97.6	41 of 42	97.6	93	85 of 89	95.5	4
	PLI	13 of 13	100.0	13 of 13	100.0	34	33 of 33	100.0	0
	Other	1 of 1	100.0	1 of 1	100.0	0			
Japanese Parties 1993–1996	LDP	19 of 39	48.7	19 of 20	95.0	44	18 of 21	100.0	0**
	SDPJ	20 of 21	95.2	20 of 21	95.2	29	27 of 28	93.1	1
	JRP	5 of 5	100.0	5 of 5	100.0	6	4 of 5	80.0	1
	Other	15 of 15	100.0	15 of 15	100.0	13	13 of 13	100.0	0
German Parties 1966–1990	CDU/CSU <sup>°</sup>	4 of 50	8.0	4 of 14	28.6	64	10 of 17	58.9	7
	SPD	1 of 79	1.3	1 of 22	4.5	87	8 of 24	33.3	16
	FDP	14 of 30	46.7	14 of 30	46.7	30	5 of 30	16.7	25
	CDU <sup>°</sup>	10 of 33	30.3	10 of 23	43.5	51	24 of 28	85.7	4
	CSU <sup>°</sup>	15 of 16	93.8	15 of 16	93.8	13	10 of 13	76.9	3
LDP Factions <sup>°°</sup> 1965–1990	Sato	116 of 150	77.3	116 of 140	82.9	204	162 of 187	86.6	25
	Kishi	98 of 112	87.5	98 of 112	87.5	111	95 of 108	88.0	13
	Ikeda	95 of 112	84.8	95 of 112	84.8	135	116 of 134	86.6	18
	Kono	72 of 83	86.7	72 of 82	87.8	116	95 of 114	83.3	19
	Miki	54 of 59	91.5	54 of 59	91.5	75	69 of 74	93.2	5
	Other	116 of 116	100.0	116 of 116	100.0	89	87 of 89	97.8	0

Sources on Junior Ministers: Italy: Colombo (1990); Germany: Schindler (1984, 1988); Japan: Kokkai benran (various years) and Miyakawa (various years); Netherlands: Timmermans and Andeweg (1997).

<sup>†</sup> Some ministers without hostile JMs were “unmonitorable” in the sense that the minister-party’s coalition partners had already used up all their JMs on other monitoring assignments.

<sup>\*</sup> Some of these “wasted JMs” appeared simultaneously: there was more than one wasted JM who could have been assigned to the same “un-monitored” minister.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The three non-LDP ministers without LDP JMs were assigned hostile JMs from other partner parties.

<sup>°</sup> The first row and “Totals” row treat the CDU/CSU as one party, whereas the last two rows treat them as separate parties, with the option to monitor each other’s ministers.

<sup>°°</sup> Factions are listed by their founders’ names. For full lineages, see Sato and Matsuzaki (1986).

departments. On the other hand, the dominant party will have more than enough JMs to keep tabs on all of its partners’ ministers, and so might assign any excess JMs to its own ministries, while still behaving as predicted by a model of managed delegation.<sup>26</sup>

Table 2 presents the data on the appointment of junior ministers to ministries headed by ministers from other parties. The first shaded column shows the share of ministers who were assigned JMs from other parties, given that there were “hostile” JMs available for the assignment. The second shaded column shows the share of a party’s JMs that were assigned as watchdogs for other parties’ ministers, given that there were ministers left to

monitor. For each party, if *either* of the shaded measures is close to 100 percent—if as many ministers were assigned “hostile” JMs as possible, *or* if nearly all JMs are assigned to hostile ministers—then we will have evidence that parties behaved in the manner predicted by the model of managed delegation, in order to avoid degeneration to ministerial government.

As it turns out, ministers from all parties in Italy and Japan and all factions during Japan’s one-party period were nearly always assigned hostile JMs. By contrast, and as expected, JM-based monitoring of ministers was much less frequent in Germany. Only when the CDU-CSU consortium is treated as two separate parties do we find ministers (from the CSU) being assigned hostile junior ministers (from the CDU) more than half the time. From the opposite perspective, namely partisan use

<sup>26</sup>I thank an anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft for clarification on this point.

of their JMs, we again find almost perfect monitoring (very few “wasted” JMs) by all Italian and Japanese parties, and nearly-as-frequent JM-based monitoring among LDP factions. Here, the German numbers look somewhat different, with the CDU/CSU group assigning its JMs to partner-party ministers more often than not, whereas the FDP and SPD refrained from assigning their allotment of JMs in this way. Again, when the CDU and CSU are treated as separate parties (reflecting their quite real regional and ideological differences) it turns out that they rarely missed an opportunity to keep tabs on one another. I will discuss partisan use of JMs in each country briefly before moving on to H2.

