

Coalition Government as a Reflection of a Nation's Politics and Society

Through examination of parliamentary governments in twelve countries, this book demonstrates the ways in which study of the parties in governing coalitions, and their parliamentary opposition, provides insight into numerous aspects of countries' cultural values, societal schisms, and the issues of greatest contention among their people.

Each chapter analyses the political parties in a different country's parliament and illustrates how they represent the country's competing interests, social divisions, and public policy debates. Coalition and opposition parties are also shown to reflect each country's: political institutions; political actors; political culture; and societal, geographic, and ideological rifts. In many of the countries, changes in the constellation of parties in government are emblematic of important political, social, and economic changes.

This book will be essential reading for students of parliamentary government, political parties, electoral politics, and, more broadly, comparative politics.

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A Comparative Study of Parliamentary Parties and Cabinets in 12 Countries

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A Comparative Study of
Parliamentary Parties and
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Edited by Matt Evans

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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	viii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>List of contributors</i>	x
Introduction	1
1 Coalitions through a comparative politics lens: parties and political culture	24
MATT EVANS	
PART I	
Typical coalition governments, with weakening pillar parties	41
2 Germany: between bloc competition and grand coalitions	43
ERIC LINHART	
3 The dynamics of coalition governments in the Netherlands	55
ARCO TIMMERMANS AND GERARD BREEMAN	
4 Government coalitions as a reflection of national politics: the complex case of Belgium	70
LIEVEN DE WINTER	
PART II	
Coalition governments with uncoalitionable minority parties	87
5 Israel's coalition government: secular liberals, religious nationalists, and ultra-orthodox parties	89
MATT EVANS	

6 Short-lived coalitions in Latvia: ethnic tension, political fragmentation, and office-seeking	105
JĀNIS IKSTENS	
PART III	
Minority governments and negative parliamentarism	121
7 Sweden: minority government as the norm	123
JONAS LINDAHL, JOHAN HELLSTRÖM, AND HANNA BÄCK	
8 Denmark: the politics of compromise and minority government governance	139
CHRISTOFFER FLORCZAK AND ROBERT KLEMMENSEN	
9 Norway: towards a more inclusive parliamentary regime	152
KAARE W. STRØM	
PART IV	
Third-wave countries, economic crisis, and political changes	169
10 Portugal: the prevalence of right-wing coalitions	171
JORGE M. FERNANDES	
11 Spain's coalitional dynamics: the relevance of multilevel politics	184
JOSEP M. RENU	
12 Greece's coalition governments: power sharing in a majoritarian democracy	198
EMMANOUIL TSATSANIS AND EFTICHIA TEPEROGLOU	
PART V	
Anti-establishment party leads government	215
13 Party system and coalition governments in post-WWII Italy	217
GIUSEPPE IERACI	

Conclusion 24

14 Coalitions and political parties as a reflection of societal changes and cultural rifts in 12 parliamentary democracies 25

MATT EVANS

Index 285

Figures

2.1	Election Results for the German <i>Bundestag</i> , 1949–2017	30
2.2	The German <i>Bundestag</i> Parties in a Two-Dimensional Policy Space	37
2.3	Most Important Problems in Germany, 2005–2018	38
3.1	Policy Scope of Coalition Agreements in the Netherlands	50
4.1	Belgium’s Regions and Provinces	68
7.1	Party Positions in 2017	142
8.1	Two-Dimensional Placement of Parties in the Danish Parliament, 2015	161
11.1	Apportionment of Seats at the 2019 Legislative Elections	209
14.1	Effective Number of Parties	269
14.2	Disproportionality Index	270
14.3	Two Largest Parties’ Combined Share of Parliament	274
14.4	Formateurs’ Share of Payoffs	282

