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WORDS AS WEAPONS: OPPOSITION RHETORIC AND
PARTISAN STRATEGY

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Eitan Tzelgov

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The dissertation of Eitan Tzelgov was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Burt Monroe
Associate Professor of Political Science
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

Sona Golder
Associate Professor of Political Science

James P. Dillard
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Christopher Zorn
Liberal Arts Research Professor of Political Science

Lee Ann Banaszak
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
Abstract

This project uses speeches in parliamentary democracies as quantitative data, in order to analyze the ways in which opposition parties use legislative rhetoric. I analyze original speech data from three democratic parliamentary legislatures: The British, the Greek and the Israeli. The core finding is that opposition parties use legislative speech strategically, i.e., they choose to address issues that might destabilize the current equilibrium, and thus increase the salience of issues that have high potential of majority splitting. The results also indicate that the use of wedge issues is conditional on intra-party politics and the complexity of new issues. Finally, I find that opposition rhetorical practices are prevalent among coalition members in unpopular governments. The results have implications to our understanding of legislative politics in parliamentary democracies, especially with regard to structure and dynamics of political issues, strategies of parliamentary opposition, and the dimensionality of legislative debate.
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1

Introduction

1.1 Studying legislative parties—the move from votes to rhetoric

“Actually, political discourse is more often than not merely a device for achieving and maintaining power”
Kenneth A. Shepsle, 1972.

This thesis uses legislative rhetoric in parliamentary democracies as quantitative data, in order to analyze the ways in which the opposition utilizes its speeches. The main goal of the thesis is to empirically demonstrate that opposition parties use speech strategically, as well as to investigate the conditions that make the use of these strategies more and less likely, and providing tools to detect and estimate the types, and magnitude of these rhetorical strategies. Additionally, the thesis aims to contribute to the scholarly debate by advocating a change in our analysis of legislative parties’ political dynamics. This change consists of moving away from the government-opposition dichotomous analytical framework, to one that also incorporates analysis of factions within the government coalition and within the opposition. Finally, the thesis seeks to develop ways in which we can use legislative rhetoric to learn about the structure of political ideologies.

More specifically, I focus on the parliamentary opposition and its legislative speech in order to show that:
Legislative speech is part of the strategic toolkit of legislative parties.

By legislative speech I mean the words MPs choose to use when they give speeches or ask questions in the parliamentary chamber. The word choices members of parliament make will be shown to be part and parcel of the political tools they use in order to achieve their goals.

When effective, these speeches have an important impact on the legislative agenda, the structure of political coalitions, and more generally, on party competition.

Rhetorical choices of MPs affect the legislative agenda since this agenda is finite. Thus, by definition, choosing to speak of topic $a$ reduces the salience of topic $b$. In turn, changes in the relative salience of issues and frames of reference can affect the incentive structure of parties (e.g. their decision whether it is better to stay in the ruling coalition or leave it). In addition, speeches can be used effectively for a variety of strategic purposes, which can be broadly defined as signalling preferences to other political actors.

Rhetorical strategies are discernible via changes in the relative usage of topics, frames, and parliamentary questions.

In the thesis I use and develop new statistical tools, allowing me to detect the rhetorical strategies parties use.

Focusing on the government-opposition divide is not sufficient for understanding parliamentary politics.

Much of the important parliamentary dynamic occurs not between the government coalition and the official opposition, but rather among party factions and factions within the coalition and the opposition.

Legislative rhetoric can be used to learn about the structure of political ideologies.
Legislative rhetoric is an invaluable data source that we can utilize to learn about the belief system of MPs, party factions, parties, and so on. For example, it will be shown that by statistically modeling these words, we find a high degree of ideological similarity between party factions that were previously considered to be part of classical ‘left’ and ‘right’ and thus very different from each other.

Thus far, studies of parliamentary rhetoric have focused on the use of speeches as signals to constituents and to other legislators, as a means to argue for or against bills and policies, and to scrutinize the executive [1, 2, 3]. This thesis builds upon this work in order to develop a more comprehensive account of the strategic use of parliamentary speeches, and their implications for party competition.

The starting point of this research is a problem in the subfields of legislative studies and party competition. Since the 1980s, scholars of legislative politics have used recorded votes to estimate legislators’ ideological preferences, both in the US Congress [4, 5, 6, 7] and in other national and international legislative assemblies [8, 9, 10]. In the US, scholars have found that voting can be efficiently explained by one dimension [6]. In settings outside of the US, the main ‘dimension’ that is found to explain legislative behavior is the government-opposition dimension.

These findings are problematic, but not surprising. The main reason for these underwhelming results is that legislative assemblies are majoritarian institutions. In other words, they are designed to help the majority get its way. The two main implications of this are: (1) we rarely get to observe votes that are not initiated by the majority, and (2) parties (especially in parliamentary systems other than the US) generally vote according to party lines.

Thus, if we are interested in the strategies parties use in order to win, and in the complexity of political preferences, we need to use a different approach, as well as additional data sources. Using speech as data overcomes the problems in recorded votes analysis; first, legislative speech is less subject to majority control. Second, speech can reveal the complexity with which legislators conceptualize and “frame” issues [11]. Indeed, a vote on a specific bill can be unidimensional and the debate leading to it would be multidimensional [12].

Overall, the approach I take in this thesis is to use quantitative methods to model the words parliamentarians use on the legislative floor. My main modeling
strategy is to employ topic models, that is, statistical methods that are used to discover the underlying ‘topics’ that characterize a collection of documents. In this research, a ‘document’ can be an utterance an MP makes, a legislative question, or an entire parliamentary debate. These models allow me to reduce the extremely large quantities of data involved with legislative speech. Second, they allow me to connect important political variables such as party affiliation, affiliation with the governing coalition or the official opposition, as well as other exogenous data (e.g. newspaper reports regarding the position of an MP on a specific issues), with the rhetorical choices parliamentarians make. Finally, they offer a clear-cut, succinct way of testing my hypotheses.

Legislative speech data

One of the biggest challenges of this thesis is obtaining legislative rhetorical data. In this section I give a brief overview of the stages and the challenges involved with working with legislative rhetorical data.

Data gathering

Gathering the data is highly challenging for a number of reasons: First, one needs to identify data sources (i.e. the raw parliamentary debates as they appear in the websites of various parliaments). Second, one needs to convert these texts into structured format (e.g. XML). In this work, I used some of the data gathered via the The Dynamics of Political Rhetoric and Political Representation project in Pennsylvania State University, led by Professor Burt Monroe. In other cases, rhetorical data were not available in a structured way, and thus I scraped the data from the legislature’s database.

Transforming words to numerical data

Once the legislative rhetorical data has been transformed to a unified format that can be manipulated, the next stage is to transform the rhetorical data in to numerical data. To do this, I wrote computer scripts (using the Python language)
that create a vocabulary for each corpus (based on the a predefined size, say 10,000 most frequent words). I then wrote additional scripts that loop through each document (i.e. what I define to be the unit of analysis – discussion, utterance, question), and count the number of times each word appears in the document.

After counting the number of times a vocabulary word appears in each document, I created a document-term-matrix, i.e. a matrix whose rows capture the documents and columns represent words. These matrices serve as the main input data for the purpose of topic modeling.

1.2 Terminology

In this section I clarify some of the terminology I use throughout the thesis, along with the specific context it is used.

The prize: What is parliamentary victory?

When we study a legislative vote, the meaning of victory is clear. However, if we wish to analyze dynamics over a larger period of time, or ‘build’ a general model of legislative victory, the definition of victory becomes more elusive.

In abstract terms, I approach party politics as if political parties that were losers in yesterday’s political game, i.e., the current legislative opposition, aspire to become tomorrow’s winners. However, this approach may be too too general. For example, in most parliamentary elections it is common knowledge that small parties do not have a chance of forming the government. For these parties, even increasing their share of the votes does not necessarily imply government participation, because the party forming the government might not invite then to join the ruling coalition. Moreover, some parties in parliamentary systems (e.g. traditional Communist parties), see government participation as a violation of their ideological principles.

As a result of this definitional difficulty, it will be helpful to utilize some aspects of work on parties’ motivations. According to that work, all parties seek (to varying degrees): votes, office, and policy. For the purposes of this

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1 I detail some of these procedures in the empirical chapters and in the appendices.
thesis, it will suffice to focus on vote and policy seeking\(^1\). Thus, in this work, parties’ ‘victory’ can be conceptualized as an increase in either their vote share or their influence over policies in time \(t + 1\), relative to time \(t\). This definition is intentionally minimal. In essence, it assumes that no party out of power wishes to maintain its vote share or policy influence as it is. In turn, this conceptualization allows me to analyze the strategies of a wide variety of legislative parties, including those that do not necessarily want to hold office.

**Opposition**

The extant literature utilizes the concept of opposition in a clear-cut way—the opposition is composed of the MPs representing parties that are not part of the *ruling coalition* / *government parties*. However, one of the most important themes of this research is that in order to model and analyze legislative behavior, it is necessary to move beyond the dichotomous conceptualization of ruling coalition - official opposition. In fact, this thesis demonstrates that intra-party variation of preferences (regardless of the official status of the party as a member of the government or the opposition), that is, intra-party opposition, can have important implications for party strategy. Second, the analysis reveals that under certain conditions, MPs from parties in the coalition actually ‘oppose’ more than their peers in the formal opposition. Thus, while the official affiliation of a party with the government or the opposition does play an important role in this thesis, it is important to note that at times, the term *opposition* will be used to denote the *actions* of MPs from ruling parties, or to denote intra-party differences in preferences which have important implications for party strategy.

**Selective emphasis**

\(^{14}\) argue that parties use *selective emphasis* to increase the salience of issues that differentiate them from other parties and that they have “ownership” over \(^{15}\). This means that parties do not state positions on every possible issue. They rather elaborate on the dimensions where they believe their position to be

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\(^1\) While not completely unrelated, office-seeking is more relevant to studies focusing on the bargaining aspect of coalition politics.
dominant. In the context of this thesis, I argue that the legislative opposition would rather talk on issues where it has an advantage; at the micro-level, this can be seen as attempts to ‘embarrass’ the coalition, e.g., to use question time to point to government failed policies. At the macro-level, this means attempts to change the dimensionality of partisan conflict and politicize additional issues that might threaten the coalition.

**Political dimensionality**

Dimensionality is a central concept in this thesis. While I use statistical models to learn about political dimensionality, my analysis builds upon the insights of positive political theorists (16, 17), especially Richard D. McKelvey. These theorists have formally shown that coalition stability is directly related to dimensionality. Put differently, with more than one political dimension (or issue), the necessary conditions for coalition stability are extremely restrictive. Overall, in this research political dimensionality can be thought of mainly as the number of topics that constitute the political agenda in a given period.

1.3 Objectives

To reiterate, there are four main goals to this dissertation project:

- Showing that legislative speech is part of the strategic toolkit of legislative parties

In order to achieve this goal, one has to demonstrate that legislative speeches are used in a way that promotes the political goals of legislative actors. This entails first showing that speeches reflect the priorities of these actors, followed by demonstrating that the dynamics of speeches is in accordance with the strategic logic that increases the likelihood of parliamentary victory, as defined above.

- These speeches impact the legislative agenda, political coalitions, and party competition
For example, we can think of a rhetorical attack, i.e. a case where a legislative actor decides to increase the salience of a specific issue, believing that this hurts its political rival. A successful rhetorical attack leads to a response by the legislative actor being attacked. Thus, this process changes the composition of the political agenda, since we observe an increase in the salience of a topic. This also affects the topics that are considered as ‘important’, and the structure of competition between legislative actors.

- Rhetorical strategies are discernible via changes in the use of topics, frames, and questions

This is essentially a research design and methodological issue. The first challenge is to derive falsifiable hypotheses regarding the strategic use of rhetoric. The second challenge is to develop and use appropriate tools to test these hypotheses.

- Legislative rhetoric can be used to learn about ideologies

Studying the strategic use of words is mainly dynamic, i.e. it entails tracing changes in the distribution of words/topics across time. In contrast, here the goal is to use variation in the use of words across and within legislative actors, rather than across time, in order to learn about the structure of ideas in the legislative agenda.

1.4 Three cases of rhetorical strategies (or lack thereof)

In order to establish that political parties indeed use rhetoric strategically, I first focus on modeling and detecting the ways rhetoric is used by the opposition to introduce wedge-issues, (18, 19, 20, 21). In order to do that, I analyze legislative dynamics in Israel. Israel serves as an optimal case to detect changes in agenda dimensionality, since for decades, its political agenda has been dominated by the security issue (22, 1).

The low dimensionality of the Israeli political agenda, along with its tradition of coalition governments, illuminate some of the basic assumptions of this project.
Namely, these assumptions are that parties win elections and form government coalitions when they win the political debate on the main issue, the conflict of conflicts (21). Second, that any political agenda has the potential of becoming multidimensional, since numerous issues are latent at any given time, and that activation of these issues can destabilize the coalition.

While the analysis of the Israeli case demonstrates that legislative rhetoric can be used in a sophisticated manner by opposition parties, in my study of parliamentary dynamics in the UK House of commons, I clarify why opposition parties often refrain from using particular rhetorical strategies. The case of the UK is very different than the Israeli case. First, the Westminster model generally leads to one party governments and to a high degree of party discipline. Second, in the UK, the issue threatening the government party, European integration, is cross-cutting, that is, it splits both the government and the opposition. By combining quantitative analysis of votes and rhetoric, I am able to identify the nature of these splits. That is, utilizing rhetorical analysis in addition to analyzing votes enables me to verify the ‘cross-cuttingness of European integration,’ as well as to learn exactly why and how the parties are split by the issue.

Although in many regards the cases of UK and Israel stand in stark contrast, both political systems experienced an agenda shock. (23) describe these as events that change the salience of the weights that parties place of specific policy dimensions, but do not change their actual policy preferences. In the Israeli case, an exogenous agenda shock brought to the fore a frame of the security issue that had been latent, thus making visible the internal contradictions in the ruling coalitions, and providing the opposition with a strategic opportunity. In the case of UK, the issue of European integration did not cause legislators to change their political positions, but the ‘projection’ of their positions onto the new issue caused a split within both parties.

In Greece, the third case I analyze, the dynamic is different. Here we have a policy shock, i.e. a change in the policy space such that some parties actually have to change their policy positions. The result of this shock is the formation of unexpected coalitions between mainstream parties, and an increase in oppositional behavior by coalition members. Put differently, since the agenda shock creates unnatural coalitions, the parties in coalition parties employ oppositional
rhetorical tactics (parliamentary questions), in order to differentiate themselves from their partners. In addition, the analysis of parliamentary questions reveals a stark difference in the ways different types of parties use the oppositional tool of parliamentary questions.

1.5 Significance

This thesis seeks to make a number of contributions. First, the empirical analysis demonstrates that legislative speeches are an important source of information regarding party strategy and partisan ideologies. In this regard, this is one of the first studies of legislative parties that uses rhetoric as its main focus. The results show that this is a promising venue for future research. The use of rhetoric should not replace studies of vote but rather complement them.

Second, the dissertation provides a number of methodological contributions. This work adds a number of valid tools for the analysis of political rhetoric. These methods range from the dynamic topic model (24), an application of latent dirichlet allocation (25) to legislative debates, to the factor analytic topicky model (26). These tools should provide useful for research utilizing rhetoric across various political institutions.

Third, this research challenges the prevalent notion in parliamentary studies–focusing on the government opposition divide–by demonstrating the importance of investigating intra-party dynamics. Moreover, this work calls into question the concept of ‘opposition’ by demonstrating that oppositional activities can be found with the ruling coalition.

Fourth, this work adds to our understanding of political ideologies. In this regard, legislative speeches provide an extremely important source of information, enabling the analyst to map the relationship between the different dimensions / topics of the legislative agenda.
2

Legislative Rhetoric and Opposition Parties

2.1 Why legislative rhetoric?

What is the purpose of the parliamentary floor? Review of political science literature [27, 28, 29], would suggest that the legislative floor is where legislators meet to make decisions. Most importantly, the decision-making process is manifested in voting. For us, as analysts, the legislative floor is where we finally get to observe the behavior of legislators. As empiricists, the legislative floor yields clear-cut, parsimonious, quantifiable and observable behavior—votes. As a result, the industry of studying votes in political science is immense [30, 31, 32, 33], and has made remarkable strides, especially since the pioneering work of [6, 34].

However, studies of recorded votes suffer from a number of serious limitations. First, the analyst only gets to witness a truncated sample of votes. Observable votes are a subset of all potential votes. This subset is essentially “what’s left” after the political machinery of the legislative majority has weeded out problematic votes. This negative agenda control [35] means that we generally know the result of the game even before it started: the majority party will get its way. In reality, most parliamentary votes are lopsided.

This happens because once a sufficiently large number of legislators are guaranteed for the majority party, there is a cascading effect [36]. Even if legislators
would like to vote sincerely (based on their true preferences), it is generally un-
wise. Given that a particular vote will not affect the political outcome but will
possibly infuriate party bosses and whips, why risk it? Why endanger a career
by performing a symbolic act that has immense negative implications on the dis-
senting legislator? Thus, in many studies of parliamentary votes, the attempt to
estimate political preferences yields results that merely differentiate between the
parliamentarians of the governing legislative party, and the legislative opposition
(33, 37). This does not tell us much about legislative politics beyond what the
casual observer would know.

In essence, the first problematic characteristic of observable votes is that the
majority party knows that if it were possible to rank legislators on an ideological
continuum based on their views of a bill, it will have the votes of at least \( \frac{n+1}{2} \)
legislators. The median legislator is going to vote according to the majority’s
preferred position. In turn, what this means is that the analyst can place the
two possible outcomes of a specific bill on the same continuum where legislators’
preferences are located (e.g. a bill offering to allocate \( \varepsilon 1 \) million to preserve a
national monument), and estimate the range at which the two possible outcomes
are located, based on the fact that a vote is actually taking place (otherwise, the
majority would ‘kill’ the bill before it reaches the floor). In turn, what this means
is that we only get to observe votes whose possible outcomes are located on a
very specific subset of the ideological continuum.

Second, the minority and majority differ in the relative advantages they have
with regards to various political topics (38, 39, 40). For instance, some parties
are viewed as better in handling the crime issue, while others are deemed more
effective in solving educational problems. The modern political agenda, is, of
course, extremely complicated and involved. However, since the majority has
negative agenda control over votes, votes on issues where the majority is deemed
as weak are rarely observed. Thus, what the analyst gets to observe is not only a
truncated sample in terms of the locations of votes’ outcomes on the ideological
continuum, but also a truncated set of political continua. Put differently, not
only is the playing field tilted in favor of the majority, but also the type of game.
While it seems that this phenomena is helpful in terms of the Occam’s razor
criterion, this extreme version of dimensionality reduction leads us to view the
legislative agenda as a stable, unidimensional construct. However, in actuality, there are many political issues that may be latent, but given a change in the issue ‘equilibrium,’ can have important political implications.

Third, even if we did get to observe the entire universe of bills, that is, the majority party did not have a monopoly over the legislative agenda, votes are binary. While some works trace various stages in the ‘evolution’ of bills, in the majority of cases, no matter how long and arduous the political process that led to the bill was, the analyst is left with one data point.

Overall, then, analysis of votes in parliaments is problematic on a number of counts: it uses a non-random sample (both in terms of the alternatives of each bill, and in terms of issues), and it is overly reductionist. This brings us back to the initial question: what is the purpose of the parliamentary floor?

I argue that the actions of legislators on the floor are about more than voting. They are about signalling. Legislators use their time on the floor to let other political actors know about their preferences. The other actors are voters, party leaders, fellow party legislators, and legislators across the isle. Informing voters of their preferences enables voters to think retrospectively of their electoral choice and plan their future electoral choices. For party leaders, floor speeches can serve as important venues to learn about intra-party dissent. For other legislators, floor speeches can serve as means of communicating future venues of cooperation and conflict, and so on.

For us, as students of legislative politics, legislative words are a invaluable source of learning about variation in the preferences, both among legislators and across time. Thus, if we interested in studying legislators’ preferences, the systemic structure of these preferences (ideology), and the dynamics of these preferences (strategy), then the rhetoric legislators use on the floor is an invaluable source of data.

As opposed to legislative votes, until recently, empirical analysis of legislative rhetoric has not been very common in political science. The main reason for this is the sheer magnitude of legislative speeches data. Politicians talk a lot! As will be seen in the empirical chapters of this thesis, even a topical subset of speeches, with a limited vocabulary, holds millions of words. This creates problems in terms of collecting, storing, ‘cleaning’, manipulating and analyzing
the data. However, with the rapid increase in computational power over the last decade, these aspects had become less problematic. The second reason for the relative dearth of empirical work is the set of (partially contradictory) objections that fall under “speeches don’t matter.”

1. Nobody listens to speeches

2. No matter what politicians say, real politics is done elsewhere (e.g. committees)

3. No matter what politicians say, real politics is about voting

4. Politicians can be insincere when they speak, so studying their rhetoric is useless

The first objection is false for a number of reasons. Someone is always ‘listening,’ even if a speech is merely recorded in the legislative protocols. Additionally, in modern times, even if the assembly is practically empty, parliamentary speeches are frequently televised (11, 15). As for the second and third objection, while committees play an important role in legislative politics (16, 17), arguing that speeches do not convey important political information ignores the fact that political decisions are made because legislators have political ideas, and they communicate those via speech. Finally, politicians do lie. But strategy is part of the political game, and the fact that politicians can be insincere (as they are oftentimes are when they vote), does not mean that the lies are useless.

But there is more to it than that. To reiterate, speeches on the floor are about signalling legislators’ priorities. Among other things, a legislator uses the time he is allotted to let his own party leaders know of problems in his district, and simultaneously let the voters in his district knows he has their best interests in mind. He uses his time on the floor to let the leader of the party know of his dissatisfaction with its policies. He uses his speaking time to let like-minded legislators know that their position is similar to his, and induce cooperation. He uses his speeches to scrutinize the other party, and criticize its policies. He uses speeches to rally his own troops. Thus, while the crowd may vary, the overarching purpose of political speeches in parliaments is informing political actors of the
speaker’s preferences. This is important, because as analysts, we can model this information systematically and learn about these preferences. Although this is similar to the basic theoretical idea behind studies of recorded votes, there are a number of differences between votes and speeches:

1. While all legislatures have clear rules regarding speech \cite{48,49}, the majority does not hold strict agenda control over speeches. This implies that the issue of dimensionality reduction, so severe with votes, is not a problem for rhetorical analysis. Put differently, a scope of information that we can gather from a legislative speech is much wider the information we can gather by observing votes.

2. Speeches can convey complex ideas. More specifically:

   (a) Legislators can bring up various aspects of the same issue. This opens up a wide array of opportunities to analyze who raises specific aspects, why, and when.

   (b) Legislators can debate, i.e. respond to each other. The dynamic nature of rhetoric enables analysts to learn about the interaction among legislators in debates.

   (c) Legislators can address a number of issues in one speech.

3. Choosing not to speak about a particular issue is informative. While this behavior might be seen as similar to abstention \cite{50,51}, choosing not to speak on an issue is more informative and lies at the core of prominent theoretical and empirical models used to analyze political documents\cite{52}.

In summary, speeches convey important information about legislators’ preferences, and can be used for a variety of political purposes. In addition, political speeches reveal the complexities of the political reality that is inherent to modern legislatures\footnote{Speeches contain rich information, and are much less subject to institutional constraints. Speeches are extremely helpful if we are interested in the structure of political ideas and their dynamics.}. Speeches are extremely helpful if we are interested in the structure of political ideas and their dynamics.

\footnote{This is not to say that quantitative analysis of rhetoric is without its own difficulties. As will be seen shortly, many problems are involved in the analysis of these data.}
However, a crucial point to be made is that speeches are also limited in time and availability. As analysts, this also makes them relevant to us, since the speaker has to choose what to talk about. This decision reflects the priorities of the speaker. This also makes speaking time extremely valuable for legislators.

### 2.1.1 Speeches as resources

Throughout this thesis, I propose to treat legislative speeches as a form of legislative resources. Legislative time is finite, and thus we need to think of this legislative resource as the relative ability of a given legislator or party to affect the parliamentary agenda. The ability to do so is crucial for individual legislators in their pursuit of electoral goals (e.g. reelection) and intra-party promotion, especially in systems that encourage geographic representation (e.g. UK) and intra-party competition (e.g. Germany). In addition, in political systems that put greater emphasis on the ‘party brand’ such as closed-list proportional representation systems, speeches can serve to ‘rally the troops’ and signal the parties’ cohesion. Last, for the party as a whole, speaking might be important because speeches offer a straightforward way of influencing the political agenda. The ability to influence this agenda may be crucial with regards to parties’ attempts to define what is ‘important’ in the political debate.

Floor speaking time is subject to supply, controlled by party leadership, and to demand by ambitious legislators. Allocation of this resource creates an inherent tension within political parties. On the one hand, party leaders may have incentives not to allow dissidents to speak in the parliament, fearing the party label would be diluted if these legislators express opinions that do not represent the leadership’s views. On the other hand, dissidents have an incentive to use this resource as much as possible, since their influence in terms of voting outcomes is negligible. As a result of this tension, party leaders might use this legislative resources to allow the dissidents to “blow steam.” Since voting against the party line might be too costly, a dissident might be allowed to speak on the floor as a compromise.

Since speaking time allows political actors to influence this agenda, we should expect these actors to act strategically, using this resource selectively so as to
influence the overall political agenda, and promote political actors’ goals.

