

# Party Competition in Western Europe

## Legislatures

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## What we did last week...

- ...we defined institutions
  - ...we analysed how the electoral system shapes voting behaviour
  - ...we accessed data sources to model electoral system's effect on the number of parties in a system and the share of women in politics

## Plan for today

Today is our final substantive session. We will learn...

- ...how legislative institutions shape parliamentary processes?
- ...and how to present academic articles

# Parliamentary organization

## Working vs. debating



(a) Nationalrat in Austria



(b) House of Commons in UK

Figure: Parliaments in Austria and UK

*How do the debates between Austria and the UK differ?*

# PowerPoint karaoke

After 11 sessions, it's time to switch sides. The class is split into two groups, group A presents Proksch and Slapin (2012) and group B explains Sieberer and Höhmann (2022).

- You've got 10 minutes to discuss the paper within the group
  - You are presenting together, everyone can jump in
  - You have two wildcards
    1. Ask your peers from the other group
    2. Ask me
  - This should be fun, no need to be nervous.

# Institutional Foundations of Legislative Speech

According to Proksch and Slapin (2012), parliamentary speeches...

- ...have a limited direct effect on policy-making
- parties use their speeches strategically to boost their electoral fortunes
- speeches used to garner public attention and serve as a tool for position-taking

# Institutional Foundations of Legislative Speech

However, trade-off exists for both leaders and MPs

- for leaders: public visibility and party identity vs. disunity
- for MPs: proximity to constituents vs. standing in party

**RQ:** *How do institutional rules affect which MP is allowed to speak in parliament?*

## Argument

“political institutions [...] create different incentives for legislative speech-making.” (Proksch and Slapin 2012, p. 521)

Institutions are endogenous to political parties’ strategies. → What does that mean?

## Argument

Party leaders want to prevent intra-party dissent from being articulated in parliament

- parliamentary rules and internal party guidelines equip them with means to control speaking agenda
- these rules are not independent from the leaders; instead party leaders actively design these rules to maintain control over the agenda

# Institutional determinants of legislative debates

Two institutional rules that affect the utility-function of party leaders and MPs

- **Regime type**

1. presidential system: strict independence between legislature and parliament → party leader cares little about party cohesion
2. parliamentary system: mutual dependence → cohesion more important

- **Electoral system**

1. Single-member district plurality: personalization trumps cohesion
2. Closed-list proportional: party brand > individual candidates
3. Mixed-member proportional: trade-off depends on ballot

## Data and Methods

Proksch and Slapin (2012) use two different ways to test their formal model

- using simulations (based on their derived expectations and equations)
- empirical test of parliamentary speaking data from Germany and the UK

## Data and Methods

### Germany

- parties receive speaking time (as in Austria)
- party leaders can then decide how to allocate the time → select speakers

### United Kingdom

- parties have no say in speaker selection
- non-partisan Speaker of the House decides who speaks on which matter

# Data and Methods

Analysis of...

- number of speeches given by party leaders
- how distant speaking MPs are to the party line

# Findings

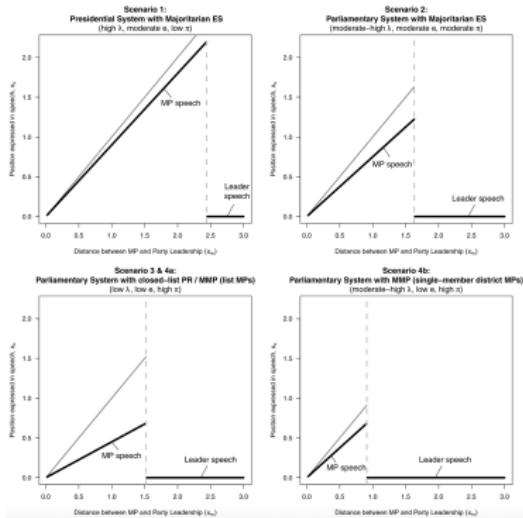


Figure: Simulated scenarios

*In which scenario are party rebels most likely to speak?*

# Findings

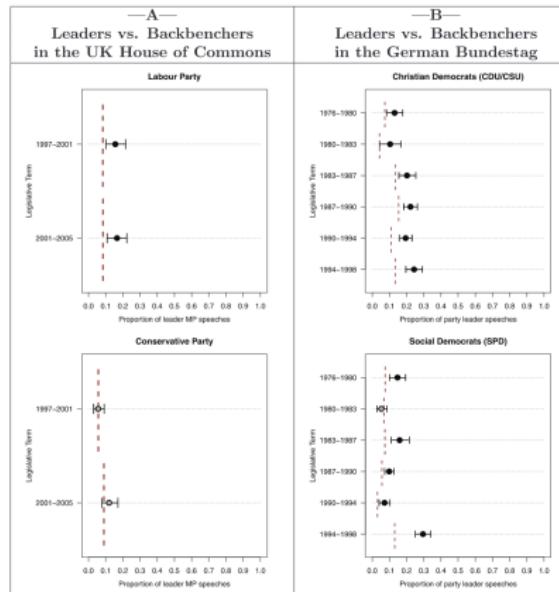
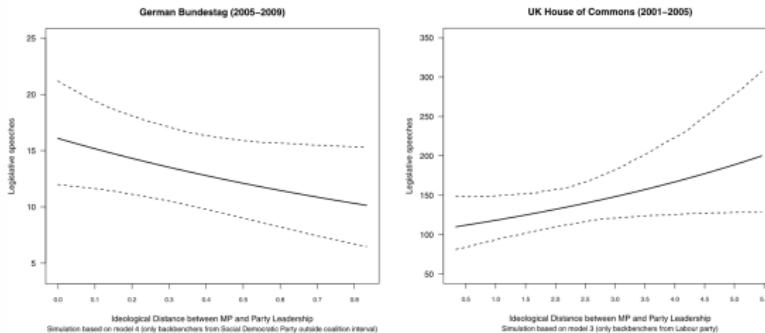


Figure: Number of speeches by party leaders in the UK and Germany

# Findings

FIGURE 3 Effects of Ideological Distance between MP and Party Leadership on Legislative Speech Counts in Germany and the UK



Note: Expected values and associated 95% confidence intervals were simulated using the R package Zelig (Imai, King, and Lau 2007). In the simulations, the party leader dummy was set to zero (to predict the effect for backbencher MPs).

