The Eyes that Bind: Junior Ministers as Oversight Mechanisms in Coalition Governments

Supplemental Information

Overview

In this document, we provide additional details about our variables, how we put our data set together, as well as an exploration of the robustness of our results to different operationalizations of our variables and different decisions about which cases to include in our analyses. Throughout this document, we will refer to the model presented in Table 3 of the paper as the "main model."

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for all of the variables analyzed in our main model and those used for the robustness checks reported in this document.

Cases Covered and Treatment of Missing Data

Müller and Strøm (2003) provides an extensive cross-nationally comparative coding on the use of junior ministers in West European nations. The one exception to this is Luxembourg for which the coding of junior ministers appears to have been carried out in a substantially different fashion than the other countries. We thus coded data from each coalition government on all of the nations covered in this volume except Luxembourg.

For the Finnish governments, we code additional ministers assigned to portfolios as oversight junior ministers, because they perform the same executive-level oversight function. Although cabinets in Finland do not have junior ministers, "the problem of 'divided portfolios' is relevant in the sense that it is an established practice to appoint two full ministers

to the most important ministries, who regularly come from different parties" and "they are of course able to watch each other very carefully and to report the doings of their colleague to the party and to the coalition leadership" (Müller and Strøm 2003, 283) In the French cases, Müller and Strøm code junior ministers as cabinet ministers when they are in charge of the ministry (2003, 515-520). The CSU and CDU are coded as the same party in the German cases. For an explanation of the relationship between these two parties, see Müller and Strøm (2003, 63-64). It also is worth noting that throughout the time period covered there were no junior ministers in Denmark. From Damgaard (2003), it is clear that although no junior ministers were assigned, there was no rule prohibiting the use of junior ministers throughout this period. In order to avoid excluding cases based on the value of the dependent variable, we have kept Denmark in our analyses. Below we show a replication of our analyses excluding Finland and Denmark, and these exclusions do not substantively alter any of our findings.

Our data set began with 3,649 ministries. We dropped cases from beginning governments in several nations, because the elections which led to early governments were not covered by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) data set. Cases excluded for this reason were: Austria governments 1, 2, and 3; Italy 1 and 2; and Netherlands 1.[1] We also excluded cases of governments that came about as a result of shakeups in governments without changes in the parties in government. Cases dropped for this reason were: France 9.5, 11.5, 14.5, and 22.5; and Portugal 14.5. We excluded Belgian governments 2 and 3, because the CMP data set did not include the Communist Party which was in those two governments. We dropped Finland 14 because the SDL had not contested the elections prior to that government forming. After removing these governments, our data set contained 3351 ministries.

Although the coverage of ministries by Druckman and Warwick (2005) is fairly comprehensive, we were not able to find exact matches for 2.05% of the cases in our data set. To code ministry importance for these cases, we used codings for similar ministries. For example, the 9th ministry in Austria is the "Health and Environment" ministry. This ministry was not coded by Druckman and Warwick, but they coded the importance of the Health Ministry and the Environment Ministry as .79 and .75, respectively. We therefore coded the Health and Environment Ministry as having the average importance of these two ministries, .77. Table 3 shows the results in our main model with these cases removed. The exclusion of cases for which we constructed values of this variable does not lead to any substantive changes in our conclusions.

Most of our ministries had only a single cabinet minister. Excluding Finland, which is a special case mentioned above, there were 126 ministries in our data set which had two ministers assigned to a single portfolio and 4 which had three ministers assigned to one portfolio. For the purpose of our analyses, we chose to treat these ministers as separate cases. This brought our total number of cases up to 3461. Table 4 presents the results with these cases excluded; this exclusion does not substantively change our conclusions.

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[1]Throughout this section, we will use the cabinet numbers as assigned by Müller and Strøm.

Table 2 presents country-by-country aggregated data on the use of junior ministers (based on Table 2 in Thies (2001). From this table, we can tell that there are substantial cross-national variations in the use of watchdog junior ministers. We can also see that there were some cases in which coalition partners did not have enough members of parliament to assign junior ministers to all of the ministers from their larger partners. In order to account for this type of occurrence, we have created a dichotmous control variable that identifies these type of coverage gaps.

Alternative Measures of Party Ideology

The measure of right-left politics from the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) is the single most-used measure of political party ideology across nations and over time (Budge et al 2001). Although it is intended to be a catch-all measure of left-right politics, it does contain more economic measures than any other broadly-defined category of measures. In the review process, a reviewer raised this issue and suggested that we might explore what our results would look like if we limited them to only economic ministries.