2.1.2 Using resources wisely: selective emphasis

Since legislative speech is costly, political actors should carefully plan the ways they are going to use this resource. There are a number of ways political actors can use their rhetorical resources to influence the legislative agenda. The first one would be to try and negate the opponent’s argument. Put differently, under this scenario the debate would ‘converge’ to exactly the same topic (56 57), as legislators try to persuade the ‘crowd’ of the superiority of their position. Direct confrontation between opposing sides is indeed a part of legislative debates. For example, in structured debates such as legislative questions, one of the goals of the asking legislator is to attack the position of the government/minister (58). However, there are a number of important reasons to think debates never actually ‘converge.’ First, different legislators will have different rhetorical styles. Second, these legislators will have varying amounts of time to address the issue at hand, and will therefore focus on specific aspects of the topic. Third, as the debate goes on, debaters’ attention will shift to specific aspects of the topic that seem pertinent. Last, and perhaps most importantly, speakers will focus on specific facets of the topic because they have a political incentive to do so.

Selective emphasis theory (14) argues that political speakers do not directly address each other’s arguments. Rather, political speakers choose to discuss issues that they think will give them a political advantage. This idea has been used extensively in studies of parties’ elections programmes (manifestos) of parties in Europe (52). In these studies, after devising a scheme in which every sentence can be assigned to a specific, well defined, policy area, the authors find that parties use their limited space to emphasize political aspects they deem as important. In addition, they focus on political issues where they think they hold an advantage.

I argue that this logic, stipulating that given the finite time and space political actors have to signal their priorities and achieve their political goals, can be used to analyze legislative speeches. Since legislators have limited time with which they can affect the legislative agenda, their speeches should reflect their attempts to focus on issues that can help them achieve their goals. Overall, these are issues
that they think they hold an advantage on, or that they think are politically important. Even when legislators are arguing with one another over a specific topic, we should expect their legislative rhetoric to reflect the variance in the ways they see that topic, and the aspects of the topic they try to emphasize.

2.2 Rhetoric: weapon of the weak?

As noted, parliaments are, essentially, majoritarian institutions. Put differently, all parliaments are designed so as to give the parties supporting the government substantive advantages over minority parties. As a result, opposition parties have immense difficulties passing bills that conform to their ideal policies, or even preventing the government from getting its way.

Rhetoric can thus serve as an important tool for the parties who otherwise do not get their way in the legislative assembly. Since the chances of immediate success in terms of affecting policy outputs are slim, legislative speeches are one of the most important venues for minority parties to try and affect the legislative agenda, and highlight issues that the majority chooses to pay less attention to. For example, all legislatures have institutionalized parliamentary questions. Generally, these questions take place during a well defined period, and they allow MPs to ask governmental ministers or their representatives for answers regarding various areas under the responsibility of the ministry. These questions can take various forms, ranging from sessions of ministerial questions, in which one or more parliamentarians are able to interrogate a minister, to interpellations, in which a groups of parliamentarians are able to schedule a specific debate regarding a topic they deem important, followed by an open discussion of the topic on the floor.

Thus, opposition parties can use their time on the floor to attack the government. This can be done by pointing out the government’s failed policies, propose a different way of action had the opposition party been in power. Second, parties can use legislative speeches to monitor the actions of the government. Specifically, this can be done by demanding information on particular issue areas, raise

\footnote{In highly professionalized assemblies this type of oppositional strategy is institutionalized by appointing an oppositional “shadow cabinet” [59].}
specific problems, and keep the ministers “on their toes.” Third, MPs of the opposition can use these question sessions to signal to their constituencies that they have their interests in mind.

Moreover, I assume that one of the main reasons certain party/parties control government in democracies is the simple fact that they were able to win the current political debate\(^1\). That is, given what’s considered as politically important in a given time, a sufficient number of voters thought that their position is superior to that of the opposition. This implies that one of the ways the opposition should try to use its time on the floor is to change the debate. There are two basic ways this can be done:

1. Framing – “encouraging readers or listeners to emphasize certain considerations above others when evaluating that issue” (60, 637). In legislative speeches, we can conceptualize framing tactics as attempts to change the focus of a debate, or the relative ‘weight’ that is being given to a specific aspect of a topic. For example, we can have a discussion of abortion from the point of view of mother’s rights or of the fetus’s rights. Second, a discussion welfare policies can be focused on equality or on government spending. Note that the overall topic of debate stays the same, but the relative weight we give to specific aspects of the topic change.

2. Priming – “any procedure that affects accessibility rather than the amount of emphasis given to an issue in a communication” (60, 640). As opposed to framing, in the case of priming the overall topic of debate is changing. If in period one the legislative assembly was focused on international affairs, a successful priming effect would result in switching the topic of debate in period two to economic policies.

Using tactics such as framing and priming can be an important tool for opposition parties, which cannot win the current debate with the incumbent party. In turn, the incumbents would like the topic of debates to remain static and stable, since this is the topic that brought them to power. Overall, then, we should expect the opposition to have an inherent incentive to destabilize the legislative agenda.

\(^1\) This assumption may be less reasonable in the cases of minority governments.
2.2.1 The meaning of ‘opposing’

There is no a-priori reason to think that the strategic use of legislative speech be limited to the opposition. Rather, since political parties are not unified actors, and political preferences within parties are always heterogeneous, rhetoric can be used by various political actors who might be in a weak position, but wish to change this situation.

Limiting our analysis of rhetoric as an oppositional tool only to the official opposition is problematic for a number of reasons: First, by using the simple analytical framework of government versus opposition we run the risk of reducing the dimensionality of legislative politics, much like the problem I referred to with regards to the analysis of votes. Second, focusing on the official opposition ignores the fact that there are also winners and losers within political parties. Thus, many of the strategies that can be expected to be used by the official opposition, such as selective emphasis of issues, framing and priming, can be used strategically within parties, in order to fight intra-parties ‘battles.’ Third, there might be important reasons as to why legislative rhetoric would be used by parties that are government coalition partners. These can include an interest in monitoring the actions of other parties in coalition (2, 61), an attempt to avoid being associated with unpopular policies (62), and, more generally, signalling priorities to possible voters (63).

Overall, then, I propose that we address the concept of ‘legislative opposition’ generally. In legislative speech, ‘oppositional behavior’ is any rhetorical behavior that reflects lack of cohesion across and within political parties, both in the official opposition and in governing parties. This framework allows the analysts to leverage data at various units of analysis (i.e. the legislator, party, faction, party type and so on), in order to make inferences regarding the structure of political ideologies, and the strategic use of rhetoric.

2.2.2 Equilibrium and the dimensionality of legislative debates

Political agendas are inherently multidimensional. That is, the scope of issues and problems that modern governments have to deal with is immense. However, in
any given period, there is a limited set of topics occupying the legislative agenda (36). I argue that governing parties would like to stabilize and keep it in a state of equilibrium. This is mainly because the current agenda is what brought them to power. Put differently, they were able to win the current political debate. Second, adding dimensions to the agenda (that is, adding additional issues that are deemed politically important) is dangerous for governing parties.

In his seminal work, (16) shows that multidimensionality equals coalition instability. In other words, as long as we have a multidimensional political space, coalitions are unstable because there is always an outside option, which a subset of the current coalition would prefer over their current state. Opposition parties, which, under the current state of affairs, are losers, have an incentive to increase the dimensionality of the political debate. Under a multidimensional political agenda the conditions for a coalition equilibrium are extremely restrictive. More specifically, complicating the agenda creates intra-coalition pressures, since there is always variation in the political preferences across members of the coalition. Note that this logic is not limited to the strict definition of coalition as a group that is composed of a number of parties, but rather is relevant to one-party ‘coalitions’. In these cases, the coalition is the set of legislators that share the same party label, but differ in their political preferences.

In order to see that increasing the dimensionality of the agenda leads to coalition instability, assume that, \textit{ceteris paribus}, governing coalitions are formed on the basis of these foundations:

1. A mutually beneficial agenda, that is, a state of affairs in which members of the coalition all benefit from the relative salience of the issues composing the agenda. For example, consider an extreme religious party, whose ideal point (most preferred policy) is to make school prayers mandatory. Since, given its electoral power, the party cannot realistically hope to implement this policy, it benefits from the fact that school prayers are allowed in some schools, and that the issue has low political salience. Possibly, increasing the salience of the issue could cause a rift between it and other parties in coalition, who are not as religious.
2. Affinity in the preferences of its members\(^{64,65}\). That is, the parties are ‘ideologically similar.’ This means that, \textit{ceteris paribus}, coalitions are more stable the more ‘ideologically close’ its constituent parts are.

This is a state of equilibrium. That is, given the composition of the agenda (the issue or set of issues that are deemed important, their relative salience, and the frames these issues are viewed through), none of the coalitional partners has an outside option offering him a better deal.

However, consider a situation where this equilibrium is perturbed. That is, the structure of the agenda changes. At this stage, it is sufficient to say that either a new topic has been introduced into the agenda, or the relative salience of frames that are used to evaluate a certain existing issue is changed. This perturbation can alter the incentive structure that caused the governing parties to form a coalition. Without loss of generality, consider the situation presented in figure 2.1\(^1\). In the left figure, we see an agenda that is extremely simple. The agenda is composed of one issue, namely the foreign relations one. The coalition between green and red parties is formed based on their affinity on this issue, captured by their proximity on the horizontal line. Red party is in the opposition, since its position on foreign relations is too ‘liberal.’

\[ \text{Figure 2.1: Changes in the dimensionality of the legislative agenda} \]

\(^1\) To make the example simple, I present a change from one to two dimensions.
In the right panel of figure 2.1, the economic dimension becomes more salient. Now the agenda is multidimensional, and while the positions of parties on the foreign relations issue remains the same, the projection of their position onto the economic issue creates a problem for the blue-green coalition. Simply put, if political coalitions are based on the ideological affinity of parties, that is, parties prefer to form coalitions with parties that are similar to them ideologically, then the coalition between blue and green becomes unlikely.

Of course, the scenario presented in figure 2.1 is extremely simple, and is just one example of the possible implications of a complication in the legislative agenda. In summary, parties in the opposition generally have an incentive to change the topic of legislative debates and create a more complex agenda, hoping that in this new disequilibrium, they can form a winning coalition by changing the incentive structure of members of the current coalition. In addition, by changing the issue composition of the agenda, they hope to attract voters who agree with their positions on the new issue.

2.3 The oppositional toolkit: rhetorical strategies, limitations, and opportunities

I posit that by using their speaking time strategically, losing parties can change their fortunes. In the previous section I described a general way this can be done. In the broadest sense, using legislative rhetoric selectively entails choosing to highlight topics that would complicate the agenda and increase the likelihood of coalition splits.

More specifically, opposition parties can use wedge-issues strategies. The wedge-issues literature discusses these issues as those that split one party or coalition, but do not split the other party. The concept of wedge-issues has drawn attention from both scholars and pundits. Past literature has utilized the concept in one of two approaches. The first approach, focusing on legislative politics, traces exogenous changes either in the

\footnote{I use the term issue in a general sense here. These ‘issues’ can be frames of an existing issue that split the opposing party.}
constituencies’ interests, or in the priorities of party activists. Then, this strand of the literature connects these exogenous changes with legislative votes. The second approach, most prominent in (66), traces macro processes over several decades and connects those to massive changes in the composition of winning and losing coalitions.

However, using the framework of legislative rhetoric allows us to directly observe wedge-issues tactics. Wedge-issues usage should be discernable via legislative rhetoric since, by definition, using these issues entails increasing the salience (i.e. talking more) of an issue or a frame over which the coalition is split, or at least less cohesive. Thus, the legislative speeches framework is ideal for detecting and estimating the magnitude of wedge issues tactics.

In addition, parties can use their legislative speech in a straightforward, ‘attacking mode.’ In this case, parties signal their ‘opposition’ to a certain policy by pointing out problems in it, and at times offering alternative policies that would have been implemented had they been in power. This tactic is more characteristic of institutional forms of rhetorical opposition, such as parliamentary questions and interpellations.

In addition, parties’ goals may vary, and as a result, the ways they choose to use speeches might be different. Specifically, parties that less interested in immediate government control and are more concerned with ideological purity such as extreme parties, might have less of an interest in questioning the government over specific policy issues. Thus, they may use their questions not to inquire about specific problems or offer policy solutions, but rather to signal their ideological commitment.

Overall, the oppositional toolkit includes a variety of ‘weapons’: First, the opposition can use its speeches in an attempt to alter the political agenda. By doing so, office seeking parties hope to change the incentive structure that led to a formation of the current coalition. Alternatively, changing the agenda can lead to an improvement in their electoral fortunes. This can be done specifically by increasing the salience of a wedge-issue or of a new frame. Second, parties can use their speeches to obtain information, attack specific governmental policies, and highlight alternative policies that would be implemented when they are in

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{ See (13) for a discussion of the tension between office-seeking and policy oriented parties.}\]
power. Third, extreme parties can use speeches to signal their commitment to specific policies.

### 2.3.1 Challenges to oppositional strategies

Changing the dimensionality of the political agenda is a difficult task. First, as [36] point out, both cognitive factors (such as information processing and problem evaluation capabilities) and institutional configurations (e.g. supermajoritarian institutions) block changes to the agenda. Once the dimensionality of the topical agenda in a given political system is a state of equilibrium, multiple political actors are communicating in this topic space and reinforcing it. Thus, the set of important topics in a given country is ‘sticky.’

Moreover, it is important to remember that just as the opposition has an inherent incentive to change the current political discourse (in which it is losing), governing parties have an incentive to keep the structure of the agenda intact (in which they are winning and along which the current party system is structured). In other words, governing parties try to depoliticize new issues or frames. This depoliticization can take the form of trying to incorporate the political issue into the current structure of political cleavages [67]. If this tactic is successful, then governing parties are no longer threatened by the new issue because the likelihood that the new issue/frame will create new political coalitions is diminished. The other depoliticization tactic governing parties can use is ignoring, or dismissing the issue [68].

In addition, not every issue can be used against the governing coalition. First, it is unwieldy to try and attack a governing parties on issues on which it considered competent. Second, the use of wedge-issue tactics can be a double-edged-sword, because a wedge-issue can also be a double-wedge, or cross-cutting. Put differently, although an issue has the potential of fracturing the opposing political party, some issues can cut across multiple coalitions. Thus, since all parties are essentially coalitions of interests, raising the salience of issues that do not conform to the current issues structure, can be hazardous to multiple parties.

Last, introducing a topic into the agenda requires legislative resources. This means that a party has to allocate speaking time to legislators who will try to
reframe an existing issue or broach a new one. This implies opportunity costs, as other issues that might be used to promote the legislator or the party’s interest are not used. These costs are especially high, since in general smaller parties do not have as much speaking time on the floor as larger parties. Thus, opposition parties (which are generally smaller), face a difficult choice regarding the selection of issues they would like to emphasize on the floor.

2.3.2 Issue opportunities

What, then, are the conditions that increase the likelihood of a successful introduction of an issue, or of changing the salience of issue frames? What are periods of oppositional opportunities? There are two possible scenarios: First, these are time periods in which the relative weights of different aspects of a given issue are modified. Second, these are time periods in which parties change their preferences (ideal points) on a given issue.

Overall, these two types of opportunities can be labeled *exogenous shocks* to the topical agenda. In the literature, the concept of shocks (also know as ‘critical events’), was an important part of the theoretical and methodological debate in the government survival literature (69 70). Two prominent contributions in this literature offer a systematic treatment of shocks. First, (71) find that while various events can have implications for the political system, events become critical only if they “affect politicians abilities to achieve their legislative and electoral goals.” (71, 652). (23) are the most precise in their analysis of shocks. They classify critical events into *agenda shocks*, and *policy shocks*. While both types of events cause changes in the topical agenda, there are subtle differences between the two.

*Agenda shocks* are events that change the salience of the weights that parties place of specific policy dimensions. Within the realm of legislative rhetoric, these are events that offer opposition parties an opportunity to increase the salience of a new frame within a topic that is already considered as important in the current topical agenda. Importantly, these events do not change the preferences (ideal points) of parties. All they do is change the way in which a given policy issue is being evaluated by political actors.
Contrarily, \textit{policy shocks} are critical events that actually change the locations of parties on the policy space, i.e. their ideal points. Note that this dynamic can be a result of an introduction of a new issue into the topical agenda. While the topic is new, it might be related to extant topics, and thus might change parties positions on them with regards to legislative rhetoric, these events can be used by opposition parties to increase the salience of the new issue, in an attempt to split the majority. Alternatively, policy shocks might change the policy positions of by making some policies unviable.

2.4 Conclusion

To conclude, the basic assumptions in the framework I offer in this thesis are the following:

1. Legislative speeches are an important, rich, and unfertilized venue for studying legislative politics.

2. Parties are interested in winning, broadly defined.

3. Speeches are a valuable resource for legislators and parties.

4. Speeches are used for signalling political preferences.

5. The political agenda is multidimensional, but in any given time only a limited set of issues is deemed important.

6. Coalitions are formed on the basis on ideological affinity and a mutually beneficial agenda, that is, a state of affairs in which members of the coalition all benefit from the relative salience of the issues composing the agenda.

7. Increasing the dimensionality of the agenda leads to a more vulnerable coalition.

8. Exogenous shocks create political opportunities for the opposition.

9. Parties are not unified actors.
10. Oppositional behavior is not limited to the official opposition.

Based on these assumptions, the most important hypothesis I test in this thesis is: legislative parties use speeches strategically, in order to become winners. Thus, the first goal of my thesis is to demonstrate that the strategic use of rhetoric is a part of legislative parties’ toolkit. My second goal is to identify the conditions that increase or decrease the likelihood of the strategic use of legislative speech. Third, by investigating various tactics of ‘opposition’ I try to show that these behaviors are not limited to the official opposition, but under certain conditions are prevalent among members of the government. In addition, rhetorical strategies are not used only in government-opposition politics, but exist also within parties of the opposition. Finally, beyond studying the dynamics of party competition and party strategy, my analysis seeks to improve our understanding of the structure of political ideologies. By using rich rhetorical data, I seek to improve our understanding of parties positions on various issues, and the relationships between the issues that compose the political agenda.
3

Damned if You Do and Damned if You Don’t: Rhetorical Hesresthetic in the Israeli Knesset

3.1 Introduction

Opposition parties have few strategic levers. The accepted image of parliamentary affairs is that absent a successful vote of no confidence or a critical government crisis (71, 72), majority parties control the legislative agenda. The main proponents of this view are (85), who demonstrate that coalition parties enjoy negative agenda control powers, which exclude majority-splitting bills from reaching the legislative agenda. Under this view opposition parties can use some parliamentary tools such as committee memberships (73) to exert influence over the agenda, but these are very limited. Thus, we might think that the legislative opposition accepts its fate and waits for the next election.

However, majority agenda control does not stop the opposition from raising issues on the legislative floor. More specifically, the majority’s control over what the opposition chooses to talk about is limited. We know that opposition parties use speeches to chastise the government for performing poorly, and accept as given that these speeches are used strategically to let the public know of governmental
dysfunctionality. We also know that parties use speeches to communicate their positions to voters (see 2). Thus, legislative speeches are important, if only because parties treat them as such. In addition, legislative speech is not “cheap talk.” It is a scarce resource for both parties and MPs, and is a function of both party supply and MP’s demand (55).

In this chapter I analyze legislative speeches and show they are used as part of a heresthetical strategy. Heresthetic is a term coined by William Riker to denote “[M]anipulation of issue dimensions” (1986: 147-48). The basic argument in this chapter is that, other things being equal, what crowns certain parties or party blocs as winners in parliamentary systems is their ability to win the political battle on the main issue in time t. Minority parties thus have an incentive to reframe (74) the agenda in a way that would nullify this advantage in time t + 1. However, as (66) note in their analysis of the American case, the evolution of political issues that would allow for such framing can be a long and complicated process. Exogenous shocks to the political system can thus serve as an opportunity for opposition parties, to transform the agenda. I maintain that given this opportunity, and due to the weak rhetorical agenda control powers the coalition holds, opposition parties use their parliamentary speeches to emphasize frames of the political debate that hurt the majority by exposing the weakness of its position and increasing the likelihood of majority split.

I use quantitative analysis of the Israeli parliament’s (Knesset) debates between the years 1989-93. Utilizing a major agenda shock (23) to the Israeli system, my analysis demonstrates that after an American intervention, dovish Israeli minority parties began using their speeches heresthetically. This intervention was a result of a loan the hawkish Israeli government requested from the US government in 1989. The Israelis needed the funds urgently to absorb Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In response, the US government conditioned the loan upon the cessation of Israeli investments in the settlements. Subsequently, the Knesset’s dovish minority parties started addressing the issue of security using the frame of immigration. By raising the salience of this frame,

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1 That is, Israeli communities built on territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.
these parties made apparent the weakness of hawkish coalition’s stance on the issue of security, the most important issue in Israeli politics.\footnote{In the 1980s and 1990s, Israeli security questions revolved mainly around its relationship with the Palestinians and the preferred method of handling the territories occupied in the 1967 war.}

The root of this weakness was that, on the one hand, the majority coalition was partly composed of right-wing parties (pivotal for its legislative majority) whose first priority was the settlements. On the other hand, a government refusal to accept the American condition would have lead to a failure in accommodating the immigrants, resulting in economic and social crises and alienating mainstream voters. As a result of the dovish heresthetical maneuver, the hawkish coalition, which had previously “owned” the security issue, lost its ownership of the issue. In addition, I argue that the immigration frame served as a wedge issue, and its growing salience contributed to the disintegration of the hawkish bloc, and played at least a marginal role in its 1992 electoral defeat.

The chapter offers a number of contributions to the literature. Similar to other work\cite{55} it highlights the importance and the strategy involved in the use of legislative rhetoric. Second, this work generalizes the logic to the actions of the opposition. In particular, it shows that in the absence of majority negative rhetorical agenda control we observe oppositional actions that are aimed specifically at “rolling” the coalition, bringing its divisions to the surface, and increasing the likelihood of its defeat. Third, by using quantitative text analysis, this work offers the first operationalization of heresthetic, an important political concept that scholars have only analyzed in qualitative work\cite{75,76,77}. Finally, the model I use can be generalized to track political actors’ rhetoric across various political institutions.

My analysis proceeds as follows: in the next section I give a brief review of Israeli party politics. I then demonstrate statistically and descriptively the relevance of selective emphasis approach. I then elucidate the difference between voting and rhetorical agenda control mechanisms, and the rationale behind using framing and heresthetic as an oppositional tool. In the next sections I discuss the details of the case of US intervention and then test the hypotheses. Finally,
I review the implications of the heresthetical strategy and offer some concluding remarks.

### 3.1.1 The Israeli “Left” and “Right” blocs

Over the years, “left” and “right” have become synonymous with Israeli party positions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the issue of security more broadly (78), where left denotes a dovish position and right denotes a hawkish one. The conflict “[O]vershadows economic and social decisions, and often sets the political agenda” (22: 1). The two party blocs have formed along this dimension. During the 1980s, the Likud party had become the leader of the right-wing bloc of parties, while the Labor party had become the leader of the left. Likud had established itself as a “security first” party, attacking the left for being too soft on security (79).

![Likud's advantage on security and territories issues](image)

**Figure 3.1: Israeli public opinion on security**
Figure 3.1 presents the difference between Israeli voters’ evaluations of the two main parties on the issue of security and the question of handling the territories occupied in 1967 (the questions used in the surveys are presented in table 3.1, full data in supplemental file). For example, the figure indicates that among those who answered Likud or Labor in 1988, approximately 20% more favored Likud’s position. Overall, the figure reveals two things; first, that in the eyes of Israeli public, there is a high correspondence between the territorial aspect and the overall issue of security. Second, and more important, they clarify that through 1988, Likud had enjoyed a significant and consistent advantage on these matters. Interestingly, by 1992 Labor had dramatically closed the gap on security and reversed its fortunes on the issue of the territories.

After the 1988 election, Likud and Labor formed a grand coalition. Labor left the government on March 1990 due to disagreements with Likud over its position regarding the peace process. The coalition then lost a no confidence vote initiated by Labor, but Labor was unable to form a government. Consequently, Likud formed a new government supported only by extreme hawkish parties, while Labor was relegated to the opposition.

Given the importance of the security issue in Israel and Likud’s advantage in this area, it is not surprising that after its first victory in 1977, Likud became the main party in Israel. However, in 1992, after 15 years of dominance, Likud suffered an electoral blow. The party lost 20% of its seats, down to 32. Labor garnered 44 seats and combined with Meretz, the left-wing bloc held 56 seats. This bloc was able to count on the support of Arab-Israeli members of Knesset (MKs). Controlling a bare majority of 61 MKs out of 120, the left-wing coalition served four years in office, overseeing a change of policy toward the Arab world, including the signing of the Oslo accords with the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

The hypotheses I test in this chapter concern dynamics during the 12th session of the Knesset, between the years 1989-93. The analysis focuses on the security issue due to its salience in Israeli politics. Given Likud’s stable advantage on the

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1 Since in some of the questions participants were asked to answer “Likud”, “Labor” or “other”, and in others they were given the full list of parties, I rescaled the data. Thus, figure 3.1 presents the share of Likud and Labor supporters from the total of the those who named one of the two parties.
issue, dovish parties faced a high political hurdle in their attempt to defeat Likud and its coalition partners. This is exactly why these parties chose to reframe the issue of security, choosing to emphasize aspects on which Likud did not hold a winning position.

3.1.2 Selective Emphasis in legislative rhetoric

Legislative parties have limited speaking time with which they can affect the agenda of legislative debates. Since the legislative agenda is finite, we should expect parties to allocate their speaking time strategically. This leads naturally to a “selective emphasis” view of party politics (see [14]). According to this view, parties do not take opposing positions on issues, but rather choose various emphases based on their priorities. I utilize a statistical model demonstrating the selective emphasis approach. If parties use selective emphasis, the words they choose to use when addressing the same political issue should be different. In addition, these partisan rhetorical differences should fit our prior expectations and knowledge of parties’ positions, rather than stem from random variation.

