Coalition government and intra-party politics

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Introduction

Most of coalition research is based on the unitary actor assumption, i.e. political parties are treated as unitary actors. In the most frequently cited (qualified) defence of this assumption Laver and Schofield (1990: 14) recall that it 'rather neatly leaves open the matter of precisely who makes the key decisions within a particular political party'. The unitary actor assumption has often been criticised as unrealistic (e.g., Daalder 1983). According to Klaus von Beyme (1985: 224) 'the image of parties acting as monolithic units is a fiction that cannot be sustained'. Laver and Schofield's defence of the unitary actor assumption basically rests on the claim that 'parties do in practice tend to go into and come out of government as a single actor' (1990: 15). While the empirical limitations of this claim will be discuss below, even Laver and Schofield (1990) make three major qualifications:

First, drawing on Daalder (1983), Laver and Schofield suggest that 'The reason why most theorists to date have been able to get away without taking intraparty politics into account is precisely because they have homed in on the moment of coalition *formation*' (1990: 17, emphasis added). This is at odds with the recent shift in the coalition literature to coalition governance. Indeed, Laver and Schofield admit that 'intraparty tensions … can have quite systematic and generalizable effects on the process of coalition bargaining' (1990: 16).

Second, Laver and Schofield (1990: 28) suggest that the unitary actor assumption works in a *static* research design, i.e. 'if we confine ourselves to analysing individual episodes of coalitional behaviour at given time points'. As Laver and Schofield go on: 'If we wish to develop a more dynamic approach to coalition behaviour, however, we have no option but to take account of the possibility that we are *not* dealing with a fixed set of unitary actors' (1990: 28). Indeed, coalition politics are more adequately understood as a *dynamic* process in which government formation, governing, government termination, and elections are systematically linked.[1]

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[1] For general pleas for a dynamic understanding of coalitions see, e.g., Laver (1974, 1986); for empirical hints see Franklin and Mackie (1983); for a theoretical perspective along the lines suggested by their findings see Pierson (2000); for a more comprehensive attempt see Strøm, Müller, and Bergman (forthcoming).

Third, Laver and Schofield (1990: 28) point out that even under the restrictive conditions (i.e. the focus on coalition *formation* and a *static* approach) that make the unitary actor assumption viable we have to 'make a few significant exceptions for parties that really are no more than coalitions of factions in every sense' (1990: 28).

More recently, Laver and Shepsle (1996: 259) have gone further in suggesting that 'neither the assumption of homogenous preferences nor that of totalitarian control' – the two conditions under which political parties are indeed unitary actors – 'seems very plausible'. Indeed, in their work they assume preferences to differ 'even within the same party' (1996: 259). From this assumption they build their extension of the portfolio allocation theory to intra-party politics (1990, 1996: 247–260). Yet, in their treatment of intra-party politics, Laver and Shepsle have no real world data to test their theory or, at least, to provide plausible illustrations. This is not to criticise Laver and Shepsle (1996) who have done a job as good as reasonably can be expected between one set of covers, but it underlines the relevance of the topic discussed in this paper.

To conclude this brief review: treating political parties as unitary actors in coalition politics is highly unrealistic and therefore inadequate in many instances. Over time and with considerable benefit coalition research has dropped or modified several assumptions as unrealistic as the unitary actor one (e.g., the implicit assumption that institutions do not matter). Bringing in intra-party politics now seems the order of the day. The present paper is a step in that direction. It presents the outlines of a research programme that that aims at a better understanding of the relevance of intra-party politics in coalition systems (though the research programme also will speak to issues of inter-party relations in coalitions per se). It is *conflict* that is at the heart of our approach. In the next section we disentangle various conflicts that are relevant to our approach. Then we address the issue why coalition conflict occurs. In the following section we provide an overview of inter-party conflict in the cycle of coalition politics. Next we present a typology of the patterns of intra-party politics in coalition governments. We then turn to party characteristics that should make these behavioural patterns more or less likely. Subsequently we present a set of tentative hypotheses. Then we briefly conclude.

Government conflicts, coalition conflicts, and intra-party conflicts

Coalition politics is a vast field. Our approach concentrates on coalition conflicts. In some form conflicts are at the heart of all questions in coalition research and, more generally, politics. Thus, government formation typically is understood as the minimizing of conflict in government: according to office-seeking theories, conflict about office is minimized, while the minimization of policy conflict is the thrust of policy-seeking theories. Conflict management is at the heart of studies of coalition governance. Likewise, it is conflict what makes the study of government duration viable, as it constitutes the most powerful explanation of premature government termination in coalitions.[2] To be sure, some sub-fields of coalition research are mainly concerned with latent conflict while others focus on manifest conflict. To the extent that intra-party politics has been considered relevant in coalition studies, it is in the context of coalition conflicts. Coalition conflicts therefore are a natural angle to approach the issue of intra-party politics in coalitions.

