

# B2.6 Government Formation as an Optimal Combination of Office- and Policy-Motivation of Parties



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## Research Question

Analysing the **effects of office and policy motivations** of German parties on **coalition building** in the German states and developing alternatives to mainstream formateur models which are based on assumptions not holding for Germany.

Recent coalition theories assume that parties are both office- und policy-oriented. Equilibrium solutions of coalition negotiations are derived non-cooperatively via backwards induction assuming a fixed sequence of negotiation steps which are started by the choice of a formateur. Contrary to that assumption, coalition bargaining in German states is free-style in a situation without a head of state.

## Research Site

- 16 German states 1990 – 2010
- 11 German states 1975 – 1989

Advantages of German states as research site for coalition bargaining:

- Very similar institutional rules for coalition building
- State parties as regional organizations of national parties can be compared across states.

Problem: The policy positions of the regional parties, subdivided by departmental division of labour, had first to be identified.

## First Result: Domain specific policy positions

Election programs and domain specific policy positions of all German state parties which were represented in state parliaments 1975 – 2010 are now available at MZES Eurodata.

Method: Section headings of state election programs were hand coded to assign the section text to one of 11 policy domains. Length of text is interpreted as measure of a party's interest in domain (domain salience) and policy positions were identified with Wordfish (Poisson model for word frequencies in election programs, first principle component only) for four collapsed policy domains:

- Domestic affairs and justice
- Education and science
- Economic policy
- Labour and welfare policy

## Second Result: Answer to the research question

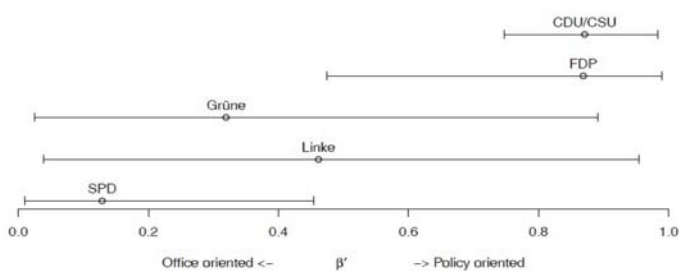


Chart 1: Weight parameter estimates for policy motivation with 90 % credibility interval.

	1975-1989			1990-2010		
	In coalition	Not in coalition	N <sub>p</sub> /N <sub>KR</sub>	In coalition	Not in coalition	N <sub>p</sub> /N <sub>KR</sub>
CDU-FDP	0,54	0,81	5/7	0,39	0,58	17/31
CDU-SPD	-	0,84	0/7	0,71	0,79	16/42
CDU-Grüne	-	2,32	0/3	1,59	1,85	2/36
CDU-PDS	-	-	-	-	1,70	0/23
SPD-Grüne	1,89	1,69	2/3	1,32	1,20	10/36
SPD-FDP	0,67	0,69	4/7	1,08	0,71	4/31
SPD-PDS	-	-	-	1,06	1,09	5/23
Anzahl	11	27	11/27	54	222	54/222

Table 1: Mean pairwise policy distances of parties when governing together or not.

## Third Result: Power play first, policy adjustment second

Dominant player	4,85***
Distance to policy mean in parliament if no dominant player	-0,79**
N	126
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0,52
Log pseudolikelihood	-21,18

Anmerkungen: Robuste Standardfehler. Signifikanzniveaus: \*\*\*0,01 \*\*0,05 \*0,10

Table 2: Which party will get the prime ministership? Conditional logit analysis.

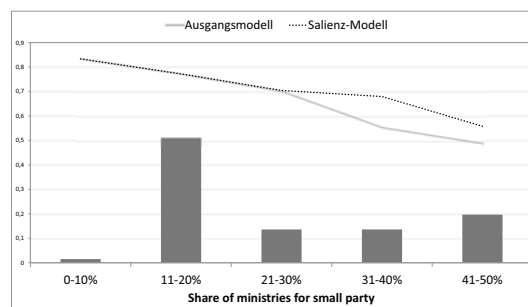


Chart 2: Correct prediction of ministerships in coalition governments: How many and which ministries?

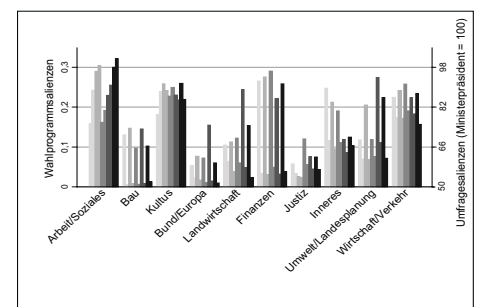


Chart 3: Party interests in policy domains: Text length vs. party leadership answers.