**Italy.** Between 1970 and 1989, Italy was governed by twenty-three different cabinets, including eighteen coalitions. The Christian Democratic Party (DC) always constituted the central party, though it did not always name the prime minister. Throughout this period, every departmental minister<sup>27</sup> was assigned at least one JM (or, as they are called, Undersecretaries – *sottosegretari*).<sup>28</sup>

As Table 2 indicates, only twenty Italian ministers out of 340 (5.9 percent) were not assigned a junior minister from a different party. In nine governments, every minister was assigned a partner-party JM, and in six others, all but one or two ministers were. As the dominant party in Italian politics, the DC used its pivotal position to ensure that it held *at least* a junior ministership in every department: only once in 20 years (0.3 percent) was there a ministry without DC representation at either the ministerial or junior-ministerial level!<sup>29</sup> The DC would surrender control of the top spot in various departments to its coalition partners, but it would always assign a junior minister or two to keep tabs on what its partners were up to.

Just as the ministers from the DC’s various partner parties always were provided hostile JMs, they did their best to reciprocate. Collectively, they used 340 of their 382 allotted JMs (89.0 percent) to shadow other parties’ ministers. A closer look at the forty-two exceptions reveals that for twenty-seven, there were no unmonitored ministers on whom to keep tabs, and for ten of the nine-

teen unmonitored DC ministers, there were no JMs from other parties who were not already assigned to monitor someone else.

**Japanese multiparty governments, 1993–1996.** From 1955 through 1993, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) controlled a majority of seats in the Lower House of the National Diet and was able to form single-party governments.<sup>30</sup> However, the post-1993 period has seen multiparty coalition governments. Of the eighty ministers who served in the four governments formed between August 1993 and November 1996, 59 (73.8 percent) had JMs (called parliamentary vice-ministers, or *seimu jikan*) from parties other than their own. Twenty of the twenty-one exceptions were LDP ministers in the latter three governments (the LDP did not participate in the 1993 government). By contrast only one of forty-three non-LDP ministers lacked a hostile JM. The LDP assigned its JMs to eighteen of twenty-one partner-party ministers, leaving the other three to be monitored by other coalition partners (which they were). While the LDP’s partners did not always receive enough JMs to keep tabs on every LDP minister, they used their allotments very efficiently. Only two non-LDP JMs were “wasted” on same-party ministers.

**The Netherlands 1971–1994.** In the 1950s and 1960s, Dutch practice was to allow most ministers to choose their own junior ministers. Not surprisingly, between 1948 and 1971, only thirty-six of 108 ministers (33.3 percent) had junior ministers from other parties.<sup>31</sup> By the early 1970s, the “distribution and appointment of junior ministers became part of the negotiations during coalition formation.”<sup>32</sup> Andeweg and Irwin write that in the Netherlands, “parties are kept informed about departments headed by ministers from other parties because junior ministers from one party are sometimes appointed as ‘watchdogs’ at a department of another party’s minister” (1993, 133). The data reveal that between 1971 and 1994, fully seventy-six of 120 (63.3 percent) cabinet

<sup>27</sup> Ministers-without-portfolio (who never have junior ministers) are excluded from the analysis.

<sup>28</sup> Cotta (1988) sees the allocation of JMs as simply a distributional means to “pay off” parties participating in the coalition government of the day. Pridham (1988:85), by contrast, suggests that juniors are appointed from parties other than their ministers’, “as a means of knitting together the coalitional relationship at the [ministry] level.”

<sup>29</sup> The Social Democrats held both posts in the low-prestige Merchant Marine ministry in March 1979.

<sup>30</sup> Three consecutive governments in the 1983–1986 period included one minister from the New Liberal Club, a small group of LDP defectors. During these years, the LDP still held a majority, so the provision of one portfolio to the NLC was not necessary, but was designed to lure the few remaining NLC members back into the LDP.

