
PARTY MANDATES AND DEMOCRACY

MAKING, BREAKING, and KEEPING
ELECTION PLEDGES in TWELVE COUNTRIES

EDITED BY

ELIN NAURIN, TERRY J. ROYED,
& ROBERT THOMSON

NEW COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Party Mandates and Democracy

When people discuss politics, they often mention the promises made by politicians during election campaigns. Promises raise hopes and expectations that positive policy changes are possible, but people are generally skeptical of these promises. *Party Mandates and Democracy* focuses specifically on the extent to which and conditions under which governments fulfill the promises made by parties during election campaigns and finds that, contrary to conventional wisdom, in most countries most of the time a majority of pledges—and sometimes a large majority—are acted upon.

The fulfillment of parties' election pledges is an essential part of the democratic process. This book is, however, the first major and genuinely comparative study of the topic across a broad range of countries and elections, including the United States, Canada, nine Western European countries, and Bulgaria. In order to facilitate valid cross-national comparison, individual country case studies were tightly coordinated in terms of definitions of pledges and assessments of fulfillment. A number of explanations of variation in pledge fulfillment across countries are explored. The presence of power-sharing arrangements between governing parties is found to be an important factor; the book thus adds to the considerable body of literature on the impact of alternative democratic institutions on a variety of outcomes.

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*Making, Breaking, and Keeping Election
Pledges in Twelve Countries*

Edited by
Elin Naurin, Terry J. Royed, and Robert Thomson

University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

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Published in the United States of America by the
University of Michigan Press
Manufactured in the United States of America
Printed on acid-free paper
First published March 2019

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-0-472-13121-1 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-12467-1 (e-book)

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Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL:
<https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9796088>

Preface

The subject of this book is often a topic of conversation. When people talk about politics, they often mention the promises made by politicians during election campaigns. Promises raise hopes and expectations that positive policy changes are possible. However, the sentiments people express when they mention campaign pledges are more often negative than positive. People are generally skeptical of the promises made by politicians during election campaigns. This skepticism is often accompanied by strong emotions because broken promises can lead to a sense of betrayal and distrust.

Our work focuses on the extent to which and conditions under which governments fulfill the promises made by parties during election campaigns. The skeptical view of parties' campaign promises suggests that few promises are fulfilled. In contrast, one of our main conclusions is that parties in government take their promises seriously. We show that for many parties and elections, there is often a stronger linkage between election pledges and governmental actions than the conventional wisdom indicates. While citizens in most countries express the belief that parties in government usually break their election promises, we find that parties mostly do not break their promises.

The fulfillment of parties' election pledges is an essential part of the democratic process. This is, however, the first major and genuinely comparative study on the fulfillment of election pledges across such a broad range of countries and elections. Until now, most studies on the fulfillment of election pledges have focused on one or a small number of countries. Moreover, they did not fully coordinate their efforts, as we do here, to align their definitions of pledges and assessments of fulfillment.

The authors of the book have coordinated their research under the auspices of the Comparative Party Pledges Project (CPPP). The CPPP was launched at an open panel at the General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research in Pisa in 2007. That panel presented some preliminary results from the UK, US, Netherlands, Ireland, and Sweden. In June 2009, the Swedish Research Council and Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology together financed a conference in Gothenburg that gathered several more scholars specifically dedicated to the evaluation of parties' election promises. The Gothenburg meeting resulted in specific plans for future collaboration to produce comparative research. We are grateful to the Lisbon University Institute and the Multidisciplinary Opinion and Democracy Research Group at the University of Gothenburg, which financed more workshops that helped us finalize coding procedures. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge financial support from the following sources: the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), grant nos. S10903-G11 and S10903-G08; the Fonds de recherche du Québec-Société et culture (FRQSC); the Fundação para Ciência e a Tecnologia, grant no. PTDC/CPJ-CPO/111915/2009; the German Research Foundation (DFG), Political Economy of Reforms project, grant no. SFB 884: C1; the Spanish Ministry of Innovation, grant no. CSO2013-40870-R; the Swedish Research Council, grant no. 421-2007-7276; the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, grant no. RRD10-1418:1; the COFAS Marie Curie Fellowship Programme, grant no. 2011-0106; the University of Gothenburg via the Multidisciplinary Opinion and Democracy Research Group and the Swedish National Election Studies Program; and the US National Science Foundation, grant no. SBR-9730785.

We also thank the many scholars who are not directly involved in our pledge research but generously provided comments on our work at numerous international conferences. Many colleagues offered constructive criticism and encouragement on this project and our individual country studies. At various stages of the project we received particularly influential advice on the comparative aspects of the study from André Blais, Shaun Bowler, Michael Huelshoff, Bill Jacoby, Michael McDonald, Bing Powell, Stuart Soroka, Susan Stokes, and Guy Whitten. We are grateful to the series editor, Mik Laver, for advice and support and to colleagues at the University of Michigan Press, Elizabeth Demers, Danielle Coty, and Mary K. Hashman. The anonymous peer-review process has also served us well on this project as we have benefited from generous support and constructive criticism from many anonymous reviewers of this manuscript and our related articles. Remaining errors are our own responsibility.

As we note in the conclusion, while this book represents an important milestone in comparative research on the program-to-policy linkage based on the study of election pledges, it is as much a waypoint as a final destination. We invite other researchers to join us by contributing to the development of new evidence, theories, and methods that are relevant to our program of research on the making, breaking, and keeping of campaign promises. Future comparative research in this area is likely to be as challenging as that which we have undertaken to date, but we expect it to be at least as rewarding. We have experienced the difficulties of international collaboration on integrated comparative research and are convinced that it has been worthwhile to address these. The reward has been and will continue to be the deepening of knowledge on a vital part of the practice of representative democracy.

The Editors, August 2018

Why Comparative Research on the Fulfillment of Election Pledges Matters

Elin Naurin, Terry J. Royed, and Robert Thomson

In the 2015 British General Election campaign, the Conservative Party pledged to hold an “in or out” referendum on European Union membership before the end of 2017 and to “respect the outcome.” The referendum was held in June 2016, and as a result of the vote in favor of “Brexit,” negotiations began for Britain’s exit—in spite of the fact that both of the main parties had campaigned against it. This is one of the most dramatic examples of a government keeping a pledge. This book will present many other examples and show that in the majority of countries a majority of pledges are at least partially kept. In spite of this fact, it is probably promise *breaking* that gets more attention in the popular press, and surveys show that most voters in most countries believe that politicians do not usually keep their pledges. Certainly there are prominent examples of broken pledges—for example, the British Liberal Democrats’ failure to keep a 2010 campaign pledge to abolish university tuition and US presidential candidate George H. W. Bush’s famous 1988 broken pledge “Read my lips: no new taxes.” In both cases, the party or individual who made the pledge suffered a loss in the next election, which was attributed in large part to the breaking of pledges.

There is no question that the making, breaking, and fulfillment of election pledges are ubiquitous features of democracies throughout the world. Yet we would argue that this remains a relatively understudied topic in the subfield of comparative political science. With this book, we provide the

first large-scale systematic comparative analysis of the fulfillment of election pledges. We use a mixed-methods approach, relying on both cross-national quantitative analysis and country studies. Several questions guide us: Do parties offer voters a choice in elections in terms of substantive promises? To what extent and in what ways do parties' substantive promises differ? To what extent and under what conditions are election pledges more likely to be fulfilled? What impact do various power-sharing arrangements have on promise keeping and breaking? Using a common definition of and methods for identifying election pledges and their fulfillment, we studied thousands of pledges over the past three decades in 12 countries with very different institutional contexts: Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. After identifying more than 20,000 specific policy commitments, our team of researchers conducted detailed qualitative analyses of relevant government actions and outcomes to assess fulfillment. The research we present builds on an established research approach, but one that until now has mostly been applied in separate country studies. Our project is the first to present comparative analyses of many countries.

In the following, we review the literature relevant to the making, breaking, and fulfilling of parties' election pledges, starting with prominent normative theories, followed by normative and empirical critiques of the theories. We briefly review the non-pledge literature that bears on these issues. We then make a case for the importance of the study of specific pledges to add to this body of work and review the current state of knowledge in the area. Finally, we describe in more detail the task we set for ourselves in this book and present a brief outline.

1.1. Democratic Theory: The Role of Parties and Elections

While democratic theorists may have some disagreements about a specific definition of *democracy*, Abraham Lincoln's famous invocation of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" captures the essence. Put differently, democracy is a system in which there is a "necessary correspondence between acts of governance and the equally weighted felt interests of citizens with respect to those acts" (Saward 1998, 51, cited in McDonald and Budge 2005; cf. May 1978, 1). The key point is that there should be a strong linkage between citizens, government, and policy, and it is elections that provide that linkage. In contemporary democracies, political parties have "emerged as the primary linkage mechanism for facilitating

the representative process” (Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2011, 5). The “responsible party model,” also sometimes known as a “mandate model,” states that parties select issues and policy proposals and present these as prepackaged sets of alternatives at elections. Voters vote on the basis of the parties’ positions, and the winning party (or parties) then fulfill their promises. Voters can then take the fulfillment or lack of fulfillment of promises into account when voting at the next election, and in that sense responsibility or accountability is ensured (APSA 1950; Downs 1957; Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2011).

Anthony Downs’s *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957) presents a formal theory of the role of parties in representative democracy that is arguably the foundation for current conceptualizations of the mandate model. Downs’s model consists of two sets of actors: political parties and voters. Politicians are assumed to be motivated by the goal of obtaining the benefits associated with holding government office; they are “office seekers.” The theory assumes that voters aim to secure government policies that are most favorable to their interests; they are “policy seekers.” Accordingly, “parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies” (28). Voters will, other things being equal, vote for the party that adopts policies closest to their own preferences. In a two-party system, the party that receives the most votes will become the governing party. In order to secure its chances of success at the next election, this party has an incentive to enact the policies it promised. This is due to the fact that voters will evaluate the party at the next election not only prospectively, based on the policies it promises, but also retrospectively, by the extent to which it acted on its previous pledges. In multiparty systems, there will, according to Downs, be a less effective transmission of voters’ policy preferences into government actions. Nevertheless, the same basic behavioral mechanisms that motivate governing parties to fulfill the pledges they made at the last election will be present.

Downs’s work and mandate theory in general have been the subject of extensive discussion and criticism (Barry 1970; Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1977; Monroe 1991; Grofman 1993). Criticisms have been both normative (taking issue with the mandate model as an ideal type for democracies) and empirical (arguing that some of the assumptions about the behavior of voters, parties, and governments and the nature of the linkage among them are unrealistic).

First, some liberal democratic theorists have been skeptical of the idea that political representatives *should* be bound by the policies they supported during previous election campaigns. The most famous opponent of

the idea of a binding mandate is Edmund Burke, who, in a speech delivered after he won an election, stated, “Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion” (quoted in Kelley 1983, x).

A Burkean view could be justified if voters are uninformed or lack any opinions at all. A key assumption of Downs’s theory is that voters hold clearly defined policy preferences; some theorists view this as naive. Pitkin (1967, 163) questions whether voters even have discernible views: “The represented have no will on most issues, and the duty of the representative is to do what is best for them, not what they latently want.” One response to this view of citizens is that the liberal democratic tradition recognizes that democracy requires leadership. Political parties are the organizations that select and aggregate issues and formulate sets of proposals to put before the electorate. In the absence of clear policy demands by most members of the electorate, parties must be innovative and active in order to identify issues and formulate proposals that voters will perceive as relevant and in keeping with their interests (Pomper and Lederman 1980, 219–23).

Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999) accept the idea that “responsiveness” and “accountability,” as conceived in the mandate model, are important for democracy, but they also argue that good “representation” requires governments that act in the best interest of citizens—and suggest that at times governments may be in a better position to know what is best than citizens do. In that vein, Stokes (1999, 2001) notes that there are some conditions under which leaders *should* violate mandates. If they come to office and find that circumstances have changed or if they have access to information that voters do not have, then breaking a promise may be in the best interest of voters. In such cases, politicians owe voters an *explanation*: “Representation as the pursuit of voters’ basic interests requires voter education” (Stokes 2001, 181).

Another criticism of the mandate model is that even if voters do vote for parties that best reflect their policy preferences, election results generally give a rather unclear expression of “the will of the people.” Riker (1982) argues that *no* method of voting can truly ensure that the will of the people is reflected and that the only things elections can really do is allow voters to throw incumbents out of office. Two more specific criticisms may be made. First, while single-member district (SMD) electoral systems generally provide a clear indication of which party should form the government, this is not always an endorsement by an electoral majority due to the distorting effect of the system. For instance, none of the United Kingdom’s post–World War II single-party majority governments was elected with a

majority of votes, and typically not much more than 40 percent. Second, in proportional representation (PR) systems, whether a party enters government office is frequently as much a result of its ability to bargain its way into the governing coalition as it is of the proportion of votes it received. In each case, it seems that elections are an imperfect tool for translating people's wishes into a government.

Another critique of the mandate model challenges the apparent assumption that majority rule is the only or best form of democracy. Implicit in the model is the view that there are clear winners and losers in elections; the winners enact policy, while the losers serve as the "opposition" and hope to win the next time around. In contrast, Dahl (1989, 104) argues that lawmakers should take into account the preferences of all citizens who are affected by proposed laws, not just the majority of voters. Lijphart (2012, 2) is also critical of majoritarianism; he proposes that an alternative answer to the question of "who governs" is not "the majority" but "as many people as possible." Similarly, Powell (2000) argues that there are two distinct "visions" for how democracy should function. He associates the mandate model with the "majoritarian vision," while the "proportional vision" is based on the view that as many voices as possible should influence policy-making rather than one winning party or coalition or parties.

We would argue that whatever its shortcomings the responsible party or mandate model is widely accepted as a standard for evaluating democracies today. Most modern political parties in liberal democracies are programmatic; they formulate comprehensive and detailed sets of policy proposals and put them before the electorate with the understanding that a vote for a particular party will help ensure that that party carries out its proposals. The Burkean view that representatives should be unconstrained by such proposals seems inconsistent with these modern democratic practices. Given that this is the case, there is a significant body of research that addresses empirically various aspects of the responsible parties model; we turn to that next, starting with approaches that do not explicitly focus on specific party pledges.

1.2. Responsible Parties: Empirical Investigations (Non-Pledge-Based Approaches)

The mandate model we have laid out suggests what Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister (2011, 7) refer to as a "chain of democratic linkage," in which citizens are linked to parties, parties participate in government, policy is

produced, and voters then react. Different scholars have conceptualized these linkages in various ways, but in its simplest form the mandate model suggests that voters choose candidates or parties, the results of the elections determine (or at least influence) who will be in government, governments then produce policies, and the policies should in some way reflect the views of voters as expressed in the election. There is a large volume of literature, spanning multiple subfields within political science, investigating some part of this linkage. Our work is specifically concerned with the *parties-to-policy linkage*, but as other linkages are related to our work it is relevant to mention parts of that literature as well.

To begin with, is it realistic to assume the existence of a “responsible electorate,” which rewards and punishes parties according to their promises and performance (Key 1966)? Many studies indicate that most voters know little about politics (e.g., Milner 2001; Althaus 2003; Wattenberg 2007; Achen and Bartels 2016). Other studies suggest that citizens know enough to make evaluations and cast their votes in an informed manner (e.g., Dalton 1988; Page and Shapiro 1992; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). To some extent, these different findings are a consequence of different levels of analysis: at the aggregate level, random individual-level errors in voters’ knowledge about politics cancel each other out (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1992; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). There is also strong evidence that voters rely on ideology as a cognitive device to enable them to infer parties’ positions on more specific policies (e.g., Van der Eijk, Ceas, and Binder 2005).

In addition, there is a large body of literature on “economic voting” that finds some evidence that voters do reward or punish governments for economic conditions (see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013 for an extensive review). Powell and Whitten (1993) find that voters punish governments for a poor economy only when they can clearly identify a responsible party; other studies have also confirmed greater economic voting in contexts of high “clarity of responsibility” (for a review, see Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck 2017). Some have reached alternative conclusions; Royed, Leyden, and Borrelli (2000) find more economic voting in coalitions than in single-party governments (the opposite of the “clarity” expectation), and Rowe (2015) finds that economic voting increases when more viable parties are competing. Most recently, Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck (2017, 536) find “a remarkable consistency of the economic vote across countries and contexts.” Thus, at present there is significant evidence of economic voting and mixed evidence about whether or how institutional context matters.