Our dependent variable is the degree of conflict in governments, including single-party and coalition cabinets. For the time being, we distinguish between cabinets with conflict and those without. Yet, it will be not too difficult to move to finer distinctions, e.g. by building an index that employs the various dimensions of coalition politics and the number of conflicts recorded for a specific cabinet.

Coalition conflict, by definition, is inter-party conflict. It constitutes a research topic in its own right. To the extent that conflicts are terminal, they are already well covered in the literature. Yet, we aim at improving our understanding of coalition conflicts by collecting systematic data on non-terminal coalition conflicts. In particular, coalition governance conflicts have not yet constituted the focus of empirical research. Making them the dependent variable in a new research effort on coalitions is a worthwhile project in its own right. However, together with the better-documented types of coalition conflict, they are also a key to unravelling the role of intra-party politics in coalition politics.

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[2] Inter-party conflict in the form of strategic dissolution is also the most powerful explanation of premature termination of single-party governments (see Strøm and Swindle 2002).

Coalition conflicts are a sub-type of government conflicts, as single-party governments are not prevented from internal conflicts. Yet, the widely shared assumption is that government conflict is much more frequent and consequential in coalitions, what is supported by the cabinet duration literature. While in single-party cabinets conflict by definition is intra-party, in coalitions government conflict can be exclusively inter-party or also have a relevant intra-party component. To be sure, intra-party conflicts are not confined to government parties. Indeed, sometimes the fact that a party has not made it into government triggers intra-party conflict. Finally, not each intra-party conflict in a government party is a government conflict in the sense that it directly affects the conduct of governance or the stability of government. The following five two-by-two tables (Figure 1) illustrate the above discussion.

Figure 1. Government type, government conflict, source of government conflict, and intra-party conflict

Government type

		Single-party	Coalition
Government conflict	No		
	Yes		

Government type

		Single-party	Coalition
Source of government conflict	Inter-party	NOT POSSIBLE	
	Intra-party		

Party in government

		Yes	No
Intra-party conflict	No		
	Yes		

Party in coalition government

		Yes	No
Intra-party conflict	No		
	Yes		

Government conflict

		No	Yes
Intra-party conflict	No		
	Yes		

Why parties make troubles

When a coalition is formed, it is in equilibrium. Yet, coalition conflicts suggest that the initial equilibrium no longer exists, or, at least, that some relevant actors think so. Three developments may destroy an initially existing equilibrium: the exhaustion of the common agenda of the coalition parties, external shocks, and party change (Figure 2). To be sure, these factors may occur simultaneously and one may cause the other. However, each of these developments can occur independently and has the potential of exercising decisive influence on the fate of a coalition.

Figure 2. Determinants of coalition conflict

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                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │ Exhaustion  │
                    │ of common   │─────────┐
                    │ agenda      │         │
                    └─────────────┘         ▼
┌─────────┐                          ┌─────────────┐
│External │──────────────────────────▶│ Coalition   │
│shock    │──┐                       │ conflict    │
└─────────┘  │                        └─────────────┘
             │   ┌─────────────┐         ▲▲
             └──▶│ Exogenous   │─────────┘│
                 │ party change│          │
                 └─────────────┘          │
                    ┌─────────────┐       │
                    │ Endogenous  │───────┘
                    │ party change│
                    └─────────────┘
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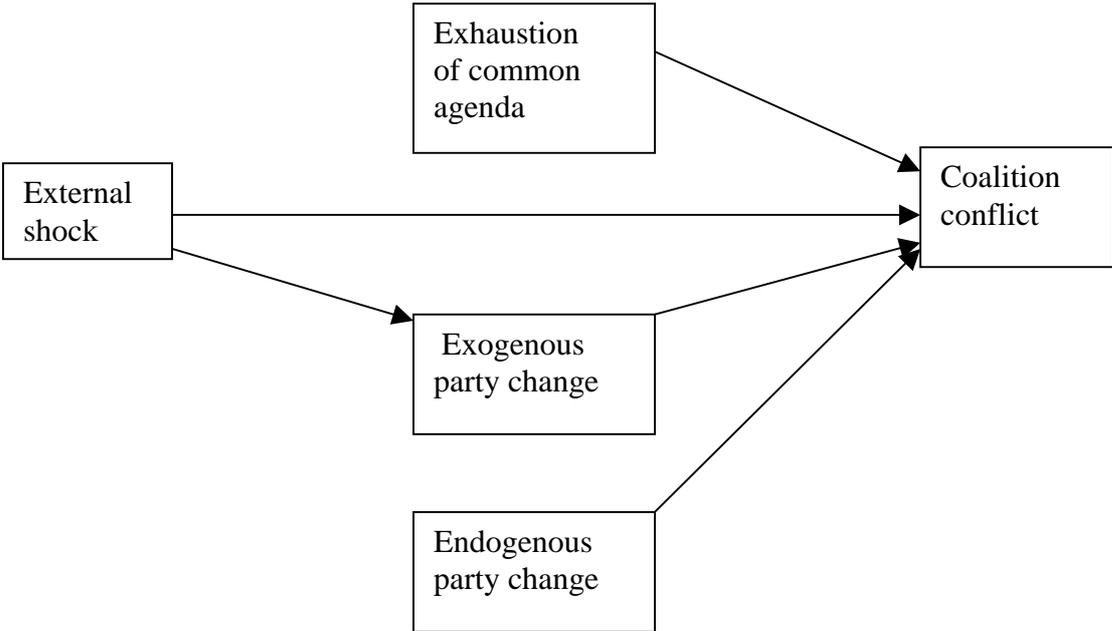
Exhaustion of common agenda