Tables

2.1	Mechanisms of the German MMP System (as of 2013 reform)	29
2.2	Coalition and Opposition Parties in the <i>Bundestag</i> (Following the 2017 Elections)	32
2.3	Coalitions in the German <i>Länder</i> (as of January 2019)	42
3.1	Political Parties Represented in Parliament and Government (2017)	47
4.1	Portfolio Distribution in the Atypical Coalition (2014–2018)	77
5.1	Coalition and Opposition in Israel’s Parliament, 2015–2019	94
6.1	Coalition and Opposition in Latvia’s Parliament (Following the 2018 Parliamentary Elections)	112
7.1	Coalition, Support, and Opposition Parties in the Riksdag Following the 2018 Election	139
8.1	Parties in the Parliament of Denmark (2015–2019)	154
9.1	Government Types in Norway, 1905–2018	166
9.2	Norway’s Coalition and Opposition Parties Following the 2017 Elections	170
9.3	Strength of Party Attachment in Norway, 1945–2009	178
10.1	Government of Portugal, 2011–2015	194
11.1	Congreso de los Diputados (Lower House), 2018	211
11.2	Congreso de los Diputados (Lower House), 2019* (Prior to Government Formation)	212
12.1	Coalition and Opposition in Greece’s Parliament, 2015–2019	235
13.1	Coalition and Opposition in Italy’s Chamber of Deputies (Following the 2013 Elections)	257
13.2	Coalition and Opposition in Italy’s Chamber of Deputies (Following the 2018 Elections)	259
14.1	Head of State	268
14.2	Coalitions’ Share of Parliament	280

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Introduction

People usually learn about a country's history and culture before studying its political system and the parties competing for power. This book takes an alternative approach, examining different countries' political parties in order to better understand their political culture and the issues of greatest contention within their societies.

Coalition governments in parliamentary systems are the starting point through which each country's study begins. Hence, this book illustrates how study of the parties vying for power provides insight into a country's cultural values, societal divisions, and issues of greatest contention among its people. There are a number of very good volumes on various aspects of coalition research. Such books are usually written for those with a special interest in the subject of coalitions and generally require a broad understanding of parliamentary government and different types of electoral systems. These books are often based on research topics such as coalition dynamics, political negotiating, and portfolio allocation. Much of the research uses large-n quantitative analyses of data to test theories relating to ministerial decision-making behaviour (Moury 2013), strategic interactions between parties within a coalition (Müller and Strøm 2000), and the link between a coalition's parties and the policies pursued by the government (Laver and Budge 1992).

This book, however, uses the political parties in coalition governments and their parliamentary opposition to provide practical illustrations of many of the principles taught in comparative politics. In so doing, the book helps bridge a gap between introductory-level comparative politics texts and more advanced research on coalitions. Hence, this book is especially useful for mid- to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, the chapters in this book also provide valuable background material for research on coalitions in parliamentary democracies and single-country comparative studies.

In multiparty parliamentary democracies, governments are typically composed of a coalition of parties that represent certain segments of their countries' competing interests and societal divisions. Coalition negotiations, following national elections, require parties accounting for a majority of parliament's members to reach agreements – formal and informal – on national policies and determine

2 Introduction

which parties will be in charge of the government's ministries that oversee policy implementation. Consequently, a lot can be learned about a country's social, economic, and cultural divisions by analysing the composition of its governing coalition and the parties in the opposition.

Through examination of the parties in parliamentary governments in twelve countries, this book demonstrates the ways in which study of governing coalitions provides insight into numerous aspects of countries' political actors, societal divides, political culture, competing interest groups, and changing values. Each chapter examines the electoral system, the ruling party, its formal and informal partners in government, and its parliamentary opposition, in a different country. Thus, the chapters illustrate how the parties reflect each country's social, geographic, and ideological divisions and their significance in public policy debates. The policy principles that determine whether parties are able to cooperate in forming and sustaining a coalition government reveal important aspects of a country's political culture and the issues that most concern that country's citizens at a particular point in time. In many of the countries, changes in the constellation of parties in government are emblematic of shifting national values and important political, demographic, and economic changes.

In postelection coalition negotiations, parties seek to obtain the ministerial and parliamentary committee positions that will enable them to affect the policies most important to their constituents. The number of political parties and the type of constituents they represent are largely a factor of institutions that are often based on a country's unique history and culture. Furthermore, the varying degrees to which portfolios for defence, immigration, or welfare, for example, are sought by parties in different countries is indicative of broader issues within a country's political and social debates. Similarly, changes in the value of coalition payoffs, such as the ministries of industry, agriculture, or environment, also reveal shifts in a country's demography, economy, and political culture.