Here I consider word-partisanship within the security issue. Based on (80), I develop a statistical measure that estimates the difference in partisan word usage within a topic, \( s_{kw}^{(i-j)} \). Put differently, the measure captures the partisanship difference between parties \( i \) and \( j \) on word \( w \) in topic \( k \), and identifies the most partisan words while accounting for the variance of word distribution. I first classify debates into topics, an issue I address later in the chapter. Here, in order to estimate the partisanship of words within a topic, I denote the relative odds of using word \( w \) as 

\[ \Omega_w = \frac{\pi_{w}^{(i)}}{1 - \pi_{w}^{(i)}} \]

Thus, \( 1 - \pi_w \) captures the odds of using all other words in the vocabulary. Since I am interested in the difference in word use between parties, I denote:

\[ \delta_{w}^{(i)} = \log \frac{\Omega_{w}^{(i)}}{\Omega_w} \]

Finally, we can apply this logic to capture the usage difference for word \( w \) in
topic $k$ between party $i$ and party $j$:

$$
\delta_{kw}^{(i-j)} = \log \left( \frac{\left( y_{kw}^{(i)} + \alpha_{kw}^{(i)} \right)}{n_{k}^{(i)} + \alpha_{k0}^{(i)} - y_{kw}^{(i)} - \alpha_{kw}^{(i)}} \right) - \log \left( \frac{\left( y_{kw}^{(j)} + \alpha_{kw}^{(j)} \right)}{n_{k}^{(j)} + \alpha_{k0}^{(j)} - y_{kw}^{(j)} - \alpha_{kw}^{(j)}} \right)
$$

Where $\alpha$ is a parameter of the Dirichlet distribution prior, $y_{kw}^{(i)}$ captures the number of time the word $w$ was used in topic $k$ by party $i$, and $n_{k}^{(i)}$ is the overall number of words used in topic $k$ by the party. To overcome the heteroscedasticity problem in the distribution of words, I use an estimate of the variance. The estimate is:

$$
\sigma^2(\delta_{kw}^{(i-j)}) \approx \frac{1}{y_{kw}^{(i)} + \alpha_{kw}^{(i)}} + \frac{1}{n_{k}^{(i)} + \alpha_{k0}^{(i)} - y_{kw}^{(i)} - \alpha_{kw}^{(i)}} + \frac{1}{y_{kw}^{(j)} + \alpha_{kw}^{(j)}} + \frac{1}{n_{k}^{(j)} + \alpha_{k0}^{(j)} - y_{kw}^{(j)} - \alpha_{kw}^{(j)}}
$$

I use the $z$-score of the log odds ratio to measure differential word usage:

$$
\zeta_{kw}^{(i-j)} = \frac{\delta_{kw}^{(i-j)}}{\sqrt{\sigma^2(\delta_{kw}^{(i-j)})}}
$$

In this formulation I use an informative Dirichlet prior for $\alpha_{k0}$ and $\alpha_{kw}$. The former is the average length of a speech made by party $i$ on topic $k$. In the latter, I multiply this quantity by a vector containing the probability of using each word in vocabulary. The use of the conjugate prior essentially adds an “average speech” to the calculation of each point estimate, and thus shrinks $\delta_{kw}^{(i-j)}$ toward the overall frequency of word usage. This shrinkage increases the likelihood of finding no rhetorical difference between parties. I compare the word usage of the hawkish Likud and the dovish Meretz parties in the security dimension of the Israeli Knesset’s rhetorical agenda. In Figure 3.2, the x-axis depicts the number of times a word is used in the security topic, and the y-axis the partisanship value of a given word, denoted by $\tilde{\zeta}^{(Likud-Meretz)}$. I place two broken horizontal lines at $\tilde{\zeta}^{(Likud-Meretz)}=\{2.33, -2.33\}$ to indicate a .99 confidence band around zero under a normal approximation. Substantively, words appearing above the 2.33 line are significantly more hawkish (Likud), while those below the -2.33 line are more dovish (Meretz). Non-partisan words are represented in smaller dots, appearing
"Right" and "Left" word emphases by Likud and Meretz, 1988–1999, security issue

Figure 3.2: Comparison of Left and Right security rhetoric

between the broken lines. The figure demonstrates the stark difference between parties’ positions on security. Likud, a nationalist party, emphasizes symbolic and identity related words like “Jerusalem”, “synagogue” and inflections of the root “Jew”. Additionally, Likud emphasizes “terrorism” in its security discourse, as well as the word “killers”. Note also that Likud addresses the lands Israel occupied in 1967 as “Judea” and “Samaria”, which are biblical names. Meretz, a dovish liberal party, address the same areas using the neutral word “territories”. Also in contrast to Likud, Meretz highlights conciliatory terms like “peace” and “process” (from the expression “peace process”), as well as addressing moral-legal aspects of Israeli-Palestinian reality such as “occupation” and “settlements”. Overall, inspection of the figure reveals that when discussing the same issue,
parties are selective in choosing their frames of reference. Moreover, the partisan words fit precisely the emphases we would expect of an Israeli nationalist hawkish party on the one hand, and of a liberal dovish one on the other. Note that the selective emphasis strategy is related to framing, since both refer to increasing the salience of certain aspects of a given topic.

3.1.3 Lack of majority agenda control and oppositional rhetoric

(35) present a model by which the majority party collectively monopolizes agenda-setting power. By obtaining this control, the majority party in the American House of Representatives is able to prevent unwanted bills from reaching the floor. This negative agenda control is crucial in reducing the majority’s roll rates. This model has been tested extensively in various presidential and parliamentary systems (81, 82). In applying their model to the Israeli case, (81) identify multiple points at which the Israeli government can delay the opposition’s bills. Among these are the ability to remove a bill from the agenda after the preliminary debate, or to delay bills indefinitely in committee, assuming the chair is cooperative. As a result of this control, the government’s roll rates are significantly lower than those of the opposition.

However, Israeli opposition parties have various rhetorical tools that can be used to influence the floor’s debates. First, MKs are able to table as many reservations as they wish to a bill, and can then speak on each of the reservations. In some cases, thousands of these are tabled, allowing the opposition to the bill to speak for a long time. This filibustering technique is used strategically. As MK Chaim Oron puts it, “The filibuster is a means to gain time. During that time, there is a public debate that can cause a crisis within the [governing] coalition” (81, 257-258). In addition, parliamentary parties are able to affect the floor’s speaking agenda by tabling Motions for the Agenda, by approaching a minister with a question, by utilizing their one-minute speeches, or by demanding an issue

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1 If a majority of a party’s members vote against a bill that passes, the party has been rolled.
to be debated in the plenum (as few as two parties or eight MPs can demand a debate).

While the majority has some control over these procedures, the opposition’s arsenal with which it can affect the rhetorical agenda of the Knesset is more effective than its ability to affect votes. Moreover, rhetoric is fundamentally different from voting. At the final stage of voting, the political choice has been reduced to a binary yes/no choice. In contrast, in the case of speeches there is almost no limitation on the various emphases and frames that an MK can use when discussing a specific issue.

In summary, the majority’s ability to regulate speeches in the Knesset is much weaker than its strict control mechanism over voting. Given this relative lack of agenda control and the limited political resources given to the opposition, the strategic use of speeches could be an effective tool of oppositional politics. When the coalition cannot limit the agenda to “safe” issues, the legislative opposition can use rhetoric to emphasize specifically those political aspects that problematize the agenda and threaten the coalition. Among these are issues that might “split” the coalition (i.e bring to the fore issues on which the coalition is divided), and those that expose the weakness of its position.

3.1.4 Framing, heresthetic and the dominance principle

The importance of security issues in the Israeli agenda suggests that parties will attempt to win votes based on their positions on this issue. In the framing literature, political scientists refer to a frame as the “[w]ords, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker...uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience...the chosen frame reveals what the speaker sees as relevant to the topic” (60, 100). In legislative debates, frames can be used as focal points for evaluation of issues. Hawkish parties are likely to benefit from the parliamentary rhetorical agenda as long as the security issue is seen mainly through the frame of Palestinian attacks on Israel, or through a nationalist-symbolic frame.

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1 The House Committee determines how many motions each party may table in a given year. Second, MKs are allowed table 30 questions per session. Third, the amount of motions for the agenda each party is allowed to table is proportional to its size.
Given Likud’s advantage on the issue of security, reframing the issue might be a useful tool for dovish opposition parties. Yet framing might not be sufficient. The tricky aspect of oppositional rhetoric, as Riker points out, is being able to “force [the opponent] to put himself in an undesirable position for winning some future election” (20, 8). Therefore, while the frame is important for the heresthetician, it is vital to have the right opportunity, a context in which its opponent must respond to the frame. If the framing attempt gains sufficient traction within the legislative and public agendas, then the opponent must respond. By definition, any response to successful heresthetic should harm the responding agent.

What should we expect Likud to do in light of the opposition’s framing strategy? Riker derived the Dominance Principle (83), stipulating that once a political side establishes an advantage, and given the cost of rhetoric, the losing side will eventually abandon the issue. Thus, if the heresthetical strategy used by its opponent was successful, Likud must initially address the frame. However, over time, Likud should stop using the oppositional frame, so as not to waste its speaking time on a frame that highlights its own weakness.

**Israeli dovish opposition parties**

The Labor party served as a minor partner in a Likud led coalition for over a year. It left the government in early 1990 but was not able to form a government. Labor was a large party with extensive time to express its views on the Knesset’s floor. Thus, we might think it unnecessary for Labor to try and reframe the issue of security. Rather, it is plausible that by imitating Likud’s hawkish positions, Labor would try to attract hawkish parties to form a coalition, or attract voters that previously supported Likud.

Previous scholarly accounts reveal that Labor attempted to boost its credentials as a security oriented party by selecting the hawkish Yitzhak Rabin to lead it in 1992, and by downplaying its dovish candidates (84). By doing this, Labor was essentially competing with Likud on Likud’s terms. However, previous literature has not taken into consideration the ability of a large party such as Labor
to use two strategies: it can signal hawkish views on the security issue and it can use its plenary time to reframe the issue.

Meretz list was a federation of three parties, promoting dovish positions. The party’s voters were a cohesive group—mostly secular, upper-class citizens. As such, its voters were not likely to support hawkish positions. Thus, while unable to compete with Likud based on its nationalist credentials, but forced to discuss the security issue due to its salience, Meretz was likely to use its limited speaking time to try and reframe the issue.

3.1.5 Opportunity strikes: Russian immigration and US intervention in Israeli partisanship

Prior to fall of the Soviet Union, there was no reason to expect immigration to be a component of the security debate. This changed in September 1989, when the Likud led coalition had asked the US government to guarantee $400 million in loans to house the anticipated influx of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. The immediate American response was to condition the loans on an Israeli pledge not to direct the new Soviet immigrants to settlements in the territories occupied in 1967.

After the departure of Labor from the coalition in March and the formation of a right-wing government, both sides toughened their stances. This impasse lasted until early 1991, at which point, the Israeli government, alarmed by high unemployment rates and an impending social crisis, requested additional guarantees or loans in the amount of $10 billion. The US response was similar to the first Israeli request, leading to a crisis in the relations of the two states.

These events were an agenda shock. That is, the events changed the way political actors viewed the issue of security by making immigration an integral part of it, but did not necessarily changed parties’ positions on security. In addition, they presented an an opportunity for the dovish opposition. For Likud, the main party in government, rejecting the US demand caused difficulties in the absorption of immigrants and led to severe economic and social crises. Moreover, the rejection resulted in a conflict with Israel’s major ally. However, in the context of security, immigration was a wedge issue—accepting the US demand would cause
a rupture with Likud’s supporters among settlers and their right-wing political representatives in the coalition. Dovish parties had no such dilemma; they did not compete with Likud over the extreme-right vote, and thus could now attack Likud over its inability to provide a solution to Israel’s security problems, and its responsibility for the diplomatic and immigration crises.

3.1.6 Hypotheses

Thus, introducing a previously non-partisan immigration frame into the security issue has given the opposition a potential rhetorical tool. The expectations derived from the discussion are the following:

*Hypothesis 1*: After the US intervention, Meretz will increase its use of the immigration frame in Knesset security discussions.

*Hypothesis 2*: After the US intervention, Labor will increase its use of the immigration frame in Knesset security discussions.

Riker’s Dominance Principle offers a clear prediction regarding Likud’s rhetorical behavior. If Riker’s model is correct, we should observe an initial increase in the usage of the immigration frame by Likud, as the importance of the frame becomes evident, followed by a decline in its usage as its own weakness on the frame is made clear.

*Hypothesis 3*: Likud’s usage of the immigration frame after US intervention is curvilinear. Specifically, the use of the frame by Likud should initially increase and then decrease.

Finally, note that if the foregoing expectations are fulfilled, then immigration will become a dovish frame. Put differently, the immigration frame will have been transformed from a “non-issue” into a partisan, dovish one.

*Hypothesis 4*: There should be an increase in the level of dovish partisanship of the immigration frame.

3.1.7 Data preparation

Hypothesis testing is based on estimating changes in the usage and partisanship of word groups over time. The first stage in this process is to identify specific

\(^1\)See also appendix
topics of debate. I obtain these topics using a dynamic topic model (24). In order to fit this statistical model to the rhetorical data, one has to first transform raw parliamentary debate documents into numerical data. To do this, I retrieve the Israeli discussion data from the Israeli Knesset’s website. Using a series of computer scripts, I generate a vocabulary of the 5000 most frequent words in the Knesset’s discussions. Then I generate a matrix of document-word frequencies. The input data then consist of 18 million nonzero speech-word-count triplets.

The basic assumption of the model is that every legislative discussion deals with one topic of $K$ topics. Every Knesset discussion is transformed into a vector of $W$ integers representing the number of times each word is used in the discussion. Based on the word-discussion word distribution, the model estimates a number of parameters. An important parameter, $\delta_k$, is a vector capturing the prototypical usage of words for a discussion about topic $k$. Then, based on the words used in it, each Knesset discussion is classified as into a specific legislative topic. Table 3.7 gives an example of the end result of this process, using a ten topic model.

The 10 topic model of the Knesset’s rhetorical agenda presented in Table 3.7 identifies six topics (1, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10) that reflect what we consider politically important. Topic 1 can be broadly defined as Economy, topics 5 and 9 as Security, topic 6 as Social, 7 as Infrastructure, and 10 as Judicial. Procedural words characterize three additional topics.

To model party rhetoric, I generate party specific word frequency matrices and estimate party specific models. After examining party specific model output, I identify statements from discussions that were classified as belonging to the security issue across all parties and combine those into a new data set. Since I am interested in comparing the behavior of dovish parties with the hawkish Likud party in coalition, I generate a list of 538 security discussions in which Likud and Meretz participated, and 958 discussions in which Likud and Labor took part. These data are then used for the main statistical analysis.
Table 3.1: An example of a 10 topic model characteristic words

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3.2 Analysis

Following the definition of a frame by (60), I select from the vocabulary of 5000 most frequent words used in the Knesset debates terms that share the roots for "immigrant", "absorption" and the words "Soviet" and "Union". These words refer to the newcomers from the former Soviet Union, and to accommodating them in Israel, which is commonly referred to in Hebrew as absorption. Overall, these words encompass the immigration frame in the context of the early 1990s.

To test the hypotheses, I generate daily values for each party’s usage of words within the security topic. Specifically, for any day of the 1989-93 period I obtain a weighted average count of every word’s use. The values are generated via an exponentially weighted moving average series using a time window of 180 days, and a smoothing factor of 0.05.

Figure 3.3 addresses hypotheses 1 and 2. It presents the raw counts of immigration frame words in the 12th Knesset, as well as one year after the 1992 election. The rug plot depicts actual Knesset’s discussions on security, and the American intervention period is shaded. The upper panel compares frame usage from discussions in which speakers from Meretz and Likud took part. Inspection of this panel suggests that Meretz increased its usage of the frame after US intervention. Specifically, the immigration frame usage starts to rise from around the time of the first American condition (i.e. at the beginning of the intervention period) to approximately 90 times. Frame usage by Meretz remains stable around 60 daily instances, and then peaks after the second US condition, which was made on January 1991. Afterwards, frame usage levels remain high and relatively stable. Meretz’ usage of the frame dies out prior to the pre-election Knesset hiatus.

---

1See also appendix.
2This is a list of 16 different words in Hebrew.
3 Dropping words from the immigration frame does not lead to substantive change in the results.
4 The results presented are not sensitive to the choice of the smoothing factor or time window. The use of a relatively large time window helps overcome some long breaks in Knesset debates. For a given day $t$, time window $\gamma$ and smoothing factor $A$, 

$$ s_{kw t} = (1 - A) \sum_{t-\gamma}^{t} y_{kw} + A \sum_{t-\gamma+1}^{t+1} y_{kw}. $$

44
in March 1992\footnote{Casual inspection of the plots would suggest that the effect, that is, the changes in levels of frame usage predate the intervention. This is caused by the moving average nature of the data. Note that each daily observation includes a weighted component (0.05) of the 180 days of future observations, and thus estimates of changes in frame usage in time $t$ reflect a small fraction of future values.} A Welch $t$ test, which compares the mean of frame usage by Meretz during the period of US intervention to its mean during non-intervention is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.
The lower panel of figure 3.3 compares frame usage between Labor and Likud speakers. In this panel, following the first American condition in September 1989, there is a dramatic rise in the daily usage of the immigration frame by Labor speakers, from a level of approximately 25 instances a day to a peak of 160. Frame usage remains stable, and peaks at 176 after the second US condition. A Welch $t$ test comparing the means of Labor’s frame use during US intervention to the mean during the non-intervention period is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Overall, the data presented in figure 2 provides strong support for hypotheses 1 and 2. Both Meretz and Labor significantly increased their use of the immigration frame following the US intervention, and continuing until the 1992 election. After their victory in the 1992 election both parties reduce their use of the frame.

Hypothesis 3 centers on Likud’s use of the immigration frame in light of the US intervention. The hypothesis states that we should observe an initial increase in Likud’s usage of the immigration frame, followed by a decline. To test this expectation, I divide the period between September 1988 and March 1992 (the pre-election hiatus) into three sub-periods. The first period is the pre-intervention period and serves as a baseline for comparison. It starts at November 1988 and ends with the first Israeli request (for $400 million) and the American condition (i.e. the beginning of the intervention). The second period starts right after the beginning of the intervention in September 1989, and lasts until the second Israeli request for $10 billion and the second American condition of January 1991. The third sub period covers January 1991 until March 1992. The rationale for this is that during the initial intervention period, the advantage dovish parties gain by using the immigration frame might still be questionable, and thus Likud should still use the frame. However, the second Israeli request for an additional $10 billion is a clear signal of hardship, and the inability of Likud to find a solution to the immigration problem is evident. Hence, we should then see Likud “abandoning” the frame.
Table 3.2: Mean of Likud’s immigration frame usage by sub period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sub period</th>
<th>Likud’s usage of frame in discussions with Meretz</th>
<th>Likud’s usage of frame in discussions with Labor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 1988-Sep 1989</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1989- Dec 1990</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1991-Mar 1992</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>35.6</td>
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</table>

The summary statistic reported in Table 3.2 provides support for the third hypothesis. Likud increases its use of the immigration frame after the US intervention. This increase is followed by a decrease in the final sub-period (January 1991-March 1992). This trend is visible in comparing Likud’s rhetoric to that of the two opposition parties. However, there is no measure of uncertainty in these summary statistics. In order to test more rigorously whether Likud’s usage of the frame is curvilinear, I fit the following model:

\[ Y_t = e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 t + \beta_2 t^2}, \]

Where \( Y_t \) is Likud’s daily frame words count, and \( t \) is time.\(^1\) Note that in this hypothesis, we only care about frame use dynamics after the initial US intervention. If my expectation is correct, the coefficient on \( \beta_1 \) should be positive and significant, while the coefficient on the squared time variable should be negative and significant.

\(^1\)In this model I use data up to January 1992 to guarantee that the results are not influenced by the Knesset hiatus in March 1992.
Table 3.3: Testing the curvilinear usage of immigration frame by Likud

<table>
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<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Likud’s usage of frame in discussions with Meretz</th>
<th>Likud’s usage of frame in discussions with Labor</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>0.003 (0.0002)</td>
<td>0.002 (0.0004)</td>
</tr>
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<td>time squared</td>
<td>$-8.24e-06$ (3.005e-07)</td>
<td>$-3.953e-06$ (2.341e-07)</td>
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<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>3.63 (0.03)</td>
<td>3.88 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.44</td>
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</table>

N=678. Standard errors in parentheses

The results obtained from the model support hypothesis 3. All the coefficients have the expected sign and are statically significant at the 0.01 level. To ease interpretation, I plot the (exponentiated) model’s predictions over time in figure 3.4. The plot makes clear that indeed, Likud initially increased its use of the immigration frame, followed by a decline in its usage.

![Graphs showing Likud’s usage of frame in discussions with Meretz and Labor during intervention period](image)

Figure 3.4: Model Predictions: Counts of Likud’s Words on Immigration
Finally, I test hypothesis 4. To present the dynamics of partisanship graphically, I plot the log odds of using the immigration frame words, and thus the weight a given party is giving to the frame over other words, accounting for variance. I denote the log-odds parameter by $\delta_{tw}^{(\text{Likud-dovish party})}$. The parameter is similar to the one I previously used to demonstrate parties’ selective emphases (see figure 3.2). However, note that this parameter is superscripted by $t$, denoting day to day dynamics.

The solid lines in both panels denote the dynamic estimate, $\delta_{tw}^{(\text{Likud-dovish party})}$, enclosed by 90% confidence bands. A confidence band below zero means that the frame is used significantly more by a dovish party. In both panels, the immigration frame is a non-partisan issue prior to the intervention. In the lower panel depicting Labor vis-à-vis Likud, an immediate reduction in the values of
\( \delta_{tw}^{(\text{Likud-Labor})} \) is visible, indicating that the frame becomes significantly more associated with Labor. The high level of frame partisanship becomes even more pronounced after the second US condition, and continues for almost the entire period leading up to the election. In the case of Meretz and Likud (upper panel) the frame is non-partisan until the second intervention (which is not surprising given the initial increase in Likud’s usage of the immigration frame visible in figures 3.3 and 3.4). It then becomes highly partisan and dovish.

In order to test hypothesis 4 more rigorously, I apply intervention analysis \(^{(86)}\). This method offers a concise way of testing frame partisanship. The main advantage of using intervention analysis is that it establishes a clear temporal relationship between the US intervention and the shift in the immigration frame partisanship series. In terms of data, the use of a weighted average series in this analysis is problematic, due to serial correlation issues. To overcome this issue I construct a measure which calculated the posterior log odds of monthly frame use. A useful way to capture the US intervention in the Israeli case is via a simple step function:

\[
S^T_t = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } t \geq T \\
0 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
\]

This function equals 0 before the intervention and 1 throughout the post intervention period and until the 1992 election. If, as I hypothesize, the intervention results in a change in the mean of the series, it can be modeled as \( m_t = \omega S^T_t \), where \( \omega \) is the unknown permanent change in the mean related with the intervention. In order to perform the intervention analysis, I use an exogenous independent variable, namely the cooperation score between Palestine and Israel \(^{(87)}\). I fit AR(1) models to both immigration partisanship series: the one comparing Likud’s rhetoric to Labor and to that of Meretz\(^{(87)}\). The fitted model is thus:

\[
Y_t = m_t + N_t, \text{ where}
\]

\(^1\)This is a weekly measure of Israeli-Palestinian relations, where high values indicate higher levels of cooperation and lower values generally indicate violence. I use the series referring to Palestinian actions toward Israel.

\(^2\)All series are stationary, an AR(1) specification was chosen after inspection of regression residual autocorrelation plots due to serial correlation.
\( N_t \) is the underlying AR(1) process, \( y_t = \phi y_{t-1} + \beta [\text{Pal/Isr cooperation}] + \epsilon_t \).

**Table 3.4:** Intervention analysis model results

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<th>parameter</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.03)</td>
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<td>-0.004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
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<td>( Y_{t-1} )</td>
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<td>(0.12)</td>
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<td>( \sigma^2 )</td>
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</table>

N=68. Standard errors in parentheses

The results presented in table 3.4 support hypothesis 4. In both models, the coefficient on the intervention variable is negative and statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Substantively, this means that the US intervention has had a rapid and significant impact on the partisanship of the frame. As hypothesized, the negative sign indicates a change towards a significantly more dovish frame during the period of intervention.

**The aftermath of the dovish strategy**

In early 1992, Israeli officials made clear that without the $10 billion, the country would face an economic disaster (The Guardian, 11 January 1992). The government eventually gave in. In January 1992, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said that US loan guarantees would be applied exclusively to help absorb Jewish immigrants, and not for building settlements in the occupied territories. Within a week, its right-wing coalition members left government. On 3 February 1992 these parties proposed a no confidence motion due to “[T]he government’s agreement with the US government to limit settlements in Judea and Samaria in exchange for immigration absorption loan guarantees”.

Likud’s acquiescence to the US condition was considered a move away from its hawkish principles. This contributed to splits in the far-right camp in the 1992
election, as multiple lists were trying to woo far right voters. Seven nationalist parties ran for election in 1992, compared with 5 in 1988. Only three of these lists did not pass the electoral threshold. This almost certainly led to the loss of votes that were pivotal, given that the left had won 61 out 120 legislative seats and fact that the Left bloc won by only 30,000 votes.