Between policy-seeking parties the equilibrium results from the coalition policy. Typically political parties that join forces in a government coalition do so on the basis of an explicitly or implicitly agreed policy programme. Yet, once this programme is implemented, the equilibrium may vanish. To be sure, it will not vanish if the dimensions to which the issues

belong will produce a constant stream of important new issues. But this is not always the case. Thus, the end of the SPD-FDP coalition (1969–82) was explained by one its architects, Walter Scheel, by the exhaustion of communalities between the parties. More specifically, Korte (2000: 851) notes the exhaustion of the specific agenda that had been agreed at the beginning of this coalition. More generally, and in a much more pessimistic tone, this is also reflected in the following quote from Giovanni Sartori (1997: 113):

> 'Indeed, in most parliamentary systems which require government by coalition, governments prolong their survival by doing next to nothing. In this context the little what coalition governments can do is usually done in the first six months, the initial honeymoon period in which they cannot be decently overthrown.'

Thus, the exhaustion of the agreed agenda will result either in conflict or inactivity, and, according to Sartori, the agenda is not likely to last very long.

External shocks

External shocks constitute another challenge to a coalition's initial equilibrium. Beginning with the 'critical events' literature[3] that focussed on the effect of 'purely accidental events' such as scandals, party splits, economic crises, wars, other international crises, conflicts over government policy, and the sudden death of the Prime Minister (Browne, Frendreis, and Gleiber 1986: 633, 635) external shocks have been employed to understand the fate of coalitions (King *et al.* 1990; Alt and King 1994). More recent approaches have attempted to provide micro-foundations for the effects of critical events. Thus, Lupia and Strøm (1995) argue that critical events cause shifts in the bargaining power of the coalition parties (which is precisely what makes them critical) and hence may trigger a new round of coalition bargaining. These shifts of bargaining power can lead to early parliamentary dissolution (as expected by Grofman and van Roozendaal 1994), a renegotiation of the existing coalition, the formation of a new coalition in the sitting parliament, or the stabilisation of the incumbent coalition. Laver and Shepsle (1998) have broadened this approach by considering different types of shocks (public opinion shocks, agenda shocks, policy shocks, und decision rule

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[3] See Browne, Gleiber, and Mashoba 1984; Browne, Frendreis, and Gleiber 1984, 1986; and Frendreis, Gleiber, and Browne 1986.

shocks). Tying this to their portfolio allocation theory they show that different coalitions react differently to the various types of shocks.

Party change

Finally, coalition crises may result from party change that includes changes in 'strategy' or 'strategies and tactics' (Harmel and Janda 1994: 266, 275). According to the party change literature in its purposive change variant 'party changes result from decisions of party operatives' and are 'normally a result of leadership change, a change of dominant faction within the party and/or an external stimulus for change (Harmel and Janda 1994: 262). Harmel and Janda expect 'the most dramatic and broadest changes' when the party has experienced an external 'shock'. External shocks, in turn, are related to the party's abilities to achieve its primary goal. Hence, vote-maximizing parties are likely to change when they suffer electoral defeats, office-maximizing parties when they lose treasured portfolios or even government participation, and policy- or ideology-seeking parties when they lose confidence in 'the correctness or importance of key positions' (1994: 270).[4] Yet, party change can occur without external shocks (endogenous party change).

Types of coalition conflict and intra-party politics

Conflict is ubiquitous in coalition politics. Following the life cycle of coalitions, we can find conflict at the government formation stage, the coalition governance stage, the coalition termination stage, and in the elections that eventually conclude the cycle.

