

THE OUTPUT OF AGGREGATED PREFERENCES: WHY GOVERNMENT PARTIES CHANGE THEIR PLATFORM MORE THAN OPPOSITION PARTIES

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WHO CHANGES MORE: GOVERNMENT PARTIES OR OPPOSITION ONES?

Classical, but largely untested, hypothesis 1: Opposition parties and government parties are *equally likely* to change their platform

Why? Spatial models of elections predict that parties choose a platform that maximizes electoral support. If, say, public opinion shifts to the right, *all* parties will shift to the right as well.

Largely untested hypothesis 2a: Opposition parties are *more likely* to change their platform than government parties are.

Why? Parties use proxies, such as government/opposition status. Opposition parties have lost, motivating change.

Or, focusing on parties' aspiration level and assuming that office is parties' overriding goal, only opposition parties perform below their aspiration level, motivating change.

WHO CHANGES MORE: GOVERNMENT PARTIES OR OPPOSITION ONES? (CONT'D)

Behavioral hypothesis 2b: Opposition parties are *less likely* to change their platform than government parties are (opposite of H2a)

Why? **Endowment effect** makes that government parties want to keep their endowment (office). The **cost of governing** motivates these parties to change

Assumption: Party platform change is risky

PARTIES' VARYING PREFERENCE FOR OFFICE

Variation across parties in their preferences or goals (policy, votes or office)

We focus on **office aspiration**; a dynamic measure that changes according to performance

Three main types of parties, varying in terms of behavior when entering office:

1. Parties that have (almost) never been in office and, hence don't expect office (low aspiration parties);
2. Parties that have (almost) always been in office and, hence, do expect office (high aspiration parties);
3. Parties that move in and out of office.

PARTIES' VARYING PREFERENCE FOR OFFICE (CONT'D)

Hypothesis 3: Opposition parties with low office aspiration are *less* likely to change their platform than government parties with low office aspiration.

Hypothesis 4: Opposition parties with high office aspiration are *more* likely to change their platform than government parties with high office aspiration.

DV: PARTY PLATFORM CHANGE

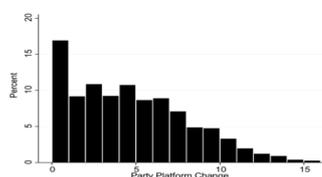
Based on comparative manifesto (CMP) dataset; data for 191 parties from 21 established democracies in the period 1950-2013, yielding > 1,600 platform changes

CMP data re-aggregated into 19 categories, capturing change in issue attention or position

Calculated whether a category significantly differed from previous election (if yes, coded 1 for change)

Counted number of significant differences per manifesto (min = 0; max = 19)

DV: PARTY PLATFORM CHANGE (CONT'D)



KEY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

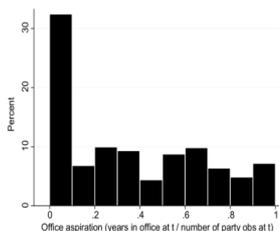
Office performance (for H1 & H3)

- Dummy variable: In office (1) prior to election or not (0)

Office aspiration (for H3 & H4)

- Continuous variable between 0 and 1
- Office aspiration = 0: about 30% of the sample (e.g., Die Linke; GroenLinks);
- $0 < \text{office aspiration} \leq 0.25$: about 14% of the sample (e.g., German Green party; D66);
- $0.25 < \text{office aspiration} \leq 0.5$: about 20% of the sample (e.g., mainstream parties in the UK);
- $0.5 < \text{office aspiration} \leq 0.95$: about 27% of the sample
- Office aspiration > 0.95: about 5% of the sample (e.g., Swedish and Austrian social democrats).

OFFICE ASPIRATION

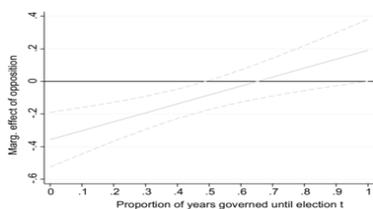


DO OFFICE PERFORMANCE AND OFFICE ASPIRATION EXPLAIN PLATFORM CHANGE?

TIME-SERIES CROSS-SECTIONAL NEGATIVE BINOMIAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS, CONTROLS EXCLUDED

	Model 1 (H1 & H2)	Model 2 (Main model [H3 & H4])
	irr/se	irr/se
In opposition	.883*	.711*
	(.039)	(.062)
Office aspiration		.905
		(.139)
In opposition*Office aspiration		1.688*
		(.273)
N	1585	1585

MARGINAL EFFECT OF OPPOSITION ON PARTY PLATFORM CHANGE FOR INCREASING VALUES OF OFFICE ASPIRATION



SUMMING UP

Opposition parties do not change more than government parties do (H2a)

Instead, on average, governing parties change more than opposition parties do (H2b)

Moreover, opposition parties with low office aspiration are *less* likely to change their platform than government parties with low office aspiration (H3)

Opposition parties with high office aspiration are *more* likely to change their platform than government parties with high office aspiration.

Implications for preference aggregation?

THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION!
QUESTIONS?