Table 5 shows the results from a model restricted to economic ministries next to the results from the main model. When we restrict the model to these cases, we can see that we get very similar results to what we had in the main model. Figures 1 and 2 present replications of the first two figures from the table. From these figures, we can see that the results for the impact of *Ideological Distance* and *Ministry Importance* are slightly sharper with this more limited selection of cases.

Denmark and Finland

As discussed above, Denmark and Finland were somewhat unusual cases in terms of the the use of oversight junior ministers. Table 6 presents the main model next to results from two models in which we exclude cases from Finland and then Denmark. An examination of the coefficients and indications of statistical significance demonstrates the robustness of our results to the exclusion of these cases.

Alternative Measure of Committee Strength

As discussed in the paper, our current coding of *Strong Committees* "comes from Palmer and Whitten (1999). According to their coding scheme, originally discussed in Powell and Whitten (1993), a committee system is strong 'when it has two of the three properties of size (over 10 committees), specialization to fit the government bureaucracy, and limitations in the number of committee memberships held by individual legislators' and inclusive 'if

committee chairmanships must be shared proportionately among all parties, or at least the major ones, regardless of their presence in the government' (1999, 400)."

An alternative coding of committee strength comes from Martin and Depauw (2010). As they explain, their coding of 31 countries is based on "an analysis of standing orders and other documents and follow with in-depth country surveys of national experts during 2009 and 2010" (2010, 6-7). For the cases covered in our paper, Martin's scaled measure of committee strength ranges from 5 to 9.

Table 7 presents results from our main model next to results from a model in which we substitute *Committee Strength (Martin Scale)* for *Strong Committees*. A comparison of the two columns indicates that most of our parameter estimates are quite robust to this change in measure. The main exception to this is the estimated effect of *Weak Bicameralism* which remains positive but is now substantially smaller and not statistically significant. The *Constant* changes, but this is because its interpretation has been changed substantially by the inclusion of a variable the runs from 5 to 9 (in a logistic regression model, the constant is the expected value of $X_i\hat{\beta}$ when all X's are equal to zero). Turning to a comparison of the estimated effects of these two alternative measures of committee strength, it is clear that the estimated effect of *Committee Strength (Martin Scale)* is also negative and highly statistically significant in support of hypothesis 4. Comparisons of the substantive effects of these two variables is somewhat tricky, because it is difficult to think in terms of equivalent shifts in the values of a dichotomous and a scaled variable. From the table of simulated first differences in the paper, we can see that, holding all other variables constant at typical values, the impact of shifting *Strong Committees* from 0 to 1 is -13.03% (-17.79, -9.37).[2] This estimated impact is between the two most obvious comparisons of an estimated impact for a scaled variable: the simulated first difference of shifting *Committee Strength (Martin Scale)* from its mean value to its mean value plus one standard deviation is -5.61% (-7.69, -3.73) and the estimated impact of shifting this variable from its minimum value to its maximum value is -19.89% (-27.63, -12.97). If we compare assessments of model fit between the two models displayed in Table 7, the model with *Strong Committees* is the clear winner: the AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) is smaller, the BIC (Bayesian information criterion) is smaller, and the pseudo-R^2 is higher.

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[2]For each of the simulated first differences presented in this document, we have put the 95% confidence intervals in parentheses.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Non-Dichotomous Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Ideological Distance	8.75	9.84	0	66.26
Ministry Importance	0.04	0.31	-0.68	1.01
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.02	2.13	-18.93	8.84
Party Size	46.00	28.32	0	97.2
Committee Strength (Martin Scale)	6.95	1.42	5	9
Dichotomous Variable	**% Cases where $X = 1$**			
Committee Strength	53.05			
Weak Bicameralism	38.14			
Strong Bicameralism	34.79			
Surplus Party	14.04			
Coverage Gap	6.62			