Finally, it is clear (see Figure 3.1) that in 1992, for the first time in over a decade, more voters had accepted the plan proposed by Labor regarding its territories policy, which included halting settlement construction in these areas. In addition, a majority if voters saw Labor as more capable than Likud to deal with the immigration problem, and two-thirds of voters declared that immigration issue would affect their vote (see 1992 Israeli National Election Study). Although other events such as the Palestinian uprising, the 1991 Gulf War, and the Madrid peace conference contributed to this change, these shifts in public opinion are likely to have been at least partially related to the framing strategy undertaken by dovish parties. Simply put, the territorial question was not viewed as being commensurate with the security issue in the eyes of Israeli voters. Rather, the territories were now also viewed through the frame of immigration, a winning frame for the dovish opposition.

3.3 Conclusion

“In the next year four hundred thousand immigrants will arrive from the Soviet Union ... [T]his government is caught in its own internal contradictions and cannot deal with these issues ... The Foreign Minister came back from France the other day, and answered critiques from within the government, saying: we don’t have to use the American loans. Only those who do not understand what we are facing can say such a thing. Can Israel afford not to use the American loan?” Member of Knesset Haim Oron (Meretz), 5 November 1990, in a Knesset discussion on a non-confidence motion submitted by dovish parties
This chapter argues that given Likud’s advantage on the issue of security and the importance of this issue in Israeli politics, dovish parties were forced to reframe the security issue. The unprecedented intervention of the US government into Israeli politics served as an exogenous shock and an opportunity for these parties. The quote by MK Haim Oron at the beginning of this section tells much of the story, by discussing the internal contradictions of the right-wing government and to adequately deal with immigrants because of its hawkish ideology. This rhetorical strategy is heresthetical because by increasing the salience of the immigration issue within the realm of security, dovish parties put Likud in a no-win situation.

Using a dynamic topic model (24) to classify debates in the Israeli Knesset in the years 1989-94, and statistical analysis of discussions of security, this chapter finds the following. First, after US intervention in Israeli partisanship, both opposition parties increased their usage of the immigration frame. Second, as hypothesized in Riker’s Dominance Principle, while initially increasing its use of the frame, Likud decreased its use of the frame, after realizing it was losing the debate on immigration. Finally, using intervention analysis, I find a significant change in the partisanship of the immigration frame, as it was transformed from a non-issue within security, to a partisan frame, used by the dovish opposition.

More generally, the Israeli case demonstrates the ability of opposition parties to use their rhetoric to influence the parliamentary agenda. While the majority monopolizes a great deal of the legislative voting agenda, à la (35), the analysis shows that given its inability to control the legislative rhetorical agenda, the opposition uses its speaking time to attack the coalition. These rhetorical attacks are exactly what the majority is trying to avoid by utilizing its voting agenda control, i.e. dealing with issues on which it is not cohesive, and hence vulnerable.

In addition, this chapter utilizes quantitative text analysis and time-series methods to model oppositional heresthetical attacks and counter attacks by legislative parties. This is possible by using a Bayesian model that reduces large datasets into topics, and allows the analyst to focus on specific issues/dimensions that are salient and relevant. Leveraging the highly dynamic, fine-grained nature of legislative rhetorical data enables a close examination of temporal changes in the use of rhetoric by parties. Combined, these methods open a wide array of
possibilities for research. For example, one can apply these methods to study the evolution of political ideas in legislatures, analyze the changing components of those ideas, and identify the moments in which parties “switch positions” on an issue [66]. Second, one can use these techniques to analyze the dynamics of parties’ rhetoric across legislatures that vary with regard to the level of procedural agenda control they give to the majority (e.g. in bicameral systems). Third, one can apply variants of the methods I offer and model parties’ rhetorical cohesion, focusing on specific legislators or intra-party factions. Finally, these techniques are well-suited for studying the dynamics of electoral campaigns.

The chapter offers a way to operationalize Riker’s heresthetic. Heresthetic is about changing the dimensions of debate so that the opponent cannot win, no matter the strategy he chooses. This important phenomenon requires a specific context, as the Israeli example illustrates. In this regard, this work combines case specific insights with broad institutional theories regarding the stability of political coalitions and the relevance of the multidimensionality of political agendas as a weapon in opposition-coalition political games.

3.4 Appendix

Public opinion data

The full data used to produce figure 1 in the manuscript appears here in Table 3.5. Since in some of the questions participants were asked to answer “Likud”, “Labor” or “other”, and in others they were given the full list of parties, I rescaled the data. Thus, figure 1 in the manuscript presents the share of Likud and Labor supporters from the total of the those who named one of the two parties.
Table 3.5: Comparison of respondents views of Labor & Likud on security issues, 1981-1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Likud</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party to ensure the nation’s security</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>May 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best representing interviewee’s position on security issues</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>May 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best representing interviewee’s position on territories issue</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>July 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best representing interviewee’s position on security &amp; foreign issues</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>July 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best representing interviewee’s position on security issues</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>Dec 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best representing interviewee’s position on territories issue</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>Dec 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party best reflecting Interviewee’s stand on territories issue</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>Oct 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with parties on foreign and security issues</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>Oct 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which party reflects best your position toward territories?</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>June 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose stand are you closer to on defense and foreign affairs?</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>June 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which party will handle security issues better?</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>May 1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Data retrieved from the [Israel National Election Studies Institute website](#) Author’s calculations. In all questions but the identification question (October 1988) and the last question, respondents were presented with a list of all competing parties. Otherwise, the choice was ternary, i.e. Labor, Likud or other.

### Data and Main Model

#### Generating Textual and Numeric Data from the Knesset’s Records

The Israeli discussion data is retrieved from the Israeli [Knesset’s website](#). These data are collected using perl scripts. Next, Python scripts are used to convert the HTML files to XML format.

The documents are structured into discussions, nesting utterances and sentences by individual MKs. MKs are tagged by their name, party label and the position they hold in government (if relevant). I then use an additional series of Python scripts to convert the debates into the components necessary for analysis. First, a vocabulary of words is created. In this project I use a vocabulary of approximately the 5000 most frequent words in the corpus. Then, I generate

---

1There is currently no Hebrew stemmer available. This fact obviously leads to the inclusion of many words with identical suffixes in the vocabulary. However, after using multiple criteria to examine the internal validity of discussion categories, I am confident that this characteristic...
a word by discussion frequency matrix for the entire period. A small version of this matrix is shown, where the first column corresponds to the serial number of a word in the vocabulary, the second column corresponds to the serial number of the discussion in the corpus, and the third column corresponds to the number of
does not pose a problem for the analysis.
times the word appears in the discussion.

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{word} & \text{document} & \text{count} \\
1 & 1 & 1 \\
1 & 2 & 3 \\
1 & 3 & 2 \\
2 & 1 & 5 \\
2 & 2 & 10 \\
\end{bmatrix}
\]

For example, in the case of Israeli Knesset debate between 1981-2008, this 18479355×3 matrix is the main input data.

The dynamic topic model

According to the statistical model I use in the manuscript (24),

\[\text{every legislative discussion deals with one specific topic of } K \text{ topics.} \]

\[\text{Every discussion is transformed to a } W\text{-vector of non-negative integers, } y_d, \text{ where the } \omega \text{th element of } y_d \text{ gives the number of times word } \omega \text{ was used in discussion } d. \]

Additionally, let \( t = 1, \ldots, T \) index time (in days).

Assuming that \( y_d \) was generated from topic \( K \), and conditioning of the total number of words \( n_d \) in discussion \( d \), then

\[ y_d \sim \text{Multinomial}(n_d, \theta_k) \]

\( \theta_k \in \Delta^{W-1} \) is a vector of multinomial probabilities with typical element \( \theta_{kw} \). \( \theta_k \) is the prototypical usage of words for a discussion about topic \( k \). For purpose of interpretation, i.e., in order to ascertain what each topic is actually “about”, (24) use the transformation:

\(^1\)For a complete review of this approach see original paper.  
\(^2\)This approach is markedly different then the latent Dirichlet allocation approach (25) in which each document is a mixture of the corpus wide topics. For the purpose of characterizing parties’ using their topical emphases and the characteristic features (words) of these topics, assuming one topic per discussion is adequate.  
\(^3\)\( \Delta^W \) being an W-dimensional simplex.
\[
\beta_k = \left( \log \left( \frac{\theta_{k1}}{\theta_{k1}} \right) - c \right), \left( \log \left( \frac{\theta_{k2}}{\theta_{k1}} \right) - c \right), \ldots, \left( \log \left( \frac{\theta_{kW}}{\theta_{k1}} \right) - c \right)
\]

where \( c = W^{-1} \sum_{w=1}^{W} \log \left( \frac{\theta_{kw}}{\theta_{k1}} \right) \).

Denoting the probability that a speech is given on topic \( K \) in period \( t \) as \( \pi_{kd} \), Quinn et al. specify the sampling density of the entire corpus to be:

\[
p(Y|\pi, \theta) \propto \prod_{d=1}^{D} \sum_{K=1}^{K} \pi_{s(d)k} \prod_{w=1}^{W} \theta_{kw}^{z_{dw}}
\]

and writing the sampling density in terms of latent data \( z_1, \ldots, z_D \) (where \( z_d \) is a \( k \) vector with element \( z_{dk} \) equal to 1 if \( d \) was generated from topic \( k \) and 0 otherwise), the overall likelihood is written as:

\[
p(Y, Z|\pi, \theta) \propto \prod_{d=1}^{D} \prod_{K=1}^{K} \left( \pi_{s(d)k} \prod_{w=1}^{W} \theta_{kw}^{z_{dw}} \right) z_{dk}
\]

They specify a Dirichlet prior for \( \theta \), and the prior for \( \pi \) captures the day to day dynamics, and is thus based on a dynamic linear model (DLM) [88]. This model is “unsupervised” clustering model in that the user does not pre-specify certain documents as belonging to a certain topic. The models are fit using Expectation Conditional Maximization (ECM) algorithm.

**Fitting the Model to Israeli Knesset Discussions**

In this section I describe the general procedures used to fit the statistical model to the Knesset debate data and validity tests I perform. Since these models are not yet very common in political science, the aim of this section is to establish the validity of the procedure as a whole. I use these techniques to estimate the models presented in the manuscript, focusing on party specific rhetoric, after tagging each utterance by the partisan affiliation of the speaker.

In order to use the Dynamic Topic Model one specifies the number of clusters (topics) to be identified from the data. Then, the analyst must decide on the
“desired” model based on the statistical fit of the model to the data and the validity of model output. Here I use models starting at various seeds and choose the model that has the highest logged posterior. After fitting the model to the data, it is important to examine whether it is valid, i.e., whether models’ output reflect the legislative agenda, and the extent to which we can draw inferences from it.

Validity tests

Broadly, the use of our method of content analysis is valuable if we are able: “To make inferences about the values, sentiments, intentions or ideologies of the sources or authors of the communications” [90, 904]. The first goal of this procedure is to establish the correspondence between our clustering procedure and political reality. Put differently, we need to guarantee that our measure has criterion validity: “The extent to which a measure taps an established standard or important behavior that is external to the measure.” [90, 115]. Analysis of all speeches from the Knesset should clearly describe the issues the Israeli legislators deal with. Thus, the topics should capture the overall parliamentary Agenda. In addition, one way to increase our confidence in the validity of our categories is to show that they consistently vary with external events, i.e. that our model categories respond to the Israeli political reality over time.

Table 3.6 presents the characteristic words of a five topic model that was fit to the entire Israeli corpus data. The words in the table are words that have high value of $\beta$ importance, where $\beta_{\text{importance}} = \frac{\hat{\beta}_{\text{cum}} - \text{mean}(\beta_{-kw})}{sd(\beta_{-kw})}$, and $sd(\hat{\beta}_{-kw})$ is the linear prediction resulting from regressing the standard deviation of $\hat{\beta}_{-kw}$ on mean$\hat{\beta}_{-kw}$. The aim of this simple weighting technique is to overcome the heteroscedasticity of the word distribution in the data (Monroe et al. 2008).\footnote{I have also used, but do not report, a topic entropy reduction by word criterion [91], which produces similar results.}

Inspection of the model output reveals that two out of five clusters pick up important issues in the Israeli political reality, namely the conflict with the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries, and the economic issue. These two clusters account for 11% and 15% of classified discussions, respectively.
clusters 1-3 provide little substantive information regarding the parliamentary agenda. In cluster one we see words are characteristic of various topics, i.e. “police”, “teachers”, “office”, and “air”. The model also finds that a procedural word such as the Hebrew word that means “question” in the parliamentary question and answers session is characteristic of this cluster. This cluster accounts for 35.6% of classified discussions. Clusters two and three report high values of $\beta_{importance}$ for many parliamentary procedural words, e.g. “bill”, “reading”, and “announce”, as well as other words that might be prominent in some parliamen-
tary discussions, but do not provide information about the topical agenda of the Knesset, such as “democracy”, ”voting”, and “Supreme”.

At this point, we can make a number of preliminary conclusions. First, the largest cluster is clearly a mixture of various topics. This is, most likely, because many discussions were grouped together as a result of the low model resolution. Second, while procedural words should appear in every model, simply due to the highly ceremonial and structured nature of parliamentary debate, the overwhelming weight (30%) given to these words in the five topic model suggests that a higher level of data granularity is desirable. Thus, although the five topic model gives some information about topics of discussion in the Knesset, the inferences we make from it and hence its usefulness are

Table 3.7 presents the characteristic words from a model using ten clusters. Clearly, moving from five to ten topics reveals a more nuanced picture of the parliamentary agenda; there are now six topics (1,5,6,7,9 and 10) that reflect what we generally think of as various political aspects. Combined, these clusters account for 50.5% of all 20,184 debates. Three additional clusters are characterized by procedural words. Clusters two and three are characterized by words that capture plenum voting and committee related procedures, while cluster eight is characterized by words used frequently in parliamentary Q & A sessions. Cluster four (1% of debates) is characterized mostly by proper nouns, i.e. names of MKs.

It is clear that in describing the overall rhetorical parliamentary agenda, a ten cluster model is more useful then a five model topic. While capturing two salient political dimensions, namely foreign relations and the economy, the five topic model is overwhelmed by procedural words. In terms of construct validity, i.e. the extent to which is related to the political constructs, the ten cluster model is more valid in that it reports an agenda that corresponds to more important facets of political reality, such as economic, security, social, infrastructure and peace negotiations.

I proceed with this process of model evaluation. I now present results from a 45 topic model. Figure 3.7 presents the output of an agglomerative clustering

\footnote{These clusters account for 22.3%, 7% and 19% of classified debates, respectively.}

\footnote{I do not present characteristic words for this model for the sake of brevity.}
Table 3.7: An example of a 10 topic model characteristic words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 1</th>
<th>Topic 2</th>
<th>Topic 3</th>
<th>Topic 4</th>
<th>Topic 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>income, employment, tax, Shokels, poverty</td>
<td>Knossen, Knesset, bill, prime, member, amendment, work, story, member, committee</td>
<td>מין, decision, reservations, elections, pre, Gesunde, justice, cabinet, reading, govern, budget, state</td>
<td>דריה, reservats, voting, vote, Saul, Ben, Gideon, Zev, Mordechai, Haifa, Ehud, Uzi</td>
<td>צוות, זכויות, ביצוע, ביז真實, שוקל, סהרה, בנק, מחאה, המנה, בור, וולטר, מתא, הנב, עבודה, התשובה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 6</th>
<th>Topic 7</th>
<th>Topic 8</th>
<th>Topic 9</th>
<th>Topic 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>money, student, labor union, budget, vote</td>
<td>Negev, workers, Negav, nature, ecology, electricity, office, power, hospitals, patients, economy, environment</td>
<td>מין, Knesset, event, command, incident, commander, police, prison, IDF, police, army, UN, Hamas</td>
<td>תרור, תקיפה, השלום, Golan, agreement, paying, Jerusalem, Palestine, negotiators, Qassam, PLO, okon, Hamas</td>
<td>ביטחון, שוקל, ביא, אישה, עונש, מחאה, גולן, דיפלומט, הפרס, הרציה, פלסטינים, נפגוש, מנה, אישה, הを迎, עבודה, חורב</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are results from a hierarchical cluster analysis. In this algorithm, each topic is initially assigned to its own cluster and then the algorithm proceeds iteratively, at each stage joining the two most similar topics, continuing until there is just a single cluster. At each stage distances between clusters are recomputed according to the particular clustering method being used. In the left panel I use the average distance method, i.e. \( \frac{1}{|A|} \sum_{a \in A} \sum_{b \in B} d(a, b) \), where \( d \) is the Euclidean distance, \( A \) and \( B \) are two clusters, and \( a, b \) are topics. The right panel uses Ward distance (1963) based on minimization of the sum of squared errors when clusters are combined, i.e. \( \Delta(A, B) = \sum_{a \in A} \sum_{b \in B} (\bar{m}_a - \bar{m}_b)^2 \), where \( \bar{m}_a \) is the center of cluster \( a \), and \( n_a \) is the number of points in it. \( \Delta \) is the added error, or the merging cost of combining clusters \( A \) and \( B \).
In order to present the dendrogram, I first compute the Euclidean distance between $\beta$ vectors. Recall that these roughly capture the relative frequency of word per topic, so in the case of a 45 topics, we compute the distances for a $4703 \times 45$ matrix. In the left panel we observe that the branch leading to the ”Identity” cluster includes topics where the use of characteristic words is very similar across topics. This also holds for the “Economy” branch. The “Social and welfare” branch exhibits a wide variation of topics and lower levels of lexical similarity. Finally, procedural topics are combined based on their dissimilarity to the rest of clusters and exhibit a high level of inter-topic similarity. The Right panel contributes to the confidence in the internal validity of the topic model, since both clustering algorithms yield highly similar results. The right panel also highlights the lexical difference between political and procedural topics, which is estimated as statistically significant using bootstrapped standard errors.

![45 Topic Model](image)
An additional way to establish model validity is to examine the correspondence between the clustering of debates to topics and external events. To this aim, figure 3.8 presents the aggregated words that were spoken in the Knesset on the Palestinian-Security issue using the output from the highest maximized log posterior 45 topic model. In figure 3.8 I identify a number of high word volume debates. These correspond to pivotal events in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, namely debates surrounding the Oslo accords presented to the Knesset by the Labor led coalition at late November 1993, as well as the implementation of advanced sections of these accords in early 1997 by the hawkish Likud led coalition.

Last, I present the dynamics of Knesset’s debates for the 1988-1999 period for

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1For ease of presentation these figures are generated after I aggregate a number of lexically similar categories into Metatopics.
three Metatopics. This figure is based on the $\pi_{i,k}$ parameter which reflects the posterior probability that in a given day, a debate will be on a certain topic. The increase in the salience of Palestinian-Security metatopic after the signing of the Oslo accord is evident. The rise in the proportion of economic debates during budgetary discussions is also evident from the figure.

Figure 3.9:

Overall, this analysis depicts a close mapping between external events, the Knesset’s rhetorical agenda and the model-based classification of legislative debates. Generally, we see an increase in the attention devoted to specific issues when we “expect” to see it–after a major external event. Additionally, the model correctly assigns high posterior probabilities of belonging to specific topics such as social or economic issues based on the rhetorical agenda. This evidence, combined with the results of hierarchical agglomerative clustering algorithms, which point to lexical similarities across topics that are expected to be composed of
similar words (e.g., economic issues clustered together) provide a high degree of confidence in the model outputs I use in the manuscript.

**Placebo tests—establishing the relationship between the shock and rhetorical changes**

The aim of this section is to test whether other groups of words (that is, not the immigration frame) react in any meaningful way to the American intervention. Essentially, these are *placebo tests*, and the expectation is that there should be no systematic trend during the period of intervention. To do this, I first present figure 3.10.

![Figure 3.10: Ten randomly drawn words](image)

The figure depicts dynamic partisanship (i.e., $\delta_{wt}$, identical to those used in the chapter to test hypothesis four. Here I randomly draw ten words from the
vocabulary and plot their dynamic partisanship. The words appear below the upper panel. Importantly, inspection of Figure 3.10 reveals that, using both groups of words and estimating word partisanship between Likud and Meretz, as well as Likud and Labor, the results conform to a null hypothesis. In the upper panels, the words remain non-partisan across the entire period (aside from the idiosyncratic drop June 1992, in the upper left panel). In addition, the changes in word partisanship between Labor and Likud follow no a-priori expectation and are the result of random variation.

![Figure 3.10: The word “the”](image)

Finally, figure 3.11 presents dynamic partisanship of the word the. As expected, this word is non-partisan. In fact, it does not deviate much from zero across the entire period.

Overall, these placebo tests support the results presented in the chapter, and the
argument connecting the American intervention to the change in the partisanship of the immigration frame.
4

Cross-Cutting Issues, Intraparty Dissent and Party Strategy: The Issue of European Integration in the House of Commons

“We have won more elections than any party in Britain because we are the most united and the most determined party in Britain. Over the same period Labour has been the most divided and the most undisciplined party. That is why they have lost, and lost, and lost, and lost again.”

4.1 Introduction

The wedge issues literature posits that opposition party leaders use these issues strategically (18, 19, 20, 21). In this literature, a wedge issue is defined as “[A] policy issue dividing one party into two or more camps without disturbing the other party” (192, 827), emphasis added. Based on McKelvey and others’ work (16, 93), the literature also holds that politics is multidimensional and that this characteristic results in coalition instability. In turn, outside parties can take
advantage of this instability by bringing a previously “passive” issue (but one that is becoming more important) into the fore of political agenda, in an attempt to split the ruling coalition. In this chapter I expand on this limited definition of a wedge issue and demonstrate that the emergence of cross-cutting issues that are complex can lead to completely different political dynamics.

I analyze issue dynamics in the 1992-1997 session of the British House of Commons. I focus on the topic of European integration, which scholars have characterized as orthogonal or only partly related to the traditional, national level left/right dimension (67, 91, 95, 96), and as a result can be used as a wedge issue. Similar to (97), I characterize this issue as a cross-cutting, double-wedged one. However, in contrast to (97) who differentiate between the effect this issue has on parties after electoral victories and losses, I argue that the effect of electoral victory is limited, and that the divisiveness of the issues affects both winners and losers in a similar fashion. The issue of European integration is divisive for both main parties because it is complex. Specifically, it involves political aspects that are rooted in multiple cleavages: pre and post materialist cleavages, as well as an economic materialist one (98). This leads to low levels of party cohesion over the issue, and makes it ineffective as a strategic weapon for the opposition. Thus, not only cross-party dynamics, but also intra-party dynamics, especially the opposition’s party cohesion, are crucial to our understanding of the strategic use of issues as political “wedges.”

Scholars of Europeanization have thus far used qualitative methods or quantitative analysis of manifestos/surveys to gauge the dimensionality of the issue[1]. Here I analyze fine-grained data on legislative voting and rhetoric, in order to map parties and party-factions on the issue of European Integration. While the analysis of parliamentary votes shows that parties are split on the issue, the analysis of parliamentary rhetoric enables me to demonstrate that party affiliation, the level of opposition to the European project and party status all have a nuanced effect on the stances of legislators on the issue. To foreshadow, the analysis demonstrates that nationalistic, sovereignty and fiscal aspects of Europeanization unite Euroskeptic factions from both parties against Europhiles. Second, that Labour

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[1] Throughout the chapter I use the concepts of European integration and Europeanization interchangeably.
Europhiles highlight egalitarian and co-operative aspects of Europeanization, while Conservative Europhiles are limited to discussing procedural aspects of it. These findings contextualize the “cross-cuttingness” of the European integration issue, and shed light on its complexity (i.e. its relevance to multiple political cleavages). Finally, they are helpful in explaining the current difficulties political leaders in Europe are facing, as they try to save the European project.

4.2 Issues as oppositional opportunities

The literature specifies two necessary conditions for the use of wedge issues. The first is the multidimensionality of the agenda. Clearly, if parliamentary politics only takes place along the strict lines of government versus opposition, then wedge issues do not exist. The second condition is that the issue in question divides one party into a number of factions. With regard to wedge-issues and party strategy, the theoretical expectation is that the opposition party will attack—“party leaders are not oblivious to the majority party’s intramural disputes. They marshal their forces to mount a fight that could help divulge a serious fissure on the other side of the aisle”(92, 828). In terms of legislative votes, this assault should manifest itself as a series of votes in which the opposition votes cohesively against the government and is joined by defectors from the government’s party.

Figure 4.1 presents two possible ideal points distributions over a two dimensional space in a two party chamber. Without loss of generality, assume the horizontal dimension is the traditional right-left continuum, and the vertical dimension reflects a nascent issue. In both panels government and opposition parties are clearly distinguishable along the right-left dimension. Panel 4.1a presents the basic scenario described in the wedge issues literature. In it, the opposition is cohesive along the vertical dimension, but the government is not. Specifically, a group of government “rebels” occupy the first quadrant and are distant from

---

1 This tendency should hold to the extent that the government fails to block majority splitting bills from reaching the agenda (35). If the government is successful in using its negative agenda control, two scenarios are possible. The first one is that votes are less consequential and thus opposition legislators can vote sincerely either with or against the government. In the second scenario opposition legislators vote as a bloc against the government. Either way, ideal points estimated from these patterns will not reflect a strategic opportunity for the opposition.
the government’s “loyalists.” Moreover, it is possible to draw a line cutting the vertical dimension, separating the opposition and a group of government’s rebels from the governments’ loyalists. Thus, this dimension presents an opportunity for the opposition. In contrast, panel 4.1b presents a double wedge. In particular, both the government and the opposition are split on this dimension. As a result, the opposition cannot use the vertical dimension to attack the government.

Note: Red points represent legislators from the opposition. In panel a only the blue party (government) is vulnerable to wedge issue politics. In panel b both the government and the opposition are vulnerable.