All in all, this literature gives us some reason to believe that the assumptions made about voters in the mandate model are not hopelessly unrealistic. Is it realistic, though, to believe that the views of voters, or the “will of the people,” can be reflected in government composition and translated into appropriate policies? There is a growing and varied body of literature that has set about empirically investigating the links among voters, governments, and policies. This literature is primarily cross-national and quantitative, and it tends to rely on prominent comparative datasets for measuring voter, party, and government ideology and quantitative indicators for public policy, such as spending. Most of this work concludes that those links are fairly robust; some find that the links are stronger for some types of government than for others.

Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister (2011) provide a test of the entire “chain of democratic linkage.” They find, first, that voters have clear left-right orientations, that they accurately perceive the ideologies of the parties, and that their own ideology is a major factor in vote choice (153). Next they find a strong congruence between ideology of the median citizen and ideology of newly elected governments and an even stronger congruence between elected governments and their own voters. They also find evidence of a dynamic feedback process: when election results do stray from the median voter, the following election generally provides a correction (186). Finally, they find evidence of a relationship between ideology of government and policy, drawing on social program spending as evidence. For a similarly exhaustive analysis of links among voters, parties and policy applied to the US case, see Erickson, MacKuen, and Stimson (2002).

Huber and Powell (1994) and Powell (2000) argue that different institutional arrangements in democracies are based on different “visions” of how democratic linkages should work: a “majority control” or “majoritarian vision” versus a “proportionate influence” or “proportional” vision. The latter is quite similar to Lijphart’s (1999, 2012) “consensus model.” Powell (2000) analyzes 20 democracies, placing them in one of the two categories (and a third category of “mixed”) based on election rules (SMD vs. PR) and policymaking rules in the legislature. He then evaluates each type of system. His argument is that majoritarian systems should maximize the ability of voters to choose a particular government and hold it accountable, while “proportional vision” systems should maximize the ability of citizens to choose a party that represents their specific views and *all* these views should have influence in the policy process. His results confirm these expectations for the two systems. A key conclusion of his book is that “proportional vision” countries have *greater* “representational congruence”

between citizens and voters than majoritarian countries do, for “postelection bargaining among representatives generally results in governments tied to the citizen and legislative medians.” At the same time, “the majoritarian vision works only fitfully” to produce congruence (221).

Powell (2009) notes that more recent studies of “congruence” between voters and governments show no difference between the SMD and PR systems. He determines that the difference in findings is not due to different measures of ideology but to the fact that in recent years parties in SMD systems have tended to converge toward the median more than in the past.

McDonald and Budge (2005) put forth what they call “median mandate theory” as an *alternative* to ordinary mandate theory. A key factor distinguishing them from Powell (2000) and others is that “congruence” should mean that the median voter position is close to the median *legislative party*—whether in government or not: “Regardless of who forms the government, the party ‘carrying’ the median preference of the electorate should have a pivotal voting position” in the legislature (McDonald and Budge 2005, 8). They find that most often (more than 80 percent of the time), median legislative parties *do* end up in government, and “Where they do not, this is often under minority governments where the median can exercise control over legislative coalitions anyway” (27). They find a generally strong congruence between median voter position and median legislative party, as well as congruence between median legislative party and policy (measured primarily as spending in different areas). Like Powell, they find that PR systems have a stronger connection between voters and government than do SMD systems.

There is also research that focuses strictly on the links between parties or governments and *policy*. Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge (1994), for instance, drawing on Manifesto Project data,¹ examine the relationship between the emphases parties place on different policy areas and the spending priorities of subsequent governments. They found significant patterns of congruence in countries with a range of institutional structures. Using a different research design, Sulkin (2009) investigated US congressional candidates’ emphasis on different issues during election campaigns and found that politicians’ campaign appeals were followed by relevant legislative activity once in office.

Much of the comparative public policy literature looks at the linkage between parties and public policy in democracies and most commonly finds a relationship under at least some circumstances (see, e.g., Schmidt 1996; Imbeau, Pétry, and Lamari 2001; Huber and Stephens 2001; Scruggs and Allan 2004). There are also studies suggesting that party effects may be

mediated by institutional structures (e.g., Pierson 1994; Iversen and Soskice 2006).

Finally, the Comparative Agendas Project challenges the mandate model on theoretical grounds (Borghetto, Carammia, and Zucchini 2014 gives a succinct summary; more generally, see Green-Pedersen and Walgrave 2014; Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Baumgartner and Jones 2009). These studies argue that manifesto or platform writers have limited information available to them, and once in office, new information about policy problems “continuously reshapes actors’ preferences and policy priorities” (Borghetto Carammia, and Zucchini 2014, 167; Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Many of the essays in Green-Pedersen and Walgrave (2014) call into question the idea of a strong parties-to-policy linkage, arguing that “in terms of issues addressed by government, the party in power does not seem to make much difference” (226). This conclusion is based on examining congruence between manifestos and legislative agendas in terms of their *emphasis on particular issue areas*. Arguably, there are ways in which parties may compete and act than the degree of issue emphasis, and this book presents one alternative approach.

None of the literature addressed thus far focuses on the role of specific party *pledges*. Much of the literature investigating democratic “linkages” focuses on aggregate measures of ideology (median voters, median government party or median legislative party) and aggregate measures of public policy (spending, economic outcomes). And yet implicit in the responsible parties or mandate model is a concept of “promissory representation,” that is, “the idea that during campaigns representatives made promises to constituents” (Mansbridge 2003, 515). What role do actual election pledges play in democratic systems?

1.3. The Role of Election Pledges in Democracy

We start with reasons to be *skeptical* of studying party pledges. Despite the importance given to them in perceptions of how democratic representation *should* function, evidence suggests that most voters do not read manifestos (Harmel 2018), and the conventional wisdom is that politicians’ promises cannot be trusted. Citizens and many experts generally hold negative views on pledge fulfillment. The International Social Survey Programme conducted a survey in 33 democracies in 2006, which contained an item that asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the general statement “People we elect as MPs [members of parliament] try to

keep the promises they have made during the election.”² Respondents had five substantive answer categories from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” In 31 of the 33 countries covered, more respondents disagreed with the statement than agreed with it. For instance, in the United States, 58.0 percent of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement while only 21.9 percent agreed or agreed strongly. In Great Britain, 46.0 percent of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, while only 22.8 percent agreed or agreed strongly.

Skeptical views about pledges are by no means confined to uninformed mass opinion. Bernard Manin, a prominent theorist, argues, “Even assuming that voters choose to pay some attention to the candidates’ promises, they know, or should know, that the credibility of those promises is an open question. It is not reasonable on their part to suppose that candidates will necessarily honor their commitments” (1997, 180). Many other political scientists have shared Manin’s view. Schattschneider wrote that “party platforms are fatuities; they persuade no one, deceive no one, and enlighten no one” (1942, 567). Rose (1984) investigates British party pledges and finds that a large proportion of them are fulfilled, but he nevertheless concludes that mainly “something stronger than parties” influences policies, a view he reiterates in Rose and Davies (1994). This finding is due to the fact that his indicators of policy are a variety of economic outcomes and government spending figures, both of which tend to change only incrementally and be influenced by a variety of factors outside of the party system.

Budge et al. (2001, 78–87) are also skeptical about the importance of specific party pledges. Their Manifesto Project (see note 1) is predicated on a “valency and saliency theory,” in which parties emphasize “valence” issues, which they define, drawing on Stokes (1966) as ones in which “only one position is possible . . . because of its moral superiority or obviousness or rightness” (Budge et al. 2001, 82, 85). Because so many issues are “valence” ones, parties compete primarily not by taking different specific positions on a given issue but by placing differential *emphasis* on issues, emphasizing the ones on which they believe they have a competitive advantage (see also Robertson 1976; Budge, Robertson, and Hearl 1987). Analysis of specific pledges allows us to test this assumption that parties emphasize “valence” issues rather than specific substantive pledges.

In spite of the skepticism about pledges coming from both citizens and scholars, parties continue to put forth manifestos containing election pledges and campaign on them. Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the importance of party pledges is their prominence in the real world.

The fulfillment of election pledges is a common topic in political debates across countries. Research indicates that parties' election programs and specific election pledges receive considerable media attention (Krukones 1984; Costello and Thomson 2008; Kostadinova 2017). The Pulitzer Prize of 2009 was awarded to the website Politifact.com for its Obameter, in which US president Barack Obama's election promises were tracked, and similar websites operate in other countries. A study of Swedish parties shows that the most commonly used reproach in political debates among parties is that other parties are not trustworthy and do not keep their word (Esaïasson and Håkansson 2002; see also Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Lau and Pomper 2004). Research also shows that election promises can have a significant direct effect on voters' choices on election day (Elinder, Jordahl, and Poutvaara 2015; Johnson and Ryu 2010; Born et al. 2017) and that both candidates and citizens cite failures to fulfill election pledges as a reason why citizens distrust politicians (Naurin 2011).

Why do parties continue to put forth manifestos or platforms with campaign pledges? There are a number of reasons to expect that rational parties acting strategically should make policy pledges. As noted above, Downs's theory assumes that parties are motivated solely by the pursuit of government office: they put forth policy programs because it is assumed that voters are "policy seekers" who will vote for parties that espouse policies most in line with their preferences. Moreover, since voters will punish parties for reneging on their promises, governing parties have an incentive to fulfill their pledges. Downs's model does not mention the level of specificity with which parties formulate their policies, other than that their positions need to be clear enough for voters to discern which party is closest to their own preferences. It could be argued that if you assume that voters are likely to have doubts about the integrity of politicians, parties would benefit from making plans quite specific. Former British prime minister Edward Heath made such a case when he stated, "People today are so cynical and skeptical about the whole machinery of government that detail is needed to convince them that you really intend to carry out your promise" (quoted in King 1972: 123).

Research has suggested that Downs's vision of politicians as office seeking is an incomplete picture of party motives; in particular, there is extensive research suggesting that parties are policy seekers as well as office seekers: they are motivated by the desire to see particular policies enacted (Laver and Hunt 1992; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005, 9–10). In this view, parties develop and adhere to coherent ideologies as part of their

identities and in keeping with the groups that support them and pursue policies in keeping with those factors. For winning parties, the claim to hold an electoral mandate to keep a promise is an argument they can use against opposition to their policies, which may be encountered from other governing parties in coalitions, opposition parties in the legislature, civil servants, interest groups, or even factions within the parties themselves. Formulating specific election pledges during campaigns, then, aids a party in enacting its preferred policies.

The most compelling theoretical models in the recent literature on party competition incorporate some combination of office- and policy-seeking motivations in explaining parties' behavior (Laver and Sergenti 2011; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005, 6–10, present a brief review of literature on these and other party motives). Müller and Strøm (1999) argue for considering “office” and “votes” as separable motives. They suggest there are frequently trade-offs among three goals—office, votes, and policy—and choice of goal may depend in part on a party's time horizon; a party may, for example, choose to forgo office with its attendant opportunities for policy influence in order to maximize its votes in the future. These sorts of trade-offs might be one factor in determining the particular pledges a party chooses to put forth at any given time—for example, pledges that are responsive to committed party activists rather than a broader electorate.

Regardless of which particular goal a party is prioritizing, it is clear that manifestos, and the pledges they contain, serve several different purposes for parties (for further discussion, see Harmel 2018). The first is what we have emphasized thus far: *electoral*. Manifestos provide information to voters on what parties will do, thereby offering them a way to prospectively evaluate parties and retrospectively evaluate performance. The absence of such statements would encourage individual party candidates to improvise their own policy proposals (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). It is unlikely that such undeveloped and uncoordinated electoral appeals would present a confidence-inspiring image to the electorate during the campaign. Also the absence of clear electoral commitments would impact the possibilities for the *media* to accurately report on parties' policy positions. Election pledges thus help the media to exercise its role as linkage between citizens and parties (Håkansson and Naurin 2016).

Pledges also serve an *intraparty* function. Political parties are often coalitions of factions. Parties must respond to and represent their factions so as to maintain internal support while also endeavoring to be cohesive to some extent so as to receive electoral support (Thomassen 1994). Richard Rose writes, “The drafting of a manifesto is first of all a search for consen-

sus *within* each of the parties” (1980, 56). Once written, election programs become constraints placed on governments by the party.

Another important function performed by detailed manifestos is an *interparty* one, and this is particularly relevant for political systems in which coalition governments are expected. Parties in such systems must consider the effects of their manifestos on their standing as potential coalition partners, and election programs form the basis of negotiations with prospective partners. This provides parties with a motivation to specify their positions on the issues they wish to raise during these negotiations.

In summary, we believe that parties make pledges for a number of strategic reasons and that pledges are a key element in our most common understandings of democratic representation. We turn now to a review of the state of knowledge in pledge research and make the case that a truly comparative approach is thus far lacking.

1.4. Empirical Research on Election Pledges

Although our project is the first large-scale cross-national comparison of the fulfillment of election pledges, the study of election pledges and their fulfillment is a well-established tradition of research in political science. The approach consists of identifying election pledges made by parties and then examining the evidence on whether or not, or the extent to which, each of these pledges was fulfilled. Gerald Pomper (1968) was a pioneer in the field; his study of American party pledges was the first to carry out such a systematic analysis. His original study was extended by Pomper and Lederman (1980) in a project that investigated more than 3,000 pledges in 18 Republican and Democratic party programs during the period 1944–78. They found that 79 percent of the president’s party’s pledges were fulfilled for 1944–66 and 66 percent for 1968–78; majorities of the nonpresidential party’s pledges were fulfilled as well. They conclude that, “contrary to the conventional wisdom, these platform pledges are redeemed. . . . The vote for party is also a vote for policy” (157).

Subsequent research refined and extended the study of election pledges to more recent periods and other countries. Richard Rose (1980) investigated the 1970 and the 1974 elections in the United Kingdom and concluded that on average 82 percent of the promises made by the Conservative Party in 1970 and the Labour Party in 1974 were at least partially fulfilled. Colin Rallings (1987) also studied pledge fulfillment in the United Kingdom and added Canada, using a tighter definition of election pledges

compared to that of Rose and confining his assessment to legislative output (some pledges may have been fulfilled by other means). Nonetheless, Rallings also concluded that a clear majority of the pledges during the studied period (1945–79) were fulfilled: 64 percent of the British parties' pledges and 72 percent of the Canadians' were at least partially fulfilled (see also Bara 2005). Efthalia Kalogeropoulou (1989) followed Rallings's approach in an evaluation of Greek promises, finding that 74 percent of the promises made were at least partially fulfilled. Other relevant case studies focused on promises given in the platforms of US presidents' parties (Fishel 1985; Shaw 1998), by parties in New Zealand (McCluskey 2008), at the subnational levels in the United States (Elling 1979) and Canada (Pétry 2002).

As scholarship in this field advanced, researchers devoted more attention to both the replicability of their work and the comparative potential of the field. Terry Royed's (1996) comparative study of pledge fulfillment in the US under President Reagan and in the UK under Prime Minister Thatcher was important in this respect. Royed provided explicit coding procedures that set out the way she defined and identified election pledges and also reported the results of intercoder reliability tests. This was also the first work to investigate the impact of cross-national institutional differences on pledge fulfillment. Robert Thomson's (2001) study of the fulfillment of election pledges in the Netherlands was the first to examine pledge fulfillment in a coalition. Although Thomson's definition of election pledges was narrower than Royed's, he also provided a detailed definition and coding procedure regarding election pledges and conducted reliability tests. Other studies that provide detailed definitions and coding procedures for pledges include Ireland (Mansergh 2005; Costello and Thomson 2008), Spain (Artés and Bustos 2008; Artés 2013), Sweden (Naurin 2011, 2014a), Italy (Moury 2011a), Bulgaria (Kostadinova 2013), Austria (Praprotnik 2017b; Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a), and Portugal (Moury and Fernandes 2018). In general, these studies found that between 50 and 90 percent of governing parties' pledges are fulfilled at least partly.

