

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Politics of Parliamentary Debate

Parliamentary debate is a fundamental aspect of democratic lawmaking. Although lawmakers everywhere seek to express their views in parliament, there are large discrepancies in who has access to the floor across political systems. This book explains how parties and their members of parliament (MPs) structure parliamentary debate. Parties may actively seek to prevent some members from taking the floor while promoting opportunities for others. In doing so, they attempt to control the message that their partisans convey in parliament. The authors provide a theoretical model to explain the design of procedural rules in parliament, how the party leadership interacts with rebel backbenchers, and how MPs represent voters. The book explores political institutions, intraparty politics, electoral politics, and legislative behavior. It develops and tests a new theory of parliamentary debate, using data from the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, and the European Parliament.

SVEN-OLIVER PROKSCH is Assistant Professor of Political Science at McGill University. His research focuses on comparative political institutions, party politics, legislative behavior, European politics, and political text analysis. He is the coauthor of *Reforming the European Union: Realizing the Impossible* (2012).

JONATHAN B. SLAPIN is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for International and Comparative Studies at the University of Houston. His research focuses on comparative political institutions, legislative behavior, European politics, and European integration. He is the author of *Veto Power: Institutional Design in the European Union* (2011).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Politics of Parliamentary Debate

Parties, Rebels, and Representation

SVEN-OLIVER PROKSCH

JONATHAN B. SLAPIN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107072763

© Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-07276-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To Rebecca and Liam
SOP

To Jann and Harold
JBS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
Introduction	1
Part I Modeling parliamentary debate	15
1 A theory of parliamentary debate	17
1.1 Democracy and debate	18
1.2 The nature of parliamentary speech	20
1.3 Parties, rebels, and speech – a theory	24
1.4 Two illustrations	28
1.5 A delegation model of parliamentary speech	34
1.6 Summary	41
2 Empirical implications	43
2.1 Country-level variables – electoral systems	44
2.2 Within-country variables – electoral tiers and candidate selection	49
2.3 Effects of electoral incentives on debate participation	52
2.4 Summary	55
3 Research design	56
3.1 Empirical strategy: an overview	56
3.2 Cross-national comparison and party survey	58
3.3 Case selection: Germany, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and New Zealand	61
3.4 Measurement of latent concepts	70
3.5 Summary	72
Part II Empirical studies of parliamentary debate	75
4 Debates and institutions	77
4.1 Parliamentary rules	78
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>
4.2 Party rules	83
4.3 Summary	99
5 Debate participation: Germany and the United Kingdom	100
5.1 Hypotheses	100
5.2 MP status: when party leaders get involved	101
5.3 Ideological disagreement	115
5.4 Summary	123
6 Dissent in parliament and the media: Germany and the United Kingdom	124
6.1 Political reaction to the financial crisis, 2008–2009	125
6.2 Fiscal stimulus debates in the United Kingdom	129
6.3 Fiscal stimulus debates in Germany	136
6.4 Summary	147
7 Candidate selection and debate participation: a European perspective	148
7.1 Party debate rules in the European Parliament	149
7.2 Votes, rebels, and speaking time	152
7.3 Summary	161
8 Changing institutions: New Zealand	163
8.1 Electoral system change	163
8.2 Rules change in parliament	164
8.3 Behavioral change: budget debate participation	166
8.4 Summary	173
Conclusion	174
<i>Appendix</i>	181
<i>Bibliography</i>	186
<i>Index</i>	199

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of figures*

1.1	Parliamentary debates in German news	<i>page 23</i>
1.2	Expected relationship between latent intraparty disagreement and observed intraparty dissent	26
1.3	Overview of the strategic delegation game of parliamentary speech	36
2.1	Comparison of institutional scenarios	53
4.1	Institutions of parliamentary debate and personal vote seeking	80
4.2	Party survey: MPs' level of demand for speaking time in parliamentary party groups	84
4.3	Party survey: final say over the party's speaker list	86
4.4	Party survey: leadership monitoring of MPs' speeches	87
4.5	Party survey: monitoring MPs' statements in the media	88
4.6	Speech monitoring scale ($N = 36$)	90
4.7	Distribution of perceived intraparty cohesion ($N = 36$)	92
4.8	Distribution of party seat shares and government status ($N = 36$)	94
4.9	Relationship among intraparty cohesion, personal vote incentives, and party leader monitoring	96
4.10	Government parties' expectation regarding their MPs' speeches ($N = 18$)	98
5.1	Debate participation: leader involvement in the United Kingdom, 1979–2005	105
5.2	Debate participation: leader involvement in Germany, 1976–1998	106
5.3	Debate participation: district versus list MPs in Germany, 1976–1998	108
5.4	Effects of ideological distance between MP and party leadership on legislative speech counts in Germany and the United Kingdom	121