**Figure 4.1:** Ideal Points Distributions in Two Dimensions
4.2.1 Estimating voting dimensionality in the House of Commons

As the starting point of this chapter, I model the House of Commons’ political dimensionality using parliamentary votes (divisions). This is important, since scholars of legislative ideology and dimensionality have used models of legislative votes as their workhorse over the last three decades. The “industry” of ideal point estimation research has focused mostly on the American Congress (e.g. 4, 5, 7, 99), but scholars have increasingly used Optimal Classification (OC) to analyze legislators’ ideal points in other legislatures (8, 9, 10). It has been argued, (37) that using Optimal Classification to estimate legislators’ preferences is problematic and will erroneously place extreme governing party members (rebels) near moderate opposition members. They demonstrate their claim using 1997-2001 data. The problem stems, arguably, from the fact that in some votes coalition rebels vote sincerely against the government, and opposition members almost always vote strategically against it (i.e. opposition members vote against the government regardless of their ideology). This contention overlooks two important facts: first, that opposition MPs do not always vote cohesively. There are cases where opposition members rebel against their own leadership and vote sincerely on the government’s bills. Second, while in most cases a unidimensional model is sufficient to explain voting behavior, consistent rebellions on specific issues imply that the agenda is not unidimensional. Thus, the reason that OC places coalition rebels near opposition members stems from the fact that the binary choice nature of voting data cannot account for the multidimensionality of the agenda. I demonstrate this claim in this section.

I analyze voting data from the 1992-1997 House of Commons. Since most votes in the House of Commons take place according to strict party lines, I focus only on the 245 dissenting votes during this session. 77 of those are related to European integration. To clarify, dissenting votes are those divisions where one or more Labour or Conservative MP voted against their party whip or the wishes of their front bench. [1]

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1 These data are retrieved from Philip Cowley’s “Dissension in the House of Commons” dataset.
Figure 4.2: Divisions with Dissension in the House of Commons

One Dimensional Optimal Classification, 1992–1997

+ Labour MPs
+ Tory MPs
○ Tory Euroskeptics
○ Labour Euroskeptics

Note: This figure presents the location of Conservative and Labour MPs along a unidimensional continuum. A bit of “noise” was added to each observation to prevent excessive overlaying. Identification was done using the Labour MP Skinner Dennis as “Left” pole. I identify approximately 20 Tory and Labour Euroskeptics in the figure.

Figure 4.2 presents the results of the unidimensional OC scaling algorithm. Inspection of the figure reveals two things. First, the algorithm identifies Tories and Labour MPs as two distinct voting blocs. Second, as (37) note, it places Tory Euroskeptics in the middle of the unidimensional continuum, close to centrist Labour MPs.\footnote{Tory Euroskeptics are identified based on the data in (100). I hand coded Labour Euroskeptics using primary sources.} This image conflicts with the fact that most Tory Euroskeptics (e.g. John Biffen, Nicholas Budgen, Norman Lamont, Michael Portillo, and Iain Duncan, Smith) are identified with the right-wing of the Conservative party. The
reason for the “odd” location of Tory rebels lies within the multidimensionality of voting in the House of commons. While most divisions take place along the dominant right/left (or government/opposition) continuum, divisions on European integration do not, as can be seen from estimating a two dimensional model.

**Figure 4.3**: Divisions with Dissension in the House of Commons

![Two Dimensional Optimal Classification, 1992–1997](image)

**Note**: This figure presents the location of Conservative and Labour MP’s in a two dimensional space. Identification was done using the Labour MP Skinner Dennis and Tory Liam Fox as poles. I identify approximately 50 Tory Euroskeptics and 20 Labour Euroskeptics in the figure.

Inspection of figure 4.3 reveals that while there is a clear distinction between Conservatives and Labour MPs along the horizontal dimension, some MPs from both parties occupy a similar area along the vertical dimension. These MPs are members of Euroskeptic factions. While both parties’ frontbenchers were generally supportive of European integration (and in most cases Labour leaders...
requested their MPs to abstain), members of both the Tory and the Labour backbench rebelled against their own frontbench.

In order to visualize the difference between voting on European Integration and on other issues, it is useful to compare Rice voting cohesion scores \( \text{(101)} \). This comparison is shown in figure 4.4. While the parties are cohesive on other issues, cohesion scores’ distributions of votes on European integration have large variances (with mean values of 0.69 and 0.64 for Labour and Tories, respectively). Thus, both parties were facing low levels of cohesion on the issue of European integration, but were very cohesive on other dimensions.\(^1\)

\[ \text{Rice} = \frac{|\text{Yes} - \text{No}|}{\text{Yes} + \text{No}}. \]

---

**Figure 4.4**: Rice scores distributions

To sum up, the issue of European integration is important in explaining vot-
ing behavior in the House of Commons, in addition to the traditional left-right continuum. While both parties had voted cohesively on other issues, they were clearly split on European integration. Based on the distribution of ideal points in figure 4.3, it is evident that both parties were vulnerable to the European integration issue. This situation is similar to the picture presented in panel 4.1b of figure 4.1. Thus, the voting data suggests that Labour was not able to “attack” the Conservatives on European integration. The reason for this lies in the complexity of the issue, that is, the fact that it brings to the fore aspects of three different cleavage types: pre-materialist, materialist and post-materialist.

4.3 European integration as a complex issue

Using Inglehart’s (1977) terminology, we can characterize the European Integration issue as encapsulating pre-materialist cleavages such as nationalism and identity, materialist cleavages such as economic distribution, and post-materialist cleavages such as green politics. For example, (94) argues that it is composed of two orthogonal cleavages: the integration-independence cleavage and the right-left one. The former captures questions of “more” or “less” integration among European states, and the latter has a libertarian-authoritarian component and an intervention-free market component. (67) posit that the traditional economic left-right continuum affects positioning only on European policies that involve redistribution and regulating capitalism. In addition, the European project reinforces a “pre-material/industrial” dimension, in which national identity is the dominant component. Similarly, (96) argue that an important factor related to parties’ attitude toward European integration is their position in a Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalism (TAN) versus a Green/Alternative/Libertarian (GAL) dimension.

Further, in terms of party competition, students of European integration make two important, complementing claims. First, some scholars (67, 102) find a robust, inverted U shape pattern of support for Europeanization. This pattern describes a phenomenon whereby main parties, located near the center of the left-right continuum generally support Europeanization, while parties at the extreme oppose it. According to the second claim, advanced by (95) and (94), mainstream
parties are threatened by the national sovereignty aspect of Europeanization. As a result of this threat, these parties attempt to stifle partisan competition relating to aspects of Europeanization that are not subsumed by national left-right continuum. Thus, the second claim highlights the fact that parties are non-unified actors. They are broad coalitions of interests and views, specifically with regard to stances on Europeanization. This logic is taken a step further by (97), who connect the issue of European integration to the vast wedge-issue literature.

Overall, these works highlight the complexity of the issue of European integration and the challenges it poses for political parties. First, the inverted U shape pattern underscores the difference between parties at the mainstream and extreme parties. Second, because of the complexity of the issue, the level of support for Europeanization varies widely within mainstream parties. As a result of this variation, it has the potential to create internal party fractures, and serve as a wedge issue by opponents. However, note that Europeanization poses a problem both for right and left wing mainstream parties, since these parties are a broad umbrella of interests. For right-wing parties, higher capital mobility and increased economic competition are attractive, but the possibility of a central European government that can regulate markets on a larger scale is problematic. Moreover, parties near the TAN pole, such as Conservative parties, value national identity and the political sovereignty of the nation state. Thus, within the right, neo-liberals interests clash with nationalistic views. For left-wing parties, Europeanization poses a threat because it impinges on the power of the welfare state and reduces its ability to regulate the economy. However, it also creates a potential for regulated capitalism as well as environmental and human rights policies at the European level.

In the UK, the inherent complexity of the issue of European integration led to the formation of a multitude of political groups within mainstream parties, emphasizing a variety of Euroskeptic views. I now turn to reviewing these ideological groups.

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1 (97) argue that the extent to which European integration threatens their internal unity depends on the strength of party leadership. Specifically, if the leadership is strong, they hypothesize it will be able to muffle the problematic issue.
While the issue of European integration has been a part of party politics in the UK since the 1960s, the introduction of the issue into British party politics was an agenda shock (23). That is, it caused legislators from both political parties to reevaluate their view on other topics. In turn, it led to the formation of a multitude of political groups within mainstream parties, emphasizing a variety of Euroskeptic views. I now turn to reviewing these ideological groups.

4.3.1 Varieties of Euroskepticism in the UK

The Conservative party

“The President of the Commission, Mr. Delors, said at a press conference the other day that he wanted the European Parliament to be the democratic body of the Community, he wanted the Commission to be the Executive and he wanted the Council of Ministers to be the Senate. No. No. No.”
Margaret Thatcher, 30 October 1990, speech to the College of Europe, Bruges

“We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels.”
Margaret Thatcher, 20 September 1990, the House of Commons

From 1992 to 1997, most Tory frontbenchers were either Europhiles or neutral towards Europe. As part of the government, they were taking part in the process of negotiating the details of EU integration. However, Euroskepticism was widespread among backbenchers. It was expressed by a number of legislative groups. The Friends of Bruges Group, which in the early 1990s was rumored to be associated with over 130 backbenchers (103), was composed mainly of Thatcherites-Nationalists. They viewed European monetary union as a threat to British nationhood, and emphasized “defence of the popular sovereignty of the British people against the incursions of Brussels and against the drive for further
integration” (104 332). Economically, Thatcherites feared that European interventionist policies could threaten Britain’s newly deregulated economy. Therefore, the majority of the group opposed the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM).

The Fresh Start Group had its origin in two Early Day Motions, the first prompted by the Danish rejection of the Maastricht treaty in June 1992, and the second tabled on September 1992 after Black Wednesday, i.e. the Sterling’s withdrawal from the ERM. The Fresh Start Group’s main goals were opposition to the ratification of the Maastricht treaty, and securing a referendum on the treaty and the issue of single currency (103 86).

Prominent Conservative MPs argued against the single currency. Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, maintained that the monetary union will only give a spurious appearance of economic stability. In his view, given the differences in economic structures between EU member states the convergence pact will only enforce inappropriate policies on states experiencing the greatest difficulties as a result of being in the monetary union. Similarly, Jon Redwood, the Conservative spokesman on Trade and Industry, argued that the Maastricht convergence criteria would hurt jobs and raise taxes, but more importantly, his main argument was not primarily economic. Rather, it was “about the effect of single currency in displacing British national identity with a spurious European identity.” (105 11). According to Redwood, joining the European currency would also erode British parliamentary sovereignty, because decision making powers would be transferred to an non-elected European Bank.

The Labour party

“At the heart of the treaty lies an economic ideology which should be anathema to everything Labour has stood for. Maastricht incorporates a monetary and deflationary ideology into the domestic law of Britain.”

---

1 The European Exchange Rate Mechanism was a system introduced by the European Community in 1979 in preparation for monetary union and the introduction of a single currency. Prime Minister Major’s Government was forced to withdraw the sterling from the ERM after they were unable to keep it above its agreed lower limit. This withdrawal and its economic implications were dubbed “Black Wednesday”.

80
Denzel Davies, the Socialist Group of European Parliament, Maastricht: the Final Victory of the Right, nd.

Since the Labour party had gradually moved toward a pro-European stance by the late 1980s, the formal opposition did not criticize the Maastricht agreement very much. When they did it was mostly for not signing the Social Chapter. For Labour Europhiles, the union was seen as having the potential to “[T]ranscend national rivalries and to bring the power of public action to bear in a world otherwise dominated by unaccountable multinational companies and global capital” (105, 15).

In contrast to this view, many backbenchers were still staunchly Euroskeptic. Labour Euroskeptics argued that the British economy differs in many ways from those of the continental European countries, and that these differences make it particularly risky for UK to join the union. The “right” of the Labour parliamentary party echoed Conservative rhetoric, with MPs such as Peter Shore and Austin Mitchell advancing arguments regarding the loss of sovereignty and national autonomy. For other Labour Euroskeptics, the main problem with the treaty was that it imposed a deflationary policy that would make it impossible for a future Labour government to deliver on its commitments. Similarly, it was argued that the Maastricht version of the monetary union committed governments to driving down wages and social spending. In terms of monetary policy, Euroskeptics argued it was a dangerous experiment, a “leap in the dark.”

4.4 Partisan rhetoric and European Integration

Thus far I have provided evidence for the existence of overall agenda multidimensionality in the 1992-1997 session of the House of Commons. I have used voting data to suggest that both main parties were divided on the emergent issue of European integration. The Labour party’s Euroskepticism was largely driven by concerns about the economic implications of membership, with MPs arguing that the Maastricht treaty would impose a deflationary policy that would make it impossible for a future Labour government to deliver on its commitments.

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1 The Social Chapter of the Maastricht treaty changed the voting rules from unanimity to qualified majority on a number of issues. The chapter also “extends the ability of the European collective bargaining partners to intervene and even set the agenda of European social policy.”

2 For example, the Labour Euro Safeguards Campaign claimed to have had just over a quarter of the MPs as paying members.
of European integration. Based on the European and the UK political parties’ literature, I have also argued that the issue is complex, bringing to the fore a number of important political sub-issues/frames. These can be grouped mainly into materialist and pre-materialist cleavages. In turn, this issue complexity leads to low levels of party cohesion on European integration, and makes it ineffective as an oppositional weapon. In this section, I provide additional evidence for the inability of the opposition to take advantage of the issue of European integration, and present the ways in which the issue of European Integration cuts through both parties.

4.4.1 Analysis of rhetoric

While analysis of voting suggests that the opposition was divided over the issue of European integration, there are important reasons for analyzing rhetoric. First, the dynamics of parliamentary rhetoric partisan is different. Even if the opposition does not mount a legislative assault on the government, it can still join forces with Tory Euroskeptics and use its floor speeches to highlight the problematic aspects of Europeanization. Especially since the majority does not have strict rhetorical agenda control, legislative speeches can be used to contribute to ruling parties’ splits (108). Second, the analysis of rhetoric adds context and detailed information regarding the structure and nature of partisan splits. Third, rhetorical data allow us to test hypotheses which cannot be tested by relying only on voting data.

At the most general level, using European integration as a wedge issue implies that Labour had been more likely to discuss European integration than the Conservative party. This reasoning is grounded in the selective emphasis approach (14), which underlies the Comparative Manifestos Project (52). According to this view, parties do not take opposing positions on the same issue (e.g. more versus less social spending), but rather choose to focus on issues on which they think they have an advantage.

To test whether Labour was more likely to discuss European integration, I compare the partisan proportion of utterances on that issue to the partisan proportion of utterances over other topics in the 1992-1997 period. Overall, Labour
and Conservative MPs have made 547,059 utterances. Of those, 11,847 were on European integration. This yields a list of 535,212 utterances on all other issues. A Welch t-test comparing the proportions of Labour and Conservative speakers across both sets of issues does not support the Labour European integration wedge issue strategy expectation. Labour MPs were not more likely to bring up the issue than Conservative MPs.

Next, I examine party and faction rhetoric on European Integration. If, as the wedge issues’ literature predicts, Labour had been using the issue to attack the divided Conservative party, then we should see a cohesive rhetorical assault by Labour. However, if, as I suggest, ideological fissures within Labour had prevented it from using the issue strategically, these divides should be discernible in speeches. Most importantly, the divides should reflect our prior expectations and knowledge regarding the position of factions over European integration, rather than stem from random lexical variation.

**Inter-Party Expectation:** Given that both main parties are constrained in their approach to European integration by previous interests, and that some economic aspects of European integration have been subsumed by the traditional right-left continuum, the first expectation is the following:

*Hypothesis 1: In its European integration rhetoric, Labour party (as a whole) should emphasize social, employment and production aspects. These reflect the party’s overall objection to the refusal of the Conservative government to sign Maastricht’s Social chapter, as well as traditional Labour concerns.*

Note that this is the only expectation regarding differences between parties as a whole. Both Europhiles and Euroskeptics Labour MPs are committed to lowering unemployment, and both see social aspects of European integration as having high priority. Moreover, relative to Tories, Labour MPs are more concerned with the state’s ability to influence and plan economic production.

**Inter-Faction Expectation:** Two issues are expected to differentiate Euroskeptics from Europhiles: nationhood and the economy. With regard to the first

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1 I explicate these procedures in the data and methodology section
2 Particularly, Labour MPs have made 4,025 on European integration and 203,583 on all other topics. Tories have made 7,822 utterances on Europeanization and 331,629 on other topics.
aspect, the theoretical literature suggests that both Tory and Labour skeptics should use nationalistic frames in their European integration rhetoric. Economically, Euroskeptic factions from both parties decried the monetary convergence (Euro) aspects of European integration.

**Hypothesis 2:** Relative to Europhiles, Euroskeptics are more likely to emphasize nationalistic aspects of Europeanization. Second, they are more likely to highlight aspects of monetary convergence.

**Intra-Party Expectations:** Here I explicate the expectations regarding differences within the two parties, by comparing Euroskeptics and Europhiles. While some of these expectations reflect the overall Euroskeptic/Europhile divide, they also deal with additional, intra-party divides.

**Hypothesis 3a:** Relative to Labour Europhiles, Labour Euroskeptic MPs are likely to emphasize nationalism. Second, Labour Euroskeptics are likely to highlight monetary convergence. In contrast, Labour Europhiles, supportive of the notion of a supranational accountable government, should emphasize the cooperational aspects of European integration.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Relative to Tory Europhiles, Tory Euroskeptic MPs are likely to emphasize nationalism. Second, Tory Euroskeptics are likely to discuss monetary convergence. In addition, since Tory Europhiles are mostly frontbenchers who are involved in the negotiations, their rhetoric should reflect technical and functional aspects of European integration negotiations.

### 4.4.2 Data and methodology

Recent computational advances and methodological innovations in political science have led to a growing volume of research using “words as data”, describing the agenda of political institutions and estimating ideological party positions (e.g. [24], [91], [109]). Here I use a similar approach in analyzing the debates of the House of Commons.

Records of House of Commons debates (*Hansard*) are found online. The records were converted to XML format. Each day of debates is structured hierar-
chically, with sentences nested within utterances, which are in turn nested within
discussions. I use Python scripts to extract only debates whose title includes
stems that indicate they address the issue of European integration. Using these
data I generate a vocabulary based on the 5,000 most common words. Leveraging
the nested structure of the data, I then generate a matrix of utterance by stem,
where each entry represents the number of times a stem \(i\) appears in utterance
\(d\). These entries are tagged by details identifying the utterance by date of the
discussion, as well as by the name of the speaking MP, his partisan affiliation and
whether he is a Euroskeptic or not. Next, I remove stop-words from the data, as
well as stems that have low term frequency-inverted document frequency values.
This yields a 11,807 \(\times\) 4,000 matrix, which is the input I use for the statistical
analysis.

To classify the corpus into topics, I use a latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA)
model \(^{(25)}\). The LDA is a hierarchical Bayesian model, in which each document
(here, legislative utterance), is modeled as a mixture over an underlying set of
topics. Thus, every political utterance exhibits topics with different proportion.

In the context of LDA, the topics are hidden variables and the observed vari-
ables are the documents’ words. In terms of inference, we use the LDA to compute
the posterior distribution of the topics given the words. More formally, the topics
are \(\beta_{1,K}\), where \(\beta_{k}\) is the distribution of words in the topic. Topic proportions for
the \(d\)th document are \(\theta_{d}\), where \(\theta_{d,k}\) is the proportion of topic \(k\) in document \(d\).

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1 The stems are: “european”, “europ”, “membership”, “luxemburg”, “euro”, “masstricht”,
“bruges”, “ige”, “delros” “amsterdam”.

2 As noted, \(^{(100)}\) provide most of the data identifying Tory rebels. Additional sources
are \(^{(110)}\) and \(^{(103)}\). I hand coded most of Labour Euroskeptics using data from British news
sources.

3 The use of term frequency-inverted document frequency (\(tf.idf\)) scores is common in
computational linguistics and is widely used in document search and information retrieval
tasks. Denoting the number of times the stem \(w\) appears in document \(d\) and \(D\) as the number
of documents in the corpus, the score is: \(tf.idf(w_i) = w_{i,d} \times \log_{2}(\frac{D}{\sum_{d} w_{i,d}})\). I use the 4,000 words
with highest average values of \(tf.idf\). Intuitively, words that appear many times in a low number
of documents have high values of \(tf.idf\), since they convey the most information.

4 Put differently, it is a mixed membership model, in which every document is composed
of a number of topics. In this chapter the bulk of the analysis treats utterances as classified to
the topic for which they were assigned the highest probability. For an introduction to LDA, see
David M. Blei’s paper.
In addition, document topic assignments are $z_d$, and $z_{d,n}$ is the topic assignment for the $n$th word of document $d$. Finally, the words for document $d$ are $w_d$, where $w_{d,n}$ is the $n$th word in document $d$. The implied joint distribution of the hidden and observed variables is:

$$p(\beta_{1:K}, \theta_{1:D}, z_{1:D}, w_{1:D}) = \prod_{k=1}^{K} p(\beta_k) \prod_{d=1}^{D} p(\theta_d) \left( \prod_{n=1}^{N} p(z_{d,n}|\theta_d)p(w_{d,n}|\beta_{1:K}, z_{d,n}) \right),$$

and the posterior distribution is:

$$p(\beta_{1:K}, \theta_{1:D}, Z_{1:D}|w_{1:D}) = \frac{p(\beta_{1:K}, \theta_{1:D}, Z_{1:D}, w_{1:D})}{p(w_{1:D})}$$

The results of a 22 topic LDA model are presented in table 4.1. Each column in the table corresponds to a “topic”, i.e. a specific distribution over words that best characterizes a sub group utterances. I name the topics after inspecting the words characterizing it, and reading multiple utterances that were assigned to that topic. The words presented in table 4.1 are among the words with the highest $\beta$ parameters, i.e., those that best capture an important subset of variation in vocabulary choice across utterances.

For example, under the title “Monetary Convergence” we find stems like: “currenc”, “single”, “converg” “monetari” etc. Under the title “Elections”, we find stems like: “govern”, “scotland”, “repres”, “elect” etc, under the title “Fiscal Policies”, we find stems like: “Monei”, “cost”, “tax”, and “public”. Note that there are a number of topics that do not convey any relevant information for analytical purposes. These topics are “Procedural”, “Q&A”, “Party Politics” and “Parliamentary”. I therefore drop utterances that were classified under any of these topics. Hence, the data set used for hypotheses testing includes 8236 utterances, distributed over 18 topics.

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1 Model selection and evaluation procedures are described in the appendix.

2 I have also used the mutual information Criterion to select representative words (111). Results are very similar to those presented in table 4.1.
Table 4.1: Characteristic words, 22 topic LDA model

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<td>secur</td>
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<td>import</td>
<td>weu</td>
<td>european</td>
<td>former</td>
<td>legal</td>
<td>conserv</td>
<td>point</td>
<td>protocol</td>
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<tr>
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<td>offic</td>
<td>novemb</td>
<td>cap</td>
<td>nato</td>
<td>protocol</td>
<td>join</td>
<td>judgment</td>
<td>opposit</td>
<td>nr</td>
<td>britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>regul</td>
<td>offici</td>
<td>decemb</td>
<td>food</td>
<td>aircraft</td>
<td>ratif</td>
<td>membership</td>
<td>interpret</td>
<td>minist</td>
<td>order</td>
<td>opt</td>
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<tr>
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<td>affair</td>
<td>programm</td>
<td>deal</td>
<td>vote</td>
<td>commun</td>
<td>enlarg</td>
<td>convent</td>
<td>speech</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>industri</td>
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<td>prond</td>
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<td>matter</td>
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<td>page</td>
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<td>against</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>wage</td>
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<td>statement</td>
<td>discuss</td>
<td>fraud</td>
<td>forc</td>
<td>provio</td>
<td>democraci</td>
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<td>leader</td>
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<td>aid</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>oblig</td>
<td>human</td>
<td>answer</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>bill</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

It is useful to think of the topics extracted using the LDA model as frames of reference to the complex issue of European integration. In order to provide a simple test of my hypotheses, I focus on the log odds-ratios of using these frames by political groups (i.e. a logit transformation). Specifically, if we denote as $\pi_i = \frac{p_{i,k}}{1-p_{i,k}}$ the odds of group $i$ using a specific topic $k$, then $\theta_{i,j}^k = \log \frac{\pi_{i,k}}{\pi_{j,k}}$, is the logged odds-ratio of using the topic $k$ for the two groups. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 present the results of this model applied to test the first two hypotheses, respectively comparing parties’ and factions’ rhetoric on Europeanization.

The results presented in figure 4.5 support hypothesis one. Labour is significantly more likely (by 112%) to discuss Employment/Social aspects of European integration, as well as being more likely to emphasize the Production & agriculture frame (see column 4 on the bottom of table 4.1, a frame characterized by stems such as: “agricultur”, “govern”, “produc”, “import”, “cap”, etc.)

Figure 4.6 presents the logged odds-ratios estimates of Euroskeptics frame use relative to Europhile frame use (factions are aggregated across parties). Hypothesis 2 is also supported. As expected, nationalistic/sovereignty and Monetary Convergence frames characterize Euroskeptics’ discourse. Specifically, Subsidiarity (see column 5 on the top of table 4.1, a frame characterized by stems such as: “subsidiar”, “cultur”, “languag”, “differ” etc.), and Citizenship emerge as topics that are used much more by Euroskeptics, followed by the issues of Monetary Convergence and the Powers of the European Parliament (a topic capturing mainly the transfer of powers from the British parliament to the European one.) The differences in these effects are large in magnitude. For example, Euroskeptics are approximately 167% more likely to discuss Subsidiarity, and 118% more likely to discuss Citizenship than their fellow Europhile MPs. In addition, Euroskeptics are 58% more likely to discuss Monetary Convergence than Europhiles.