The overriding impression one gets from the pledge fulfillment research is that pledges are fulfilled to a greater degree than most citizens believe, as reflected in the surveys discussed above. Naurin (2011) argues that this "pledge puzzle"—in which citizens and empirical research come to different conclusions about the general ability of parties to fulfill election pledges—has to do with differences in how the term *election pledge* is used. Citizens sometimes use the term to express a narrative about the "promise-breaking politician." In this sense, expressions such as "parties usually break

their election pledges” denote feelings of general deception toward politicians and the political system rather than just specific policy failures. Furthermore, scholars of election pledges typically look for pledges in election manifestos, but Naurin finds that when citizens are asked to give examples of election promises, they refer to promises that originate from personal contacts with politicians, media coverage, and debates between party leaders, as well as to promises that—according to the citizens—*ought* to have been made. Moreover, to look for fulfillment of the promises, citizens seem to look far down the chain of implementation, typically also taking into account their own personal situations, as distinct from political decisions.

However, while the views of “election pledges in general” are often negative, citizens’ evaluations become more similar to scholars’ research findings when evaluations specifically concern individual pledges. Thomson (2011) shows that citizens are affected by actual government performance when they evaluate individual pledges, even in contexts where initial political trust is low and corruption is perceived as high. More specifically, Thomson asked Irish respondents to assess whether four election promises made in the 2002 Irish election campaign by one or both of the parties that went on to form the governing coalition in the period 2002–7 were “fully fulfilled,” “partly fulfilled,” or “not fulfilled.” Inspired by Thomson’s study, Naurin and Oscarsson (2017), studied Swedish voters and came to similar conclusions. They also argued that evaluations of very specific pledges encourage citizens to be knowledge based in their evaluations rather than partisan based. Together these studies indicate that voters are able to distinguish between broken and fulfilled pledges when they are specifically asked to do so—a finding that provides some support for the mandate model’s assumptions about voters.

This research on citizens’ knowledge and perceptions of election pledges is an essential addition to work that examines broader linkages between voters and parties or governments, as reviewed earlier in this chapter. However, the aim of this particular book is gaining a clearer picture of a different part of the “chain of democratic linkage”: the linkage between party pledges and policy. Specifically, *we want to gain a clearer understanding of the circumstances under which pledges are carried out or broken.*

We have seen that the study of party pledges has become more methodologically aware and has expanded into more and more countries over time. However, these studies do not yet reflect a fully integrated research program. Each of the existing country studies uses subtly different definitions of election pledges. In this book, we have aligned our definitions and coding procedures as much as possible in order to strengthen our ability

to reliably investigate a number of questions about how and why party pledges and their fulfillment vary across countries.

1.5. A Comparative Approach to Studying Pledges: About the Book

This book uses a mixed-methods approach, relying on both cross-national quantitative analysis and detailed country studies. All in all, the book includes more than 20,000 pledges made in 57 election campaigns in 12 countries covering several decades. Work has been published on most of the countries included, but we have collectively added thousands of pledges to complement our previous country-specific studies, extending them to parties and periods that were not previously covered.

Our review of the non-pledge-focused literature on democratic linkages, as well as the existing pledge research, leads us to expect that institutional context—particularly the degree of power sharing in government—should matter for pledge fulfillment: greater power sharing should lead to more compromise and thus lower pledge fulfillment for governing parties. While much of the “linkage” literature examined the effect of electoral systems (SMD vs. PR) on democratic performance, we are particularly interested in the types of government formed after elections—single-party versus coalition and majority versus minority—something that is clearly related but not identical to the distinction between electoral systems.

It is important to note that this project originally evolved from among a group of people independently studying one or two countries. Our final sample of countries, then, was predetermined: these are the countries on which work was being done or countries and parties that could be added during the project. Our final set of cases allows us to compare four types of governments with different degrees of power sharing: (1) single-party executives with legislative majorities, (2) single-party executives with legislative minorities, (3) coalition-based executives with legislative majorities, and (4) coalition-based executives with legislative minorities. Among single-party executives, we include one presidential system (that of the US), which inherently allows for more power sharing than parliamentary systems do. The cases also offer a great deal of variation in economic conditions and government stability, which allows us to examine the impact of these and other variables on fulfillment rates. Table 1.1 summarizes the governments we have included.

Chapter 2 sets out the research design of our project. The identifi-

TABLE 1.1. The 12 countries and 57 governments included in this volume

Country	Year	Political party
<i>Single-party executives with legislative majorities</i> (15 governments)		
Bulgaria	1997–2001	ODS
Canada	1993–97	Liberals
	1997–2000	Liberals
	2000–4	Liberals
	2011–15	Conservatives
Ireland	1977–81	Fianna Fáil
Portugal	2005–9	PS
Spain	1989–93	PSOE
	2000–2004	PP
United Kingdom	1974–79	Labour
	1979–83	Conservatives
	1983–87	Conservatives
	1987–92	Conservatives
	1992–97	Conservatives
United States	1977–81	Democrats
<i>Single-party executives with legislative minorities</i> (16 governments)		
Bulgaria	2009–13	GERB
Canada	2004–6	Liberals
	2006–8	Conservatives
	2008–11	Conservatives
Ireland	1987–89	Fianna Fáil
Portugal	1995–99	PS
Spain	1993–96	PSOE†
	1996–2000	PP†
Sweden	1994–98	Social Democrats†
	1998–2002	Social Democrats†
	2002–6	Social Democrats†
United States	1981–85	Republicans
	1985–89	Republicans
	1989–93	Republicans
	1993–97	Democrats
	1997–2001	Democrats
<i>Coalition executives with legislative majorities</i> (22 governments)		
Austria	2000–2003	ÖVP/FPÖ
	2003–7	ÖVP/FPÖ
	2007–8	SPÖ/ÖVP
	2008–13	SPÖ/ÖVP
Bulgaria	1995–96	BSP/NS
	2001–5	NDSV/DPS
	2005–9	BSP/NDSV/DPS‡
Germany	2002–5	SPD/ Greens
	2005–9	CDU-CSU/ SPD
	2009–13	CDU-CSU/ FDP
Ireland	1982–87	Fine Gael/Labour
	1989–92	Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats
	1992–94	Fianna Fáil/Labour
	2002–7	Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats

TABLE 1.1.—*Continued*

Country	Year	Political party
Italy	2007–11	Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats/Greens
	2011–16	Fine Gael/Labour
	2001–6	Berlusconi II's coalition (FI/AN/LN/UDC/NPSI/PRD)‡
Netherlands	2008–11	(PdL/LN/MpA/PID)‡
	1986–89	CDA/VVD
	1989–94	CDA/PvdA
	1994–98	PvdA/VVD/D66
Sweden	2006–10	Moderate Party/Centre Party/Liberal Party/Christian Democrats‡
<i>Coalition executives with legislative minorities</i> (4 governments)		
Ireland	1997–2002	Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats†
Italy	1996–98	Prodi I's Ulivo coalition (PDS/PPI/RI/FdV/UD)†‡
	2006–8	Prodi II's coalition Unione (DS/DL/PRC/RnP-PdCI/IdV/FdV/UDEUR)‡
Sweden	2010–14	Moderate Party/Centre Party/Liberal Party/Christian Democrats‡

Note: This table shows all the government parties included in the comparative analyses in chapters 3 and 4. In three cases—Austria, Canada, and Germany—the country chapters focus more narrowly on a smaller subset of governments than are shown here, as described in the chapter descriptions. In addition, this shows government parties only; the full dataset includes at least some opposition parties for all countries other than Italy.

†Minority governments that reached an agreement with one or more opposition parties or parliamentarians in order to maintain support.

‡Includes pledges made by governing parties that were part of pre-election coalitions.

List of Party Abbreviations

Austria

FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party
SPÖ	Social Democratic Party of Austria

Bulgaria

BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
DPS	Movement for Rights and Freedoms
GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
NDSV	National Movement Simeon II
NS	People's Union
ODS	United Democratic Forces
SDS	Union of Democratic Forces

Canada

PC	Conservative Party

Germany

CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CSU	Christian Socialist Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany

Ireland

FF	Fianna Fáil
FG	Fine Gael
PD	Progressive Democrats

Italy

AN	Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance)
DL	Democrazia è Libertà (Freedom and Democracy)
DS	Partito Democratico (Democratic Party)
FdV	Federazione dei Verdi (Federation of the Greens)
FI	Forza Italia (Forward Italy)
IdV	Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values)
LN	Lega Nord (Northern League)
NPSI	Nuovo Partito Socialista Italiano (New Italian Socialist Party)
PDS	Partito Democratico di Sinistra (Democratic Party of the Left)
PPI	Partito Popolare Italiano (Italian People's Party)
PRC	Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (Communist Refoundation Party)
PRI	Partito Repubblicano Italiano (Italian Republican Party)
RI	Rinnovamento Italiano (Italian Renewal)
RnP-PdCI	Rosa nel Pugno–Laici Socialisti Liberali Radicali (Radical Party)
UD	Unione Democratica (Democratic Union)
UDC	Unione di Centro (Union for the Center)
UDEUR	Democratica per l'Europa/ Union of Democrats for Europe

The Netherlands

CDA	Christian Democratic Appeal
D66	Democrats '66
PvdA	Social Democratic Party
VVD	Liberal Party

Portugal

PS = Partido Socialista / Socialist Party

Spain

PP	People's Party
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Worker's Party

cation of election pledges and research into their fulfillment is a labor-intensive qualitative research task. We describe the different choices faced by researchers studying election pledges, including how to decide which statements qualify as pledges and how to go about testing the fulfillment of them. The chapter describes the methodological choices made jointly by the authors in the book and describes our reliability tests. We hope that the discussion of our process will contribute to broader discussions about how one conducts systematic qualitative comparative research. While we set out a clear comparative framework that is used throughout the book, case-specific issues are dealt with in the separate country chapters.

Chapters 3 and 4 move on to formulate and test a number of hypotheses about how parties' pledges and their fulfillment may vary under different circumstances. Chapter 3 looks comparatively at the number and types of

pledges made by parties across our countries. It investigates whether there are trends in terms of numbers of pledges, and assesses a set of hypotheses concerning differences between incumbents versus challengers and right-wing versus left-wing parties, as well as the circumstances under which competing parties may express direct agreement or disagreement with one another. Chapter 4 formulates and tests hypotheses about how the fulfillment of pledges varies. Our primary focus is on the impact of institutions. In particular, we are interested in exploring how the degree of power sharing in governments affects pledge fulfillment: majority versus minority governments; single-party versus coalition governments; and, within coalitions, holding the positions of chief executive or the relevant portfolio. We also address the difference between governing and opposition parties' ability to get pledges fulfilled.

Chapters 5 through 16 provide in-depth analyses of the making and fulfillment of pledges in our 12 countries. Each chapter describes the main parties and institutional arrangements, as well as any peculiarities with respect to election pledges. Most chapters include a brief description of the manifesto-writing process for the parties included. They present qualitative and quantitative analyses of both election pledges and their fulfillment. Each chapter compares the pledges made by different parties on a number of criteria. Each includes a discussion of some specific pledges and their fate, presents a quantitative summary of pledge fulfillment, and discusses some of the factors influencing those numbers.

In terms of the order of presentation of countries, because our main interest is in the effect of government power sharing on pledge fulfillment, we have ordered the chapters roughly on that basis, with the exception that we cover our 11 relatively more established democracies first and save our one postcommunist, relatively newer democracy, Bulgaria, for last. Chapters 5 through 9 present countries that had single-party executives during the time periods examined. Chapter 5 presents arguably the most strictly majoritarian case in our sample, the United Kingdom, comparing a total of five single-party majority governments over the period 1974–97.³ There is something of a debate in the United Kingdom on the degree to which parties really matter in terms of policy, in spite of their dominance in the Westminster system, and this chapter addresses that debate. From there chapter 6 moves to another SMD system, but a presidential one: that of the United States. Analysis is presented for six presidential terms from 1977 to 2000, which covers one period of united party control of the executive and legislature and five terms of divided party control. Fulfillment for both parties is analyzed, and attention is given to trying to understand each

party's relative performance over time. Chapter 7 returns to parliamentary single-party government with the case of Canada, focusing on comparing four majority to three minority governments, over the period 1993–2015. Chapter 8, on Spain, looks at four single-party governments: two minority (one socialist and one center-right) and two majority (one socialist and one center-right) and also looks at pledge fulfillment for a small regional party that had a formal cooperative agreement with first the socialists and then the center-right. Portugal, covered in chapter 9, has our only semipresidential system. This chapter compares two socialist governments, one majority (in the 1990s) and one minority (in the 2000s), that were faced with very different economic conditions. The chapter also gives significant attention to examining the process of manifesto creation for the two governments.

Chapters 10 and 11 examine countries that had both single-party governments and coalition governments during the periods covered. Chapter 10, on Sweden, compares three Social Democratic minority governments with two center-right coalition governments (one majority and one minority) over the period 1994–2014. The coalition governments formed a pre-election coalition with a joint manifesto, and so this case can be compared to coalitions without joint manifestos. Chapter 11, on Ireland, provides our longest period of analysis for any country (1977–2016), as well as our only case that includes all four types of government: six coalition majority governments and one each of coalition minority, single-party majority, and single-party minority. This case also offers a particularly large range of economic conditions, from booming to one of the worst possible crises.

Chapters 12 through 15 discuss countries that always have coalition governments. Italy, covered in chapter 12, has equally powerful upper and lower houses, which can have different partisan majorities, so that a government with a majority in the lower house might be a minority in the upper house. The chapter compares four governments under varying majority/minority situations. It is also our second case that has preelectoral coalition agreements. Chapters 13 through 15 include countries that had majority coalitions for the entire period of analysis. Chapter 13, on Germany, compares a Grand Coalition government to two more typical coalition governments over the period 2002–13. Chapter 14, on Austria, compares two center-right governments that were unusual for Austria in that they were *not* Grand Coalitions. Chapter 15, on the Netherlands, examines a country that is generally considered to be “consensus” oriented and thus arguably close to the opposite end of the spectrum from the Westminster model with which we begin. Three governments over the period 1986–98 are examined: two that include the historically dominant Christian Demo-

cratic Party (with different coalition partners); and one that, for the first time since 1917, excluded such a party.

Chapter 16 focuses on Bulgaria over the period 1995–2013, which allows us to compare the performance of a newer democracy to that of the others. This period includes three majority coalition governments and two single-party governments, one a majority and one a minority.

The concluding chapter sums up the lessons learned from the book and considers the implications for our understanding of the performance of contemporary democracies. We also consider issues and unanswered questions raised by our work and propose possible new research directions based on them.

NOTES

1. The Manifesto Project refers to the collective work of the Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR) Project and its predecessors. MARPOR was founded by the German Research Foundation and continues the work of the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) and the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). The aim is to derive parties' policy positions from content analyses of parties' electoral manifestos. For more on these projects, see <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu>. Note that while we use the term Manifesto Project to refer to the collective work of this set of projects, other scholars might use MARPOR, MRG, or CMP.

2. This dataset, the Role of Government Survey IV, is available at <http://www.issp.org/> and <http://dx.doi.org/10.4232/1.4700>

3. Two of those governments lost their majority toward the end of their tenure.

A Systematic Research Design for Studying the Fulfillment of Election Pledges

Terry J. Royed, Elin Naurin, and Robert Thomson

Research on parties' election pledges has existed since the 1960s, but it has lacked comparability across contexts. Our aim is to create a systematic research design enabling truly comparative research on parties' election pledges across many contexts. This chapter describes in detail the process by which we have obtained the comparability that allows us to carry out the integrated analysis presented in the book. The chapter also discusses some differences between the contributing authors in the operationalization of the concept of a *pledge*; the individual country chapters will make clear which operationalization is used in each chapter. Our goal is that of replicability and comparability: other scholars should be able to apply our definition(s) to achieve work that is comparable to that presented here. We also argue that there are theoretical issues involved in deciding what constitutes a pledge, and we explore these.

All in all, the comparative analyses of the book include more than 20,000 pledges made in 57 election campaigns in 12 countries. The choice of contexts depended on our prior work on election pledges, but we have added thousands of pledges to complement our previous country-specific studies. Taken together, the data we use give us plenty of variation with which to study the hypotheses we present in chapters 3 and 4. Our cases offer variation in four main types of executive government: (1) single-party executives with legislative majorities, (2) single-party executives with legis-

lative minorities, (3) coalition-based executives with legislative majorities, and (4) coalition-based executives with legislative minorities.