Government formation

Our first type of coalition conflicts relates to the government formation stage of the coalition cycle. Strictly speaking, inter-party conflicts at this stage are not yet *coalition* conflicts, as the coalition is only in the making. It is nevertheless useful to include this type of conflict. We can distinguish two types of inter-party conflict that occur in the government formation phase:

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[4] The fourth ideal-type of party considered by Harmel and Janda (1994: 271), the intra-party democracy maximizing party, is not relevant in the context of the present paper.

inconclusive bargaining attempts and temporary breakdowns in an negotiation attempt that eventually leads to the formation of a coalition. Obviously, parties involved in inconclusive bargaining attempts cannot overcome their disagreements and hence remain in a conflict situation. We may have to qualify this statement if the final outcome of the government formation situation is a coalition of these parties (after another bargaining attempt) or a minority cabinet, which receives permanent support from parties that were involved in the coalition negotiations.

Temporary breakdowns of negotiations that are eventually concluded by government formation in the same bargaining attempt indicate substantial disagreement between the parties. The formation of a common government indicates that it was eventually possible to overcome the conflict. Yet, it also suggests serious disagreement between the parties. Although government formation indicates that the specific stumbling blocks have been removed, a relatively high amount of latent conflict is likely to remain and burden the government. First, the compromise that allowed government formation may be merely formal (or 'implicit', Timmermans 2003: 24): the parties agree to disagree, what, in turn, may mean to shelf the relevant issues or to relax coalition discipline with regard to them. Second, even if a substantial (or 'explicit', Timmermans 2003: 24) compromise is worked out in order to overcome the disagreement, the relevant policy dimension is likely to produce new issues during the reign of the government that will constitute new challenges.

Coalitions thus exhibit a low degree of conflict at formation stage when they are formed in one bargaining attempt and no temporary breakdown occurs. They show a medium amount of conflict if they are formed in one bargaining attempt that is interrupted by a temporary breakdown (but no bargaining attempt involving different parties is made). Finally, coalitions exhibit a relatively high degree of conflict at formation stage if more than one bargaining attempt is required. While these measures refer to manifest conflict in the formation process, latent inter-party conflict can be inferred from the number of formation attempts that occur before a specific combination of parties is explored in bargaining attempts.

Sceptics may argue that temporary breakdowns and inconclusive bargaining rounds are rarely more than attempts by one party to dramatise the situation and drive up its price. While they

may have a point with regard to the aim of party leaders to play to the diverse audiences of coalition negotiations, breakdowns are hardly plausible without substantial and credible disagreements.

Coalition negotiations may not be concluded by government formation for two reasons. First, the party leaders at the negotiation table may find the deal offered to them not good enough. Even pure office-seekers may be willing to trade the role of junior partner in a coalition today against that of senior partner in the future. And occasionally some of the bargaining rounds were never considered serious attempts at government formation by the actors involved. Rather they aimed at sending signals to the outside world (e.g. '*we* are willing to cooperate for the sake of the country'). Second, coalition negotiations may lead to nothing because of intra-party resistance.[5] In a dramatic scenario the party negotiators' proposal is voted down at a party congress, but there are many ways in which intra-party politics can undermine inter-party agreement. At the heart of non-strategic temporary breakdowns and failed formation attempts there is an information problem. It can relate to inter-party politics and intra-party politics. Hence, the negotiators may not know enough about the preferences of their negotiation partners or may fail to anticipate their party's response to the negotiation results.

An empirical survey of the coalition politics in 15 Western European states suggests that intra-party politics is highly relevant even for coalition formation and termination. In the 1945–2000 period 214 inconclusive bargaining rounds (or, phrased more dramatically, failed formation attempts) occurred (Müller and Strøm 2000).[6] Although the data does not allow to pin down the causes that brought to naught these attempts at coalition formation it is save to assume that intra-party politics played a vital role in many of these events. Sometimes party leaders do not strike a deal with other party leaders because they are afraid of the reaction of their voters in the next election (a consideration that lies at the heart of Warwick's [2000] concept of 'policy horizons'). Sometimes party leaders face a more immediate threat from party activists and card-carrying members who can revolt and threaten to remove the leaders

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5 Logically, intra-party resistance may also force back the party leaders to the negotiation table they have left or are willing to leave. However, we are not aware of a single case in which this allegedly was the case.

6 The range of inconclusive bargaining attempts is 0–6 per government formation situation and 3–56 per country.

by the means of intra-party democracy (voice) or to withhold their labour and membership contributions (exit) and hence deprive the leaders of crucial resources. Sometimes the party leaders who conduct the inter-party negotiations are tightly constrained by *ex ante* formulated demands and/or the requirement to get the details of coalition deals *ex post* ratified by demanding party bodies (see Marsh and Mitchell 1999). And sometimes coalitions are not formed because the party leaders of one party consider the leadership of another party not sufficiently stable for effective coalition governance. Yet, inconclusive bargaining attempts are probably only the tip of the Iceberg.