Additionally, study of the parties that are outside of the coalition, and either informally support the government or serve as the parliamentary opposition, provides further insight into that country's political and social rifts. The factors that cause a party to join or eschew a parliamentary government frequently go beyond the policies that they advocate. The differences between coalition and opposition parties are often illustrative of a country's ethnic, religious, or socio-economic schisms. These factors will be elucidated in the comparative analyses of twelve countries studied in this book. The different parties in coalitions, and their rivals in the opposition, are analysed in terms of the ways in which they reflect each country's: political system, political actors, political culture, public policies, and political economy.

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- 1 Not including a few independents.
 - 2 For a more detailed discussion of electoral systems, see Lijphart (2012).
 - 3 For a fuller discussion of cabinets, see Lijphart (2012).
 - 4 See Mill (1986), Locke (1949), Rawls (1971).
 - 5 For more, see Matravers et al. (2006), Estlund (2012), or Tannenbaum (2012).
 - 6 For a thorough analysis of policy-based theories of coalition governments, see Laver and Budge (1992)
 - 7 For more on extreme or niche parties, see Kedar (2005), Adams et al. (2006), Meguid (2005).
 - 8 For more on issue ownership in portfolio allocation, see Budge and Keman (1990)
 - 9 See Lijphart (2012) for a more complete summary of minimal winning coalitions.
 - 10 For more on minority governments and cabinet formation, see Laver and Schofield (1990).

- 11 For more on deputy ministers, see Giannetti and Laver (2005), Thies (2001), (Evans 2018a).
- 12 For more on committee chairs, see Kim and Loewenberg (2005), Carroll and Cox (2012).
- 13 See, for example, Bäck et al. (2011), Warwick and Druckman (2006, 2001), Browne and Franklin (1973).
- 14 See, for example, Baron and Ferejohn (1989), Diermeier et al. (2008), Baron and Diermeier (2001).
- 15 See, for example, Laver and Shepsle (1990), Strøm (1990).
- 16 See Bäck et al. (2011), Raabe and Linhart (2015), Evans (2018b)
- 17 For a comparison of consensus versus majoritarian government see Lijphart (2012), Martin and Vanberg (2004).
- 18 For more on comparative politics, see Powell et al. (2018) or Munck and Snyder (2007).
 - 1 The example is slightly simplified, as the German electoral system knows a further step of seat allocation to parties' *Länder* lists, but it should be sufficient to understand the basic mechanisms.
 - 2 Developments of the party system are discussed in more detail below.
 - 3 See Section II for some clarifications regarding the relationship between CDU and CSU.
 - 4 The FDP is commonly referred to as the Liberals in Germany; hence, the two references for this party are used interchangeably in this chapter.
 - 5 "Social market" economy is a concept developed by German Christian Democrats after World War Two as kind of a third way between liberal capitalism and socialism. Social market economies largely follow the idea of free markets and competition but accept higher degrees of state regulation. This concept comes close to what Hall and Soskice (2001) call a "coordinated market economy."
 - 6 SED stands for *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* and means Socialist Unity Party of Germany. PDS stands for *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (Party of Democratic Socialism).
 - 7 At the federal elections of 2017, for example, 17.8 percent of the East German voters elected The Left with their list votes, while 7.4 percent of the voters in the West did.
- 1 *Tweede Kamer* (the House of Representatives) translates to Second Chamber, and *Eerste Kamer* (the Senate) translates to First Chamber.
- 2 The PVV supported a minority coalition from 2010 to 2012.
- 3 Current estimates are for an agreement by Summer 2019.
- 4 The only disputes that occasionally arose concerned labour issues in the Port of Rotterdam.
 - 1 Currently, regional competences include urban planning; environment; agriculture; local government; housing; developmental aid; and parts of public transportation, employment, trade, and economy. The communities' competences include nearly all educational and cultural matters; parts of health policy; and assistance to families, the disabled, elderly, and youth.
 - 2 For instance, after six years of negotiations, the federal and regional governments still did not manage to conclude an agreement prior to the December 2015 Paris summit on climate change.
 - 3 The Gallagher Index of Disproportionality in 2014 stands at 4.6.
 - 4 Nonetheless, since World War Two, eight cabinets have resigned in order to pre-empt a no-confidence vote.
 - 5 Belgium has had a few experiences with long-lasting caretaker governments, and that of 2010–2011 (541 days) was certainly the longest. Formally, a caretaker government cannot make any major decisions, and it must use the frozen budget of the previous government. However, when the formation of a new government takes a long time,