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

List of figures

6.1	Parliamentary speeches in the United Kingdom mentioning “fiscal stimulus,” 2008–2010	127
6.2	Parliamentary speeches in Germany tagged with keyword “economic stimulus,” 2008–2010	128
8.1	Importance of representational activities in New Zealand (responses from candidate surveys)	167
8.2	Predicted probability of budget debate participation in New Zealand	171
8.3	Comparison of debate participation of rebel backbenchers and party leaders in New Zealand	172

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of tables*

1.1	Parliamentary activities of British MPs	<i>page</i> 22
3.1	Empirical strategy of the book	57
3.2	Party survey: list of participating parliamentary parties (<i>N</i> = 45)	60
4.1	Personal vote-seeking incentives and electoral systems	82
4.2	Parliamentary rules and electoral incentives	83
4.3	Missing values in the seven monitoring questions	89
4.4	Measuring personal vote incentives	93
4.5	Linear regression models of party leadership monitoring	95
5.1	Overview of parliamentary speeches in the United Kingdom and Germany	102
5.2	Models of parliamentary speech in the United Kingdom, 1979–2004 (all MPs)	111
5.3	Models of parliamentary speech in the United Kingdom, 1979–2004 (only MPs switching between backbencher and leader status)	112
5.4	Models of parliamentary speech in Germany, 1976– 1998 (all MPs)	113
5.5	Models of parliamentary speech in Germany, 1976– 1998 (only MPs switching between backbencher and leader status)	114
5.6	Models of parliamentary speech in Germany, 1976– 1998 (only MPs switching between electoral tiers)	115
5.7	Modeling the effect of ideological disagreement in the United Kingdom (2001–2005)	118
5.8	Modeling the effect of ideological disagreement in Germany (2005–2009)	119
5.9	Probit model of budget speeches in the United Kingdom (2011) and Germany (2010)	122
6.1	Overview of UK data on legislative action on stimulus package	129

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

List of tables

6.2	United Kingdom: legislative behavior of Labour MPs in budget debates, 2008–2009	134
6.3	Ordered probit model of UK MPs' level of dissent	135
6.4	Marginal effects of party leadership status and margin of victory on the level of intraparty dissent in the United Kingdom	136
6.5	Overview of Germany data on legislative action on stimulus package	137
6.6	Germany: party behavior of government MPs (CDU/CSU and SPD) in fiscal stimulus debates, 2008–2009	140
6.7	Probit models of German MPs' level of floor activity and dissent	142
6.8	Germany: coalition behavior of government MPs (CDU/CSU and SPD) in fiscal stimulus debates, 2008–2009	144
6.9	Germany: relationship between intraparty and coalition dissent on activities of government MPs (CDU/CSU and SPD) in fiscal stimulus debates, 2008–2009	145
6.10	Germany: legislative behavior of government MPs (CDU/CSU and SPD) in fiscal stimulus debates, 2008–2009 (ministers and junior ministers excluded)	145
6.11	Probit models of German MPs' coalition dissent	146
7.1	European Parliament: process of allocating speaking time	150
7.2	European Parliament: political group priorities in allocating speaking time	151
7.3	Proportion of MEPs giving a speech as a function of voting and candidate selection mechanisms (vote-speech sample from Sixth European Parliament, 2004–2005)	156
7.4	Explaining parliamentary speeches in the European Parliament (1999–2004)	159
7.5	Predicted speech counts in the Fifth European Parliament (1999–2004): substantive effects of national rebel defection and candidate selection	161
8.1	Budget debate participation in New Zealand (logit)	170
A.1	Chapter 5 simulated predicted speech counts (with 95 percent confidence intervals) for different types of German MPs	185