2.1. The Definition of an Election Pledge in Our Comparative Analyses

There are two steps to our pledge-testing approach: first, identifying pledges in election manifestos, and second, testing fulfillment. For a statement to qualify as a pledge it must contain language indicating commitment to some future action or outcome. Pledges include both a firm commitment, such as “we will” or “we promise to,” and a more softly described intention, such as “we support” or “we favor,” as long as parties indicate that they support the action or outcome referred to unequivocally. What determines whether a statement qualifies as a pledge is the testability of the action or outcome to which the party is committing itself. A pledge is a statement committing a party to an action or outcome that is *testable*; that is, we can gather evidence and make an argument that the action or outcome was either accomplished or not. Many statements that begin with hard commitment language would be considered rhetoric, not pledges, because they do not meet the testability criteria—for example, “we will ensure that our government shows respect for families” or “we promise fair treatment for all.”

In the comparative analyses presented in chapters 3 and 4, we define a pledge as *a statement committing a party to one specific action or outcome that can be clearly determined to have occurred or not*. All the authors in this book agree that such statements are pledges. However, some of them also study pledges that go *beyond* this definition. Below we describe part of the process of making our data comparable and reliable across countries. We believe that our work on conceptualizing and operationalizing election pledges has identified theoretical and methodological issues for future election pledge scholars to take into account. This chapter also clarifies how our previously published country-specific studies differ when it comes to the operationalization of election pledges, differences that were not known to us before our comparative work began.

Research has shown that voters sometimes define election pledges in a considerably wider sense than scholars in election pledge studies do, typically including broader expectations on parties and governments (Naurin 2011; Thomson 2011). It is important to note that as much as emotional

and rhetorical statements might cause expectations among voters, these are not what we intend to capture with our coding.

2.2. Different Definitions of Pledges and the Process of Finding the Joint Definition

To begin with, all scholars represented in this book look for pledges in the written programs that parties present before elections. These programs are often called election manifestos or programs (or, in the US, platforms). Our focus on such election manifestos is shared by many research groups interested in parties' election campaigns and agenda setting. Furthermore, all of us started out with the same common definition of *election pledge* as "a commitment to carry out some action or produce some outcome, where an objective estimation can be made as to whether or not the action was indeed taken or the outcome produced" (Royed 1996, 79). Moreover, each researcher has carried out intercoder reliability tests using coders in his or her own country, finding satisfactory levels of reliability in each context (described in the country-specific chapters). However, these country-level reliability tests did not quite address the comparative question: to what extent do we have the same operationalization of the concept of a pledge?

In order to secure comparable empirical coding across many countries, a first joint coding exercise was performed using a portion of a manifesto from Ireland, that of Fianna Fáil (FF) in 2002. It was this exercise that alerted us to the fact that researchers in our group differed regarding their conceptualization and operationalization of election pledges despite agreeing on the general approach. Each person coded the manifesto according to his or her usual standards for coding. Before the exercise, seven of the authors here participated in at least two workshops at which coding issues were discussed.

Even before this exercise, we recognized that there were a number of reasons why reliability across countries might not be as high as the results we found individually within each of our country studies. First, it might be the case that the wording of manifestos varies based on political context. It could be that parties that are more likely to have more control of policy-making will make pledges that commit to more definitive, specific actions. So the language of parties in countries that typically have single-party governments may vary from those where coalitions are common or where "divided government," in which parties share power in a noncooperative

arrangement (e.g., as in the US), often occurs. Coders who are used to one style of wording may find it difficult to consistently isolate pledges in programs with a different style. Second, knowledge of current policy debates may influence the way a researcher codes pledges. A statement may seem vague or incomprehensible to an outsider, whereas someone familiar with the context might recognize the language as referring to something specific. It is often the case that certain terms or phrases come to have specific, nonobvious meanings in the policy world. Finally, where coders are coding documents in a language that is not their first, all these issues may be exacerbated. Even someone who is fluent in the language may miss some of the subtle or complex meanings that can be part of an election program.

To evaluate reliability in the Irish manifesto exercise, we computed the simple percentage agreement between each pair of coders. This was computed as x/n for each pair, where x = the number of statements on which there is agreement between two coders (i.e., agreement that it is a pledge or that it is not) and n = the total number of statements that were counted as pledges *by the entire group*. The result was an average paired agreement of 67.5 percent. The range of paired agreement rates was 45 to 87 percent. Even taking into account our expectations of lower reliability for cross-national as opposed to within-nation tests, these figures are low. In our workshops, statement-by-statement discussion of our results showed that in fact there was variation in our definition and operationalization of the pledge concept. We found that some coders counted only statements that were highly precise, some were quite generous in their consideration of what a pledge is, and some appeared to be somewhere in between the narrowest and broadest conceptualizations.

The narrowest definition of a pledge was that provided by Thomson (2001, 180), who writes that a pledge is a statement for which “the criteria used to judge the fulfilment of pledges are . . . provided by the writers of election programmes, not by the researcher.” This means that the statement must promise one specific course of action; pledges that could conceivably be fulfilled in multiple ways are excluded, as are pledges that might require interpretation on the part of the researcher on which relevant actions or outcomes to consider when evaluating fulfillment. Reliability between two researchers who used this “narrow” definition was 77 percent, whereby the first researcher identified 24 pledges and the second 25.

Reliability between two researchers who followed the “broadest” definition was the highest, at 87 percent, whereby the first researcher identified 52 pledges and the second 51. These researchers agreed that, in addition to statements identified by those who followed the “narrow” definition, other

types of statements can be pledges too. This broader category includes statements that could be fulfilled by means of more than one course of action (e.g., a pledge “to create opportunities for parents to return to work” might be fulfilled by either providing tax cuts for private child care facilities or by creating more publicly funded ones). This broader category also includes statements that might require interpretation on the part of the coder as to either the meaning of the pledge or the action or outcome that would need to occur to constitute fulfillment. We refer to this as the “broad” definition.

Other coders identified more pledges than the two researchers who followed the narrow definition did but fewer than those who followed the broad definition. These coders generally included statements that could be fulfilled in more than one way, but they were more cautious about including statements for which more interpretation on the part of the coder was required. Attempting to more clearly identify systematic differences between the broadest approach and this less broad approach is a topic for future research.

To understand the differences in approaches, in particular the difference between narrow pledges and others, examples are helpful.

Different Definitions Illustrated

For the eight pledges listed below, there was unanimity among all coders that the statements constituted pledges. These pledges meet the requirement of the narrow definition, namely, they pledge one specific action or outcome and interpretation of the meaning of the pledge and what constitutes fulfillment are unambiguous. The language shown comes directly from the manifesto; sentences are sometimes incomplete because we are showing just the part that is a pledge.

1. *Fianna Fáil will continue to set aside . . . 1% of GNP to provide for future pension obligations.*
2. *We will establish . . . a new National Development Finance Agency.*
3. *Keep . . . those on low incomes and the minimum wage out of the tax net.*
4. *. . . [A]chieving the situation where 80% of taxpayers pay only the standard rate . . .*
5. *. . . [C]omplete the reduction of the standard rate of corp. tax to 12.5% in 2003.*
6. *Extend, on a permanent basis, the Employment Action Plan.*

7. *The . . . Small Business Task Force . . . will be launched.*
8. *We will ensure the putting in place of open-access broadband on a national basis (including rural communities).*

The statements listed below were not considered pledges by the researchers who followed the narrow definition, while all others coded them as pledges. For each statement, we discuss the rationale that people gave in a postcoding exercise.

1. *We will implement a comprehensive programme to expand the number of school pupils taking Science.*

Narrow approach: Not considered a pledge because it is unclear what the program would consist of. Possibilities could include, for example, hiring more science teachers or changing the curriculum.

Broad approach: The question to investigate would be: Was a new program created for the purpose of increasing the number of science students or not? There could be various ways to achieve this, such as the examples given above or others. *Any* new program intended to meet the aim would fulfill the pledge.

2. *We will drive forward our Schools IT programme . . .*

Narrow approach: The statement is vague about the action being promised. What would the program consist of and what would it mean to “drive it forward”?

Broad approach: “Schools IT programme” seems to refer to a specific IT (information technology) program currently in existence. Research would be required to determine what it is; from there, research would determine what, if any, changes were made in the program while the government was in power. “Drive forward” is indeed ambiguous, but research would help determine how to interpret it. For example, it could have been a new program at the time of the manifesto writing, and “drive forward” may simply refer to carrying it out as planned, making this a simple status quo pledge.

The following statements were not counted as pledges by the researchers who followed the narrow definition, but opinion was divided among

those who followed a broader definition. Some coders found these statements to be too broad to count as pledge, while others did not.

1. *We will continue to encourage. . . . A better spread of jobs throughout the country, and . . . we will provide the infrastructure to make regional locations more attractive . . .* [Note: some, but not most, coders divided this into two pledges.]

Narrow approach: The aim of a “better spread of jobs” is too vague, and the action to achieve this is not specified. “Better” is especially vague and could refer to a number of things. The second part of the statement is also too vague. What kind of infrastructure? And how exactly will certain “regional locations” be made more attractive?

Broad approach: Research would be conducted to determine whether any government actions—legislative or otherwise—were undertaken for the purpose of encouraging a better spread of jobs throughout the country. Examples might be tax incentives for start-up companies in particular areas or, since infrastructure is mentioned, proposals for improved transport to underserved parts of the country.

2. *We will continue to engage in active export promotion, especially in newer markets . . .*

Narrow approach: It is not clear what specific activities would be required to promote such exports. Also this could be taken as an outcomes pledge, that is, a pledge to increase exports to newer markets. If so, the issue raised would be what qualifies as a “new market.”

Broad approach: The pledge says “we will continue to,” and so it should be read as a status quo pledge. Governments can have a variety of programs aimed at export promotion, and the pledge suggests that this was true of Ireland at the time the pledge was made. It should not be difficult to determine what these programs are and whether they continued.¹ If budget information for these programs could be obtained, then that could be used for determining fulfillment. Even if budgets are unavailable, simple evidence of these programs’ continued existence might constitute fulfillment of this status quo pledge.

Theoretical Issues in the Operationalization of Pledges

The choice of how to operationalize the concept of a pledge raises both theoretical and methodological considerations. The broad versus narrow approaches reflect different theoretical understandings of what it means for a party to make a “pledge.” Those favoring the narrow definition believe that the mandate model of representative democracy is about parties that tell voters what they will do and how they will do it if they enter government office. Since alternative policy instruments distribute costs and benefits differently, and, moreover, since citizens disagree about the effectiveness of alternative policy instruments, responsible parties must set out their plans in detail. With imprecise promises, voters may choose a party expecting one thing and find that they get another, while the government can plausibly deny that it broke its promise.

On the other hand, the broad approach assumes that promises can be made with varying degrees of precision and yet accountability can still be maintained. If a party pledges that it will “take steps to promote x,” it might be the case that x could be promoted by a number of possible actions, such as direct government provision of a service, tax breaks for businesses, or tax breaks for individuals. As long as any of these are done, the pledge will be fulfilled. If a voter is disappointed because, say, tax breaks are offered rather than direct government provision, they may certainly be entitled to be disappointed—but not because the government broke its pledge. In addition, some statements that appear ambiguous might be found, upon examination, to have a specific meaning. This can happen due to the fact that some messages in platforms are intended not for the entire voting public but for particular groups, such as the party’s core supporters. Language that seems ambiguous may in fact have a specific meaning for key interest groups.

Reliability Test for the Narrow Definition

For purposes of the comparative analysis in this book, we used the narrow definition of *pledge*; it is the “least common denominator” approach. This means that a reliability test using the definition was required. Nine researchers independently coded part of the 2008 Canadian Conservative Party manifesto looking for pledges that fit the definition used in our comparative analyses in this book (i.e., to repeat, a statement committing a party to one specific action or outcome that can be clearly determined to have occurred or not). The reliability for each pair of coders was computed

as x/n , where x is the number of statements that both coders identified as pledges and n is the total number of statements identified as pledges by at least one of the nine coders. The nine coders identified a total of 99 pledges in the manifesto with an average paired reliability of 74 percent. It should be noted that separate within-country reliability tests were carried out by most of the authors in this book with generally somewhat higher levels of agreement between coders (see each country chapter for specifics).

Six of the chapters in the book use a broader approach: the US, UK, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. For these countries, the country scholars coded a subset of pledges as being “narrow,” and these are used for the comparative analysis in chapters 3 and 4. On average, 65.6 percent of pledges in these six countries were coded as narrow. Thus, the comparative analysis covers the bulk of pledges found in manifestos. There is some variation depending on party and country; this is discussed further in the relevant country chapters.

Additional Notes on the Definition of an Election Pledge

When identifying pledges, the coding unit is the pledge. Pledges can be different in length and structure; it is possible to have pledges that are expressed in more than one sentence, and it is also possible to have multiple pledges made in separate clauses in one sentence.

Pledges are sometimes repeated multiple times in a single manifesto. How do we treat such cases? There are two types of repeat pledges. First, if the exact same pledge is repeated in the document multiple times, we count the statement as only one pledge. Second, there is the less straightforward case in which a pledge may be stated in general terms in one place and repeated more precisely elsewhere, for example, “We will lower income tax rates” and “We will lower the top income tax rate by 5 percent.” In such cases, we count only the more specific version of the pledge.

2.3. Categories of Pledges

All the scholars in this book coded their pledges in categories based on the *content* of the pledges. Here, again, there are common categories among us, as well as categories that differ somewhat across countries. The common categorizations are important for the comparative analysis presented in chapter 3.

*Type of Change Promised (Status Quo vs.
Various Types of Change)*

All pledges were classified according to whether the intention was to preserve the status quo or change it, although research on some of the Irish manifestos excluded status quo pledges. The separation of status quo pledges from pledges to enact change of some sort is important when it comes to trying to explain variance in pledge fulfillment across time, parties, or countries because it can be argued that it is easier to fulfill status quo pledges.

Most, but not all, of the scholars in this book further classified pledges to change the status quo according to the type and direction of change. In particular, pledges were classified according to whether they were promises to increase or decrease government spending and taxes. “Cut” pledges refers to pledges that would reduce government spending; “expand” pledges would increase it. “Tax cut” and “tax increase” pledges were also coded. These categories can be used to gauge ideological differences across parties and may also be relevant when it comes to explaining differences in pledge fulfillment. Finally, the category of “other change” pledges refers to change pledges that propose actions other than those that clearly involve cutting or expanding spending or taxes. Examples of such pledges include changes in school curricula, constitutional changes, changes in regulations for employers, or new civil rights legislation.

A final category of pledges on this dimension is the “review” pledge, which contains pledges to initiate inquiries or investigations, as well as to further “look into” the possibility or necessity to take a certain measure. Some scholars chose to exclude such pledges. Review pledges, which tend to be very few, are described further in the country chapters.

Action and Outcome

Pledges were also divided into action pledges vs. outcome pledges by some scholars. “Action” refers to pledges that are fulfilled by taking or not taking some action. The action involved might be legislative or executive action. As described above, narrow and broad pledges differ with regard to whether a *precise* action needs to be specified. “Outcome” pledges are pledges to produce a specific result or effect; examples would be lowering unemployment or inflation or increasing economic growth. Some coders include *only* action pledges in order to limit the analysis to only those things directly controllable by governments. Others argue that as long as

parties are making outcome pledges they are claiming an ability to control them, and this should be tested. Outcome pledges are relatively few in all contexts. They are described further in the country chapters.

*The Relationship between Parties' Pledges:
Agreement, Disagreement, or Unrelated*

Scholars in the book also looked at the degree to which a given party's pledges relate to other parties' pledges. As described in chapter 3, this information may be useful for a number of reasons. First, it may be an important factor in explaining fulfillment: it might be the case, for example, that pledges on which parties agree are more likely to be fulfilled and/or those on which they disagree are less likely to be fulfilled. In addition, looking at direct agreement/disagreement gives us a measure of how parties compare to one another on substantive issues. Finally, the variable is one way to look at the degree to which voters are given substantially different choices on election day.

For these reasons, most scholars have classified pledges as being in agreement with, in disagreement with, or unrelated to the pledges made by another party. In terms of measuring agreement between parties, we relied on the definition provided by Costello and Thomson when studying Ireland (2008, 255n2).

