

Intra-party politics, government formation and coalition governance

Panel Chair

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Abstract

The outcomes of government formation processes in modern democracies depend on the interplay of a large number of factors. These variables have their origins in party-specific incentives like the expected payoffs in terms of offices and policies, incentives that emerge from institutionalist factors like the constitutionally provided role of the head of state, the existence and competencies of a second chamber, and in contextual factors like pre-electoral commitments of parties and intra-party conflict. While there is plenty of research that focusses on the impact of office- and policy-seeking approaches and/or on institutional characteristics of political systems on coalition politics, the role of intra-party policy conflict for government formation and coalition governance has still received little attention. This is also because (comparative) data on intra-party politics in general and on the programmatic heterogeneity within parties in parliamentary democracies in particular is (still) scarce.

The aim of this panel is to contribute to the analysis of the relationship between intra-party politics, government formation, coalition governance and cabinet survival, both theoretically and empirically. An increasing degree of intra-party policy conflict is often considered to have negative consequences for parties, because the more a party is perceived as divided in programmatic or ideological terms, the less voters perceive the respective party as being able to develop solutions to important policy problems and to cope with these problems. However, parties could use their internal programmatic heterogeneity to get into a better position in the coalition formation game in general and in the negotiations between the future coalition parties in particular. For example, the leadership of a party with high intra-party heterogeneity could claim that one of its party factions cannot accept certain policy compromises if their interests are not adequately taken into account in the coalition agreement. This should lead to a revised compromise that should be located closer to the position of the factionalised coalition party. In addition, a coalition party with a high degree of intra-party heterogeneity might be better able to monitor its coalition partners, e.g. by placing a member of its left-wing faction as a junior minister into a ministry that is controlled by a coalition party with a right-wing policy profile. The latter could stabilise a coalition government even though at least one of the coalition parties shows a high degree of internal policy diversity.

This Panel is part of the Section 'Advances in Analytical Politics and Public Choice' (S04) and needs to be submitted by 15 February 2018.

If you have a paper you think might fit in this panel, please contact the Panel Chair before 12 February with the following information:

- Title of the paper (no more than 20 words)
- Abstract of the paper (no more than 250 words)
- Author's (and if applicable co-author's) email address as registered in their MyECPR account
- 3-5 keywords