Next, figures 4.7 and 4.8 present intra-party comparisons between Euroskeptics and Europhiles within the Labour and Conservative parties, respectively (hypotheses 3a, 3b).

1 Subsidiarity is one of the core principles of the European Union, stipulating that the Union can act only if the acts of nation state are insufficient.
Note: Points represent the estimates of the log-odds ratio of using a specific topic for Labour relative to Tories, along with 95% confidence bands. The estimate of the specific hypothesized effect is larger. Points in the red shaded area mean that the topic was used more extensively by Labour and vice versa for Blue. Numbers are the joint count of utterances on the topic for both parties.

Figure 4.5: Log-Odds of Using Topics on European Integration For Conservatives and Labour

First, Labour Euroskeptics are significantly more likely than Labour Europhiles to discuss the Subsidiarity frame (by 68%), and the citizenship frame (a frame characterized by stems such as “citizen”, “nation”, “country” etc). Second, compared to Europhiles, Labour Euroskeptics are significantly more likely to discuss the problematic aspect of Monetary Convergence. As expected, Labour Europhiles are significantly more likely to discuss inter-government cooperation.
**Differential Topic Usage for Euroskeptics and Europhiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Euroskeptics</th>
<th>Europhiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Policies</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiarity</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maastricht</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Convergence</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maastricht Technical</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers of EU Parliament</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Policies</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production &amp; Agriculture</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Bloc</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-EU Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Policies</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Reports</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Meetings</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Points represent the estimates of the log-odds ratio of using a specific topic for Euroskeptics relative to Europhiles, along with 95% confidence bands. Estimates of the specific hypothesized effects are larger. Points in the shaded area mean that the topic was used more extensively by Euroskeptics. Numbers are the joint count of utterances on the topic for both factions.

**Figure 4.6:** Log-Odds of Using Topics on European Integration For Euroskeptics and Europhiles

between the UK and Europe.
Note: Points represent the estimates of the log-odds ratio of using a specific topic for Labour Euroskeptics relative to Europhiles, along with 95% confidence bands. Estimates of the specific hypothesized effects are larger. Points in the shaded area mean that the topic was used more extensively by Euroskeptics. Numbers are the joint count of utterances on the topic for both factions.

Figure 4.7: Log-Odds of Using Topics on European Integration For Labour MPs

Similar to the trends we find in the Labour party, Tory Euroskeptics are more likely than their party peers to use nationalistic/sovereignty frames of European integration (e.g. Subsidiarity and Citizenship, by 278% and 129%, respectively), as well as Monetary Convergence. In contrast, Europhiles are approximately 200% more likely to discuss EU meetings and 150% more likely to discuss EU policies. This is due to their participation in EU negotiations as government frontbenchers.

These results generally support my theoretical expectations. I find that party
Differential Topic Usage for Conservative MPs

Fiscal Policies 249
Subsidarity 276
Citizenship 222
Maastricht 475
Monetary Convergence 401
Powers of EU Parliament 292
Elections 213
Judicial 296
Maastricht Technical 183
Production & Agriculture 279
Defense Policies 283
Trade 369
UK–EU Economic Cooperation 310
Employment/Social 138
Eastern Bloc 213
Financial Reports 662
EU Policies 655
EU Meetings 243

Note: Points represent the estimates of the log-odds ratio of using a specific topic for Conservative Euroskeptics relative to Europhiles, along with 95% confidence bands. Estimates of the specific hypothesized effects are larger. Points in the grey shaded area mean that the topic was used more extensively by Euroskeptics. Numbers are the joint count of utterances on the topic for both factions.

Figure 4.8: Log-Odds of Using Topics on European Integration For Tory MPs

membership affects the rhetoric of Labour MPs in a predictable way. Regardless of their level of support for the European project, they are all more likely to use social frames, i.e. Employment/Social and Production & Agriculture frames of the issue relative to Tories. Similarly, Euroskeptics from both sides of the aisle are more likely to use nationalistic/sovereignty frames relative to Europhilic MPs. Finally, the rhetoric of Tory Europhiles is mostly influenced by their membership in government, as is evident by their relatively high likelihood of using functional frames.
While informative, these binary comparisons cannot succinctly summarize the overall variation in the 18 frames/components of the European integration issue. In order to reduce the dimensionality of this data and place factions/parties on a unified scale I use principal component analysis. Based on the preceding analysis, we should expect two meaningful components to account for the variance in frame use. These component should represent ideological differences between Euroskeptics and Europhiles, as well as between the parties. Components loadings are presented in table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/Frame</th>
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<th>Component 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Reports</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers of European Parliament</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maastricht</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiarity</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Policies</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Policies</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maastricht Technical</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production and Agriculture</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-EU Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment/Social</td>
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<td>-0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monetary Convergence</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Components’ proportion of total variance are in parentheses.

Figure 4.9 summarizes the principal component analysis results. In these figures, I place factions and parties on a two dimensional space, corresponding to the component (for example, the PHILE faction in the figure represents the weighted factors’ scores of Europhiles, aggregated across both parties. LAB is the weighted aggregation of factors’ scores for Labour’s Europhilie and Euroskeptic factions.) The arrows represent the respective frames’ loadings on each dimension.

\[ I \text{ use varimax rotation.} \]
Note: symbol sizes are proportional to the share of faction/party in overall number of utterances. Locations of parties and factions are a weighted average of their factor scores by groups’ relative share of utterances.

Figure 4.9: Dimensions of European Integration

Along the horizontal axis (a dimension capturing 70% of the variance) of figure 4.9 the frames that have the lowest (negative) loadings on this component are Fiscal Policies (taxation and spending), two national/sovereignty frames: Subsidiarity and Citizenship. These are followed by the Maastricht and Monetary convergence frames. In contrast, two functional/procedural frames (EU Meetings and Financial Reports) are the frames with the highest positive loadings, followed by UK-EU Economic Cooperation. This dimension clearly captures the Euroskeptic/Europhile distinction. On the one hand, Euroskeptic factions’ scores indicate the nationalistic views and objections to Maastricht. On the other, Europhile factions highlight their views of working within the European project.
I characterize this as a “Nationalism & Anti-Fiscal Integration vs. European Governance” dimension.

Along the vertical axis (22% of the variance), the frames with the highest loadings are procedural frames such as EU Policies, Maastricht Technical and EU meetings. On the negative pole, the strongest frames are Employment/Social, Production & Agriculture, Elections, and UK-EU economic Cooperation. Two of these frames (Social and Production) capture traditional Labour concerns. The other two (Elections and UK-EU Cooperation) capture Labour’s vision of an integrated Europe. This dimension separates Europhiles from both parties. I characterize this dimension as “Egalitarianism & Cooperation vs. European Government Procedures”.

4.5 Discussion and conclusions

A number of findings emerge from the analysis of voting and rhetoric in the 1992-1997 session of the House of Commons. First, using a two dimensional optimal classification model, I show that MPs from the ruling Conservative party and the Labour opposition were clustered in similar coordinates along a dimension that is oblique to the traditional left-right continuum. These “rebels” are generally Euroskeptics, members of both the government and the opposition who voted (sincerely) against the wishes of their respective parties’ leadership. Thus, this dimension captures the fact that the emergent issue of European integration is a double-wedge issue, cutting across both parties. This suggests that in terms of voting, the Labour opposition was not likely to attack the Conservatives over the issue of Europeanization, and that a wedge issue strategy was not a feasible one.

I them use a latent Dirichlet allocation model to classify all the utterances spoken by MPs in debates over European integration. This enables me to compare partisan rhetoric across parties and party-factions. I test hypotheses regarding the relative rhetorical emphases of parties and factions, and by implication, their positions on the multiple dimensions of the European integration issue. On the one hand, the findings I obtain from the rhetorical analysis reinforce the results

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1 Most of the utterances classified as “Elections” deal with electoral districting issues, and selection of representatives to supranational institutions.
obtained from analysis of voting. Put succinctly, the issue of European integration is cross-cutting, that is, it cuts across both main parties. However, the analysis of rhetoric demonstrates exactly how both the government and opposition are split, and consequentially, why the opposition cannot use the Europeanization as a wedge issue, as the wedge issue literature posits. In addition, the results of the rhetorical analysis reveal that MPs choices of frames are a function of an interaction involving their partisan affiliation, their support for European integration and their party seniority. Further, as other scholars have noted, I find empirical evidence of the complexity of the European integration issue, involving mainly pre-materialist (nationalistic) and materialist (economic) and to a lesser extent post-materialist (cooperational) aspects.

Specifically, partisan rhetorical emphases was shown to be conditional on party affiliation: Labour MPs are highly likely to address European integration using social frames, regardless of their level of support for the European project. Second, regardless of party affiliation, Euroskeptic MPs are highly likely to frame European integration in terms of British nationhood, citizenship and political sovereignty. They are also likely to emphasize the problematic aspects of monetary convergence. Third, Tory Euroskeptics are likely to criticize European integration by emphasizing fiscal frames. Fourth, Labour Europhiles are likely to address Europeanization by emphasizing intra-governmental cooperation. Finally, Conservative Europhiles’ discourse of Europeanization is characterized by functional/procedural frames, reflecting their frontbench status and their role in European integration negotiations.

Given the complexity of the European integration issues, factor analysis techniques were helpful in reducing the dimensionality of the rhetorical data and place parties/factions on a common scale. The main dimension within the issue of European integration was found to cut across both parties, pitting Euroskeptic nationalists and opponents of monetary unification versus Europhiles from both parties, who are concerned with different visions of working within the European Union. The fact that nationalistic frames are characteristic of Skeptics from both traditional right and left is in accordance with recent literature (112).

The second dimension was found to separate Europhiles, with Labour MPs focusing on egalitarian (i.e. social, electoral, cooperational) aspects of Europeaniza-
tion, while Tories were limited to focusing on functional/procedural rhetoric, due to their participation in government.

These results complement the extant literature on wedge-issue politics. Most importantly, they demonstrate clearly that cross-cutting, complex issues cannot be used in wedge-issues tactics by the opposition. Within the context of European party politics, this chapter shows that even when the party system is composed mainly of two large mainstream parties, these parties host both supporters and opponents of the European project, and thus the “depoliticization” of the issue within mainstream parties is impossible. Last, in contrast to (97), this detailed analysis of party rhetoric shows that in the case of a complex, cross-cutting issue, party leadership is not always able to muffle the issue and suppress dissent.

This chapter seeks to contribute to a number of debates. First, it adds to our understanding of the strategic use (or lack thereof) of wedge issues by opposition parties. When opposition parties are themselves threatened by new issues, opposition-government dynamic alone cannot explain party strategy. In these cases, extant political ideologies interact with the positions all legislators occupy on the new dimension of conflict. Whether these new positions are related to their preferences on other dimensions is an empirical question. In the case of European integration, while some new economic aspects were related to it, and could be explained by positions on the left-right continuum, others were not. In particular, pre materialist concerns were found to be oblique to the left-right scale. This configuration prevented the opposition from mounting a wedge issue assault on the government.

Second, the chapter demonstrates the advantages of combining quantitative analysis of votes and rhetoric in order to improve our understanding of parliamentary parties’ strategies, and the dimensionality of the political agenda. While studying votes has become the workhorse of legislative studies, adding analysis of rhetoric can shed light on the intricacies of political ideas and on an additional arena of oppositional politics.

Finally, the chapter adds to our understanding of the issue of European integration. It is important to understand the complexity of the issues underlying the political conflict in Europe, especially when the future of the Union seems
unclear. The findings highlight the difficulties European leaders are facing as they try to form new coalitions and handle an issue composed of important economic, nationalistic and post-materialist aspects.

4.6 Appendix

4.6.1 LDA using Gibbs sampling and variational methods

The main problem in computing the posterior distribution, that is, the joint distribution of topics and words, is that computing the marginal probability of words entails summation of the joint distribution of words under each possible topic structure. Since the number of words is very large, this sum is intractable to compute.

Two sampling algorithms are generally used to overcome this issue: Gibbs and variational methods. The Gibbs sampler is based on constructing a Markov chain which is defined on the topic variables, and the algorithm collects samples from the limiting distribution. The posterior is then approximated using these samples. Variational methods offer a parameterized family of distributions over the hidden topical structure and then find the member of the family that is closest to the true posterior based on the Kullback-Leibler divergence criterion.\footnote{In this optimization procedure the problematic marginal probability of words can be ignored. See \cite{113}.}

Choosing the number of topics

After pre-processing and preparing the data, model selection with respect to the number of topics is possible by splitting the data into training and test data sets. Specifically, I perform 10-fold crossvalidation on the data, changing the number of topics from 6 to 60 and choosing the number of topics based on the criterion of perplexity. In natural language processing, perplexity can be thought of as the ability of the model to predict the next word or words in a document. In the process of model evaluation, “better” models assign higher probabilities for unseen words that actually appear in the held-out data.
Figure 4.10: Perplexity Estimates

Figure 4.10 demonstrates that at least in the case of the model using variational expectation maximization, the best model in terms of perplexity is a 22 topic model. An additional advantage of this model relative to the Gibbs model is that it does not specify the $\alpha$ parameter of the Dirichlet distribution, but rather it is estimated from the data. The $\alpha$ parameter is related to the sparsity of topics within documents, where lower $\alpha$ values indicate that documents are composed of a lower number of topics. The $\alpha$ estimated for this model is 0.09, much lower than the $\alpha$ specified before estimating the model by the analyst.
Model validity

In order to establish model validity it is useful to examine the correspondence between the clustering of utterances to topics and external events. To this aim, Figure 4.11 presents the topics utterances that were classified as “Maastricht” or as “Maastricht Technical”

**Daily Counts of Utterances Primarily Classified as "Maastricht"**

![Graph showing daily counts of Maastricht utterances over time]

**Note:** Each point represents the daily number of utterances classified as “Maastricht and Britain” or as “Maastricht Technical” by the LDA model.

**Figure 4.11:** Maastricht Utterances over time
The fact that the model classifies a large number of utterances as related to the Maastricht in days in which the House of Commons had debates related to events such as the Danish referendum on Maastricht and *Black Wednesday* should increase our confidence in the validity of model.
The Many Faces of the Opposition: Policy Shocks and Parliamentary Parties’ Behavior

“For government, there is no equivalent to the legal right of silence.”
(Norton 1993, 332)

5.1 Introduction

The government-opposition dichotomy is arguably the most fundamental construct in our understanding of parliamentary politics. It is based on the simple principle that during their time out of office, opposition parties use their political resources to monitor, and to a lesser extent, control government policies. In this chapter I challenge this basic understanding of ‘opposition’ on two counts. First, I argue and demonstrate that if the role of the opposition is to monitor governmental policies, then, after a policy shock and during times of austerity measures, it is actually junior members of the coalition who oppose, at times more than the formal opposition. Second, the analysis shows that the behavior of opposition parties is multi-faceted. Specifically, there exists a sharp distinction between the
behavior of system-parties and anti-political establishment parties.\textsuperscript{1} In contrast to former, anti-political-establishment parties (henceforth APE parties) do not use their resources in parliament to monitor specific governmental policies, but are more prone to use them for other partisan purposes. However, I find suggestive evidence indicating that this difference is less pronounced after a policy shock followed by electoral success. Under these conditions, APE parties behave more like system-parties.

The analysis is based on a new dataset comprised of all the oral parliamentary questions and interpellations (PQs) that took place in the Greek parliament during the 2007-2012 period. My analysis focuses on parliamentary questions, because they are one of the main venues of legislative-oppositional politics, and are crucial for the ability of the opposition to monitor the actions of the government\textsuperscript{11}. Questions vary in terms of their goals, procedures, and style, but the overarching purpose of PQs is that of signalling. That is, they enable the party/legislator who raises the question to send a message to other political actors indicating what his priorities are. Thus, these questions provide an valuable venue for studying parties’ ideologies and political strategies.

In order to test the ways in which parties use PQs, I employ a new method of quantitative text analysis, the Factor Analytic Topicky model (FAT)\textsuperscript{26}. This technique offers an intuitive way of classifying questions into topics, based on the distribution of words in the corpus. Along with information regarding the timing of the question, and the partisan affiliation of the MP asking the question, the topical content of PQs is proven useful in testing hypotheses regarding party behavior.

The analysis leads to a number of findings. First, I find that after policy shocks\textsuperscript{23}, the behavior of legislative parties no longer follows the expectations derived from the simple, dichotomous, government-opposition model. Specifically, I argue that policy shocks—the economic crisis and the strict memoranda signed between Greek governments and the European Union—led to a significant decline

\textsuperscript{1} Throughout the chapter I use the term system-parties to contrast these with anti-political-establishment parties.
in the policy latitude of the main Greek parties (the Conservative New Democracy party and PASOK - the Panhellenic Socialist Movement).

These policy shocks have led to ideological convergence between moderate left and right parties, culminating in the formation of two grand coalition governments. However, formal cooperation between these parties also led to increased need for policy differentiation and policy monitoring between coalition partners, especially in times of unpopular austerity policies. The analysis of PQs reveals that while serving as junior partners in these grand coalitions, coalition parties increase their use of this oppositional weapon. While this behavior challenges the binary understanding of parliamentary politics, it does follow the logic of the coalition oversight model, whereby coalition parties use legislative resources to monitor their partners, and of blame avoidance theory.

Second, I find that there exists a striking difference in the usage of PQs between system-parties and APE parties. APE parties are radical populist parties, which reject the establishment and the ‘political class’. Specifically, APE parties are prone to using their PQs for partisan purposes, while system-parties use are more likely questions to gain information and seek answers to specific issues. However, I find suggestive evidence indicating that this behavior is attenuated after policy shocks that offer an opportunity for electoral success.

The chapter proceeds as follows: in the next sections I review the literature on parliamentary questions and the Greek party system. I then motivate the analysis by focusing on the concept of policy shock its effect on party competition, and

1 Specifically, in May 2010 the Socialist Greek government agreed to the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, stipulating that in order to receive an amount of €80 billion over three years, Greek governments will tighten their budgets aiming to reduce the deficit below 3% of GDP in 2014, achieve a downward trajectory in the public debt-GDP ratio in 2013, stabilize the financial system, and implement structural reforms. In February 2012 the Greek government (a technocratic government supported by a grand coalition of right and left wing parties, led by former banker Lucas Papademos) signed the Second Economic Adjustment Programme, emphasizing implementation of fiscal consolidation and growth-enhancing structural reforms agreed under the programme and conditioning the continuation of financial assistance on the implementation of austerity policies.

2 More specifically, APE parties “describe one specific conflict as society’s fundamental cleavage: the conflict between the ‘ruled’ and the ‘rulers’, or alternatively, the conflict between audience and politics, voters and parties, citizens and politicians, society and state, electorate and elected, (silent) majority and elite, people and political establishment...The semantic clothing may vary but the basic message remains the same: public officials form an anti-popular coalition; they have degenerated into a political class”.

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discuss how this concept can be used to analyze political developments in the
Greek party system over the last five years. In the following sections I review
data and statistical issues, followed by hypotheses testing. Finally, I discuss the
results and conclude.

5.2 Parliamentary questions as an oppositional Tool

Parliamentary questions are an important resource for legislative parties. In
terms of their institutional intent, PQs are a legislative tool used to monitor, gain
information from, and to a lesser extent, control the actions of the government
(116, 117, 118). Among others, (185) discusses PQs as being used for a
number of goals:

1. Gain access to information

2. Gain personal publicity (for the asking MP)

3. Demand explanations

4. Pressure for action

5. Attack ministers

6. Show concern for constituencies

7. Demonstrate the government’s faults

8. Rally the troops within an opposition

Roughly, these goals can be divided into those that fall under the institutional
intent of PQs, and those that might serve other purposes. Similarly, (58) makes an
important contribution by distinguishing between information seeking questions
and partisan ‘questions’. While the former type is actually used by MPs to
elicit a response that might help a particular cause, or gain specific information
about government policies, the latter may be used by the asking MP to make
a political statement. Thus, rather than being a tool with which to monitor
government policies, partisan PQs are used to emphasize the ideological position
of the asking MP.

Recent empirical research of PQs has moved beyond description and classification. Rather, these contributions focus on the strategic use of PQs by opposition parties. For example, (119) finds that opposition parties are more likely to raise questions on issues they own when the news is bad (for the government). Similarly, focusing on the Danish parliament, (114) demonstrates that opposition parties raise questions based on issue ownership. While these works are important to our understanding of the uses of PQs, these scholars have not explicitly
taken into account the different strategies legislators can employ by using PQs,
nor have they considered strategies interact with party types.

In addition, the literature has paid scant attention to the ways in which parlia-
mentary questions can be used by members of government. (48, 219) rationalizes
this lack of attention by arguing that “the role of controlling the executive has
been removed from the House as a whole and invested in the Opposition, whose
capacity to control even a government with a moderate majority is strictly lim-
ited.” The logic underlying Wiberg’s assertion is that all coalition parties have a
interest in keeping some issues away from public scrutiny. As I argue in the fol-
lowing section, this is not always the case. Coalition governments might include
parties that have incentives to use PQs in a way that is similar to that of the
opposition.

5.3 The Greek party system

Since the late 1970s, the Greek party system has been dominated by classic
center-right and center-left pro-establishment parties with the Panhellenic So-
cialist Movement (PASOK) dominating the political scene and the New Democ-

\footnote{For exceptions focusing on Austria, see (120, 121).}

\footnote{While after the fall of the military dictatorship, the Greek party system was characterized
by a multi-polarity. This multi-polar competition reflected both extreme forces and a
number of moderate parties. At the left pole there were two Communist parties: a Stalinist
and a Eurocommunist one. The right constituted of the New Democracy and the National
Front. PASOK and the Union of Democratic Center occupied the center.}
Thus, the Greek system, with a reinforced proportional representation electoral system, a low number of parties, and high frequency of one-party majority governments, fits the majoritarian model of democracy (124).

However, the dominance of mainstream powers was diminished after the 2007 election, in which the extreme right-wing Popular Orthodox Rally party (LAOS) gained 10 parliamentary seats, and the left, composed of the KKE and a new left-wing list, the Coalition of the Radical Left - Unitary Social Front (SYRIZA), increasing their power, gaining 22 and 14 seats respectively. What’s more, both LAOS and SYRIZA are APE parties (115). Schedler’s defines these parties as parties that defy the government-opposition dichotomy. “Their strategy is one of symbolic de-differentiation. They recode the universe of political actors as a homogeneous political class. The central anti-political equation reads government = opposition.” (115 : 295, emphasis added). In this regard, the Greek party system during the second half of the previous decade can be characterized as moving toward the multiparty system with a dominant party type.

We can therefore divide the Greek party system of the twenty first century into two camps: in one camp we find established, systemic, mainstream parties (ND, PASOK, and to a limited extent KKE), and in the other we find the new APE parties. As will be seen, these parties have adjusted differently to the policy shock generated by the economic crisis.

5.4 The effects of policy shocks on system-parties’ strategy

Figure 5.1 presents a two dimensional ideological space. The two dimensions are the classic economic right-left continuum, and an anti-system dimension. Thus, the closer a party/voter is to the right pole of the figure, the more it supports neo-liberal economic policies, and opposes Socialist economic policies. Moving

---

1In addition, the Pro-Soviet Communist party (KKE), occupied the extreme left but did not exert real influence upon the party system and governance (124), apart from brief participation in the leftist coalition government (June 1989 to April 1990).

2See, for example (125)
to the vertical axis, the closer a party/voter is to the upper pole, the more it identifies with anti-establishment elements, relative to the pro-system, bottom edge of the figure.

Figure 5.1: A two dimensional ideological schema—prior to a policy shock

Figure 5.1 captures the political reality before a policy shock. Following (23, 37), I define policy shocks as “exogenous shocks that perturb party positions in major policy jurisdictions.” A major policy shock is presented in figure 5.2. This policy shock makes the third quadrant, that is, the Socialist systemic range of policies, unviable. Put differently, a party affiliated with these ideals would find

---

1 In the case of European party systems, one can also assume that the upper part of the figure represents Euro-skepticism.
it impossible to implement them if it gains power.

Two dimensional ideological space after a policy shock

Anti system continuum

Anti system
Socialism

Anti system
Neo–Liberalism

Left–Right continuum
(economic policies)

Systemic
Socialism

Systemic
Neo–Liberalism

Figure 5.2: A two dimensional ideological schema—the direct effect of a policy shock on system-parties

Thus, under this scenario, a Socialist system-party would be forced to move towards the neo-liberal pole of the economic policy continuum. This move has important implications in terms of competition between system-parties. On the one hand, increased ideological affinity between these parties raises the likelihood of political cooperation, i.e., a grand coalition (126).

On the other hand, electoral motivations and blame avoidance (62) generate strong incentives for differentiation among coalition partners. This is because parties that serve as junior partners in austerity governments are inclined to differentiate themselves from other parties in government, who might be viewed as
chiefly responsible for unpopular policies. One way to increase differentiation between coalition members is to use oppositional tools. In addition, according to the coalition governance literature, parties in coalitions use various oversight mechanisms ranging from appointments of deputy ministers and committee members, to political communication (legislative speeches) to monitor the actions of their coalitional members, and signal their positions to other political actors. Similarly, junior coalition partners can thus use PQs in order to signal their disapproval of certain governmental policies, inquire information, and monitor the implementation of policies.