Table 2: The Use of Junior Ministers by Nation

Nation	Ministers w/Hostile JMs	%	Monitorable Ministers w/Hostile JMs	%	JMs	Watchdog JM Chances Taken	%	Wasted JMs
Austria	36 of 164	22.0	36 of 156	23.1	36	36 of 166	21.7	0
Belgium	96 of 599	16.0	96 of 599	16.0	138	96 of 1408	6.8	42
Denmark	0 of 309	0.0	0 of 260	0.0	0	0 of 353	0.0	0
Finland	101 of 344	29.4	101 of 344	29.4	184	108 of 882	12.2	76
France	60 of 339	17.7	60 of 312	19.2	108	69 of 585	11.8	39
Germany	33 of 396	8.3	33 of 390	8.5	77	33 of 455	7.3	44
Ireland	35 of 125	28.0	35 of 100	35.0	35	35 of 130	26.9	0
Italy	375 of 635	59.1	375 of 618	60.7	814	489 of 1442	33.9	325
Netherlands	128 of 267	47.9	128 of 267	47.9	146	143 of 551	26.0	3
Norway	8 of 131	6.1	8 of 128	6.3	9	9 of 252	3.6	0
Portugal	29 of 71	40.8	29 of 71	40.8	38	38 of 87	43.7	0
Sweden	21 of 81	25.9	21 of 81	25.9	24	21 of 133	15.8	3

Table 3: Main Model compared to when we drop cases for which Ministry Importance was not coded by Warwick and Druckman

Independent Variable	Main Model	Excluding Cases Not Coded by W&D
Ideological Distance	0.01*	0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ministry Importance	1.03**	0.99**
	(0.16)	(0.16)
Ministry Importance X Ideological Distance	0.02+	0.02+
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Strong Committees	-1.18**	-1.23**
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Weak Bicameralism	0.77**	0.88**
	(0.23)	(0.23)
Strong Bicameralism	1.30**	1.33**
	(0.20)	(0.19)
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.04*	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party Size	-0.01**	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Surplus Party	0.20	0.20
	(0.14)	(0.14)
Coverage Gap	-0.81**	-0.88**
	(0.27)	(0.30)
Constant	-0.93**	-0.92**
	(0.20)	(0.19)
N	3461	3386
χ^2	265.06**	248.01**
Pseudo R^2	.13	.13

Notes: -The dependent variable equals one if an oversight junior minister was was assigned and zero otherwise.

-Robust standard errors are in parentheses underneath logit parameter estimates in the second column. These standard errors were estimated using the cluster command in Stata 11.0 where the cluster variable was a unique identifier for each coalition government in the data set.

-Two-sided z-tests: ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.1$

Table 4: Main Model compared to when we drop cases of Second and Third Ministers

Independent Variable	Main Model	Excluding Cases of 2nd and 3rd Ministers
Ideological Distance	0.01*	0.01*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ministry Importance	1.03**	1.07**
	(0.16)	(0.16)
Ministry Importance X Ideological Distance	0.02+	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Strong Committees	-1.18**	-1.11**
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Weak Bicameralism	0.77**	0.77**
	(0.23)	(0.23)
Strong Bicameralism	1.30**	1.36**
	(0.20)	(0.20)
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.04*	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party Size	-0.01**	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Surplus Party	0.20	0.19
	(0.14)	(0.15)
Coverage Gap	-0.81**	-0.80**
	(0.27)	(0.27)
Constant	-0.93**	-0.98**
	(0.20)	(0.20)
N	3461	3327
χ^2	265.06**	292.91**
Pseudo R^2	.13	.13

Notes: -The dependent variable equals one if an oversight junior minister was
was assigned and zero otherwise.
-Robust standard errors are in parentheses underneath logit parameter
estimates in the second column. These standard errors were estimated
using the cluster command in Stata 11.0 where the cluster variable was
a unique identifier for each coalition government in the data set.
-Two-sided z-tests: ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.1$

Table 5: Main Model Compared to a Model of Economic Ministers

Independent Variable	Main Model	Economic Ministers
Ideological Distance	0.01*	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ministry Importance	1.03**	1.14**
	(0.16)	(0.24)
Ministry Importance X Ideological Distance	0.02+	0.04*
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Strong Committees	-1.18**	-1.56**
	(0.17)	(0.19)
Weak Bicameralism	0.77**	0.34
	(0.23)	(0.27)
Strong Bicameralism	1.30**	1.10**
	(0.20)	(0.21)
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.04*	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party Size	-0.01**	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Surplus Party	0.20	0.13
	(0.14)	(0.21)
Coverage Gap	-0.81**	-0.92*
	(0.27)	(0.37)
Constant	-0.93**	-0.37
	(0.20)	(0.24)
N	3461	2261
χ^2	265.06**	205.70**
Pseudo R^2	.13	.17