A pledge made by one party is considered to be consensually related to a pledge of another party if the fulfilment of the latter would automatically result in the partial or complete fulfilment of the former. Given that some pledges are more specific than others, it is possible for one pledge to be consensually related to a second pledge, while the second pledge is not consensually related to the first. For example, Fine Gael pledged to increase the amount put aside for the Pension Reserve Fund and the Progressive Democrats simply pledged not to raid that fund. Clearly, if the Fine Gael pledge were fulfilled, this would automatically fulfil the Progressive Democrats' pledge. Therefore, the Progressive Democrats' pledge is consensually related to the Fine Gael pledge. However, the reverse is not true, because the fulfilment of the Progressive Democrats' pledge would not automatically fulfil the Fine Gael pledge.

Disagreement, then, would be the opposite of this. Party A's pledge is in disagreement with a pledge by Party B if the partial or full fulfilment

of Party B's pledge would mean by definition that Party A's pledge is not fulfilled.

2.4. Evaluating Fulfillment of Pledges

What Is a Fulfilled Election Pledge?

In line with most of the previous research on pledge fulfillment, most of the scholars in this book use three categories to describe the fulfillment of election pledges: fully fulfilled, partially fulfilled, and unfulfilled. What constitutes fulfillment? Most pledges are action as opposed to outcome pledges. An action pledge is fulfilled if there is action taken that corresponds to what is pledged; in the case of status quo pledges, fulfillment occurs when there is a lack of action and the policy remains unchanged. Outcome pledges are generally quite straightforward to investigate: data on the relevant outcome (e.g., unemployment, inflation, growth, or income inequality) would be investigated.

When must the action or outcome be achieved in order to constitute fulfillment? Our definition of fulfilled election pledges takes the end of the government term as its final point of evaluation. This means that actions taken, or outcomes reached, after the end of the government term do not count as fulfillment for our purposes.

The processes of investigating the fulfillment of narrow and broad pledges differ somewhat. For narrow pledges, testing fulfillment consists of finding the decision or outcome referred to in the pledge, if it exists, and assessing it in relation to the pledge. For broad pledges, the researcher is not looking for whether one specific decision was made but rather whether *anything* took place that would arguably (partially or fully) fulfill the pledge. For such pledges, part of testing for fulfillment may be researching the possible meanings of a given pledge. To take an example from those above, for the FF pledge "We will continue to engage in active export promotion," a (hypothetical) precise version might be "We will continue our program of providing technical assistance to exporters." In the precise version, the research must simply track down whether technical assistance to exporters has continued. As Thomson (2001, 180) has put it, "the manifesto writers themselves" have provided the criteria for evaluating fulfillment. In the (real FF) broader version of the pledge, the researcher, who may never have heard of export promotion programs, must investigate whether the pledge is referring to specific programs and what they might be. Investi-

gating the broader pledge might very well involve looking at the fate of a *number* of specific programs; for instance, export promotion might involve separate programs providing subsidies, tax breaks, and technical assistance to exporters. A full investigation of the pledge would require determining whether all these things continued.

What constitutes “partial fulfillment” of a pledge? This involves cases in which some action was taken but the final result fell short of what was pledged. To use an outcome pledge as an example, if a party pledges to reduce unemployment by 5 percent and it is reduced by 3 percent, that is partial fulfillment. Looking at an action pledge, if a party pledges to cut the highest income tax bracket by 10 percent and the action taken cuts the tax by 8 percent, that is partial fulfillment. In the case of broader pledges, such as the export promotion example above, a coding decision of partial fulfillment might be made if, for example, of three *possible* programs only one is continued.

Is it important to distinguish between “full” and “partial” fulfillment as opposed to having one category of “at least partially fulfilled”? There are arguments to be made against making the distinction. Thomson (1999a, 231) found in reliability tests that coders could more reliably distinguish between “not fulfilled” and “at least partially fulfilled” compared to distinguishing between different degrees of fulfillment. Another issue with the partial fulfillment category is that once the distinction is made it raises the issue of whether all instances of partial action should be treated the same way or whether further distinctions should be made.

The argument in favor of including partial fulfillment as a category is that it supplies important information about whether parties have completed at least some action toward fulfilling their pledges, as well as the degree to which compromise may be required in the process. The practice of politics does not always allow for parties to reach their final goals or act exactly as was intended.

Most of the scholars in this book include a partial fulfillment category, and the individual country chapters include data on this, as well as, in some cases, further discussion of how coding decisions were made. On the other hand, chapter 4’s comparative analysis collapses the categories and looks primarily at “at least partial fulfillment.” This is partly because not all countries can be included in an analysis that includes partial fulfillment; in addition, combining the partially and fully fulfilled categories simplifies the presentation and interpretation of the results.

We have suggested that partial fulfillment tells us something about party attempts to fulfill pledges. It is important to note, however, that

attempts are not enough if they do not result in at least some concrete action toward fulfillment or at least some success in achieving an outcome. For example, in the US system the large majority of legislation introduced in Congress never makes it into law. In investigating US pledge fulfillment, there were many examples found of legislation being introduced that precisely addresses a pledge. The introduction of legislation, its passage in one legislative house but not the other or another action that falls short of a bill being enacted into law (or final actions being taken by the executive or judiciary for some pledges) is not what we mean by “partial fulfillment.” If there is no final action, the pledge is not fulfilled.

In addition, for action pledges, if a law is passed or an executive action taken, the pledge is considered at least partially fulfilled, *whether or not it has its intended effect*. Once an action is taken, a variety of factors may come into play that affect the final policy outcome, but for our coding what matters is only whether or not the action was taken. For example, a party may make a pledge to enact legislation to address the problem of youth unemployment. As long as the legislation is passed, the pledge is fulfilled—even if youth unemployment rates go up. By contrast, for an *outcome* pledge like “we will reduce unemployment,” all that matters is whether unemployment rates go down; no effort is made to trace this reduction to some government action.

What Sources Are Used for Determining Fulfillment?

The precise sources for evaluating fulfillment of course vary by country and are discussed in the individual chapters. Most commonly, we search for evidence of fulfillment in legislation, ministerial directives, executive orders, budget data, government documents, and journalistic or other summaries of legislative and government activity. Electronic search facilities are important in the analyses but are not always enough. Some systems have comprehensive online registers of governmental decisions, some have only small amounts of data available on the internet. In some cases, data were collected before the widespread availability of data online. For some countries, interviews and questions via telephone or email with representatives and bureaucrats were used as supplementary sources.

What If No Information Is Found on a Pledge?

For narrow pledges, if information is not found it is usually reasonable to consider the pledge unfulfilled. For broader pledges, however, there is more than one possible action that might have been taken to fulfill the

pledge. In such cases, researchers must use their judgment as to whether the pledge should be considered “not fulfilled,” or whether it should be counted as “undetermined.” For this reason, scholars who use the broader definition generally have a number of cases that remain undetermined, although the numbers are never high.

Final Reliability Test: Can Fulfillment Be Reliably Coded?

Since the coding of fulfillment demands qualitative assessments of policy decisions, often facilitated by context-specific knowledge, it is less apparent how to design a reliability test. Our joint workshops and discussions about specific examples helped us assess coding reliability informally, but we also performed a more systematic test. Seven scholars participated in a test of the reliability of coding of fulfillment for eight countries. Each participant randomly selected five pledges from their work (Thomson submitted five from both countries he worked on), for a total of 40 pledges. Each scholar provided the other scholars with the evidence they used to evaluate the fulfillment of each pledge without revealing their evaluation (translating relevant material into English as necessary). Each of the seven scholars then independently categorized each pledge as fully, partly, or not fulfilled. Across the 21 pairs of researchers, we found an average agreement rate of 93 percent. Some instances of disagreement occurred in cases where one coder believed that further information was required to make a coding judgment. This coding exercise seemed to suggest that coding of fulfillment, once all relevant information is provided, may be less complicated than the coding of what an election pledge is.

2.5. Conclusions

This chapter has described the methods used by the scholars in this book for identifying, categorizing, and evaluating the fulfillment of election pledges. There are many commonalities in our approaches to operationalizing pledges. At the same time, until recently we were working independently, and our collaboration has identified a key difference in our operationalization—something that was not evident until we met as a group, performed a reliability test, and spent many hours discussing why particular statements were or were not “pledges.” Our experience provides some useful lessons for cross-national researchers of pledge fulfillment.

First, achieving reliability in content analysis in cross-national research

requires explicit communication among all researchers. Descriptions of methods on paper, no matter how detailed we try to make them, are no substitute for case-by-case discussions of particular statements during which all coders can try to understand why particular coding decisions were made. Second, this collaboration among pledge scholars has produced our most detailed description yet of the issues involved in coding pledges and presented us with two different approaches to identifying pledges, with the approaches having different theoretical implications. Finally, through our efforts we have been able to produce the first truly comparable cross-national dataset of pledges and their fulfillment. The next two chapters draw on this dataset for a cross-national analysis of making and fulfilling pledges. Following that, the individual country chapters provide an in-depth analysis of the political and institutional context of each case, helping to build a better understanding of the results of the comparative analyses.

NOTE

1. In the US, for example, such programs include “(1) grants, subsidies, and tax breaks for exporters, (2) government programs and activities to persuade importers to purchase U.S. products, (3) information and technical assistance for exporters, and (4) other governmental actions not directed at export creation but which may help increase sales abroad” (Shields 1997).

THREE

The Pledges That Parties Make

A Comparative Analysis

Robert Thomson, Elin Naurin, and Terry J. Royed

Having established that the making and fulfillment of election pledges are an important part of mainstream democratic theory, and having argued that pledge making serves several important strategic functions for parties, we turn now to an empirical analysis of the pledges that parties actually make. We compare pledge making by the parties that competed in the 57 election campaigns in 12 countries included in our study. We ensure comparability by focusing on the most specific election pledges (called narrow pledges in chapter 2) since those pledges are included in all countries' analyses. Country chapters in which authors have examined both narrow and broad pledges make clear which are being discussed and may compare the two. We also ensure comparability in this chapter (and the next, which focuses on the fulfillment of pledges) by limiting the governments considered to those that lasted at least 12 months and were the first governments formed after an election.

The analyses in this and the next chapter are comparative and quantitative, but we do not lose sight of—and in the following country chapters soon return to—more detailed discussions of specific examples of pledges. The purpose of these comparisons is partly to guide the more detailed within-country analyses in each of the following chapters. The country chapters examine some of the relationships we find and do not find, partly with a view toward formulating accounts of the mechanisms through

which these effects occur and the circumstances under which the effects are absent.

We start by formulating a number of exploratory questions and specific expectations relating to the numbers and types of pledges made.

3.1. Expectations Regarding Pledge Making

As we argued in chapter 1, we expect the goals of office, vote, and policy seeking to incentivize all parties to make pledges. Do we have any reason to expect the *numbers* of pledges to vary systematically? We consider the possible impact of ideological position, incumbency status, type of governing system, and time period. We posit these as exploratory questions rather than hypotheses.

With regard to ideological position, on the one hand it might be argued that parties that are farther to the left generally support a larger state and more economically interventionist policies, which may lead to a larger number of election pledges. On the other hand, center-right parties that want to reduce the role of government may make just as many pledges: cutting specific taxes and programs, reducing regulations, and so on. With regard to incumbency status, it might be argued that opposition parties have a stronger incentive to make more pledges; they must clearly identify what they would do differently from the current administration. In addition, opposition parties might have stronger incentives to make many election pledges so as to gain attention during a campaign. Government parties probably attract attention regardless of how many pledges they make, and they have more institutional backup with which to spread their message during campaigns.

Do parties that expect to enter a coalition after an election make more pledges than parties that expect to govern alone do? Where coalitions are the norm, parties' manifestos provide the basis for coalition negotiations after elections (Laver and Budge 1992). This might give parties in coalition systems stronger incentives to formulate many pledges compared to parties that expect to govern alone. However, the prospect of coalition negotiations might discourage parties from making pledges since these could hinder compromises in coalition government. A party that envisions taking part in a coalition government probably foresees not only policy gains but also policy losses. This means that the party may have an incentive to avoid making too many pledges as this might give other parties more things over which to demand compromise.

Do parties in recent years make more pledges than parties did in the

past? It has been observed that modern party platforms are far more detailed and comprehensive than platforms of previous decades, particularly those of the mid-1900s and earlier (Rallings 1987). This could be attributable to the professionalization of political parties, the increasing role of media in election campaigns, and the expansion of states' breadth of policy activities. Håkansson and Naurin (2016) argue that the first two factors contributed to Swedish parties having become more expansive in the numbers of pledges they make in recent years, in addition to the parties' responses to electoral volatility. It is therefore worthwhile to explore whether the numbers of pledges have increased systematically over time in the countries we consider. However, our cases are all relatively recent, ranging from the 1970s onward, and therefore they exclude cases from time periods in which the scope of states' activities was fundamentally narrower.

Overall, with the possible exception of the time factor, it seems that we can devise reasonable arguments for why parties might make either more or fewer pledges in any given circumstance. Manifestos and pledges serve multiple functions for parties. As strategic actors, their decisions on the number and types of pledges they make will likely vary from election to election based on a variety of factors, such as how the party performed in the last election and what its manifesto was like at that time, what party members/activists want and how much power they have, what competitors are doing, and so on. We therefore expect to find relatively little difference between parties in terms of the sheer numbers of pledges they make. However, it seems reasonable to expect that the *types* of pledges parties make will vary considerably. We expect the types of pledges parties make to vary by their incumbency status and ideological positions. These expectations are both theoretically grounded and intuitively plausible, and evidence in support of them further strengthens our claim that election pledges are an important and valid measure of parties' electoral appeals.

Our first expectation regarding differences between the types of pledges made by different parties concerns the relationship between parties' incumbency status and the distinction between pledges to bring about change and pledges to maintain the status quo. (We should note at this point that when we refer to "incumbents" in this chapter we are referring to parties in executive office *at the time of the election*. In the next chapter, we hypothesize about the fulfillment of pledges by "government" and "opposition" parties, and that refers to parties in executive office or not *after the election*.) All manifestos are mainly about what the author parties would change if they were to hold sufficient governing power after the election. Nonetheless,

parties do make a considerable number of pledges to keep the status quo on certain issues. Pledges *not* to do something can be substantively important and often reflect the fact that the status quo is being challenged. We expect that incumbent parties are more likely to make status quo pledges than nonincumbent parties are, although we still expect status quo pledges to make up only a minority of pledges made by incumbents. We expect this higher frequency of status quo pledges by incumbent parties because incumbents use manifestos not only to set out their plans for the future but also to give positive assessments of their track records during the previous government. In doing so, incumbents are likely to make statements indicating that they would not change certain recently introduced policies for which they are responsible. With respect to nonincumbent parties, there is a distinction between parties that have previously held executive office and those that have not. The latter are typically parties that seek to bring about more radical change than parties with prior governing experience do. Consequently, we expect nonincumbents with no prior governing experience to make relatively few status quo pledges.

H 1: Incumbent parties make relatively more status quo pledges than nonincumbent parties do, particularly nonincumbent parties with no prior governing experience.

A remarkable finding of comparative research on party competition is that a large proportion of contestation can be summarized in the left-right dimension (e.g., Benoit and Laver 2006; Klingemann et al. 2006; Steenbergen and Marks 2007; Kriesi et al. 2012). Parties tend to position themselves quite consistently on this dimension in accordance with their known policy preferences, with social democratic parties typically being farther to the left than conservative parties. The extent to which a single left-right dimension adequately summarizes party competition and its precise content varies across countries and time periods. In some cases, the left-right dimension is dominated by socioeconomic issues, and in other cases the left-right dimension also summarizes parties' positions on social and moral issues. There is evidence that in some countries the traditional socioeconomically defined left-right dimension is being complemented by a new dimension, which represents the distinction between parties on environmentalism, nationalism, and the authority of the state (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002). Nonetheless, the left-right dimension has given structure to party competition in most representative democracies in recent decades, and we expect this structure to be reflected in the types of pledges parties make.

While the left-right dimension has somewhat different meanings across countries and time periods, parties of the left and right tend to differ on whether they support a strong role for government in managing the economy and social services. Parties further to the left are generally more supportive of a strong role for the state in providing services than are parties to the right. This general position has implications not only for the funding and framing of government programs but also for the tax revenues required to fund those programs. Parties to the right are more likely to prioritize tax cuts than are parties to the left. We have the following expectations on the relationship between parties' left-right positions and the types of pledges they make.