<sup>31</sup> I eliminate the Defense ministry from this calculation. According to Andeweg, it was customary until 1970s to appoint three nonpartisan juniors—one from each of the service branches—to this ministry, usually senior officers (E-mail communication with Rudy B. Andeweg, 13 January 2000).

<sup>32</sup> E-mail communication with Rudy B. Andeweg, 13 January 2000.

ministers in ten multiparty governments were assigned junior ministers from other parties.<sup>33</sup>

**Germany 1966–1990.** German governments in the post-war period typically have featured coalitions between the small Free Democratic Party (FDP) and one of the two large political parties, the Christian Democrats/Christian Socialists (CDU/CSU) or Social Democrats (SPD). A “grand coalition” between the CDU and SPD formed once, in late 1966, and governed for three years. Junior ministers (called parliamentary state secretaries, or *parlamentarische staatssekretäre*) began to appear in the late 1960s (Paterson and Southern 1991, 100).

From 1966 through 1990, only nineteen of 159 ministers received JMs from other parties. Fourteen of those cases involved FDP ministers who were assigned a junior from whichever large party dominated the coalition. The other five occurred when an FDP junior minister checked a big-party minister. Of course, the FDP’s proportionally small allotment of JMs meant that it could not have hoped to monitor very many big-party ministers in any event. Nonetheless, the FDP took only five of its thirty chances to monitor partner-party ministers. The CDU/CSU did so ten times in seventeen chances, and the SPD in eight of twenty-four.

However, a closer examination reveals a curious finding. If we treat the CDU and CSU as two separate parties, the above numbers are turned on their heads. The CSU named sixteen ministers over four governments; two received FDP JMs, but thirteen more were assigned CDU JMs. Similarly, the CSU used nine of its thirteen JMs in CDU ministries. Indeed, only three CSU JMs who could have been assigned to CDU ministers were not, and the CDU missed only one chance to monitor a CSU minister. The CDU and CSU evidently determined that keeping tabs on each other was more important than monitoring the activities of FDP ministers, perhaps because the FDP was easy to keep in check through other, institutional means.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, the Dutch case cannot be included in Table 2, because complete data on JM appointments are not available. Timmermans and Andeweg (1997) note every occasion of cross-party assignment of ministers and their JMs, but do not distinguish instances of same-party minister-JM pairs from instances where no JM was assigned at all, nor do they indicate how many junior ministerships each party was allotted. Thus, the numbers cited in the text may understate the prevalence of watchdog JMs, in that many of the cases coded as “not monitored” may have occurred because there were no more “hostile” JMs to go around.

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps also this is a further demonstration of the great importance of regionalism and federalism in Germany. The CDU and CSU are two parties that have forged a permanent electoral and legislative coalition, the basis of which is a regional nonencroachment agreement. They do not compete with each other electorally, as the

**Japanese single-party governments, 1955–1993.** Japan is of interest during its years of one-party dominance as well. The LDP was deeply factionalized, often referred to as “more a coalition of factions than a unified party” (Scalapino and Masumi 1962, 85, 94; Sartori 1976, 90). The party reshuffled its ministers and JMs almost annually, and fifteen different LDP presidents served as prime minister during the party’s thirty-eight-year run. Party presidential elections, and the allocation of government and party posts, were decided via factional competition (Sato and Matsuzaki 1986; Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 1999).

Despite the importance of factions, a review of the Japanese politics literature suggests that a policy-based theory of post allocation among factions ought to hold little explanatory power, for two reasons. First, the received wisdom on LDP factions holds that they are nonideological, that they do not battle over policy or even evince distinct policy preferences (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993, 77; but see McCubbins and Thies 1997 for an opposing view).<sup>35</sup> Second, during the period of LDP dominance, JM posts usually were assigned to very junior politicians—second or third-termers for the most part. Thus, it has long been assumed that JMs were meant to serve apprenticeships, to learn the ministerial ropes in the hopes that they might eventually (after their sixth term, or later, depending on the importance of the ministry) return to the department as minister (Sato and Matsuzaki 1986). But note that mere lack of seniority does not imply an inability to monitor: even novice policy wonks can serve as watchdogs for their own factional mates, if assigned to “hostile” ministers.