Coalition governance

Coalition governance traditionally has been the 'black box' of coalition research. Even Laver and Shepsle (1990, 1996), who forcefully introduced governance questions to theory-guided coalition research, do so only in the form of strong assumptions and remain primarily interested in government formation (and stability). In contrast, country-specific research for many years has focussed on coalition governance mechanisms and some comparative work has begun to address issues of coalition governance (Müller and Strøm 2000; Thies 2001; Timmermans 2003; Martin and Vanberg 2004; Martin 2004).

Advocates of single-party governments (typically those who favour some variant of a majoritarian electoral system) traditionally have viewed coalitions as causing two problems: government instability and policy immobilism. These typically have their origin in the coalition parties' inability to agree on government policy. In such cases, sometimes politicians shrug their shoulders and carry on. Yet, in many instances they will try to exercise pressure on their coalition partner to make at least some concessions. In so doing, they may appeal to the public, respond by blocking a pet project of the coalition partner (perhaps for the purpose of logrolling), threat to vote with the parliamentary opposition or use any other constitutional mechanism to force the decision on the coalition partner, actually 'betray' the coalition partner by voting with the opposition or taking other unilateral action (where feasible), threat to resign from the coalition, actually resign temporarily from the coalition, or threat to bring about early elections (if feasible). All this may lead to terminal conflict, which we discuss below. Yet, in many instances such conflicts falls short of coalition termination. This may be

due to skilful brinkmanship of the coalition leaders, the hammering out of compromises or calling the bluff by one side and retreat of the other. Although these events do not lead to coalition termination, they still constitute coalition conflict. While the coalition parties occasionally may be able to keep such conflicts private, it is more likely that they become public.

It is save to assume that very often the show down between the coalition leaders is closely related to intra-party politics. To the best of our knowledge, we do not have more than anecdotal information on coalition governance conflicts and the information on the intra-party dimension of such conflicts is even more scare.

Cabinet termination

Cabinets may terminate for several reasons, including conflict. Conflict, in turn, can be inter-party exclusively or also involve intra-party conflict (which, in turn, may trigger inter-party conflict, including unilateral coalition termination by the party not affected by intra-party conflict). Clearly, cabinets that terminate for reasons of conflict show a relatively high conflict level at this stage of the coalition cycle. Everything else equal, cabinets that serve until the end of their constitutional inter-election period display less conflict. And cabinets that terminate early (where feasible) for strategic reasons and without coalition-internal conflict seem to be least conflict-ridden: after all strategic termination shows the ability for action in the mutual interest of the cabinet parties. Note, however, that the *ceteris paribus* clause is probably nowhere else more important than here, as cabinets facing electoral punishment are likely to sit out their internal conflicts.

Compared to government formation, we are in a slightly better position to estimate the relevance of intra-party processes for coalition termination: in Western Europe 15.4 percent of all cabinets in office between 1945 and 2000, altogether 51 cabinets, terminated either entirely for intra-party reasons or intra-party reasons played a significant role for termination. For the sake of simplicity these cases can be understood as conflicts between the party's team in government and other sections of the party. Finally, we know that 24.2 percent of the post-war coalitions in the same set of countries were terminated because of policy conflict between the coalition parties. We do not know whether these policy conflicts reflected the intrinsic

preferences of the party leaders or whether they mainly acted in anticipation of the reactions of their rank-and-file.

Of course, the meaning of factual statements like the ones above critically depend on the definition of 'cabinet' applied (e.g. Damgaard 1994). Here it is built on the 'standard' criteria 'between elections', 'identity of party composition', and 'identity of Prime Minister' (Müller and Strøm 2000). Hence each election, each change in the party composition, and each change of the Prime Minister leads to counting a new cabinet. Depending on the underlying research interest, other definitions have included more or less criteria. Hence, Strøm (1990), in his study of minority governments, included the cabinet's parliamentary basis and counted each change from majority to minority status and vice versa as constituting a new cabinet. In contrast, Dodd (1976), in his study of the relevance of party systems for government coalitions, focussed exclusively on the cabinet's party composition and hence counted only one cabinet as long as the same parties shared government. Thus, to provide one example, the 16-year reign of the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition in Germany under Chancellor Kohl would count as one cabinet.

Different definitions of 'cabinet' are likely to provide us with different counts of terminal conflicts in general and the involvement of intra-party conflicts in particular. Since the various cabinet definitions essentially have a different referent (i.e. real world meaning), it may be useful to distinguish them at the conceptual level (cf. Sartori 1984). Hence, we will use the following terms: *coalition* (party identity), *government* (party identity + between elections), and cabinet (party identity + between elections + identity of Prime Minister).