H 2: Parties further to the left in their ideological stances make relatively more expansionary pledges than do parties further to the right.

H 3: Parties further to the left in their ideological stances make relatively fewer tax-cut pledges than do parties further to the right.

There are, however, likely to be many exceptions to these relationships. One reason is that there are certain types of programs that parties further to the right might traditionally wish to expand, such as defense and law enforcement. There are also examples of center-right parties that seek to give guarantees for funding social services. Moreover, parties to the left may wish to cut certain taxes, for instance, those on low-paid workers. Another, perhaps more fundamental reason for exceptions to the link between ideology and type of pledge is that parties' positions on a single dimension used to summarize their general ideological stances refer to quite different concepts and measures than do the specific pledges they make. It may be expedient for parties with quite radical ideological positions to make relatively moderate specific pledges or vice versa. This distinction between general ideological stances and election pledges also makes it worthwhile to examine parties' election pledges as distinct from their general ideological orientations.

Another characteristic of pledges concerns their relationship with pledges of other parties. We might expect parties with similar ideological positions to make similar pledges. However, parties also need to distinguish themselves from other parties, particularly those that are closer to them ideologically. One way to distinguish themselves is to formulate distinct policies on specific issues. We therefore explore the link between

ideological proximity and the making of pledges that agree with those of other parties without formulating an expectation.

It is also possible to compare parties in terms of the issue areas they emphasize. Many of the country chapters that follow address this. A cross-national comparison was not possible because different scholars defined issue areas in somewhat different ways, and some focused only on a subset of issues.

Finally, several previous studies of election pledges have noted that, while it is quite common for parties to make pledges that agree with those of other parties, they rarely make pledges that are in direct disagreement. We investigate the degree to which this varies across countries and consider the relationship between agreement and ideology and number of parties.

3.2. Results

On the basis of evidence from previous studies of election pledges and the assumptions that parties are both office and policy seekers, we expected to find that parties are prolific in terms of the sheer numbers of pledges they make. The evidence clearly supports this expectation. Parties of many different types and in different circumstances make large numbers of election pledges. On average we find that parties make 111.22 pledges in each manifesto (s.d. = 69.19; $n = 160$). The 160 election programs included in this calculation exclude the 30 manifestos for which we have studied only a subset of pledges: all 12 Dutch manifestos, six Irish manifestos, and all 12 Spanish manifestos. However, it does include information on pledges drawn from platforms in the US and UK, which excludes pledges on defense and foreign affairs. These areas typically make up a small proportion of all pledges, so we do not expect this difference to substantially affect our results.

We find a great deal of variation in the numbers of pledges parties make, ranging from 16 to 319. The least prolific platforms—with between 16 and 23 pledges in each—were those of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in 1997, Bulgaria's Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) in 2009, Ireland's Labour Party in 1989, Ireland's Fine Gael in 1992, and Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1993. The platforms with the most pledges—between 271 and 319—were those of Canada's NDP in 2004 and 2008, the Christian democratic Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in 2002, and the UK's Labour Party in 1983 and Conservative Party in 1992. The fact that Canada's NDP produced one of the manifestos with the fewest pledges and two of the manifestos with the most is indicative of the substantial amount

of variation in the sheer numbers of pledges even by the same parties in different elections.

Parties of both the left and right on the political spectrum make substantial numbers of pledges, and there is no apparent relationship between the frequency of pledge making and parties' ideological stances. The top-left panel of figure 3.1 plots the parties' left-right positions against the numbers of narrow pledges in their platforms. The estimates of parties' left-right positions are taken from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2015; see also Budge et al. 2001; Klingemann et al. 2006) and are used in a broad range of research applications. The estimates are based on human coding of the platforms whereby each sentence or quasi sentence is placed into one of 56 thematic categories. Some of these themes, such as welfare state expansion, are traditionally associated with left-wing parties, while other themes, such as a free-market economy, are traditionally associated with right-wing parties. The left-right scale proposed by the researchers in the Manifesto Project subtracts the amount of emphasis parties place on left-wing themes from the amount of emphasis they place on right-wing themes. The measure was developed further by Lowe et al. (2011) in a study in which the authors proposed an adjustment of the estimates that takes into account measurement error. It is these adjusted measures that we use in figure 3.1. Therefore, using one of the most authoritative comparative measures of parties' left-right positions, we find no relationship between parties' ideological positions and the numbers of pledges they make.

Parties' incumbency status and experience of governing are not associated with the frequency of pledge making (top-right panel of fig. 3.1). Whether parties are incumbents, nonincumbent parties with prior governing experience, or nonincumbent parties with no prior experience at the time they published their election manifestos, they make equally large numbers of election pledges. There is no significant difference among these three groups.

Whether parties are likely to form a single-party or coalition government after the elections is not associated with the numbers of pledges they make. We speculated that parties that expect coalitions may make more pledges because manifestos are points of departure for parties entering into negotiations with other parties during the formation of a coalition government. However, we recognized that there are sufficient reasons for parties that expect there to be a single-party government to make pledges too. The bottom-right panel of figure 3.1 compares the frequency of pledge making in manifestos that were published before the formation of coalition governments with those that were published before the formation of

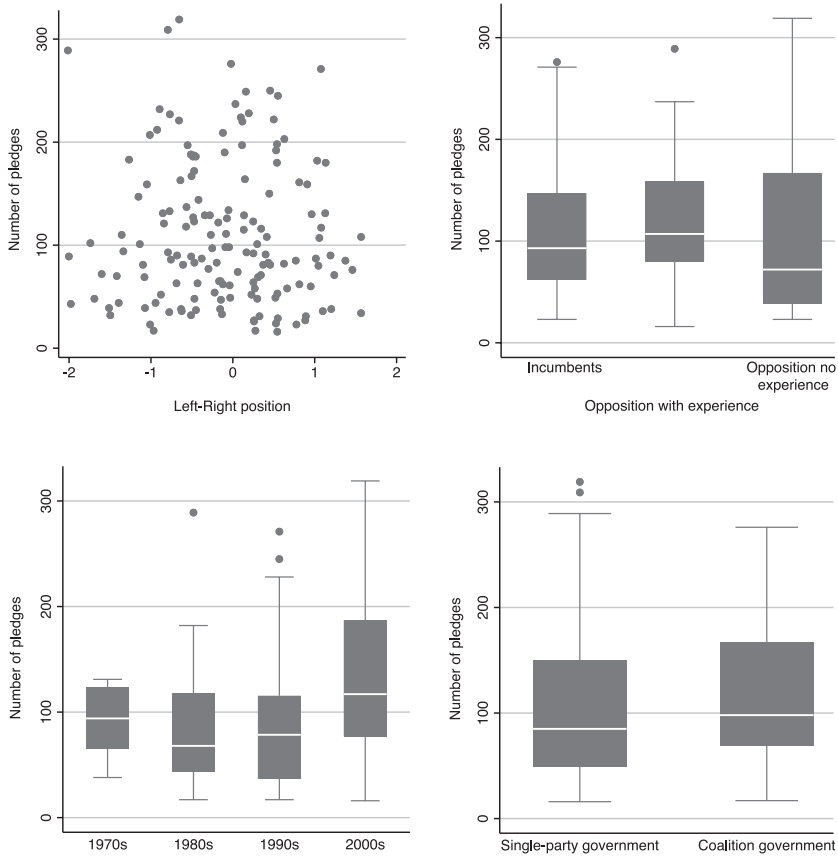


Fig. 3.1. Most parties in most situations make substantial numbers of pledges. (Note: In the top-right panel, “incumbents” are parties that held executive office when they made their election pledges, “opposition with experience” refers to parties that did not hold executive office during the campaign but had held executive office previously, and “opposition no experience” refers to parties that had not held executive office before. Excluded are manifestos from the Netherlands, Spain, and Ireland 2002 for which the case studies covered only subsets of pledges.)

single-party governments. There is no significant difference between the two groups of manifestos. This comparison involves the assumption that parties can anticipate accurately whether a coalition government will be necessary. While this is a reasonable assumption, there are some electoral systems in which it could be questioned, and the necessity of a coalition government depends on the election results.

There is some, albeit mixed, evidence that the numbers of pledges

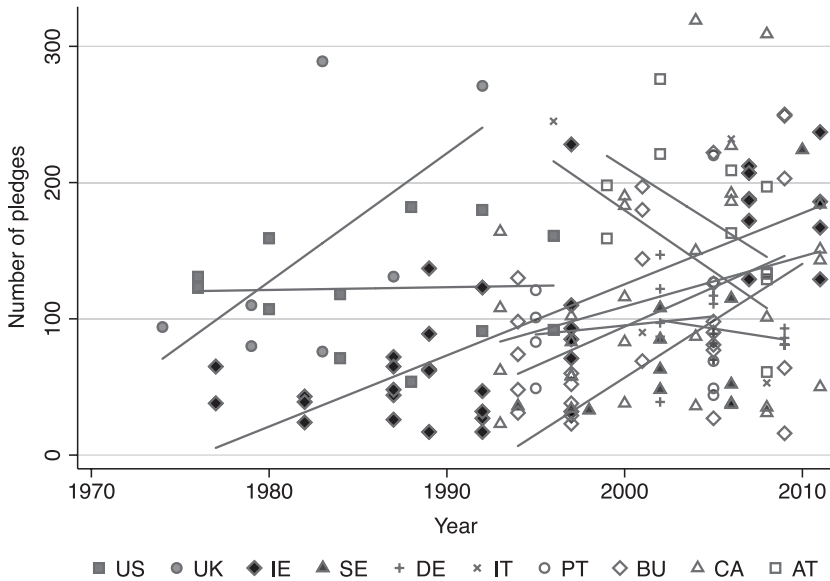


Fig. 3.2. Frequency of pledge making by country and year. (Note: Spain and the Netherlands are excluded because the studies of these countries covered a subset of pledges only. Lines summarize the relationships in each country.)

made by parties is increasing over time. The bottom-left panel of figure 3.1 breaks the manifestos into four groups by decade. The fourth group, 2000s, includes nine manifestos that were released in elections in 2010 and 2011. From the boxplots in figure 3.1, it appears that the newest group of manifestos has a higher number of pledges. A simple nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis rank test indicates that the difference between the groups is significant ($\chi^2 = 14.95$; $p = .00$; $n = 160$), which means that we are unlikely to observe these differences by chance alone. We explore this relationship between year and pledge frequency in more detail in figure 3.2. Overall, there is a weak, positive, and significant relationship between year and the frequency of pledges ($\rho = .29$; $p = .00$; $n = 160$).

Figure 3.2 investigates this relationship further and reveals noteworthy variation among the countries included. The strongest positive and significant relationship between year and the frequency of pledges is found in Ireland ($\rho = .70$; $p = .00$; $n = 36$). The information on Irish pledges concerns the longest time-series we have in the present study, which spans a 34-year period from 1977 to 2011. This relatively long time period helps us to detect this temporal trend. Similarly, we find positive significant rela-

tionships, meaning that parties make more pledges in more recent years, in Bulgaria ($\rho = .35$; $p = .00$; $n = 26$) and Sweden ($\rho = .63$; $p = .05$; $n = 10$), which span 15 and 16 years, respectively, in terms of the manifestos included. We also find positive, though insignificant, associations between year and pledge frequency in the UK and Canada. However, in the US and Portugal, we find no association. In Germany and Italy the association is negative but insignificant, while in Austria it is negative and significant. The lines in figure 3.2 summarize the direction of the association found in each of the ten countries studied (excluding Spain and the Netherlands, for which we have data on large subsets of pledges). On the whole, we find the strongest evidence that parties make more pledges in more recent years in countries for which we have longer time-series that end in recent years.

We now turn from the frequency of pledge making to the type of pledges parties make. Our first hypothesis (**H 1**) was that incumbents make relatively fewer pledges to keep the status quo than nonincumbent parties do, particularly those without prior governing experience. The evidence, which is depicted in figure 3.3, clearly supports this expectation. Taking all manifestos of both incumbent and nonincumbent parties together, 7.90 percent of pledges are status quo pledges (s.d. = 7.51; $n = 164$), which confirms that election manifestos are mainly about change. This calculation includes 164 manifestos from 12 countries on which we have comparable information on parties' status quo pledges. Not all platforms were coded for status quo pledges, which meant we had to exclude some of them from these calculations. On average, 12.24 percent of incumbents' pledges were commitments to keep the status quo (s.d. = 8.62; $n = 59$). This is significantly higher than for nonincumbent parties with prior governing experience, at 7.24 percent (s.d. = 6.27; $n = 54$), and for nonincumbent parties without prior governing experience at 3.57 percent (s.d. = 3.78; $n = 51$). As reported in figure 3.3, the difference between the three groups of platforms is statistically significant. In addition, similar tests revealed that the difference between each pair of groups is significant. In other words, incumbents make significantly more status quo pledges than nonincumbent parties with and without prior experience do, and nonincumbent parties with prior experience make significantly more status quo pledges than nonincumbent parties without prior experience do (all p -values = .00).

The next hypotheses are that parties further to the left in their ideological stances make relatively more expansionary pledges (**H 2**) and relatively fewer tax-cut pledges (**H 3**) than do parties further to the right. The comparative evidence clearly supports these expectations in that we

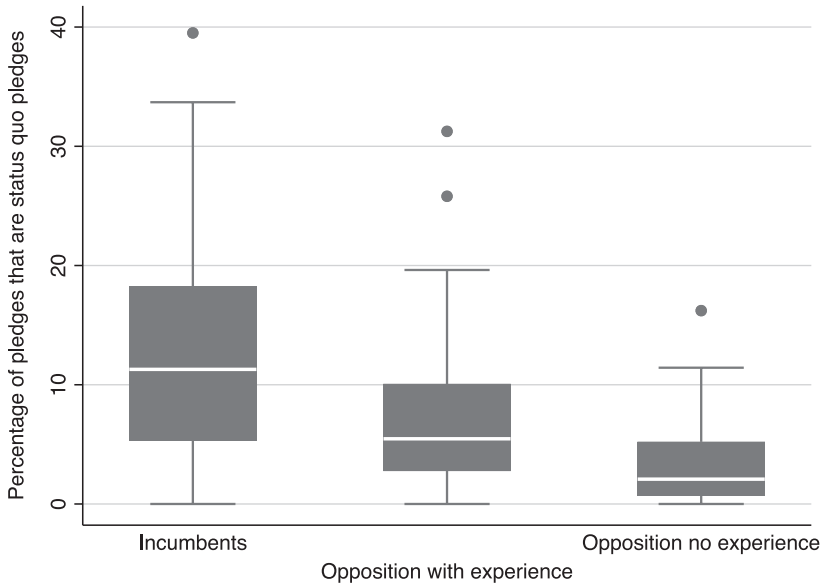


Fig. 3.3. Status quo pledges relate to parties' incumbency status during the election campaign. (Note: Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 41.18; $n = 164$; $p = .00$)

find statistically significant associations. These are reasonably strong relationships in terms of political science research. However, there are many exceptions, with some left-wing parties making modest numbers of expansionary pledges and some center-right parties making few tax-cut pledges. Figure 3.4 depicts the relationships. We use the same authoritative measures of parties' left-right ideological positions from the Manifesto Project described above. Pledges from platforms in six countries—Bulgaria, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, UK, and US—were coded according to whether they were “expansionary” or “tax-cut” pledges. A pledge was coded as expansionary if it involved increasing spending in an area or on a specific government program or if it involved changing regulations or eligibility for a program such that increased spending would be necessary. Pledges were coded as tax-cut pledges if they involved a cut in taxes regardless of the type of tax. We have 118 platforms for which we have information on both parties' left-right positions and the percentages of pledges that were expansionary or tax-cut pledges, and these platforms are included in figure 3.4. The panel on the left of the figure shows that parties with ideological positions further to the left (or right) generally make more (or less) expan-

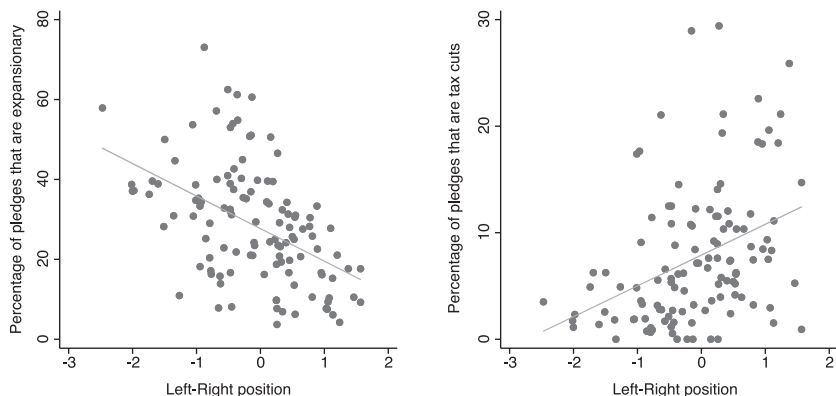


Fig. 3.4. Expansionary and tax-cut pledges related to parties' left-right positions. (Note: For the association between left-right position and percentage of expansionary pledges, Spearman's $\rho = -.51$; $n = 118$; $p = .00$; for the association between left-right position and percentage of tax-cut pledges, Spearman's $\rho = .42$; $n = 118$; $p = .00$.)