Notes: -The dependent variable equals one if an oversight junior minister was
was assigned and zero otherwise.
-Robust standard errors are in parentheses underneath logit parameter
estimates in the second column. These standard errors were estimated
using the cluster command in Stata 11.0 where the cluster variable was
a unique identifier for each coalition government in the data set.
-Two-sided z-tests: ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.1$

Table 6: Main Model, Without Finland, Without Denmark

Independent Variable	Main Model	Without Finland	Without Denmark
Ideological Distance	0.01*	0.01	0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ministry Importance	1.03**	0.95**	1.04**
	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.17)
Ministry Importance X Ideological Distance	0.02+	0.03+	0.02+
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Strong Committees	-1.18**	-1.16**	-1.10**
	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.18)
Weak Bicameralism	0.77**	0.81*	0.43+
	(0.23)	(0.33)	(0.23)
Strong Bicameralism	1.30**	1.33**	0.96**
	(0.20)	(0.31)	(0.19)
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party Size	-0.01**	-0.01**	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Surplus Party	0.20	0.14	0.08
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)
Coverage Gap	-0.81**	-0.77**	-0.61*
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Constant	-0.93**	-0.85**	-0.57**
	(0.20)	(0.32)	(0.18)
N	3461	3117	3152
χ^2	265.06**	231.14**	236.25**
Pseudo R^2	.13	.14	.11

Notes: -The dependent variable equals one if an oversight junior minister was
was assigned and zero otherwise.

-Robust standard errors are in parentheses underneath logit parameter
estimates in the second column. These standard errors were estimated
using the cluster command in Stata 11.0 where the cluster variable was
a unique identifier for each coalition government in the data set.

-Two-sided z-tests: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 7: Main Model with Alternative Measure of Committee Strength

Independent Variable	Main Model	Alternative
Ideological Distance	0.01*	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ministry Importance	1.03**	1.19**
	(0.16)	(0.17)
Ministry Importance X Ideological Distance	0.02+	0.02+
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Strong Committees	-1.18**	
	(0.17)	
Committee Strength (Martin Scale)		-0.40**
		(0.06)
Weak Bicameralism	0.77**	0.24
	(0.23)	(0.24)
Strong Bicameralism	1.30**	1.31**
	(0.20)	(0.24)
Bicameral Relative Party Strength	0.04*	0.04+
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party Size	-0.01**	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Surplus Party	0.20	0.35*
	(0.14)	(0.16)
Coverage Gap	-0.81**	-0.78*
	(0.27)	(0.30)
Constant	-0.93**	1.33**
	(0.20)	(0.47)
N	3461	3461
χ^2	265.06**	264.31**
AIC	3519.39	3543.08
BIC	3587.04	3610.73
Pseudo R^2	.13	.12

Notes: -The dependent variable equals one if an oversight junior minister was
was assigned and zero otherwise.

-Robust standard errors are in parentheses underneath logit parameter
estimates in the second column. These standard errors were estimated
using the cluster command in Stata 11.0 where the cluster variable was
a unique identifier for each coalition government in the data set.