critical events may push the temporary government to take action, contingent upon parliamentary approval. For instance, the Leterme II caretaker government decided to send F16 fighter planes to Libya.

- 6 Linguistic groups also have the power to delay legislation that threatens their interest. If at least three-quarters of the members of a linguistic group (either chamber) introduce an “alarm bell motion,” then parliamentary procedure is suspended. The federal cabinet must then, within thirty days, propose to the relevant chamber either the original bill or an amended version that appeases the aggrieved minority. This procedure was initiated only once (2010), but was not pushed through to resolution of the legislation.
- 7 Until 1995, both chambers had a strong veto power because for a bill to become law, identical versions had to be adopted by both. As there was no hierarchy between them, bills sometimes went back and forth through the navette system, without “stopping rules.” However, strongly disciplined parliamentary parties allowed the government to push the bills it initiated through both chambers, with few delays.
- 8 The Belgian Communists only gained significant electoral results in the 1946 elections.
- 9 During the 1980s, the Communists, the RW, and the UDRT lost parliamentary representation, resulting in a small reduction of the party system.
- 10 Except the post-Maoist PTB-PvdA that gained two seats in 2014 and twelve in 2019.
- 11 Belgian francophone parties do not have any organizational or programmatic link with their French counterparts, nor do the Flemish with the Dutch parties, even when the Flemish for a long time considered The Netherlands as a role model. In Flanders all demands for “Dutch-speaking re-unification” with the Netherlands have vanished. Belgian francophone public opinion is still influenced by the French political agenda (e.g., the attempts to copy Macron’s *En Marche* movement, and the *Gillets Jaunes* movement), as a majority of Belgian francophones follow French media outlets.
- 12 Protestants have always been a very tiny majority. Note that other religions exist and have acquired official recognition and subsidies from the state, that is, the small Orthodox, Anglican, and Jewish communities (all less than 1 percent) and an expanding Muslim community due to immigration.
- 13 Although negotiations in the regions conclude more quickly than in the federal arena (the latter includes more parties and contentious issues), as long as government formation in both cases occurred simultaneously, efforts were often made to synchronize the final phase of multilevel government formation (i.e., the nomination of ministers), following the informal principle that deals regarding one level become valid only when there is agreement at all levels.
- 14 During the eleven bargaining rounds needed to form the Di Rupo government (2010–2011), nine parties were actively involved in one or several rounds.
- 15 In spite of high density, the trade-union movement is traditionally ideologically heterogeneous. The Catholic ACV-CSC (*Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond – Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens*) counts more members than the two other unions together. The socialist ABVV-FGTB (*Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond – Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*) comes in second, with the small liberal trade union (ACLVB-CGSLB) third.
- 1 As of the submission of this chapter for publication, the coalition was weakened by the exit of a six-member party. Following elections in April 2019, political deadlock among the eleven parties resulted in new national elections scheduled for five months later.
- 2 For more information on Israeli political parties, see Israel Democracy Institute (2015)