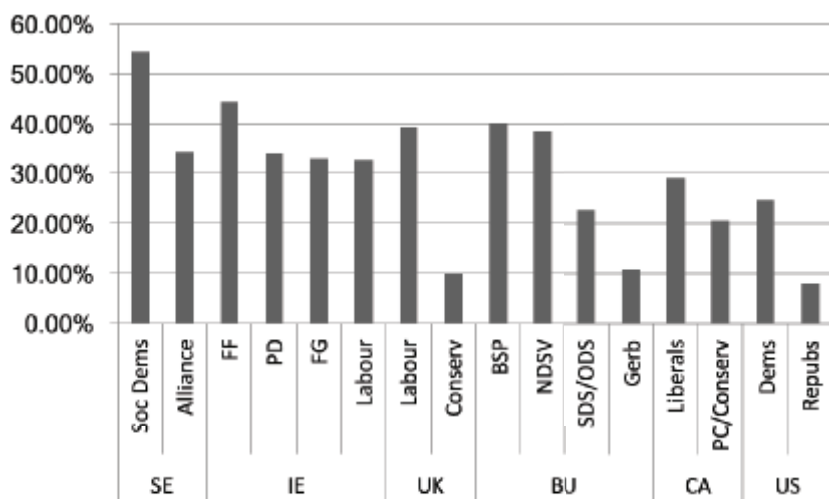


Fig. 3.5. Emphasis on pledges to expand government (expand spending) by country and party

sionary pledges. The panel on the right shows that parties with ideological positions further to the left (or right) generally make fewer (or more) tax-cut pledges. Both relationships are statistically significant ($p = .00$).

Figure 3.5 shows the total emphasis on expansionary pledges, by country, for the primary parties that have served in government in each. This shows that, as with the Manifesto Project measure of party ideology, there are significant differences across countries as well as within countries. As might be expected, the Swedish Social Democrats place the greatest emphasis on expanding government and the US Republicans place the least emphasis, with the UK Conservatives a close second. Both the Social Democrats in Sweden and the center-right Alliance for Sweden emphasize expansionary pledges more than the “leftist” parties in the US and Canada do. The UK has the greatest within-country difference in expansionary emphasis, while the US and Irish parties have the least.

The final part of our analysis of pledges focuses on the direct relationships between the pledges made by different parties in the same election campaigns. Here we consider some questions to explore rather than pre-formulated hypotheses. To what extent are pledges directly related to those of other parties? Our comparisons indicate that in most countries a substantial minority of pledges are related to those of other parties. In most cases, it is far more common for pledges to agree with pledges of other parties than to disagree directly. If a pledge “agrees” with the pledge of another party, then the fulfillment of the pledge by the other party would mean that the pledge in question was at least partially fulfilled (see chapter 2). This definition of agreement potentially underestimates the amount of choice parties offer voters. If Party A pledges to lower a tax from 20 to 15 percent while Party B pledges to lower the same tax from 20 to 10 percent, then Party B’s pledge “agrees” with Party A’s, in that the fulfillment of Party A’s pledge will at least partially fulfill Party B’s. Yet, despite offering change in the same direction, these pledges are clearly different to an extent. By contrast, a pledge “disagrees” with a pledge of another party if the fulfillment of the other party’s pledge would mean that the pledge in question was unfulfilled—for example, “We will raise the capital gains tax” versus “We will lower the capital gains tax.”

The top panel in figure 3.6 compares countries in terms of the degree to which their pledges agree, disagree, or are unrelated. We exclude Italy from these calculations because the Italian study includes only the joint manifestos of the coalitions that entered government after the elections. Note that the data on pledges in Austria and Spain do not contain information on pledges that were in direct disagreement due to the small numbers

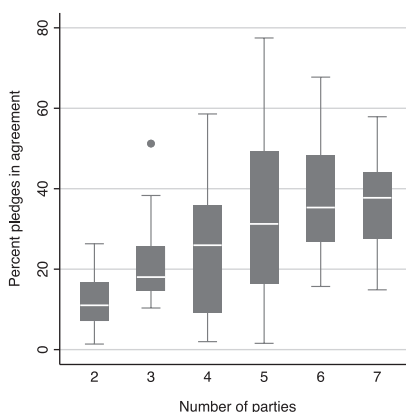
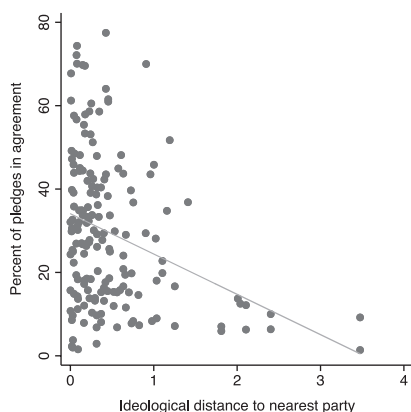
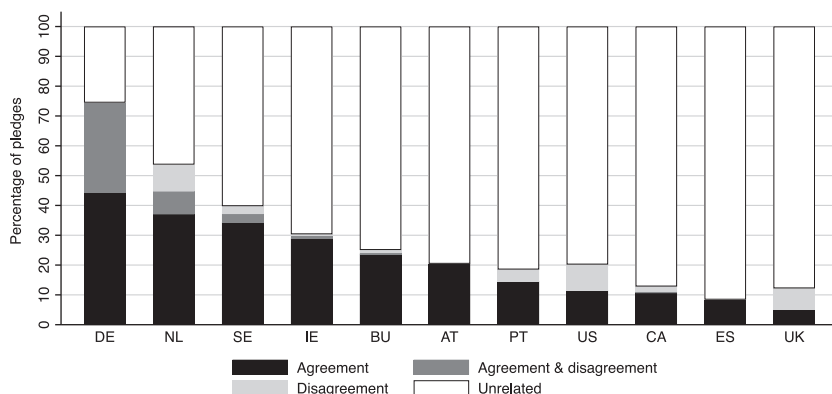


Fig. 3.6. Pledges in agreement with those of other parties by country, ideological distance, and the number of parties examined in the same election. (Note: Italy is excluded because the Italian study only includes the manifesto of pre-election coalitions of parties. Studies of Austria and Spain did not code direct disagreement due to the small numbers of such cases. Ideological distance to nearest party refers to the absolute distance between the party's position on the left-right scale and that of its nearest neighbor. For the association between ideological distance and the percentage of pledges in agreement, Spearman's $\rho = -.25$; $n = 170$; $p = .00$). For the association between number of parties and the percentage of pledges in agreement, Spearman's $\rho = .46$; $n = 176$; $p = .00$.)

of such cases. Notwithstanding these limitations in the data, the comparisons indicate that there is a considerable amount of variation in the extent to which pledges in manifestos do not directly relate to pledges in other manifestos in the same election campaigns. In most countries, we find that clear majorities of pledges are unrelated to those of other parties. The Netherlands and Germany are exceptions to this pattern since we find that minorities of pledges are unrelated in these countries: 46 percent in the Netherlands and only 25 percent in Germany.

To the extent that pledges are related, are they in agreement or disagreement with those of other parties? The evidence shows that agreement is the most common way in which pledges are related. In multiparty systems, it is obviously possible for a pledge to agree with a pledge of one other party while disagreeing with a pledge of another party. Figure 3.6 shows that agreement is the most common type of relation. In most countries, the percentages of pledges that are in direct agreement clearly outnumber those that are in direct disagreement with other parties' pledges.

There are some exceptions to the pattern that related pledges tend to agree rather than disagree. In the US, we find almost as many pledges in direct disagreement (9 percent) as agreement (11 percent), while in the UK we find slightly more pledges in direct disagreement (7 percent) than in direct agreement (5 percent). In Germany the percentage of pledges that are related to other parties' pledges by both agreeing with some other parties' pledges *and* disagreeing with one or more others is particularly high at 30 percent.

Ideological distance is only weakly related to the extent to which parties' pledges directly agree with pledges of other parties. The bottom-left panel of figure 3.6 shows that as the ideological distance between a party and its nearest neighbor increases the percentage of its pledges that are in agreement with pledges made by one or more other parties decreases. The correlation between these two variables is negative and significant ($\rho = -.25$; $n = 170$; $p = .00$). However, it is not a strong relationship, as the scatterplot shows, and it is driven by the ten observations with a relatively large value on the ideological distance variable. If we exclude these ten observations with values of greater than 1.5 on the ideological distance variable, then the correlation becomes insignificant ($\rho = -.13$; $n = 160$; $p = .10$). Of the parties that have a relatively small ideological distance to their nearest neighbor, there is a great deal of variation in the percentage of their pledges that are consensually related to pledges made by other parties. This might suggest that some parties use pledges as a means of distinguishing themselves from parties with similar ideological positions.

The Manifesto Project's ideology measure is based on the entire content of manifestos while we are focusing on specific pledges. Our finding suggests that parties that may be quite similar in their ideological profiles based on the rhetoric and general tone of their manifestos may actually be different in terms of the degree to which their pledges are in agreement.

The lower-right panel of figure 3.6 shows that the number of parties that competed in the election and were deemed significant enough to include in the country studies is strongly related to the percentage of pledges that are related by directly agreeing. This is also confirmed by the top panel of figure 3.6, in which the countries with single-member district (SMD) systems or low-district-magnitude proportional representation (PR) are concentrated on the right-hand side. The correlation between the number of parties and percentage of agreement is positive, strong, and highly significant ($\rho = .46$; $n = 176$; $p = .00$). With more parties competing in the campaign, there is a higher likelihood that they will address the same specific issues and make similar pledges on those issues. This also suggests that the amount of choice in terms of distinct policies is not linearly related to the number of parties in the system.

3.3. Summary of the Main Findings

Our main findings are the following.

- Parties make large numbers of election pledges in their manifestos, on average 111 pledges per platform. While we observe substantial variation in the numbers of pledges parties make, we found no relationship with ideology, incumbency status, or government type. In the country studies for which we have the longest time-series, there is some evidence that the numbers of pledges parties make are increasing.
- The types of pledges parties make confirm our expectations about the effects of parties' incumbency status and ideological position. Incumbents are more likely to make pledges to maintain the status quo than nonincumbent parties are, particularly nonincumbent parties with no prior experience of executive office. Parties farther to the left make relatively more expansionary pledges and relatively fewer tax-cut pledges than parties to the right do.
- Most pledges are not directly related to those made by other parties. To the extent that pledges are directly related, they are most

commonly related by agreeing with those of other parties. The patterns of agreement we observe bear some relation to the ideological distances between parties. When there are more parties in a system, we find relatively more consensually related pledges, indicating that there is no linear relationship between the number of parties and the amount of choice voters have on policies. Finally, the degree of agreement and disagreement varies substantially across countries.

The patterns we find with respect to the numbers and types of pledges made by parties support our claim that election pledges are a valid and meaningful part of parties' policy-based electoral appeals.

FOUR

A Comparative Analysis of Pledge Fulfillment

Robert Thomson, Elin Naurin, and Terry J. Royed

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of pledge fulfillment, which formulates and tests a number of hypotheses. As in chapter 3, we focus on those pledges that fall under the narrow definition of a pledge, as discussed in chapter 2. This helps us ensure comparability among countries. Some of the following country chapters, those in which authors have examined both narrow and broad pledges, compare the two. We also ensure comparability by limiting the governments considered to those that lasted at least 12 months and were the first governments formed after an election. The purpose of this analysis is partly to guide the more detailed within-country analyses in each of the following chapters. The country chapters examine some of the relationships we find and do not find, with a view to formulating accounts of the mechanisms through which these effects occur and the circumstances in which the effects are absent.

4.1. Expectations Regarding Pledge Fulfillment

As we argued in chapter 1, the office- and policy-seeking goals that compel parties to formulate pledges also motivate them to attempt to fulfill those pledges. While we expect that all parties at least attempt to fulfill their election pledges, the extent to which they are successful in doing so will

vary, and the questions and expectations we put forward in this section aim to identify some of the conditions under which pledges are most likely to be kept.

We begin by addressing the following question: to what extent are parties' election pledges fulfilled, both those of government parties and those of opposition parties? (Note that while chapter 3 focused on the status of parties at the time they make election pledges—incumbent governing parties or not—when this chapter refers to “governing” and “opposition” parties, we are referring to the parties that did or did not hold executive office *after* the elections). First, as chapter 1 discussed, the idea that there should be congruence between the commitments parties make to voters during campaigns and subsequent government policies is a prominent principle in democratic theory, and a substantial amount of non-pledge-related research suggests it is true in practice. Some critiques of the mandate model, however, suggest that democratic governments should implement not only the policies of parties that enter executive office after elections but also policies of parties that do not (Dahl 1989, 104; Powell 2000, 6). Some empirical work has found that opposition parties' manifestos do show a relationship with government policies (see the discussion of the “agenda model” in Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 43–48).

Our hypotheses concern variation in the likelihood of fulfillment of governing and opposition parties' pledges. We take an institutional perspective in that our expectations relate to the effects of institutions that compel governing parties to share power, parties' proximity to the median legislator, and the presence of opposition parties with formal support agreements with minority governments. Many other variables may account for the variation we seek to explain, and the most relevant of these are included as control variables as described below.

Our first expectation is that pledges made by governing parties are more likely to be fulfilled than pledges made by opposition parties. The traditional mandate theory of democracy leads to this hypothesis. Most of our countries have parliamentary systems, and in such systems we expect executive dominance in lawmaking. Even in the US, there are reasons to expect the president's party to have an advantage (Pomper and Lederman 1980). It is also consistent with much of the comparative public policy research that explores the impact of government ideology on policy (e.g., Schmidt 1996; Huber and Stephens 2001; Scruggs and Allan 2004; Guinudeau 2014). Much of this scholarship concludes that, even after controlling for other determinants of public policies, the partisan composition of

government has significant effects on policies, at least under certain conditions. Our first hypothesis therefore is the following.

H 1: The likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for governing parties than for opposition parties.

Our next hypothesis pertains only to government parties. Our main focus is the impact of power-sharing arrangements on the fulfillment of pledges made by governing parties. We expect that a government party that shares power with other parties should have lower pledge fulfillment rates than do parties that govern alone. The rationale for this is, first, a simple commonsense argument: parties in coalition governments will of necessity be required to compromise while parties governing alone will not. We know that coalition agreements often spell out these compromises, and they may in fact draw on manifestos as a baseline (Dolezal et al. 2012b, 889). From a theoretical standpoint, Tsebelis's (2002) veto players theory would predict lower rates of pledge fulfillment for a party in a coalition than for one governing alone. Other things being equal, having more veto players reduces the amount that gets done for all participants. Finally, this hypothesis is consistent with some of the comparative public policy literature, which finds that the number of parties involved in decision making may influence policy in various ways (Weaver and Rockman 1993; Borrelli and Royed 1995; Steinmo 1989; Iversen and Soskice 2006). Therefore:

H 2: Parties that form single-party executives with legislative majorities are more likely to fulfill their election pledges than are parties in governments that are compelled to share power with other parties.

Governments that share power include single-party minority governments, majority coalitions, and minority coalitions.

By contrast, McDonald and Budge (2005) argue that the median legislative party is the real driver of policy, regardless of whether that party holds government office. According to them, the ideology of the median legislative party is correlated with a variety of policy outcomes. They note that more often than not, the median party is part of the government. Among coalition governments, they write, more than 80 percent incorporate the legislative median party (McDonald and Budge 2005, 27). When this is not the case, governments often have legislative minorities, and in

such cases the median party would likely be called on to help pass legislation. Therefore:

H 3: The likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for parties located closer to the median legislator regardless of whether they are part of the governing executive.