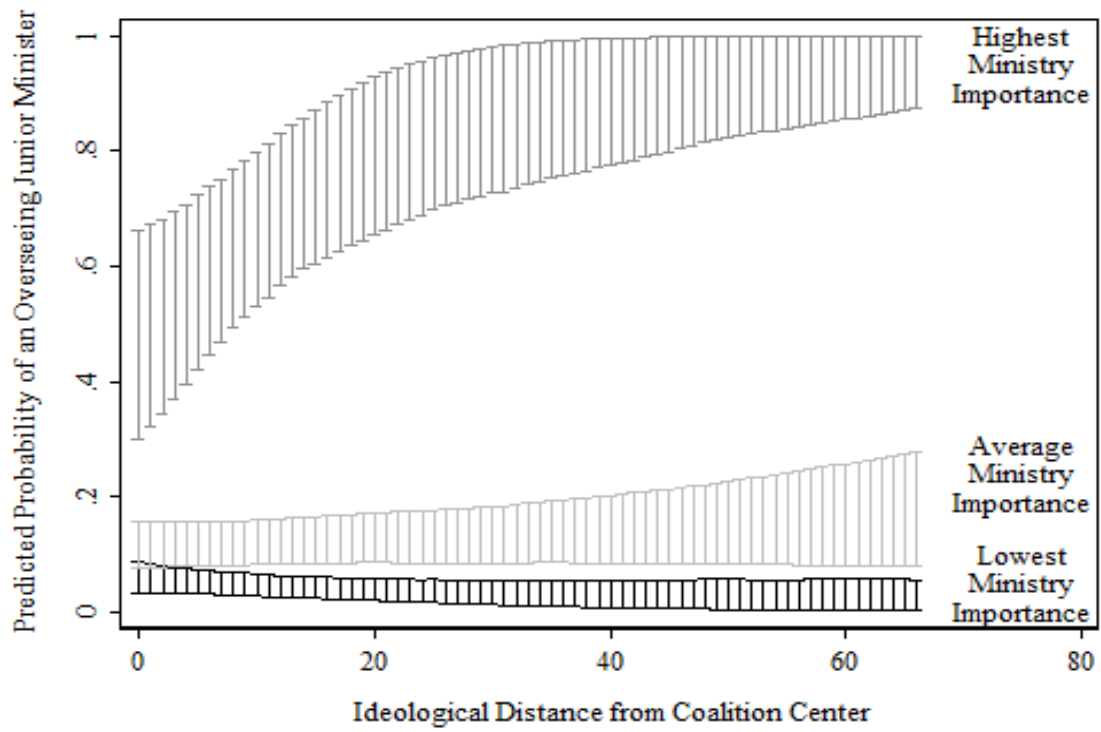-Two-sided z-tests: ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.1$

Figure 1: Simulated Effects of Ministry Importance Across the observed range of Ideological Distance–Economic Ministries Model
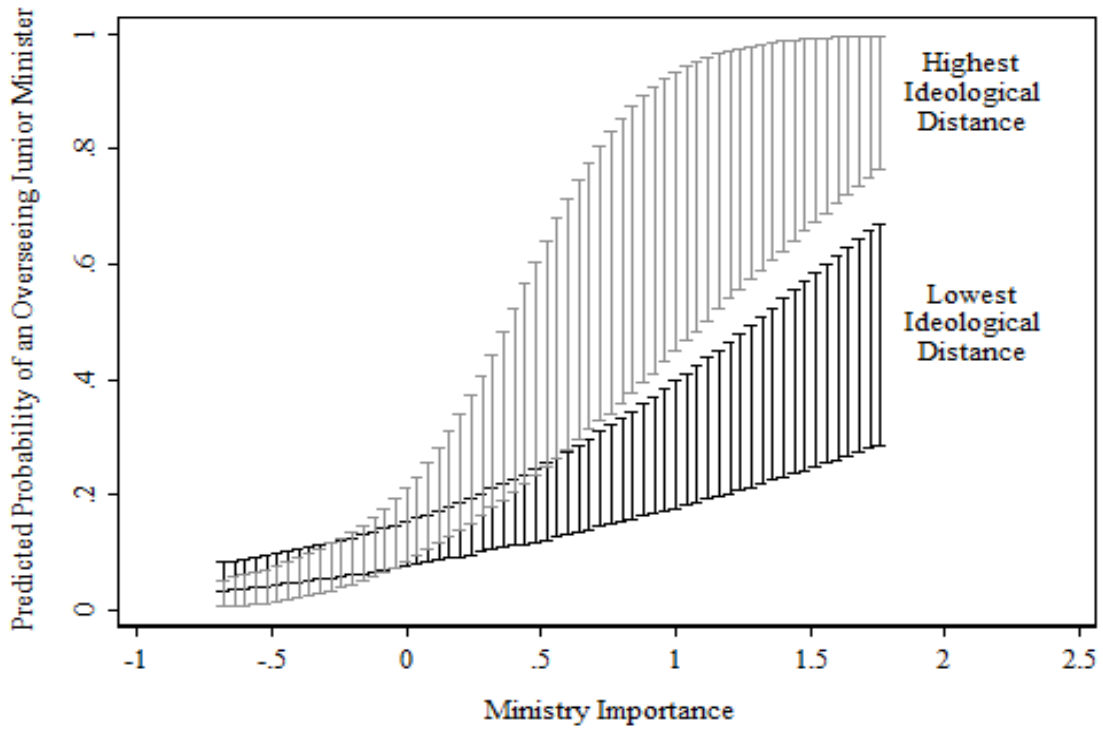
Figure 2: Simulated Effects of Ideological Distance Across the observed range of Ministry Importance–Economic Ministries Model