Table 2 shows that factions did keep tabs on each other’s ministers during the LDP’s long reign. The 1965–1990 period<sup>36</sup> saw thirty-one different cabinets and 632

CSU is limited to Bavaria, and the CDU contests elections in the rest of the country. This deal makes elections run smoothly, but virtually guarantees intra “party” heterogeneity along regional and ideological lines. Though the two form a single group in the legislature, apparently they also keep tabs on each other’s ministers.

<sup>35</sup> Two different explanations exist for policy isomorphism. Cultural theories hold that LDP factions are simply a political manifestation of a ubiquitous feature of Japanese organizations, that they reflect the Confucian emphasis on hierarchy, deference to seniority, and patron-client (*oyabun-kobun*) relationships (Nakane 1970). Electoral theories focus on the incentives for *intraparty* competition in the electoral environment. Factions supported candidates in these electoral battles, by providing money, posts, and pork (Iseri 1988; Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 1999).

<sup>36</sup> Data regarding factional affiliations of LDP Diet Members is unreliable until the mid-1960s, largely because factions were much more fluid then than in subsequent years. Members switched factions more frequently, and sometimes affiliated with more than one faction simultaneously (Sato and Matsuzaki 1986).

ministers take office. Of those 632 ministers, 551 (87.2 percent) were assigned JMs from different factions, and for eleven others, there were no hostile JMs left to go around. Looked at the other way, 624 of 730 JMs (85.5 percent) were assigned to ministries controlled by other factions, and twenty-four of the remainder were not really wasted, in the sense that there were no unmonitored ministers left for them to shadow.<sup>37</sup>

While these data describe only a small sample of countries with multiparty (or multifactional) government, they are broadly supportive of the theory of managed delegation, and of Hypothesis 1 in particular. The country with the most in the way of institutional checks on ministerial power, Germany, is the one in which governing parties resorted least often to the device of monitoring ministers with junior ministers from other parties (more on this below). In the other countries, relatively bereft of institutional checks on ministers, all parties (or factions) apparently went out of their way to use JMs to keep tabs on each other's ministers. Since any check on ministerial autonomy is inconsistent with the theory of ministerial government, but is predicted by a theory of managed delegation, the latter is better supported by the evidence.

### **Salience of Ministries and Presence of Hostile Junior Ministers**

Hypothesis 2 stated that parties are more likely to monitor partner parties' ministers who hold portfolios of greater salience. The logic here is that there is not as much incentive for partner-parties to monitor ministers of unimportant departments. Rather, they should seek to use their shares of these junior slots in ministries that they themselves do not control, but whose activities are of interest to them. Especially in governments wherein "fair shares" of each type of post would leave one party with a majority of both (i.e., when one party is much larger than the others in the coalition) the smaller parties should seek either the ministerial post or a junior ministership in all of the important departments; and if this means that the large party garners both posts in the less important departments, so be it.

To examine this hypothesis empirically, one must find a way to measure the salience of portfolios to political parties. Previous work by Laver and Hunt (1992) is helpful. Using surveys of country-experts, these authors constructed a rank ordering of the importance of cabinet

portfolios in twenty-five countries. They also created measures of the salience of eight issue dimensions to each political party in each country. Unfortunately, these data provide only a snapshot in time, not a time series, so we are obliged to assume that the relative salience (at least in terms of rank ordering) did not change over the longer time span of interest here. Moreover, the policy dimensions for which their respondents provided party-specific measures of preferences and importance do not match their list of cabinet portfolios in any transparent way.<sup>38</sup>

I deal with these limitations in three steps. First, I assume that, in general, all parties in the coalition agree on which are the most important portfolios, and use the Laver-Hunt ministry rankings, with an eye to the issue-dimension measures for anomalies.<sup>39</sup> Second, because the assumption of "no change in relative salience over time" is rather restrictive, I group ministries into "top," "middle," and "bottom" tiers, rather than attempt to discern a more fine-tuned measure. Third, I cross check these groupings with other sources in the literature where possible.<sup>40</sup>

**Italy.** The eight Italy-expert respondents to the Laver-Hunt survey collectively ranked the top eleven ministries in order of importance as follows. The top five are Treasury, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Defense, respectively, followed by (6) Education, (7) Agriculture and Forestry, (8) Health, (9) Industry, (10) Justice, and (11) Transport. Nine other ministries are unranked in this source. A second source (Hine 1993) agrees with Laver-Hunt on the five most important ministries and goes on to list the "top patronage ministries" as including Industry, Health, Agriculture, Public Works, and Posts and Telecom.