- 3 As indicated earlier, the number of ministers changes frequently with different coalition agreements.
- 4 The Likud, other right-wing parties, and a large segment of Israeli society refer to the area by its biblical names: *Judea and Samaria*. This chapter will use the term more commonly used in international discussion: *West Bank*.
- 5 It is also criticized for West Bank construction by many foreign governments who see it as an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians.
- 6 The term Palestine is a relic from the Romans and was not used by Jews, Arabs, or Turks prior to the British occupation.
- 7 Israel also took the Golan Heights from Syria, but that area does not have a Palestinian population.
- 8 The PLO was founded in 1964, prior to the war, but increased attacks in subsequent years.
- 9 Sometimes referred to as national-religious.
- 10 This is similar to immigration policies of many European countries and Japan, that grant citizenship based on ethnic ancestry.
- 11 Approximately equal to the OECD average (OECD 2017).
- 12 One female MP broke away to form her own one-person faction in 2017.
- 13 Though the party's predecessor, the National Religious Party, did have a female MP as early as 1959.
- 14 The first Arab women MPs were in majority Jewish parties Meretz (in 1999) and Labour (in 2006), and the first Arab woman MP to represent an Arab party only appeared in 2009.
- 15 See Hazan and Diskin (2009), Arian and Shamir (2008), Peretz and Doron (2000).
- 16 Labour split from the (now defunct) Zionist Union just prior to the election.
- 1 According to the Swedish succession rules before 1980, only men could become monarchs. The three queens in history who ruled over Sweden have each been the widow of Sweden's king.
- 2 In 2018, the Social Democrats won 100 seats, well below the 166 they won in 1982 or as recently as 2002, when they won 144 seats.
- 3 The Feminist Initiative has so far failed to pass the electoral threshold for parliamentary representation, but has won a seat in the European parliament.
- 4 This was a potential conflict for the government coalition of the Alliance parties. A clash was avoided by passing the matter to parliament and the Alliance parties, allowing their MPs to vote their conscience.
- 1 James Madison was president of the United States at the time that the Norwegian Constitution was drafted but did not directly influence this process.
- 2 The 1814 Constitution denied Jews and members of Catholic orders access to Norway, a provision that caused major controversy in the following decades. The prohibition against Jewish immigration was lifted in 1851, but remarkably the ban on Catholic orders remained in place as late as the 1950s.
- 3 In addition, two smaller and largely regional parties have gained parliamentary representation in recent decades: *Folkeaksjonen Fremtid for Finnmark* (The Popular Movement for the Future of Finnmark (1989) and *Tverrpolitiske Folkevalgte*, also called *Kystpartiet* (the Coastal Party) (1997 and 2001).
- 4 The Progress Party was originally Anders Lange's Party, named after its founder.
- 5 In 1971, the critical issue was Norwegian EC membership. Ten years later, it was abortion, whereas in 1990, it was once again EU membership. All other cabinets prior to 2001 had, however, formed "without a hitch."
- 6 Note, however, that this measure, because it counts the bargaining period from the date the government tenders its resignation, effectively underreports the duration of postelectoral bargaining. By convention, the outgoing administration does not tender its resignation until the new parliament has convened. Thus, when a losing government after an election has indicated that it will resign, the parliamentary

calendar leaves an interim of several weeks during which unofficial negotiations can take place. This has happened in 1997 and on several previous occasions.