The Greek economic crisis, and the strict conditionality associated with the bailout packages agreed upon by Greek governments and the EU, had changed the policy space available for ruling parties. Bailout deals are an extreme form of a policy shock. In turn, there is no doubt that these agreements affected parties’ policies and spatial locations. This led to the formation of two grand coalitions. In the first case, it was an interim technocratic government that took office in November 2011 and ruled until the election of May 2012, backed by PASOK and ND. The second (current) grand coalition is being led by ND and includes PASOK and Democratic Left (DL) party as minor partners. Both coalition were committed to painful and unpopular austerity policies. Thus, while in coalition during austerity, we can expect junior coalition members to increase their use of PQs:

**Hypothesis 1 (coalition oversight): Parties serving as junior partners during austerity will increase their usage of parliamentary questions.**

---

1 For example, in their analysis of party manifestos, (129) find that as policy commitments derived from EU membership increase, the policy space of governing parties become more constrained.

2 The prime minister was the economist and former Governor of the Bank of Greece, Lucas Papademos. LAOS also joined the government but withdrew from it on February 10, over its objection to the terms of the loan-agreement with the Troika.

3 Clearly, at least partially we can attribute these grand coalitions to basic blame avoidance tactics. The incorporation of multiple parties into government makes it difficult to identify the party responsible for welfare retrenchment. This tactic is especially apparent in the 2011 government, in which the prime minister was not drawn from the parties’ ranks.
5.5 The effects of policy shocks on anti-political-establishment parties’ strategy

Policy shocks generally do not have a direct effect on the policies proposed by APE parties, since they advance policies that are unviable under the democratic system. Therefore, initially we should not expect movements in response to a policy shock. In fact, since these parties oppose the political establishment, they are expected to continue and “deploy aggressive, confrontational styles of opposition. Their rhetoric, framed with metaphors of fighting and war, is hard and uncompromising. Undiplomatic attacks, the crude harshness of popular language, insult, ridicule and the transgression of minimal rules of courtesy...” (115, 299).

In terms of oppositional politics, APE parties should continue to employ higher rates of partisan questions over information seeking questions; that is, they are expected to continue to use PQs as a venue to make partisan statements rather than gain information.

Hypothesis 2 (anti-political-establishment parliamentary questions): APE parties are more likely to use partisan questions than system-parties.

However, eventually, the policy shock might have an indirect effect on some APE parties. Notice that the rightward movement of the Socialist system-party (figure 5.2), creates an electoral opportunity for Socialist APE parties. This is because voters who previously identified with the Socialist system-party, are now distant from their original party, currently located in the neo-liberal quadrant of the ideological space. In turn, this creates an incentive for the Socialist APE to moderate its behavior, i.e. to move toward the system pole of the vertical axis. This scenario is presented in figure 5.3.

If indeed the opportunity to gain additional Socialist votes leads to ideological moderation by Socialist APE parties, then we should see a change in the SYRIZA’s use of PQs. Specifically, it should increase its relative use of information seeking PQs.
Figure 5.3: A two dimensional ideological schema—the indirect effect of a policy shock on APE parties

Hypothesis 3: Over time, SYRIZA is expected to increase its use of information seeking PQs relative to partisan PQs.

5.6 Data

The raw data, consisting of 1,014 daily parliamentary sessions ranging from July 2007 to December 2012, were retrieved from the records of the Greek parliament. The Greek parliament stores its daily discussions (in Greek) using a variety of
formats (various types of .PDF and .doc files). In order to unify the format of the raw data, I use computer scripts and convert all the documents into .txt format. In the next stage of pre-processing, I use python scripts to scrape all the oral parliamentary questions and interpellations from daily discussions. More specifically, each question in the dataset generally starts with the minister answering the question, followed by the ensuing discussion between a number of MPs. The question ends when the chair of the house moves to a different topic on the agenda. This yields 2,815 oral PQs, tagged by the partisan affiliation of the MP asking the question. In order to prepare the data for the FAT model, the final stage of data pre-processing consists of generating a vocabulary of the 10,000 most frequent words in the corpus, and using the vocabulary to generate the $2,815 \times 10,000$ document-term matrix, which includes 8,231,981 words.\footnote{In procedural terms, PQs in the Greek parliament are well-suited for studying parties’ strategies since a minister cannot refuse to answer a question, nor can he choose the form of the question, nor the time of the answer. In addition, follow up questions are permitted (both by the asking MP and other MPs) \cite{15} 202). These procedures imply that Greek MPs are free (relative to MPs in other parliaments) in their use of PQs.}
Note: Bars represent the number of questions asked by a given party in a specific month divided by the number of legislative seats held by the party.

Figure 5.4: Average Monthly PQ Use by Party, October 2007 - May 2010
As a first overview of PQs data, it is useful to examine the over-time variation of PQ usage across parliamentary parties. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 present the monthly average of PQ usage by party (number of PQs asked per month divided by the number of seats the party holds in parliament). As can be seen, parties on the extreme left (SYRIZA, KKE) and right (LAOS, Golden Dawn, Independent Greeks), tend to ask a higher number of questions relative to the number of seats they hold in the parliament. This is in line with other work, which finds a positive relationship between speaking time in American House and ideological extremism (1, 3). After the electoral failure of the nationalist LAOS in 2012, the ultra-nationalist Golden Dawn takes over in terms of high rate of question asking. In addition, the figures suggest that question asking is indeed more prevalent by opposition parties. For example, while in government (2007-2009), ND rarely ever used PQs, but it started using them after its loss in the 2009 election. We also see a similar trend in PASOK’s use of PQ’s, namely a sharp decline in their use of PQs after their electoral victory in 2009.

It is also useful to inspect the *party specific* monthly PQ average, conditional on party type and the identify of party/parties in power. Figure 5.6 provides this information for the two right-wing APE parties, LAOS and Golden Dawn. Both LAOS and Golden Dawn tend to use the PQs tool frequently, with an overall average of 0.75 and 0.44 PQs per MP per month, respectively. Last, there are not any discernable differences in LAOS’ PQs behavior between periods of moderate right and moderate left in power.

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1 Note that LAOS did not pass the electoral threshold in the June 2012 elections. Presumably at least some of the nationalist party’s past voters, votes in 2012 for the Neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, which was able to enter the parliament for the first time.
Figure 5.5: Average Monthly PQ Use by Party, June 2010 - December 2012

Figure 5.5 presents the PQ behavior of left parties, KKE and SYRIZA. Both parties tend to use PQs quite frequently (an overall mean of 0.44 and 0.56, respectively). Interestingly, while KKE’s PQs behavior is stable, we see a sharp decline in SYRIZA’s usage in PQs after the elections in June 2012.

Note: Bars represent the number of questions asked by a given party in a specific month divided by the number of legislative seats held by the party.
Average Number of Parliamentary Questions Over Time — Right-Wing Parties

Note: Bars represent the number of questions asked by a given party in a specific month divided by the number of legislative seats held by the party. The party mean for the entire 2007-2012 period is represented by the superimposed grey line. Colors represent party in power: (from left to right) the area shaded dark blue represents ND’s government. The green shaded area represents PASOK’s government. The gray area represents Lucas Papademos’ technocratic government. The white area represents the interelection period of 2012 (May-June). The area shaded light blue represents the grand coalition including ND, PASOK, and Democratic Left.

Figure 5.6: Right-Wing APE parties PQ behavior over Time

Figure 5.8 presents the monthly behavior of system-parties, ND and PASOK. Regarding ND, the figure reveals a clear opposition-government contrast in terms of PQs’ use. During its time in power (2007-2009), ND’s MPs generally refrained from asking questions. This stands in stark contrast to their behavior during PASOK’s time in office (2009-2011), in which they tended to ask approximately 0.15-0.2 monthly questions per MP, significantly more than the party’s overall average of 0.09. Interestingly, ND continues to exhibit a relatively high average
Figure 5.7: Left-Wing Parties PQ Behavior over Time

Number of PQs during the technocratic government period (November 2011-May 2012). After forming the second grand coalition with PASOK (June 2012), we see a slight, expected decline in ND’s PQs’ use. Inspection of PASOK’s PQs behavior reveals that during ND’s term in power (2007-2009) PASOK—being the largest opposition party—had generally asked more questions than during its time in office (2009-2011). However, during the grand coalition period (June-December 2012),
the figure suggests an additional increase in the average number of questions asked by PASOK.

Note: Bars represent the number of questions asked by a given party in a specific month divided by the number of legislative seats held by the party. The party mean for the entire 2007-2012 period is represented by the superimposed grey line. Colors represent party in power: (from left to right) the area shaded dark blue represents ND’s government. The green shaded area represents PASOK’s government. The gray area represents Lucas Papademos’ technocratic government. The white area represents the interelection period of 2012 (May-June). The area shaded light blue represents the grand coalition including ND, PASOK, and Democratic Left.

Figure 5.8: Moderate Parties PQ behavior over Time

To sum, the raw data demonstrate two important points: First, as expected by the basic government-opposition model, and following their institutional intent, overall, opposition parties use PQs more than parties in power. Second, APE parties (and the communist KKE) use PQs more than moderate left and right
5.7 Analysis

5.7.1 Coalition oversight hypothesis

I now turn to testing the first hypothesis. Recall that the coalition oversight hypothesis states that system parties, while serving as junior partners in austerity governments are expected to increase their overall usage of PQs. In order to test the hypothesis, I compare the behavior of these parties (ND, who joined PASOK in November 2011 and PASOK, who joined ND in July 2012) during their partnerships in grand coalitions (November 2011-May 2012 and July 2012-December 2012, respectively), to (1) their behavior as opposition parties, and (2) their behavior during their tenure either in one-party governments or as the leaders of a coalition government (which is the baseline category in the statistical model). The dependent variable is the monthly number of PQs parties had asked during the 2007-2012 period. In order to take account for the number of parliamentary seats the party controlled in the assembly, I use the number of their respective MPs as an offset variable. Since my data are overdispersed, I use a flexible quasi-Poisson model, which, as opposed to poisson, also estimates the dispersion parameter. The results are presented in table 5.1.

The statistical models provide strong support for the coalition oversight hypothesis. The magnitude of the coalition oversight effect for PASOK is especially striking. In the case of PASOK, being a minor member of a grand coalition is significantly related to a much higher average number of questions. As a minor coalition member, PASOK’s average rate of PQs is 0.22 per month, relative to 0.11 in the opposition and 0.06 as a leader of a government. Put differently, as a junior coalition partner in the austerity government PASOK is more ‘oppositional’ than the opposition. The magnitude of the results with regards to ND is smaller, but they are in the hypothesized direction. While as government leaders

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1 This estimation strategy leads to the same coefficient estimates as the standard Poisson model, but standard errors is adjusted for over-dispersion.
Table 5.1: Coalition oversight hypothesis: PASOK and ND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parameter</th>
<th>PASOK</th>
<th>ND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Partner in Grand Coalition</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.33)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Party</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>-2.72</td>
<td>-4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.37)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\tau)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(N=53\). Standard errors in parentheses

ND’s MPs are expected to ask 0.01 monthly questions on average, they are expected to 0.03 as minor members of a government coalition and 0.06 as opposition members.

The current grand coalition includes an additional party, the moderate left-wing DL. Since the party was founded in June 2010 and first participated in the May 2012 election, we cannot compare its performance while serving in the grand coalition to other periods. However, one way to make an approximate inference about its behavior is to subject it to a difficult test, by comparing its behavior as a junior coalition member to that of all parties while in opposition. The monthly average for Democratic Left is 0.57 PQs, while the grand mean of all parties in opposition during the 2007-2012 period is 0.31 PQs (which is of course much higher than that of governing parties). Thus, like PASOK, also in the case of DL, behavior during membership in the austerity government is characterized by increasing rates of PQs, relative to the opposition.

5.7.2 Anti-political-establishment hypotheses

In order to present the statistical tests of the second and third hypotheses, I first review the FAT model results. Recall that this is a topic-model, used to classify
the 2786 PQs into factors, based on the covariance of words in these questions. The statistical model thus assigns to each word a loading, based on its correlation with underlying factor, as well as a score for each document, indicating how characteristic it is of a given factor. Table 5.2 presents the loadings’ results of the 21 factor FAT model, that is, the 10 words that most highly correlate with the latent ‘topics’.

Inspection of table 5.2 reveals that most factors correspond to Greek government ministries, along with a number of other factors, such as nationalism, crisis and games. This lends support to the validity of model results, as well as to the number of factors I chose to use. Simply put, a topic model of parliamentary questions should reflect the purpose of PQs. Here, the model highlights that most questions are used to signal the interest of the party asking the question in a particular issue, and calling on the relevant minister to provide information to the parliament.

In addition, the correspondence between the factors identified by the model and government ministries provides a way to differentiate between information seeking PQs and partisan PQs. Questions that are classified by the model as belonging to a factor that corresponds to a specific policy area (i.e. a ministry) are likely to be information seeking. On the other hand, questions that are classified into factors that do not correspond to specific ministries, are likely to be partisan.

---

1 Note that I use the concepts factor and topic interchangeably. Topic is the term used in computational linguistics to refer to a group a words that characterize a group of documents such that ‘it makes sense’ to classify these documents as belonging to a topic. Factor is the factor analytic term to describe the latent variable which is correlated with the observed variables.

2 See appendix 3 for a review of the FAT model.

3 A more comprehensive version of table 5.2 can be found in appendix 1. Here I present only the 18 substantive factors.

4 Examples of characteristic PQs for all topics are found in appendix 2.
Table 5.2: Highest loadings words, 18 substantive topics (21 topic FAT model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>farming</th>
<th>health</th>
<th>police</th>
<th>schools</th>
<th>energy</th>
<th>employment</th>
<th>maritime</th>
<th>development</th>
<th>market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>farmers</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>police</td>
<td>schools</td>
<td>energy</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Ships</td>
<td>projects</td>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
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<td>energy</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>ferry</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>market</td>
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<td>police</td>
<td>schools</td>
<td>energy</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>shipping</td>
<td>projects</td>
<td>Markets</td>
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<td>police</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>renewable</td>
<td>Employment Agency</td>
<td>islands</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>price</td>
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<tr>
<td>producers</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>policeman</td>
<td>children</td>
<td>electricity</td>
<td>unemployment</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rural</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>criminality</td>
<td>teachers</td>
<td>energy</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Island</td>
<td>NSRF</td>
<td>Prices</td>
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<td>hospital</td>
<td>police</td>
<td>education</td>
<td>sources</td>
<td>unemployment</td>
<td>islanders</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Doctor</td>
<td>police</td>
<td>education</td>
<td>renewable</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>islanders</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>super</td>
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<td>producers</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>crime</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>ship</td>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>cartel</td>
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<td>police</td>
<td>educational</td>
<td>energy</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>Ship</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>inflation</td>
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<table>
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<th>universities</th>
<th>sports</th>
<th>conservation</th>
<th>prison</th>
<th>nationalism</th>
<th>crisis</th>
<th>livestock</th>
<th>defense</th>
<th>hospitals</th>
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<td>prison</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>Radical</td>
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<td>defense</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>feed</td>
<td>defense</td>
<td>hospitals</td>
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<td>BUNDLE</td>
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<td>prison</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>livestock</td>
<td>defensive</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>fires</td>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>countries</td>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>breeders</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
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<td>forest</td>
<td>prison</td>
<td>outdoor</td>
<td>Tsipra</td>
<td>livestock</td>
<td>industry</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>sports</td>
<td>fires</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>country</td>
<td>das</td>
<td>feed</td>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>call</td>
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<td>Sport</td>
<td>forest</td>
<td>Quote</td>
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<td>Korydallou</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
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<td>milk</td>
<td>industry</td>
<td>drugs</td>
</tr>
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<td>Yeroulanos</td>
<td>firefighters</td>
<td>penalty</td>
<td>Erdogan</td>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>milk</td>
<td>ELVO</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3: Question Topic and Greek Government Ministries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Parliamentary question topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Culture</td>
<td>schools, universities, nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs</td>
<td>schools, universities, nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Secretariat of State for Sports</td>
<td>sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Mercantile Marine</td>
<td>maritime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>prison, crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity</td>
<td>health, hospitals, crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Press and Mass Media</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Employment and Social Protection</td>
<td>employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Agriculture</td>
<td>farming, livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Public Order</td>
<td>police, crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance</td>
<td>market, crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry for the Environment and Physical Planning</td>
<td>development, conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of National Defense</td>
<td>defense, nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Development</td>
<td>development, energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Aegean Islands</td>
<td>maritime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Ministry of Transportation and Communications</td>
<td>maritime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3 demonstrates the close matching between most of the factors identified by the model and Greek government ministries. Note that two topics cannot be classified neatly into a limited number of ministries. These are crisis and nationalism. The highest loading words in the nationalism factor refer to foreign affairs, Greek culture, national symbols, diaspora, and identity. As for the topic of crisis, it contains references to SYRIZA party, to the social and economic aspects associated with memorandum policies, and to scandals. It is helpful to examine a sample of excerpts from PQs classified as belonging to these topics:

**Crisis**

1. Ladies and gentlemen, a huge political, economic, social and moral scandal. An attempt to cover a humiliating issue for the country, without punishing the perpetrators, the accomplices and collaborators of this immense real crime that has taken place against the Greek society...over 2 billion euro losses suffered by the Greek state from corruption, lack of transparency.

2. Ladies and gentlemen, meritocracy, transparency in the public sector, the protection of personal data are major objectives. Are these the principles and values that guide our choices, changes and reforms to promote. But it is at least inconsistent to denouncing the government and to systematically undermined the road that follows to achieve these objectives. As regards the allegations of the Ministry of Culture, I said and I repeat: The Justice, a series of investigations conducted, it is able to find what is the truth, to reveal what is behind all of these stories and the blame where it really belong.

3. What we live in today...The Greek citizen feels hunger at the gates, the insecurity of the crime and of course, an additional uncertainty if tomorrow he will retire.

4. And I ask you: Why were not all the necessary measures, to protect the insurance funds? Second, under what actuarial studies decided in cooperation with the troika to reduce major pensions? Third, why not sought alternative sources of funding financing of the social security system to prevent dramatic reductions in pensions? Finally, because yesterday you almost said that the Left has become Albania... I ask you the following: Balkanization of pensions is leading us towards a sustainable society?

---

1 Translated using Google translate.
Nationalism

1. The submissiveness of the Greek Government, Mr. Secretary, nourishes nationalism in Skopje. Yesterday the National Team suffered unprecedented Hazing at the border between Greece and Vardarska-Vardarska was the official name of Skopje until 1945, it sounds good, so can comfortably use it if they want, but no derivative or word Macedonia - and they was not allowed to enter. They were forced to bypass the Vardarska and go to Belgrade via Bulgaria.

2. Mr. Prime Minister, you go to Turkey and cause and lay a wreath at the monument of Mustafa Kemal Atatourk. Just yesterday I pushed MPs you submit a Declaration of the European Parliament for the recognition of the Pontian Genocide. On the one hand we talk about the biggest massacre of the last century and the other side you go to lay a wreath. It’s like you go the Israeli President to lay a wreath to Hitler. This is the story. We have millions dead, talk about genocide and we have recognized the genocide in here—but will force the protocol to go to offer wreath.

3. And your Government for the Foreign Minister, has clearly told that they would concede the name Macedonia in Skopje anyway. Already without saying anything and without getting any approval from the Greek people, handed over the name Macedonia. This, of course, is a matter of general government policy.

4. Which brings me, Prime Minister, on another topic. You know that Turkey is having an exercise upon the Ebro. Namely, bridging the River Ebro. It is not an aggressive act? Now we’re talking in the region of Orestiadas try to cross the Ebro and do exercise. All of this is what? For development of the peaceful spirit with the homeland?To know that the other side does not have, perhaps, the purity of intent that the Greek state demonstrates.

Overall, then, as opposed to clear information-seeking PQs, crisis and nationalism are pertinent to broad spectrum of topics. In addition, these PQs contain aspects of symbolic politics, associated with extreme partisanship. This differentiation provides me with a way of testing the second and third hypotheses. The expectation in the second hypothesis is that APE parties will be more likely to use partisan questions than system-parties. Thus, we are mainly interested in comparing the use of PQs that are classified as either crisis or nationalism, between APE parties and system-parties.

I order to test the relationship between party type and PQ type, I classify all 2,786 questions as significantly characteristic of a specific factor based on their factor scores\(^1\) I then cross-tabulate the significant PQs with the party initiating the question. Finally, I use these data to compare PQs use across parties.

Figure 5.9 presents the log-odds ratios of PQ usage. Specifically, the figure compares PQs use of LAOS and system-parties\(^2\) Importantly, as hypothesized,

---

1 A PQ is significant if its factor score is greater than 1.64.
2 The data for LAOS is an aggregation of LAOS and Golden Dawn’s PQs since LAOS did not pass the electoral threshold in 2012, and Golden Dawn took over as the right-wing APE.
Parliamentary questions’ use—LAOS & Golden Dawn relative to system–parties

Note: Points represent the log-odds ratios of using PQs that are classified as belonging to a specific factor (see y axis). Lines are 90% confidence bands. A point falling in the yellow rectangle implies that PQs classified as belonging to the corresponding factor are used more by LAOS. Conversely, a point falling in the white rectangle, implies that PQs classified as belonging to the corresponding factor are used more by system–parties.

Figure 5.9: Comparison of PQ use, LAOS and system–parties

the topic that most characterizes LAOS’ PQs is the partisan issue of nationalism. This issue is followed by the specific police issue. The third factor used mostly by LAOS relative to system–parties is, as hypothesized, the partisan issue of crisis. On the other hand, the topics that most characterize system–parties relative to LAOS are specific issues such as farming, development and livestock.

Figure 5.10 presents a comparison of PQ use between SYRIZA and system–parties. The results clearly support the second hypothesis. Both partisan issues,

1 Although a careful read of LAOS’ PQ classified as police reveals a great deal on negative references to immigrants.
Parliamentary questions’ use—SYRIZA relative to system−parties

Note: Points represent the log-odds ratios of using PQs that are classified as belonging to a specific factor (see y axis). Lines are 90% confidence bands. A point falling in the pink rectangle implies that PQs classified as belonging to the corresponding factor are used more by SYRIZA. Conversely, a point falling in the white rectangle, implies that PQs classified as belonging to the corresponding factor are used more by system-parties.

Figure 5.10: Comparison of PQ use, SYRIZA and system-parties

i.e. crisis and nationalism, are the ones that most characterize SYRIZA’s use of PQs relative to system-parties.

Overall, both SYRIZA and LAOS are characterized by high rates of using partisan PQs relative to system parties. In addition, the results presented in tables 5.9 and 5.10 highlight LAOS’ nationalistic ideology, and the fact that although SYRIZA is considered a left-wing party, its PQ use is characterized by a high degree of nationalism.\(^1\)

\(^1\) For work analyzing the convergence of extreme left and right in Europe, see for example (112).
Turning to the third hypothesis, recall that the expectation is that we will see an increase in SYRIZA’s relative use of information-seeking PQs over time. In order to capture these dynamics, I divide the FAT model output data into four periods. These correspond to the four ‘regimes’ during the 2007-2012 period: PASOK’s one party government, ND’s one party government, and the two grand coalitions. I then generate a standardized measure capturing parties’ PQs usage (taking into account party size and the length of the period in months).  

**Figure 5.11:** The dynamics of parliamentary questions use by SYRIZA

Note: Points represent the standardized counts of PQs per factor. Lines are 90% confidence bands.

1 More specifically, I aggregate the raw counts for each party $p$ in factor $k$, and divide those by the product of party size and number of months in period $t$. 

129
seeking factors (farming, development, energy, and employment), and dynamics in the use of nationalism and crisis.

During the first period, (October 2007-April 2009), the two most prominent factors in SYRIZA’s PQs are nationalism and crisis. While the salience of nationalism diminishes rapidly, the crisis factor remains the most salient throughout May 2012, but over this period, information-seeking questions dealing with employment become more salient. Finally, following the electoral success of June 2012, the salience of crisis diminishes and employment takes over as the most characteristic of SYRIZA’s PQs. A opposed to crisis, Employment PQs are highly specific, and generally refer to specific issues, in need of the minister’s attention. This evidence suggests that we are witnessing a gradual moderation in SYRIZA, at least with regard to its use of PQs. The results for SYRIZA are especially striking when compared with the dynamics in PQs use for other APE parties. As can be seen in figure 5.12, right-wing APE parties’ PQs do not follow the same path as SYRIZA’s. In the case of right-wing APE parties, nationalism remains the by far the most salient factor.

5.8 Conclusion

The general goal of this chapter is to show that the concept of opposition is complicated, on a number of counts. To do so, I discuss conditions that might lead to oppositional behavior while a party is serving in coalition. Specifically, I argue that after a policy shock that causes changes in parties policy positions and increases the likelihood of “unnatural” coalitions, junior coalition partners have incentives to behave like opposition. Furthermore, these incentives are magnified during periods of unpopular policies.

I focus on the Greek crisis and the ensuing austerity measures implemented by coalition governments, and analyze parliamentary questions—one of the main oppositional tools—and find strong evidence for oppositional behavior in the coalition. Specifically, during their tenure as junior coalition members, legislative parties increase their use of parliamentary questions. In most cases analyzed, they actually use the oppositional tool more than opposition parties.

1 See appendix 4 for figures presenting the other parties’ PQs dynamics.
Note: Points represent the standardized counts of PQs per factor. Lines are 90% confidence bands.

**Figure 5.12:** The dynamics of parliamentary questions use by LAOS and Golden Dawn

Theoretically, this phenomenon is in line with previous work (2, 61, 127, 128), which finds that coalition partners use various mechanisms to control and monitor each other, ranging from deputy ministers to legislative speeches. However, as (130) note, little research has been done on the use of parliamentary questions as an oversight mechanism of coalition partners. Second, given the unpopular policies the coalitions analyzed in this chapter oversee, the behavior of parties can also be explained by blame avoidance motivations (62), as junior partners in unpopular coalitions try to distance themselves from the electoral damage associated with austerity measures.\(^1\) Overall, this behavior by coalition members

\(^1\) Indeed, it is possible that I find a smaller effect for ND due to the fact that when it was a
is generated by the fact that on the one hand, they are in the governing coalition, and on the other, they need to distance themselves from their political partners. 