<sup>38</sup>For example, while their "increase services vs. cut taxes" dimension and their "pro-public ownership versus anti" dimensions correspond to the some combination of the Finance, Treasury, Budget, or Economics portfolios, it is not clear which corresponds best to which. Dimensions such as "pro-permissive social policy versus anti" or "Anti-clerical vs. pro-clerical" are even more ambiguous, though posts such as Education and Social Affairs seem likely suspects.

<sup>39</sup>It is clear from the dimension measures that parties do vary in their ranking of issue importance, but, fortunately, it appears for these countries that most of that variation stayed outside the actual governments that formed.

<sup>40</sup>I exclude the post-1993 Japanese multiparty coalition governments from this discussion, because the Laver-Hunt salience rankings are clearly obsolete, and alternative sources are unavailable. Issues such as education and local autonomy have long been matters of inter-party contention in Japan, but this did not matter under stable LDP majorities. Since 1993, these issues have reentered public debate, as interparty disagreements have enlivened coalition politics, and thus risen in importance.

<sup>37</sup>It is worth noting that of the twenty LDP ministers in the 1990s governments who were not assigned juniors from the LDP's coalition partners (because the partners ran out of JMs), seventeen were assigned JMs from different LDP factions!

**TABLE 3** Junior Ministers as Monitors, by Salience of Portfolios: Italy 1970–1989

	Ministries	Ministers with JMs from other Parties
Top Tier	Treasury, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defense	84 of 85 (98.82%)
Middle Tier	Agriculture/Forestry, Health, Industry, Education, Justice, Transport, Public Works, Posts/Telecom	129 of 136 (94.85%)
Bottom Tier	Budget, Cultural/Natural Assets, Labor, Merchant Marine, Public Enterprises, Tourism, Trade	102 of 114 (89.47%)

\*Sources for Portfolio Salience: Laver and Hunt (1992:233); Hine (1993:105).

In Table 3, I call the consensus “top five” ministries the top tier, and the seven ministries that neither source ranks the bottom tier. I combine the Laver/Hunt “middle 6” and Hine’s “middle 5” to create the middle tier. The table lists each set of ministries, along with the share of ministers in each group that were assigned junior ministers from other parties. As can be seen, despite the low likelihood that *any* Italian minister is not assigned a watchdog JM, the number of exceptions increases as the importance of ministries declines. Clearly, the DC’s coalition partners were taking care to assign their JMs to top-tier ministries first, leaving only middle- and bottom-tier ministers unmonitored when JMs ran short.

Recall from the previous section that only nine of the twenty “unchecked” ministers were really anomalous in the sense that there were “wasted” JMs who could have been assigned to them. These nine cases occurred over only four governments, with four of the nine in middle-tier ministries, and the remaining five in the bottom tier. Moreover, all but two of the fifteen “wasted” JMs were placed in (their parties’ own) top-tier or middle-tier ministries in lieu of assignment as watchdogs in less important departments.

**Japan.** A general reading of the literature on Japanese politics suggests that three portfolios—Foreign Affairs, Finance, and International Trade and Industry—were the most coveted postings for their policy-making clout. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the main source of pork-barrel spending for the Liberal Democrats, was also extremely important (Curtis 1988; Calder 1988). The experts surveyed by Laver and Hunt also name the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Economic Planning Agency, and the Defense Agency as high-priority posts. By contrast, several postings—the Agencies for Science and Technology, Environment, Hokkaido Development, Okinawa Development, and National Land—are generally considered to be of inferior quality. These jobs were most often foisted upon first-time cabinet

members or Upper House members.<sup>41</sup> I place all other cabinet posts—the Ministries of Education, Health and Welfare, Justice, Labor, Posts and Telecom, and Transport—in the intermediate category.

Table 4 breaks down the rate of cross-factional checking between ministers and junior ministers according to three categories of portfolio “importance.” The table shows that while there is no difference between the middle-tier and bottom-tier ministries, where the overall share of ministers who went “un-monitored” by hostile juniors was approximately 16 percent, that share dropped to less than 7 percent for the seven most important ministries. The evidence is consistent with H2, and hence a theory of managed delegation. LDP factions apparently kept closest tabs on each other’s ministers who held the most important cabinet posts.