Electoral conflict
However cabinets terminate, the very nature of elections as a constant-sum game carries the potential of conflict between the parties of the outgoing government. Probably, some degree of inter-party conflict cannot be avoided even if all the government parties would be happy to maintain their share of the vote and continue their cooperation after the elections. However, outgoing coalitions do vary considerably with regard to inter-party conflict in the electoral arena. Conflict will be low when institutional incentives force parties to compete in blocs.

Coalition parties may campaign with the declared goal of renewing their government cooperation even in the absence of such incentives and are likely to do so when the government record is good. Alternatively, coalition parties may go in the elections with no statement about their coalition preferences for the next term and they may indeed fight each other vigorously. This is most likely, when the election follows a conflictual government termination. And, of course, parties may explicitly rule out further cooperation.

Research on inter-party cooperation in the electoral arena is a new venture in political science. While thus far it has concentrated on the 'obvious cases' with strong institutional incentives (e.g. Gschwend, et al 2003) and explicit pre-electoral coalition agreements (Müller and Strøm 2000), a broader perspective on pre-electoral coalitions is emerging.

The choice of party strategy often is neither easy nor uncontroversial. Intra-party conflict can relate to the party's fundamental choice whether to stand-alone or seek cooperation in the electoral arena. Likewise, controversy can emerge over the question whether the party should tie its hands by making public their coalition preferences or leave everything open 'until the voters have decided'. Note, that these two strategic choices are not necessarily linked to each other. Intra-party conflict can either be one about principles (stand-alone vs. seek cooperation) or about the specific choice of partners. Needless to say, that the former is often disguised as the latter. Finally, intra-party conflict can emerge about the question what is the main competitor. This decision may mean sending the 'wrong' signals to segments of the electorate that are cherished by some intra-party actors and may in effect pre-empting the decision about government formation.

Types of intra-party politics in coalition governments

Figure 3 identifies patterns of intra-party politics that impact on inter-party relations in coalitions. Note that these patterns are party-specific. Hence, the picture may look different from the point of view of its coalition partner(s). The mechanisms that translate intra-party politics in observable coalition political events are anticipation and party interaction.

Figure 3. Patterns of intra-party politics in coalition governments

Inter-party relations

		Smooth	*Conflictual*
Intra-party relations	*Smooth*	Identity Control	Party representation
	Conflictual	Mere intra-party affair	Nested game logic Multiplication logic

Identity

In this case party leaders are united and in harmony with the party's rank-and-file. Moreover, the coalition runs smoothly. We would expect this harmonious scenario to be most likely in ideologically compact coalitions in which the parties are not competing for the most prestigious cabinet positions and where the parties have incentives to maintain their common front also in elections.

Control

Here intra-party relations are less harmonious but the party leadership has the means and determination for top-down control of the party. Thus, open intra party conflict is avoided and intra-party relations remain do not show open conflict. Compared to the 'identity' scenario, we would expect this to be the case when the coalition is ideologically less compact, the gains from government participation are shared less proportionally.

Mere intra-party affair

In contrast to the situations in the upper left-hand box, the outside observer would recognize intra-party conflict. Yet, it remains an internal affair and does not spill over into coalition politics. Although it may be related to party behaviour vis-à-vis the coalition partner(s), it has no direct effect on the relevant behaviour of the party. If intra-party politics is nourished by

the party's behaviour in the coalition (typically, some 'die-hards' will see their representatives in the government to sell out to the coalition partner), it will not affect party behaviour as long it is easy for the party leaders to remain the upper hand. Such events may, however, inflict away time and attention from the business of government. Alternatively, intra-party conflict can relate to organisational or personnel issues, which, in principle, can be settled without producing fallout for the coalition.

Party representation

This case represents the classic understanding of coalition conflict with unitary actors. Thus, party leaders are united and can rely on the rank-and-file following them. The party representatives in the coalition fight for their turf or share of the cake. They may do so because of their personal values that happen to be perfectly aligned with those predominant in the party (identity). Or they may engage in a conflict with the coalition partner(s) because they are able to anticipate what deal in the coalition they can 'sell' to their party and what would cause internal troubles. They may, in turn, consider internal conflict a bad thing per se and hence put a premium on party unity, even at the price of coalition infighting. Or party leaders may be afraid of undermining their own party positions. Consider Luebbert's claim: 'What makes the talks so long, difficult and complex is generally not the lack of goodwill among the elites, but the fact that negotiations must appear the way they do in order to satisfy the members whose orientations are still largely attuned to the vocal, symbolic, and ideological aspects characteristic of each respective political culture. ... Most negotiations in cases of protracted government formation takes place between leaders and their followers and among rival factions within parties.' (1986: 52).[7] Or party leaders may consider coalition conflict as a means to demonstrate their own effort to the party. Or coalition conflict is considered as a means to extract a maximum of concessions from the coalition partner(s). While the emphasis may be one of these motivations, several of them can exist simultaneously. Coalition conflict then is a necessary stage of making hard decisions and occasionally may lead to highly spectacular events such as the breakdown of negotiations, cabinet resignations, early elections, or indeed the termination of the coalition.