- 7 The two other cases, in 1971 and 1972, were both complicated by the European Community membership issue.
- 8 The exceptions are the national unity governments during and immediately after World War Two.
- 9 Since parties also tend to have extreme preferences (relative to their coalition partners) on the dimensions they “own,” Budge and Keman’s approach in many cases predicts that portfolio allocation should favour parties that are preference outliers. Laver and Shepsle (1996) instead argue that portfolios should be allocated to parties that are centrally located in a policy space, that is, the median party on the relevant policy dimension. Norwegian portfolio allocation has tended to follow Budge and Keman rather than Laver and Shepsle.
- 10 When the first durable nonsocialist coalition was formed in 1965, there was an intra-coalition battle over the Ministry of Church and Education. The Liberals, as well as many members of other coalition parties, were reluctant to yield this portfolio to the Christian Democrats (Lyng 1976, 16–41), who had the post as one of their top objectives. The Christians did eventually prevail, but only after a serious tug-of-war with the Liberals.
- 11 Note that since the 1980s, the ministerial structure of Norwegian governments has increasingly been in flux, so that some of the ministries mentioned above no longer exist in their original form.
- 1 See Magone (2000) and Amorim Neto (2003) for previous excellent treatments on the topic.
- 2 In Portugal, the Social Democrats are a centre-right party.
- 3 A comparison in the concluding chapter of this book shows Spain currently has a slightly lower disproportionality index. Among the countries in the book, Greece and Italy have higher levels of disproportionality, though Italy’s electoral system is different.
- 4 For example, Israel has a 3.25 percent threshold. Spain has 3 percent threshold.
- 5 After Portas’s resignation in 2016, a new leadership emerged under Assuncao Cristas with several party cadres that have been nurtured under Portas.
- 6 In a previous coalition, in 2002, then President Sampaio vetoed Paulo Portas as a potential Foreign Affairs minister due to the Christian Democrat’s still ambiguous position on Europe.
- 7 Data have been obtained from the European Union’s Public Opinion Portal at http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/lineChart//themeKy/19/groupKy/102/savFile/196?fbclid=IwAR12atWkgAYK3e2MjMpL7ByO7cRrwSKHUVuvgbJ58P7s_wTBvLqxIO9-F4s
- 8 We only include ministerial posts in these calculations. Junior ministers have not been included.
- 9 The Socialists joined coalitions with the Christian Democrats (1978) and the Social Democrats (1983–1985).
- 10 Guterres presided over one of the most robust economic expansion cycles in Portugal, which permitted his government to expand the welfare state.
- 1 Despite that title, the president is only head of government but not head of state. That distinction is currently held by King Felipe VI.
- 2 In Spain, the no-confidence vote is constructive: it must include an alternative prime minister candidate in order to avoid political instability. Thus, parties need to reach a *double agreement*: both in removing the incumbent prime minister (and cabinet) and in the appointment of a new prime minister and cabinet.
- 3 Although there are proposals to reform the electoral system that advocate replacing the provinces with the ACs as electoral districts, none of the major parties has shown interest in addressing this debate. Some scholars calculate this would lead to

greater parliamentary fragmentation and, therefore, less political power for the Socialist Party and the People's Party.

- 4 Those advocating a reform of the Senate argue that it should be twofold: a change of its method of election to become a chamber appointed by the regional governments or the parliamentary assemblies of the ACs, and second, having it responsible for handling all territorial legislation. This would create a new political framework where political parties and regional governments would have the opportunity to deal specifically with territorial issues, according to their real political power in their AC.
- 5 This was a citizen movement formed following a demonstration in Madrid on May 15, 2011, convened by various groups. There were a series of peaceful protests throughout the country, with the intention of promoting a more participatory democracy away from the bipolar political spectrum of the Socialist Party-People's Party, critical of the power of banks and corporations, and demanding an "authentic division of powers" to improve the democratic system. It brought together various civic groups with different slogans, such as the May 15 demonstration: "We are not puppets in the hands of politicians and bankers" and "Real Democracy NOW! We are not merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers." Following the worldwide mobilization on October 15, 2011, the activists who were part of the encampments and assemblies began to create civil society groups. Likewise, new political parties, such as Podemos, formed in 2014.
- 6 They label Socialist Party and People's Party "old politics," in the sense of lack of renewal, gender bias, being disconnected from citizens' demands, serving the economic lobbies instead of population, and so on, and repeat claims used by the 15M movement that used the slogan "they do not represent us."
- 7 Since the electoral reform of 2004, the representation of women has increased from 34.8 percent in 2004; to 34.6 percent in 2008; 33.1 percent in 2011; 40.3 percent in 2015 and 41.4 percent in the 2016 elections.
 - 1 It skipped the election held in 2009.
 - 2 Duverger also found that use of a two-round voting system also tends to encourage the formation of multiparty systems that produce patterns of bipolar competition between two relatively stable coalitions.
 - 3 LAOS subsequently disappeared from Parliament.
 - 4 In 2019 Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of North Macedonia settled a decades-long dispute over the name Macedonia.
 - 5 As of the writing this chapter, the trial is still ongoing.
 - 1 The Italian Supreme Court invalidated the law that provided the winning party with bonus seats in 2017.