**The Netherlands.** Although JMs were not as common in the Netherlands prior to 1971, most of the cases of watchdog JMs that did occur during that period were concentrated in the most important ministries. The “top four” Ministries (according to Laver-Hunt) of Finance, Social Affairs, Economic Affairs, and Foreign Affairs together accounted for twenty-four of the thirty-six cases. In the post-1971 period, there does not appear to be much variance in the frequency with which ministers in the top ten departments (the four listed above, plus Interior, Education, Housing, Justice, and Welfare) received watchdog JMs. The average frequency was 7.2 times out of ten (seventy-two of 100), and all ministers were monitored between six and eight times. On the other hand, the

<sup>41</sup>By agreement among LDP factions, all party members were entitled to at least one term in the cabinet once they reached their sixth or seventh terms (Sato and Matsuzaki 1986; Curtis 1988). The most prestigious posts, however, were reserved for more senior members. Similarly three cabinet posts were generally reserved for Upper House members (with factional affiliation a prerequisite to cabinet participation—see Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 2000).



**TABLE 4** Junior Ministers as Monitors, by Salience of Portfolios: Japan 1965–1990

	Ministries	Ministers with JMs from other Parties
Top Tier	Finance, International Trade/Industry, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Economic Planning, Home Affairs, Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries	203 of 218 (93.12%)
Middle Tier	Construction, Education, Health/Welfare, Justice, Labor, Posts & Telecommunications, Transport	183 of 219 (83.56%)
Bottom Tier	Agencies for Science and Technology, Environment, Hokkaido Development, Okinawa Development, and National Land	165 of 195 (84.62%)

\* Sources for Portfolio Salience: Laver and Hunt (1992:242); Curtis (1988); Sato and Matsuzaki (1986).

two ministries *least* likely to have watchdog JMs were Agriculture (once) and Transport (thrice). Not surprisingly, these are the departments of lowest salience in Dutch politics.

## Analysis

Taken together, the above five case studies provide support for the “managed partnership” model of coalition government implied by the logic of delegation. Parties in Italy, the Netherlands, and 1990s Japan<sup>42</sup> went out of their way to assign their allotted junior ministers to departments headed by other parties’ ministers, especially for the most important governmental departments. Factions in LDP-majority governments in Japan did the same. From the perspective of a theory of managed delegation, the assignment of watchdog JMs was an important adaptation to the fact that ministers in those countries were otherwise relatively unchecked by other institutional actors with overlapping authority. In Germany, however, the institutions of government go a long way toward dampening the influence wielded by ministers. Accordingly, with the intriguing exception of cross-checking by CDU and CSU ministers and JMs, German parties generally did not see fit to use JMs in this way.<sup>43</sup>

Might there be reasons other than institutional decentralization of power to explain the German exception,

and more specifically, the variations in JM use across parties in that country? Besides its institutional differences from the other countries studied here, Germany is also the only country for which two-party coalitions were the rule. Moreover, while coalitions in Italy and 1990s Japan included parties that “outweighed” all of their (respective) coalition partners combined, the difference was not so great that more than a few of the dominant party’s ministers could be sure to avoid cross-party monitoring. Even if one small party could not monitor every big-party minister, it could rest assured that one of the other small parties was on the job.

In Germany, by contrast, the FDP contributed only a small percentage of the legislative seats that supported the governments in which it participated, and it had no third or fourth coalition partners to help monitor the dominant party (either the CDU/CSU or the SPD). While this made thorough JM-based monitoring of its big-party partner impossible, it also might have rendered such behavior pointless. That is, if the FDP’s diminutive size (not just in cabinet, but in all other decision-making institutions as well) implied that it was in too weak a position to impose sanctions on its coalition partner, then even successful monitoring might have done little to rein in its partner’s ministers. Perhaps, then, the reason that the FDP did not bother to assign more than a few of its JMs as watchdogs is simply that gaining information but lacking the ability to make use of it is no better than ignorance.