Second, I use parliamentary questions to show that the behavior of opposition parties themselves is multifaceted. While system-parties in opposition use parliamentary questions in accordance with its institutional intent, i.e. to acquire information and demand solutions for problems, anti-political-establishment parties utilize ‘questions’ to make partisan statements. I demonstrate this by focusing on two Greek anti-political-establishment parties, LAOS and SYRIZA. While past literature has analyzed the strategic use of parliamentary questions, I use a new text analysis method that offers new possibilities and precise ways to learn about the tactics involved in selecting the topic of the questions.

Third, based on the policy shock in Greece, I hypothesize that the ideological convergence between ND and PASOK (at the neo-liberal end of the economic spectrum), and the electoral opportunity this created for SYRIZA, might lead to a moderation in the Socialist APE party. Analysis of PQs shows suggestive evidence of that over time SYRIZA has increased its use of information seeking questions at the expenses of partisan questions. This behavior is consistent with system-parties and thus might indicate a gradual moderation, that is, a movement toward the system-parties camp.

How general are the results? The necessary conditions that would generate these exact behaviors are quite limiting. However, the concept of policy shocks is a useful analytical tool that can be used to identify ‘problematic’ coalitions. Second, future research should be focused on the use of parliamentary questions by coalition partners. Third, the growing literature on European APE parties can utilize both policy shocks and legislative rhetoric, to learn more about the dynamics of this important party type.

1 junior coalition member, the government was led by a non-politician, a fact which reduced the need for blame avoidance tactics.

1 A past paper of mine discusses a similar phenomenon in the post Communist case
5.9 Appendix 1: FAT Model Output

Figures 5.13 5.17 present the highest loadings words, estimated by the FAT model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words' Loadings, Factor 1-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>format changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>with our yet we have only a a can – my today point within not topic to we moment after do more we are non problem things yet We problems issue () we really issues my months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQ length</td>
</tr>
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<td>Abroad Vatopedi DOURANIA Abroad LYKODURENTZOS</td>
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<td>farming</td>
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<tr>
<td>farmers ELGA farmers Rural producers</td>
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<td>health</td>
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<tr>
<td>health hospitals Hospital System hospital System Doctor doctors Doctors patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Police police police policeman criminality police police police crime police police police robberies illegal immigrants Crime illegal immigrants immigrants migration immigrants immigration immigration terrorism thefts Security Greek Herbs Coast Aliens Alexs Greeks drugs Foreigners oxness narcotics crime border</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figure presents the top 35 loadings words for factors 1-5. Topics labels in bold.

**Figure 5.13**: FAT model loadings
Words’ Loadings, Factor 6–10

<table>
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<th>schools</th>
<th>energy</th>
<th>employment</th>
<th>maritime</th>
<th>development</th>
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<td>Ships</td>
<td>projects</td>
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<td>islands</td>
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<td>Gas</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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**Note:** Figure presents the top 35 loadings words for factors 6-10. Topics labels in bold.

**Figure 5.14:** FAT model loadings
### Words’ Loadings, Factor 11–15

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<td>students</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BUNDLE</td>
<td>forest</td>
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<td>students</td>
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<td>Games</td>
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<td>Sport</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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</table>

**Note:** Figure presents the top 35 loadings words for factors 11-15. Topics labels in bold.

**Figure 5.15:** FAT model loadings
Words’ Loadings, Factor 16−20

Factors 16−20

Note: Figure presents the top 35 loadings words for factors 16-20. Topics labels in bold.

Figure 5.16: FAT model loadings
Table 5.4-5.6 present the distributions of factor scores and loadings, along with characteristic words, and descriptive statistics. Inspection of the tables reveals that ‘topics’ one and two are different than other, informative topics. The distributions of these two ‘topics’ are the only ones with negative skewness values. In the case of ‘topic’ two we can explain this by observing that ‘topic’ actually captures PQ length ($r = -0.65$). Thus, since most of the PQs are of
moderate length, a low number of very short PQs give the distribution its left skew. In addition, note that ‘topic’ one is the only one whose scores have a bimodal probability density function.
Table 5.4: 21 FAT model results descriptive statistics (factors 1-7)
Table 5.5: 21 FAT model results descriptive statistics (factors 8-14)
Table 5.6: 21 FAT model results descriptive statistics (factors 15-21)
5.10 Appendix 2: Characteristic parliamentary questions

This section presents excerpts from PQ discussions that are characteristic of topics, along with the name of the party asking the question.

Farming

ND, 2011.2.11
“I have to mention things you mention. To come to power, tax everything to everyone. Farmers taxes increase farm income, reduce production costs, reduction of contributions to the ELGA and increased pensions...”

Health

PASOK, 2008.5.9
“Ladies and gentlemen, after some time we get in an organized health debate. The title of today we give timely query, I think it reflects the reality of Greek hospitals. The derailment of public hospitals, the undermining of their services, depreciation of supply and commercialization of public health goods...”

Police

LAOS, 2008.10.13
“And after a few days-and as I told you, Mr. Minister, you do visit the area-I did as a Member of the Popular Orthodox Rally, at the behest of President George Karatzaferi, visiting everyone there. And really our fellowmen are experiencing a fright. And because here we heard generally on immigration, we should know that in this country there are Greek citizens, taxpayers who have rights. If nothing else have the same human rights accorded to immigrants. Because the Greek citizen in Athens can neither his business to have, nor can circulate without fear.”

---

1 Translation by Google translate.
Schools
SYRIZA, 2011.3.21
“With regard to the issuing textbooks, Here we have a tremendous degradation. The Agency of School Textbooks had on seventy-three years to publish and distribute textbooks. Since 2009 I am trying to meet with the Minister, he systematically ignores them and gives to the real quantity to a private entity the public distribution of books.”

Energy
SYRIZA, 2008.2.29
“The plan announced by the Ministry of Development in June 2007 no longer has anything to do with the current pledges and promises of the Government to the extent of course that does the Government seriously to observe what has been agreed within the European Union and the negotiation of new Kyoto. I remind you that he provided the design for all scenarios for 2020 increases in greenhouse gas emissions by 32% instead of reducing such is our commitment by 20%. Provided for improving energy efficiency by 10% instead of 20% who say today. Provided penetration of renewable energy sources”

Employment
SYRIZA, 2010.1.15
“Mr. President, do this timely query on industrial relations, because we consider it a very serious issue, since it affects mainly young people of our country, but not only that, for the weak population groups, which are now majority after addition the other asked to pay and the economic crisis and not only that others have created and policies as those of the previous New Democracy and your own past and now, who spearheaded this whole working environment we live everyday.”

Maritime
LAOS, 2009.3.16
“The followed, therefore, to date shipping policy has created is known islands
three gears: The large islands that are more commercial and tourist, medium and large, which is remote and mostly treat persistent problem transport service, and finally to the small of barren line, remaining in isolation regardless of the weather and season.”

Development
ND, 2010.1.18
“Ladies and gentlemen, the majority in this Chamber I recognize that the current adverse economic climate requires the promotion of coordinated policies to achieve fiscal consolidation and stability and ensure economic growth. According to modern economic theories, not enough fiscal consolidation to achieve high and sustainable economic growth. Required to guarantee the conditions for economic growth by accelerating the reform effort, focusing on new sources of growth and the utilization of community resources, resources that work on the demand side as a multiplier to support”

Market
PASOK, 2009.3.20
“You did everything you could to give tax cuts to the rich are not indexing the tax brackets, depreciation consciously removed the property tax, imposed a single fee for all real estate, increases in VAT and there keep up to 19% when today other countries in Europe to boost entrepreneurship, to enhance liquidity, to release the money to buy and protect and consumers, reduces it. Also, Minister, raise taxes on fuel, cigarettes, drinks and mobile and work that we experienced in the summer, when the Government was playing with Death of a Salesman now played in the play Death of a civil servant...”

Universities
SYRIZA, 2008.5.13
“a new constitutional provision allowing the establishment of non-state, non-public, non-profit higher education institutions essentially opens the gates to the
sellout for the privatization of the field of higher education and further initiate procedures to become a commodity, the higher education in our country. These have been written ad nauseam and have been used in internal party wrangles PASOK, as a pretext for one or the other side."

**Sports**

LAOS, 2011.2.21

“Sir, after the humiliation of the cancellation of -Mediterranean Games, had yes-
terday and the vilification of football. The Government yesterday literally lost the ball and after this it is not surprising. Ladies and gentlemen, you certainly know that not talking to House for the Mediterranean Games for the first time. I personally the opportunity twice to file timely Questions to implicate the govern-
ment with indifference and the procrastination, risk the Mediterranean Games with frustration.”

**Conservation**

SYRIZA, 2008.6.2

“What we call forest protection actually was and remains the challenge to repel hazards, the size and its consequences experienced last summer. And apart from the valuation of these tragic consequences, we feel one anxiety if nevertheless the state is able to organize in the future, if you took the necessary conclusions and whether any promises of government is simply veiled complicity until next disaster. The forest protection is an indicator of government effectiveness.”

**Prison**

SYRIZA, 2012.1.12

“The situation to them and the way they treat the impacted reflect the actual cultural level of social. It is the obligation of the state to intervene in towards the improvement of the existing system of post- management of prisoners and condi-
tions of their daily living, which in some cases this living-equivalence NAME with
survival. This obligation is not only moral and humanitarian, but a constitutional imperative..."

Nationalism

LAOS, 2008.6.5

“The debate today, ladies and gentlemen, validates the substantial interest and simultaneously pays tribute and gratitude to those who kept the flame of Greece live in difficult times without anyone so requests. So, why were their soul to Greece, because this primal force of Greeks pushing them to create, self-fulfillment were. And so it happened. Keep them away from alienation. Withstood the dispersion, distances and time by an insistence that rarely occurs in world history. Gave birth and nurtured young Greek third and fourth generation! Each contact with the diaspora is for me a source of optimism and national revamp, strengthening faith in the forces of the nation.”

Crisis

SYRIZA, 2012.2.24

“That’s what I want to simply say that the parliamentary procedure pre- must be respected not only look okay, but why on the merits must be adhered to by all. I go to the substance. Vice-President of Government Set now a question which, in our opinion, is crucial. It’s a question of crucial importance, and on new reductions in auxiliary and main pensions. The first memorandum and the first laws on labor insurance and proceeded to change the building of social insurance public, redistributive universal, private, and a funded individual.”

Livestock

PASOK, 2007.11.30

“That thank you, Madam President. Ladies and gentlemen, it is appropriate to table this query, because we believe that a very important sector of agricultural production in our country, the livestock industry is going through a deep and prolonged crisis and owes the state and especially the Government, which is responsible
manage the fortunes of the country to respond to a major contradiction. What is this contradiction? "

Hospitals
KKE, 2012.1.27
"Today, a year later, we have the fact that the merger meant for example the dissolution of the 6th Oncology IKA hospitals as hospital for prevention, life-diagnosis, the treatment of breast cancer, on thirty-three thousand women annually. Second, deafening example is the fate of Pediatric Unit at Children’s Hospital. Moreover 55% of the rationalization of hospital expenditure to the stranglers wage technicians, nursing staff and technology over the years 2010-2011."

5.11 Appendix 3: the Factor Analytic Topicky model

The first stage of the Factor Analytic Topicky (FAT) model involves feature (word) selection. This stage is important, since we are interested in words whose covariation convey meaningful topical information. The FAT model feature selection approach is similar to the generic approaches used in computational linguistics, which involve removal of stop words and ranking of words based on criteria such as term frequency-inverse document frequency, or mutual information\(^\text{[25, 91]}\). Note, however, that the FAT approach is more general, since it does not involve arbitrary selection of words. Based on \(^\text{[80]}\), the first stage in this process is to calculate the per word unexpected variance. Represent the length of documents (i.e. the sum of words in each PQ) with the \(Q \times 1\) vector \(l\), with typical element \(l_q\). Represent the number of times a word \(w\) was used in question \(q\) as \(y_{w,q}\). For each \(w\) in \((w = 1, ..., W)\) and question \(q\) in \((q = 1, ..., Q)\), calculate the variance of the differences between the number of times it was used in the PQ and the number of times it would have been used in a ‘typical’ PQ:

\[
\tilde{\sigma}_w = \text{var} \left( y_{w,q} - \sum_{q=1}^{Q} y_{w,q} \times l \right)
\] (5.1)
Intuitively, we can think of words with high values of $\tilde{\sigma}_w$ as those that are used frequently in a few number of PQs, but are rarely used in most PQs. I then rank the words based on their $\tilde{\sigma}_w$ values, and choose an adequate number of words to use in the model. In the next stage, I add a ‘prior’ to each question. The prior is formally defined as \( \text{median}(l) \times \sum_{q=1}^{Q} y_{w,q} \). The purpose of this procedure is twofold: first, it shrinks the variance of the words’ frequency, thus favoring the null hypothesis of no differences between words. The second, related goal, is to penalize words that appear a very low number of times in the corpus (for example, typos made by the legislative clerk, or esoteric expressions MPs use).

In the next stage I calculate for each word log odds ratio for each word \( w \) in PQ \( q \), relative to its use in the entire corpus of questions:

$$
\delta_{w,q} = \log \left( \frac{y_{w,q}}{\sum_{w=1}^{W} y_{w,q}} \right) - \log \left( \frac{\sum_{q=1}^{Q} y_{w,q}}{\sum_{w=1}^{W} \sum_{q=1}^{Q} y_{w,q}} \right)
$$

(5.2)

And the variance of \( \delta_{w,q} \):

$$
\sigma_{w,q} = \frac{1}{y_{w,q}} + \frac{1}{\sum_{q=1}^{Q} y_{w,q}}
$$

(5.3)

Finally, we can obtain $\zeta_{kw}$, which is the normalized log odds ratio for every word \( w \), in PQ \( q \):

$$
\zeta_{w,q} = \frac{\delta_{w,q}}{\sqrt{\sigma_{w,q}}}
$$

(5.4)

In the final stage, we factor analyze the $2,786 \times 1281$ $Z$ matrix, with words serving as variables, and PQs as observations. The FAT model produces two

---

1. While choosing a larger number of words seems desirable since we would like to maximize the variation of our dependent variable, choosing a number of words that is too high relative to the number of questions would make model estimation very slow and would make it difficult to maximize the likelihood in the factor analysis stage. I therefore choose the 1,300 words with the highest $\sigma_w$ values.

2. Not strictly a prior, since it is driven by the data.

3. I note that I ‘lose’ 14 documents in this process. First, moving from a vocabulary of 10,000 words to a 1,300 words leaves empty documents. In addition, I lose 19 words because their person correlation coefficient with other words in the vocabulary is greater than 0.9, which makes factor analysis convergence problematic.
quantities of interest. First, factor loadings, which are correlation coefficients between the latent topics and the words. Second, as a by product, the model estimates factor scores. These scores are composite variables which provide information about each PQ’s placement on a specific topic. Here I report Bartlett scores (132), which are unbiased estimators of the factors’ scores.¹

¹Bartlett factor scores are computed by multiplying the row vector of observed variables, by the inverse of the diagonal matrix of variances of the unique factor scores, and the factor pattern matrix of loadings. The results are then multiplied by the inverse of the matrix product of the matrices of factor loadings and the inverse of the diagonal matrix of variances of the unique factor scores (133).
### Appendix 4: The dynamics of parties’ parliamentary questions

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**Note:** Points represent the standardized counts of PQs per factor. Lines are 90% confidence bands.

**Figure 5.18:** The dynamics of parliamentary questions use by ND
Note: Points represent the standardized counts of PQs per factor. Lines are 90% confidence bands.

Figure 5.19: The dynamics of parliamentary questions use by PASOK
Note: Points represent the standardized counts of PQs per factor. Lines are 90% confidence bands.

**Figure 5.20:** The dynamics of parliamentary questions use by KKE
Conclusion

The main subject of this thesis is the strategic use of parliamentary speech by political parties, especially parties in opposition. This is important, because scholars of legislative politics have generally focused on the majority, and its strategies for power maintenance in parliaments, and since most studies analyze legislative votes. Thus, the thesis offers a new way to model systematically the ways the legislative opposition uses speech. The study also sought to add to our theoretical understanding of the concept of legislative opposition, by looking at new settings for oppositional activity, such as parties in governing coalitions. The main questions at the outset of this project were: whether, and how, do legislative parties use speeches strategically. Second, what are the conditions that prevent them from using these strategies? Third, can we detect and estimate the rhetorical strategies legislative parties use? Fourth, can we use legislative rhetoric of learn about the structure of political ideologies?

6.1 Empirical findings

The specific details of my findings are provided in each empirical chapter. Here I provide a review of the main empirical findings and detail how they answer the research questions.
The Israeli Knesset

After an agenda shock to the political system in Israel, the issue of security, which is main dimension in Israeli politics, has changed. Opposition parties used this shock as an opportunity to change the relative weights of frames within the issue of security.

The strategy the Israeli opposition used was framing. Specifically, it used the agenda shock to increase the salience of the immigration frame within the issue of security. By doing so, the opposition was able to expose the ideological differences within the coalition, that were thus far latent.

The Israeli coalition tried to react to the oppositional strategy. But the analysis demonstrates that after an initial period in which the coalition attempted to discuss the immigration frame, the coalition tried to depoliticize the frame by not discussing it.

The British House of Commons

In the UK, my analysis of both votes and legislative speech shows the limitations of opposition wedge-issue strategies. I demonstrate that complex issues that cross-cut both majority and the majority cannot be used in a rhetorical assault by the opposition.

Combining quantitative analysis of both votes and rhetoric proves to be a helpful tool in analyzing the structure of the issue of European integration, and how this issue is related to other important political issues in UK politics such as nationalism and economic views.

The Greek Parliament

My analysis of Greek legislative rhetoric shows an additional rhetorical strategy. Specifically, I find that parliamentary questions are used more frequently by junior members of unpopular coalition governments than by opposition parties. This is an interesting finding, because the prevalent assumption in the literature is that parliamentary questions are a tool used generally by the formal opposition.

The analysis of Greek parliamentary politics also shows the rhetorical differences between system-parties and anti-political-establishment parties, in terms of
using their parliamentary questions. While the former use their questions to gain information, the latter use their questions to make partisan statements.

**Summary of findings**

Overall, the findings of chapter three illuminate the strategic rhetorical interaction between opposition and coalition. Most importantly, they provide support for the existence and the importance of legislative rhetoric as a strategic tool used by the opposition. They also highlight the importance of exogenous shocks to the legislative opposition. These shocks provide the impetus for the ‘rhetorical attack’ initiated by the opposition. The rhetorical assault by the opposition is possible, because the rhetorical agenda in parliaments is not strictly controlled by the majority, and the opposition is able to introduce topics that might split the majority that might split the majority, as well as hurt the majority’s electoral prospects.

The main finding in chapter four is essentially a non-finding. I trace the structure of the issue of European integration in the British House of Commons, and argue that given the complex nature of the issue, and the fact that it cuts across both parties, political strategies of the sort I showed in Israel are unfeasible. In addition, the findings in chapter four, regarding the relationship between the Europeanization issue and other important cleavages in UK politics are important, mostly because they demonstrate how useful rhetorical analysis can be for learning about the dimensionality of political ideas, and how different dimensions are related to one another.

The main finding in chapter five is that in austerity governments, which are governments that oversee extremely unpopular policies, junior members of the coalition government behave as if they are a part of the opposition.

**6.2 General implications**

The findings in this thesis have a number of theoretical and methodological implications. First, the analysis I perform in chapter three provides a general, comprehensive way of analyzing the effects of exogenous shocks on the rhetorical
behavior of political actors. Second, the model I use is suitable to measure the partisanship of frames across a variety of political institutions. Third, the results complement the works of scholars who focus on the majority in parliaments and how they use institutional arrangements to avoid defeats in votes (35). Fourth, the results show that complicating the legislative agenda can have implications for coalition stability.

In addition, the analysis shows the merit of combining analyzes of both votes and rhetoric. While by analyzing votes we can merely show that intra-party factionalism exists, the analysis of rhetoric tells us exactly what those factions are, and what is the nature of these intra-party cleavages. A related, important point is the scholarly accounts of party strategy are well advised to go beyond the party as a unified actor assumption. Specifically, the analysis in the case of UK shows the importance of using data at the level of the individual MP level and AT the faction level, in order to provide a comprehensive theoretical account of parties’ strategy. Finally, in this chapter I use a latent dirichlet allocation model (25), a model that is becoming increasingly common in studies of political behavior. My analysis demonstrates its usefulness for studying legislative politics.

The main results of my analysis of the Greek case are in line with studies of coalition oversight mechanisms (2, 61, 127, 128). However, the findings in this chapter complement previous findings, since I find evidence of coalition oversight in parliamentary questions, generally considered to be a legislative institution used more by the official opposition. More generally, the findings in this chapter highlight the fact that the concept of opposition has ‘many faces.’ That is, legislative oppositional behavior can exist also within the ranks of the governing coalition. In addition, the rise in the number of parliamentary questions asked by legislators from parties who are junior members in the governing coalition is in line with (62), and his important contribution to our understanding of party strategies during austerity periods. Specifically, these questions are a manifestation of blame avoidance strategy, by which parties try to distance themselves from unpopular policies. Last, in order to perform the statistical analysis of rhetoric in this chapter, I use a new model of text classification (26), which can serve as an intuitive, efficient and useful tool for analyzing political texts.
The final contribution of this project is the provision of new datasets and the validation of text analysis methodologies. As the end result of this project, I have generated three massive, structured datasets, covering more than a decade of rhetoric in the Israeli Knesset (1987-1998), approximately 40 years of rhetorical data from the UK House of Commons (1960-2000), and five years of parliamentary questions text from the Greek parliament (2007-2012). These are now all available for further analysis. In addition, in the technical appendices of this thesis I provide evidence of the applicability, validity and limitations of new methods of text analysis (24, 26).

6.3 Future research

This thesis provides me with the foundation for a number of future research projects:

I am currently working on a joined project with Dr. Monroe, Dr. Tarek Masoud and Muhammed Idris, in which we use the FAT model (24, 26) to analyze the structure of political cooptation in the Egyptian parliament.

Second, I plan on starting a project that maps the political space of Western democracies in the 1960-2010 period. To gauge the dimensionality (number and structure of salient issues) of political agendas, I intend to collect voting (recorded votes) and rhetorical (floor speeches) data from developed democracies such as the US, UK, Germany, France, and Sweden. The first stage in this project is to estimate the number of political dimensions for each country and over time. The second stage in the project is therefore to contextualize these findings, using quantitative analysis of rhetoric. In the third stage I match the findings from the analysis of votes to those obtained from analyzing legislative rhetorical data. By way of example, consider the classic economic left-right continuum and a simple scenario in which we observe a political party becoming progressively more “left-wing” over time, based on our analysis of votes. This could mean that, over time (1) the distribution of the party’s legislators has shifted, or that (2) the meaning of the classic left-right economic dimension has changed. The only way to understand and elucidate the nature of this change is by triangulating the results of voting and rhetorical data.
Third, I am completing a joint paper with Dr. Monroe, in which we provide a formal model capturing the strategic dynamics between coalition and opposition and test the model using rhetorical data.

6.4 Conclusion

This thesis shows that legislative rhetoric is an important tool the legislative opposition uses in to achieve its political goals. While the rhetorical toolkit is diverse, one oppositional strategy involves complicating the agenda, that is, increasing the dimensionality of the political debate, especially of topics on which the coalition is fragmented. However, the use of these strategies is limited if the issues cut across the government and the opposition. Additional rhetorical tools include parliamentary questions, which, in times of unpopular policies, are found to be used more extensively by coalition MPs who are members of junior coalition member parties.
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Declaration

I herewith declare that I have produced this paper without the prohibited assistance of third parties and without making use of aids other than those specified; notions taken over directly or indirectly from other sources have been identified as such. This paper has not previously been presented in identical or similar form to any other American or foreign examination board.

The thesis work was conducted from 2010 to 2013 under the supervision of Burt Monroe at The Pennsylvania State University.
VITA
Eitan Tzelgov

231 Pond Lab, Department of Political Science
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802 USA
tzelgov@psu.edu, web: https://sites.google.com/site/eitantzel/

Education

Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science, May 2010 (expected graduation date: August 2013)
Dissertation: Words as Weapons: Opposition Rhetoric and Partisan Strategy
Committee: Burt Monroe (Chair), Sona Golder, James P. Dillard, and Chris Zorn
Fields: Comparative Politics, Political Methodology and American Politics
M.A., Political Science, May 2008
Graduate student, Political Science, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 2004-2005
B.A., Politics & Government and Behavioral Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, 2003

Additional Training

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) Summer Institute, Berkeley University, 2010.
ICPSR Summer Program—2007, 2009
- Advanced Bayesian Models
- Introduction to Applied Bayesian Analysis
- Advanced Game Theory
- Game Theory
- Maximum Likelihood Estimation

Articles


Grants, Awards and Honors

Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, National Science Foundation, SES-1024190: September 1, 2010 - August 31, 2013, $7665
NSF travel grant for graduate students presenting a poster at the Society for Political Methodology Summer Conference, 2010.
College of the Liberal Arts Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Research in the Social Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University, 2011. (Award given for the best paper published by a graduate student in the social sciences.)
Pre-doctoral Fellow, Quantitative Social Science Initiative, the Pennsylvania State University, 2009-2010