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[7] This is a neat argument, but as yet there is virtually no empirical research that takes it up systematically. That even applies to Luebbert's own work on Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, and Italy from the 1950s through the 1970s (Luebbert 1986).

Nested game logic

The nested games logic (cf. Tsebelis 1990) implies that a party remain cohesive in their interaction with its coalition partner(s). However, party behaviour is not determined by their preferences with regard to inter-party politics but rather their preferences with regard to intra-party politics. More specifically, they may be motivated by their desire to remain party leaders, as Luebbert (1986) has suggested. Yet, party leaders may also put a premium on intra-party politics if they are (or consider themselves) unassailable. Thus, Sjöblom (1968: 74) lists 'party cohesion' as one of a total of four basic party goals (with programme realization, vote maximization, and maximization of parliamentary influence as the others). Party cohesion is operationalised as opinion-support (party members support and externally defend party positions), vote-support (maximum party unity in internal decision-making), and resources-support (the provision of labour and money by the party members) (1968: 85). According to Sjöblom (1968: 86) party cohesion is 'a coal, standing on a somewhat lower generality level than the other goals' but at the same time 'can be viewed as an almost essential condition for attaining the other basic goals'. Party history provides prominent examples of parties that deliberately reduced their ability to manoeuvre for the sake of maintaining 'party unity' (from the inter-war Social Democrats in Austria to the PCI in Italy, see D'Alimonte 1999). Empirically, the nested games logic cannot always be neatly separated from party representation, as in both cases the party tries to maintain a common front.

Multiplication logic

The multiplication logic implies that party cohesion breaks down and two or more sub-parties interact with the coalition partner(s). Allegedly, this used to be the case in the 'First' Italian Republic. In the words of Belloni (1978: 101):

> '[In the parliamentary arena] DC factions enter into agreements with other parties (or their factions) to support or oppose government legislation and to engage cooperatively in other kinds of parliamentary manoeuvrings. … Consequently, political forces external to the DC intervene in DC affairs either in cooperative or oppositional relationships with the various factions .... The result is an overlapping of interests and views between left-wing factions is the DC and Italian left-wing parties; and between right-wing DC factions and right-wing parties' (see also Zuckerman 1979: 147–54).

Party Characteristics

Party research since long has given much attention to the development of party typologies (see Gunther and Diamond 2003 for an overview). Most of these typologies are complex in the sense that they combine different dimensions of party such as organization, ideology, and function in the political system. For our purposes a one-dimensional typology designed to cover intra-party politics seems more adequate.

In building such a typology we start from the ideal typical *unitary party* that informs classic coalition research. It is a party with homogenous preferences that allow the party to speak and act 'with one voice'. Internal organizational structures and hierarchies exist, but they only serve *functional* demands such as to ensure division of labour and thereby generate capacity for external action. These structures are not required for intra-party interest articulation and the making of contested decisions. Intra-party *politics*, in other words, is absent.

Deviations from this conflict-free ideal type can occur on the vertical and horizontal dimensions. Internal conflicts can occur between the party leadership and the party's rank-and-file (vertical dimension) and between various intra-party groups (horizontal dimension). We assume that intra-party conflicts become more likely, the more vertically differentiated the party organization is. In other words, a high degree of intra-party democracy is likely to give rise to more conflicts than a more hierarchical structure. This, of course, is valid only *ceteris paribus* and does not imply assumptions about the preference distributions within parties. We can think of the various party organizational types as different venues for political entrepreneurs. While in strictly hierarchical systems political entrepreneurs must seek recruitment from above, they can appeal to the rank-and-file in more democratic ones. Thus, some structures will tend to increase conflict while others will rather restrict it. The following party types are ideal types in the sense that they occupy endpoints on our vertical and horizontal dimensions.

The *oligarchic party* (cf. Michels 1915) is vertically less homogenous than a unitary party. Differences of interest exist within the party, but the party leadership remains in controls and is able to maintain a high degree of discipline. Intra-party conflicts tend to be rare.