But this alternative explanation for the FDP’s inattention to the watchdog potential of JMs (that small parties are too weak relative to big-party partners to make monitoring worthwhile) is unsatisfying for at least two reasons. First, and most simply, it cannot explain why the SPD did not bother to monitor FDP ministers when those two parties teamed up. Second, and more generally, the bargaining strength or weakness of a party does not *necessarily* correspond to the size of a party’s parliamentary representation. True, a large party can always outvote a much

<sup>42</sup>An interesting postscript to the Japanese case concerns a recent move to reform the institutional role of junior ministers. The current coalition has just implemented a reform that increases the number of parliamentary vice-ministers, improves the ability of junior ministers to keep tabs on ministers and bureaucrats, and requires them to report regularly to the Diet (see, e.g., Hani 1998; Iitake 1999).

<sup>43</sup>The need for investigation of more national cases is plain. But while comprehensive data sets on ministers are now available, data on junior ministers and other institutional arrangements within cabinets are rare finds.

smaller partner if something short of unanimity rule is used to make decisions. Thus, a large party could sanction its smaller partner by threatening simply to block the small party's initiatives or to pass undesirable policies over the small partner's objections.

Ultimately, however, all decisions within a (minimal-winning) cabinet must enjoy the unanimous consent of all coalition parties, because the ultimate sanction that coalition partners hold over each other's behavior is the threat to leave the coalition. But note that the credibility of such a threat depends as well on the other options each party faces. A small party with a more credible threat than its "dominant" partner to defect and team up with the current opposition might very well be able to compensate for its small size. The FDP, which alternated between coalitions with each large party, and was the only party to participate in every government for thirty years, was in just such a "pivotal" position.<sup>44</sup> Thus, whereas the FDP's big-party partner faced the choice between the status quo coalition and relegation to opposition status, the FDP itself was able to choose between two different coalition scenarios, and to play one large party off against the other. This is not to suggest that the FDP could run roughshod over its partners. But it does suggest that the FDP should have been able to hold its own in intra-coalitional bargaining and that its partners could not simply "out-vote" the FDP whenever intracoalitional conflicts arose.

## Conclusion

Any monitoring role for JMs—or any other sort of monitoring or external checking device—compromises ministers' ability to rule their jurisdictions autonomously, which privilege is the defining feature of ministerial government. The presence of such delegation-control mechanisms suggests that, far from abdicating to ministers, cabinet partners attempt to reap gains from delegation while still governing collectively.

Thus, scholars who rely on the assumption of ministerial government to predict which governments will form would be well served to extend their models to include the extra layers of institutional detail represented by the assignment of junior ministers, and of other institutional checks. If successful monitoring of delegation by coalition partners moves parties' expectations about

policy from the "abdication" points on the lattice to some "interior" point, then the predictions of policy-based models of government formation will change as well (Figure 2).<sup>45</sup>

A broader theoretical implication of this study is that the traditional distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems is overstated. The conflict built into multiparty coalitions is very similar to the one inherent in a separation of powers. Just as members of different branches cannot affect each other's vital electoral assets, neither can different parties in a coalition easily control each other's office holders. By contrast, everyone in a single-party-majority government is more or less in a common electoral boat, and subject to myriad intraparty sanctions.<sup>46</sup> Add to this the likelihood that partner parties have more divergent preferences than present in a single-party regime, and we see that delegators in multiparty governments must worry that partner-agents have both the opportunity and the motive to misuse their authority. Once we recognize the centrality of cross-party policy compromise and managed delegation, multiparty parliamentarism emerges as a distinct regime type from its single-party cousin.

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<sup>45</sup> Whether the best way to go with such an extension would be toward a more fine-tuned lattice or not is unclear. This would require a much more specific theoretical prediction than laid out in this article concerning the magnitude of the policy effect in each dimension implied by managed delegation (through JM-monitoring or other means). Moreover, the specific preferences (i.e., partisanship) of each JM would matter. Here I have considered only the dichotomous question: "friend or foe?" But in a multiparty coalition, it *might* make a (policy) difference, for example, whether the "hostile" watchdog for a centrist minister were from a left-wing party or a right-wing one.

<sup>46</sup> This last point goes a long way in explaining why factions in Japan's LDP seem so compelled to keep tabs on each other—factional electoral fates under SNTV were largely independent (Cox and Rosenbluth 1993).

<sup>44</sup> See Sørensen (1985, 1990) for more on the FDP's "kingmaker" role in German governments. Also, Bawn (1999) provides important evidence that the FDP's pivotal position allowed it disproportionate influence over policy making, despite its small size.

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