Figure: Distance to the party leadership and number of speeches

# Your verdict

## Strengths and weaknesses

- ...
- ...

## Party systems and changes in legislative rules

As discussed last week, institutions are remarkably stable. And some institutions are never formalized.

*Under which conditions are legislative rules formalized and extended?*

- **motivation:** comprehensive overview of changes over time and between countries
- broad scope: not only one aspect of change (like speaking rules) but all institutional changes

# Institutional changes in different party systems

Sieberer and Höhmann (2022) zoom in on two party system features that might shape the density of institutional changes

1. party system fragmentation
2. polarization

# Institutional changes in different party systems

Why **fragmentation** may matter:

- generally, more fragmentation means more parties
- this implies...
  1. ...more smaller parties entering parliament which benefit from institutional regulation as it gives them more oversight
  2. ...increased necessity of coalition governments (which want to control each other)
  3. ...new (partly anti-establishment) parties enter parliament which try to sideline old procedures: established parties might try to formalize them before it's too late

# Institutional changes in different party systems

Why **polarization** matters:

- increases ideological conflict
- same as before: minority actors try to exploit loopholes, dominant actors try to close them

## Institutional changes in different party systems

Change may occur either in the short-term (to block minority actors) or in the long-term (since institutions are sticky and the political environment often evolves slowly)

## Data and Method

- collected parliamentary regulation from different versions of standing orders in 15 Western European parliaments from 1945-2009
- main dependent variable: length of standing order (if version is longer: extension, if version shorter: decline in regulations)
- explanatory variables:
  1. fragmentation through the effective number of parties
  2. polarization via distance of parties on left-right dimension

# Findings

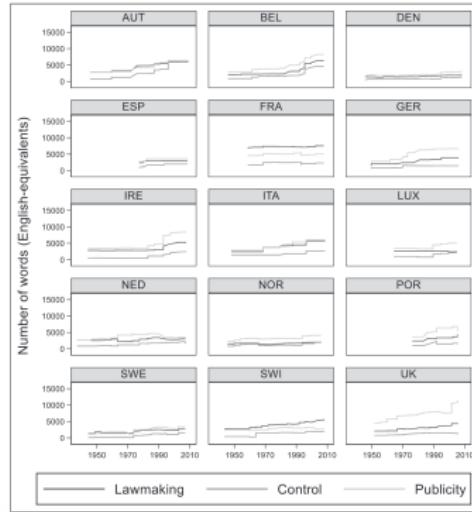


Figure: Evolution of standing orders over time by country

What becomes evident? What challenges does it pose to inference?

# Findings

- standing order from  $t$  is based on standing order from  $t-1$
- almost only positive time trends
- solution: (1) first-difference models (that model changes instead of absolute numbers) and (2) error-correction models (that take time trends into account)

# Findings

**Table 1.** The short term effects of party system characteristics on institutional regulation (models in first differences).

	Entire SO	Lawmaking	Control	Publicity
Δ Fragmentation	-51.21 (-0.61)	-27.18 (-1.43)	-37.33* (-2.02)	-6.452 (-0.25)
Δ Polarization	-1162.5 (-0.77)	-115.7 (-0.41)	23.41 (0.08)	-255.3 (-0.42)
Δ Size of legislature	-3.125 (-1.13)	0.107 (0.18)	-0.336 (-0.78)	-0.950 (-1.33)
Δ Disproportionality	-4.604 (-0.23)	-4.280 (-1.24)	-5.594 (-1.25)	-3.495 (-0.39)

**Figure:** Effects of fragmentation and polarization on different types of parliamentary regulation

# Findings

Generally, there are no significant and trustworthy effects of the party system on parliamentary rules.

- changes are not partisan
- many parliamentary rules are not competitive; their evolution is path-dependent
- often, parliamentary regulation benefits all actors involved

# Your verdict

## Strengths and weaknesses

- ...
- ...

## To prepare for next week...

- We are done with the readings
- Next week fulfils two purposes
  1. wrap-up and open questions
  2. your 2 minutes to shine
    - prepare a short elephant pitch of a potential research idea for your term paper
    - you'll present the pitch to your peers in a world-cafe setting
    - then, we'll talk in class about the term paper

Thank you for your attention!  
Any further questions?

## Literature

-  **Proksch SO and Slapin JB (2012)** Institutional Foundations of Legislative Speech. *American Journal of Political Science* **56** (3), 520–537.
-  **Sieberer U and Höhmann D (2022)** Do Party System Parameters Explain Differences in Legislative Organization? Fragmentation, Polarization, and the Density of Regulation in European Parliaments, 1945–2009. *Party Politics* **28** (4), 597–610.
-  **Zubek R (2021)** Committee Strength in Parliamentary Democracies: A New Index. *European Journal of Political Research* **60** (4), 1018–1031.