In the (internally) *democratic party* the process of influence is reversed. Members have extensive possibilities to influence party policy. Yet, there is no horizontal differentiation. At party conferences and through working groups party activists and members participate in intra-party decision-making. The party leadership is not in exclusive control. There is ample room for internal conflict between the party leadership and the activists. Such conflict is likely to come to the open at party congresses and when other mechanisms are employed that allow for the participation of the rank-and-file in party decision-making.[8]

The *factionalized party* is characterised by more or less permanent and organized intra-party divisions. Factions are vertically integrated within-party groups, that exhibit their own organizational structure. This is to say that the faction members' loyalty is greater to their respective faction than to the party. Yet, there is a delicate balance as factions do not want to abandon their party as an umbrella organization. As Belloni (1979) has put it, factions are parties within parties. Factionalized parties are particularly vulnerable to conflict. The literature on factionalized parties has often stressed the predominance of office-goals in these parties and pointed out that policy usually is less important (Belloni 1979; Cole 1989; Garvin 1981; Mershon 2001).[9]

Strictly speaking, the factionalized party does not push internal divisions to the extreme. This is a characteristic of the *atomized party* (Sartori 1997: 189) In this type every MP or party official stands for himself (or herself) and preference aggregation as a rule does not follow the two-steps logic of party democracy: first within and then between the individual parties (Laver and Schofield 1990: 15). Although most of the political entrepreneur's coalition-building remains within the borders of their party, it is ad-hoc and alliances that cut across

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[8] To provide one example, in 1969 the party congress of Luxembourg's LSAP refused to ratify a coalition deal as it disagreed with the agreed-upon policies (Hearl 1992).

[9] The classical examples are the Italian DC and the Japanese LDP but other parties, like for example the Dutch PvdA, has also seen its share of factionalism (van Praag 1994).
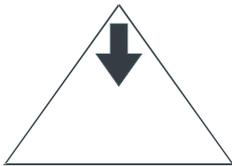
their party are never ruled out. This type of party is rare and typically excluded from the coalition game.[10]
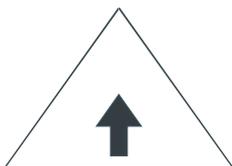
We may visualise the five party types as shown in Figure 4.
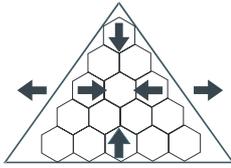
Figure 4. Party types
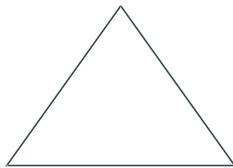
Unitary party

Oligarchic party

Democratic party

Factionalised party

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[10] The parties of the Third and Forth French Republics are probably the closest real world approximation to this ideal type

Atomized party

The empirical challenge that lies ahead is to classify political parties on the continua between these ideal types. This is a daunting task as parties change over time. Yet, any such attempt does not need to start from scratch (see, e.g., Janda 1980). .

Hypotheses

We now tie together the discussions on coalition politics, conflicts, and intra-party structures and formulate some tentative hypotheses. They are all of a probabilistic nature and are expected to hold *ceteris paribus*. The conceptual challenge that lies ahead is to further elaborate on these hypotheses and to work towards a more comprehensive catalogue of hypotheses.

Coalition Formation

H1: Coalition negotiations with oligarchic parties will take less time than coalition negotiations with democratic and factionalised parties.

H1a: Coalition negotiations with factionalised parties will consume most time.

H2: When factionalized parties are involved, coalition negotiations will show more inconclusive bargaining rounds.

H3: When factionalized parties are involved, oversized coalitions or single-party governments are more likely – due to the instability induced by "party within party".

Coalition Governance

H4: Democratic parties are more likely to insist on formal coalition agreements.

H5: Coalition agreements of coalitions with democratic parties will emphasise policy agreements.

H6: Coalitions that include democratic parties and/or factionalised parties will show a greater amount of coalition conflict.

H7: Coalitions with democratic parties establish external conflict resolution mechanisms (i.e. mechanisms that go beyond the cabinet) as the dominant method of conflict resolution.

Cabinet termination

A general feature of the literature on factionalized parties is that government participation of these parties reduces the duration of these governments. Indeed, in one of the few empirical studies on the impact of intra-party politics on coalitions Druckman (1996) found a negative relation between the degree of factionalism and cabinet duration.

H 8: Coalitions including factionalised parties will have a shorter duration than coalitions consisting of oligarchic parties.

Coalitions may terminate not only due to faction infighting. Truly democratic structures may produce a similar effect, either because of rank-and-file rebellions or the need of politicians to demonstrate their readiness to fight for the party goals.

H 9: Coalitions including democratic parties will have a shorter duration than coalitions consisting of oligarchic parties.

Conclusion

In this paper we have focussed on party conflict as an angle to study the relevance of intra-party politics in government coalitions. We have done so not because this seems the *only* possible way to do so, but because we think it is a research strategy that is both rewarding and feasible. The concepts and data suggested in this paper clearly go beyond the intra-party politics in coalition research. Admittedly, there are some loose ends in the paper. Tying them in and conducting empirical research are the challenges that lie ahead of us.

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