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

While sitting together as students in a graduate seminar at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) about 10 years ago, we began to wonder how political scientists might improve on existing measures of party ideology in European politics. Political texts, such as election manifestos and parliamentary speeches, provide a tremendous source of information on the position-taking strategies of politicians. Parliaments meanwhile store their records in easily searchable online databases, making content accessible to researchers for analysis. Over the past decade, our musings on how to use these data have led us down a variety of paths. Initially, we were most interested in using political texts, such as party manifestos, to estimate ideology. This interest resulted in the development of *Wordfish*, a text-scaling approach we initially applied to party manifestos. As we turned our attention to parliamentary speeches, however, we quickly realized that our theoretical understanding of the language politicians use in speech was far inferior to our theoretical understanding of other sources of information regarding ideology, such as election manifestos and roll-call vote records. Without stronger theoretical guidance as to what speeches can tell us about ideology, we felt we could not make any further headway in the field of ideal point estimation. Parliamentary speech provides a wealth of information on policy stances, but to use it effectively, we need to know more about the politics driving speech itself. While digging deeper into the issue, we discovered that political debate, as a subject of research, had received little attention from legislative scholars. There has been little comparative theorizing to link parliamentary debate to the role that parties play in political representation, or how other institutions, such as electoral rules, may affect these relationships. This book represents the culmination of our efforts to provide such a theory and to explore these relationships.

Writing this book has been a multiyear project and we have benefited from the feedback of many colleagues and friends along the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

way. Several people have read complete versions of the manuscript, including Thomas Bräuninger, Thomas Gschwend, Chris Kam, Orit Kedar, Kira Killermann, Thomas König, James Lo, Will Lowe, and Mike Thies. Others have read previous versions of individual chapters. This list includes Eduardo Aleman, Tanya Bagashka, Ken Benoit, Serra Boranbay, Simon Hix, Justin Kirkland, Ken Kollman, Michael Shackleton, Elisabeth Schulte, Georg Vanberg, and Jonathan Woon. We have presented results from this project at many institutions and conferences over the years. We are grateful to seminar participants at Texas A&M, Rice University, the University of Houston, Penn State, Trinity College Dublin, Washington University in St. Louis, Essex University, Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Europe, Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft Working Group on Behavioral Decision Making, University of Mannheim, McGill University, and Nuffield College at Oxford University. Kira Killermann, Linh Nguyen, and Sander Ensink assisted with data collection, and Jann Slapin, who has selflessly served as Jonathan's editor since elementary school, assiduously proofread the final version. We also thank John Haslam and Sarah Green, editors at Cambridge University Press, whose encouragement facilitated the revision and ultimate completion of the manuscript. Lastly, we owe a debt of gratitude to George Tsebelis, who served as our mentor and advisor while at UCLA. His intellectual impact can be found throughout our work, and this book is no exception.

We also thank several scholars for providing us with data and additional information about the cases under investigation. Jeff Karp, Jack Vowles, and Chris Kam have provided us with candidate surveys, and data on parliamentary voting and leadership positions in New Zealand. The research librarians Ruth Graham and Tony Reed from the New Zealand parliamentary information office graciously sent us additional information about parliamentary practice in New Zealand, as did David Bagnall (Senior Parliamentary Officer, Parliamentary Relations and Policy Group Office, Clerk of the House of Representatives). We thank Thomas Gschwend, Hermann Schmitt, Andreas Wüst, and Thomas Zittel for sharing the German candidate survey data. We also thank the many parliamentary party group representatives and administrators who participated in our survey.

Sven-Oliver Proksch acknowledges funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07276-3 - The Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation

Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xv

under grant agreement number 239268 (Marie Curie International Reintegration Grant). We are also grateful to the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research and the Research Center SFB 884 on the Political Economy of Reforms for hosting a book manuscript workshop in June 2011. The University of Mannheim, McGill University, Trinity College Dublin, and the University of Houston have supported our research as we have undertaken this project. Portions of Chapters 1 and 5 were previously published as “Institutional Foundations of Legislative Speech,” *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 520–537 (2012), and Chapter 7 is based on results previously published as “Look Who’s Talking: Parliamentary Debate in the European Union,” *European Union Politics* 11(3): 333–357 (2010).

Lastly, we offer our gratitude to our very supportive families. Our deepest thanks go to our wives, Rebecca and Aurelija, who tolerated our many Skype conversations and graciously hosted us whenever we visited each other in Mannheim, Dublin, Houston, or Montreal. Our project and our lives would have been much less rich without their intellectual support, love, and constant encouragement. And our wonderful children, Liam, Benjamin, and Olivia, allowed us to sleep and work most of the time, and kept us smiling when not engaged in either of the previous activities.