McDonald and Budge's theory implies that we should observe a lower likelihood of pledge fulfillment among parties located further from the median legislator. In addition, this theory would predict that once we control for distance from the position of the median legislator we would not expect to find an effect of parties' occupation of government.

Within the set of governing parties, we expect that parties holding the post of chief executive or prime minister will have an advantage in terms of pledge fulfillment. Governing parties in single-party governments by definition hold the chief executive, and this may explain some of their higher rates of pledge fulfillment compared to parties in coalitions. Within coalitions, the party of the chief executive has greater influence over policy than does its junior coalition partner(s) according to models of coalition formation and policymaking. Several models focus on the proposal power of the party selected to initiate government formation, which puts them in a strong position relative to other coalition members (Austen-Smith and Banks 1988; Baron 1991; Diermeier and Feddersen 1998). The party that leads the process of coalition formation is generally the largest party that goes on to control the chief executive. For Huber (1996), the vote of confidence procedure enables the party of the prime minister to raise the stakes in any legislative vote by making it a vote of confidence in the government, thereby limiting the extent to which other coalition parties can influence policies. Some models show that the prime minister's party can shape policies by reconfiguring the jurisdictions of ministerial portfolios (Thies 2001; Dewan and Hortala-Vallve 2011). This implies that:

H 4: Governing parties that receive the post of chief executive are more likely to fulfill their election pledges than are governing parties that do not.

We also expect that pledges are more likely to be fulfilled if the party that made them went on to hold the relevant ministerial portfolio. In Laver and Shepsle's (1996) model of coalition policymaking, parties have little say in policy areas over which they do not receive ministerial control. Accord-

ing to this model, parties will be persuaded to participate in a coalition only if they believe it is credible in terms of policy, and the distribution of ministerial portfolios provides such credibility. In addition, models of ministerial drift posit that ministers may be tempted to pursue initiatives that differ from their government's common platform (Huber and Shipan 2002, 185; Martin and Vanberg 2004, 15–16). These theoretical models imply the following proposition.

H 5: In coalition governments, a pledge is more likely to be fulfilled if the party that made it receives the relevant portfolio.

There are, however, other models of coalition policymaking in which policymaking is a process of compromise between coalition partners and ministerial autonomy is constrained (Warwick 1999; Dunleavy and Bastow 2001). According to these models, we should find little or no effect of portfolio possession on pledge fulfillment.

In addition to the abovementioned power-sharing arrangements, there are broader sets of institutions that may constrain parties, particularly those with governing power, from fulfilling their election pledges. Scholars have described these broader institutions in different ways. Lijphart's (1999) typology includes federalism, bicameralism, judicial review, and central bank independence, and Powell's (2000) the first three of those, as well as presidentialism. McGann and Latner's (2013) theory incorporates the proportionality of the electoral system and an index of characteristics that constrain governments, including bicameralism, federalism, presidentialism, and referenda. An idea shared by these scholars is that having more competing centers of power makes it harder for governments to bring about policy change. This is also consistent with Tsebelis's (2002) veto players theory. In terms of pledge fulfillment this leads to the following expectation.

H 6: Governing parties that are subject to fewer institutional constraints are more likely to fulfill their election pledges.

Given the countries we include in the present study, we focus on (semi) presidentialism, bicameralism, federalism, and European Union (EU) membership as possible constraints on governing parties that reduce the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. Note that the hypothesis refers specifically to pledges made by governing parties because these constraints do not have clear implications for the fulfillment of opposition parties' pledges. It

might be the case that some of these institutions empower opposition parties, a possibility we explore in our analyses.

We now turn to the fulfillment of pledges made by opposition parties. The second hypothesis (**H 2**), which states that parties' pledges are more likely to be fulfilled if those parties are closer to the median voter, is relevant to the fulfillment of both governing and opposition parties. The reasoning behind this expectation is that governments try to respond to the preferences of the median voter. Therefore, if an opposition party is close to that position, then that party's policies are likely to be close to the government's policies. Our analyses of pledge fulfillment include separate analyses of governing and opposition parties' pledges, which allows us to explore whether the effect of proximity to the median voter has a greater effect on the fulfillment of opposition parties' pledges than governing parties' pledges.

Minority governments may give opposition parties a particular opportunity to influence government policies. Strøm (1990, 108–9) defines genuine minority governments as those that seek support for each new initiative on an ad hoc basis. Since minority governments do not obtain such support in return for the spoils of office, they may offer policy concessions to opposition parties that involve the fulfillment of those opposition parties' election pledges. However, Crombez's (1996) theoretical work on government formation suggests that minority governments need not make large concessions to opposition parties. According to Crombez's model, as the largest party becomes more centrally located and secures a larger proportion of legislative seats, though still less than 50 percent, the likelihood increases that a strong single-party minority government will form. Therefore, while it is worth exploring whether opposition parties' pledges are more likely to be fulfilled if they face governing executive parties with legislative minorities rather than majorities, there are reasons to question whether such an effect exists.

The practice of formulating formal support agreements between governing and opposition parties may have implications for the fulfillment of both governing and opposition parties' pledges. Strøm (1990, 108–9) describes minority governments with formal support agreements with opposition parties or independent legislators as majority governments in disguise. These agreements take a range of forms and levels of detail, but when support agreements are with opposition parties rather than independent legislators they include commitments to introduce at least some of the policies supported by those parties in the previous election. We therefore expect to observe the following:

H 7: Pledges made by opposition parties with formal support agreements with minority governments are more likely to be fulfilled than are pledges made by opposition parties without such agreements.

While formal support agreements with minority governments are the most obvious factor in increasing the likelihood of opposition party pledge fulfillment, we also explore the impact of government type generally on opposition party pledge fulfillment without formulating specific hypotheses.

We recognize that a host of other variables are relevant to explaining the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. Our intention is not to enumerate these. Instead, we limit the hypotheses to the above propositions, which are closely related to our institutional perspective. Nonetheless, we aim to control for other explanatory variables that are most relevant to consider in the cases we include. These other explanatory variables include characteristics of pledges and of parties making the pledges, among others. One of the most obvious, theoretically trivial, but nonetheless important possibilities is that governments fulfill opposition parties' pledges simply because they agree with them. We therefore include a control variable for agreement between parties, as defined in chapter 2.

It is also possible, as discussed in chapter 3, that a party may agree with, or at least not oppose, another party's pledge even if it has not directly expressed a position on that pledge. In such cases, we would expect governing parties to fulfill those opposition parties' pledges if the issue is one that has substantial public support and there are sufficient government resources to support the pledge. We conceive of resources broadly in terms of both time and finances and expect that pledges of both governing and opposition parties are more likely to be fulfilled as governments last longer and experience stronger economic growth.

We also control for the distinction between status quo and change pledges. However, rather than adding another variable to our regression model, as we do with the other control variables, we exclude status quo pledges from the analyses. Instead we provide a separate analysis of the fulfillment of status quo pledges. This is appropriate for three reasons. First, our expectations are mainly about the ability of parties to bring about change. Second, status quo pledges are very likely to be fulfilled regardless of the institutional context, which means that including them would reduce variation in our dependent variable. Third, restricting the regression analyses to pledges to bring about change allows us to include all pledges, including some manifestos for which researchers excluded status quo pledges.

We also control for incumbency and government experience, specifically whether or not the party was in government when it made the pledge and whether the party had any government experience at all when it made the pledge. We expect that pledges by incumbents are most likely to be fulfilled, while pledges by nonincumbent parties with government experience are more likely to be fulfilled than are the pledges of nonincumbents with no government experience. It may be that opposition parties that were incumbents when they formulated their election programs promise reforms that they had already put in motion when they were in government. By identifying parties without governing experience, we consider parties' expectations regarding the likelihood they will enter government office. Parties without governing experience may not expect to enter government and therefore to have to implement their pledges, which may make them more inclined to make pledges that are difficult to fulfill.

Finally, our analyses also include controls for other factors that might affect the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. The analyses include controls for the number of pledges made in each manifesto, the decade in which the pledges were made, and whether or not the country study of which the pledge was a part covered all policy areas or only a subset of policy areas. We do not expect these control variables to have a significant impact on pledge fulfillment, but controlling for them gives us greater confidence in the results.

4.2. Results: Descriptive Comparisons

We first describe the main patterns in the evidence we have assembled on pledge fulfillment before moving on to a multiple regression analysis. Figure 4.1 presents all the data we have assembled on the fulfillment of over 20,000 pledges in 12 countries. The first main finding is that substantial percentages of pledges are fulfilled, including those of both governing and opposition parties. Higher percentages of governing parties' pledges are fulfilled than opposition parties' pledges, providing preliminary support for hypothesis 1, but there is substantial variation in the percentages of fulfillment for both governing and opposition parties. Governing parties fulfilled a clear majority of pledges at least partially: 60 percent, or 5,439 of the 9,133 pledges, were fulfilled at least partially. In the following, when we refer to "fulfilled" pledges, we include those that are both fully and partially fulfilled. The highest rate of fulfillment for governing parties is found in the UK, where all five governments were single-party govern-

ments with parliamentary majorities; the UK's governing parties fulfilled 86 percent (494 of 575) of their pledges. The single-party minority governments in Sweden also fulfilled a remarkably high percentage of their constituent parties' pledges. The three Swedish single-party minority governments, which governed from 1994 to 2006 and had support agreements with opposition parties, fulfilled 87 percent (112 of 129) of their pledges. The Swedish majority coalition that took office in 2006 after having campaigned on a joint election manifesto fulfilled 68 percent (92 of 135) of their pledges, while the minority coalition that took office in 2010 fulfilled 82 percent (182 of 223). There are also relatively high rates of pledge fulfillment in the two single-party Portuguese governments, as well as in the Spanish and Canadian cases. The lowest overall rates of pledge fulfillment for governing parties are found in Ireland, Bulgaria, Austria, and Italy. These governments include several short-lived coalitions, and minority governments. Two of the Austrian coalition governments include the far-right populist Freedom Party, which had little government experience at the national level and faced ongoing internal disagreements, which also led to the early termination of the first cabinet. Presidential parties in the US fulfilled a higher percentage of their election pledges than executive governing parties in most coalition systems did, but less than governing parties in parliamentary systems where single-party governments are the norm.

Opposition parties' pledges have a reasonable likelihood of being fulfilled. Overall, 34 percent (3,734 of 10,890) of opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled. In Germany, for instance, 45 percent of opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled. This would perhaps be expected of the grand coalition of Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)–Social Democratic Party (SPD), 2005–9, during which time the opposition parties indeed saw 46 percent of their pledges (110 of 241) fulfilled. However, it is also true of the more ideologically compact SPD–Green coalition, 2002–5, during which time the opposition parties saw 44 percent of their pledges (97 of 223) fulfilled. Nonpresidential parties in the US also saw relatively high percentages of their pledges fulfilled. In most periods, nonpresidential parties held congressional majorities. During the Republican presidency of George H. W. Bush (1988–92), when the Democrats held majorities in both the Senate and the House, 67 percent of the pledges (36 of 54) in the Democrats' 1988 platform were fulfilled compared to 64 percent (116 of 182) in the Republicans' 1988 platform. In the UK, pledges made by opposition parties are less likely to be fulfilled, which accords with the general view of the UK as a winner-take-all majori-

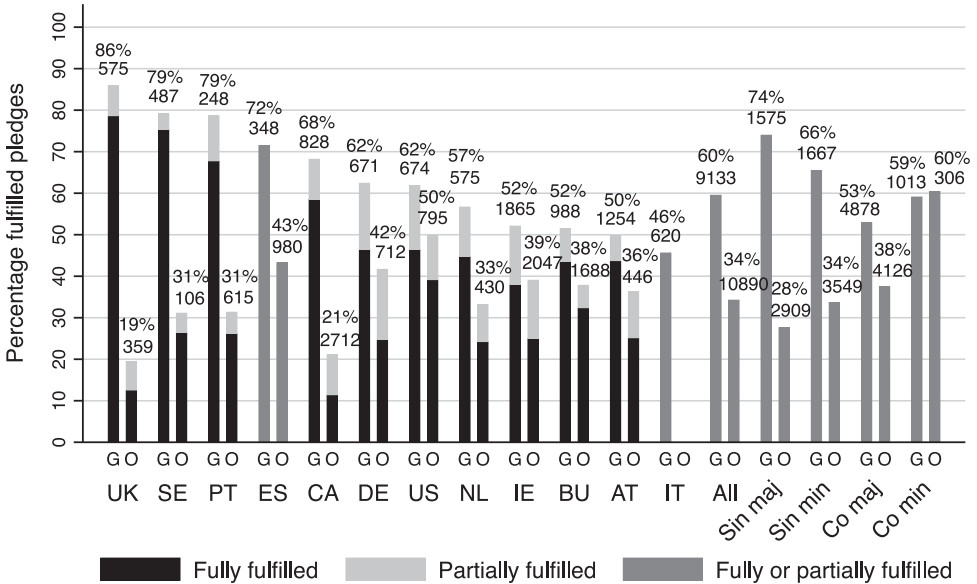


Fig. 4.1. The fulfillment of election pledges by country and government type. (Note: UK = United Kingdom, SE = Sweden, PT = Portugal, ES = Spain, CA = Canada, DE = Germany, US = United States, NL = The Netherlands, IE = Ireland, BU = Bulgaria, AT = Austria, IT = Italy, G = parties that held executive office after the elections, O = parties that did not. The study of Italy does not include pledges made by opposition parties. Sin maj = single-party majority governments, Sin min = single-party minority governments, Co maj = majority coalitions, Co min = minority coalitions. Percentages above bars refer to the percentages of pledges that were fully or partially fulfilled; numbers refer to the total number of pledges tested for fulfillment.)

tarian system. Canada has a similarly low rate of fulfillment for opposition parties' pledges.

The main comparisons in which we are interested are, however, not across countries but across types of government, namely, single-party executives and coalitions with and without legislative majorities. These descriptive comparisons show that governing parties that are compelled to share power are less likely to fulfill their pledges than are those that govern alone, providing preliminary support for hypothesis 2. The difference between governing alone and governing in a coalition has a greater effect on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment for governing parties than does the difference between controlling or not controlling a legislative majority. The rightmost bars in figure 4.1 refer to the percentages of governing and opposition parties' pledges that were fulfilled in different types of governments. For governing parties, we find the highest percentage of

pledge fulfillment for single-party majority governments (74 percent). Parties in single-party minority executives fulfill a somewhat lower percentage of their pledges (66 percent), but this is still higher than governing parties in coalitions. (Note that for purposes of this comparative analysis, the US under a divided government is coded as a “single-party minority government”). We only have four minority coalition governments, in Ireland, Italy, and Sweden, and three of these coalitions issued joint-coalition manifestos before the elections. This is a small number of governments, and joint-coalition manifestos may be expected to increase the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. It is noteworthy that they fulfilled a somewhat higher percentage of their pledges than did parties in the 22 majority coalition governments in our study.

The fact that single-party minority governments appear to have a somewhat lower level of pledge fulfillment, though not much lower, than single-party majority governments deserves further examination. In general, single party minority governments are of a shorter duration than majority governments. However, this difference does not appear to account for the somewhat lower level of pledge fulfillment by single-party minorities. If we examine pledge fulfillment in only those eleven single-party minority governments that lasted at least three and a half years, we find a similar level of pledge fulfillment: 64 percent (734 of 1,140) of governing parties’ pledges were fulfilled.

Figure 4.2 (the left and middle portions) include more detailed comparisons of pledge fulfillment in minority governments by distinguishing between parties that were and were not part of support agreements with opposition parties. Support agreements appear to affect pledge fulfillment. Of the 20 minority governments in our analysis, seven had a range of support agreements. Both the Spanish single-party minority governments had the support of the Catalanian Nationalist Party (CiU). In the case of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) government of 1993, this was a public but unwritten agreement, while in the case of the Popular Party government of 1996, this was a written and signed agreement. The support agreements of the three Swedish minority Social Democratic governments consisted of the placement of Centre Party administrative officials in certain ministries (1994–98), an agreement with the opposition Left Party and Green Party to cooperate in five broad areas with little policy detail (1998–2002), and a detailed 121-point program agreement with the same parties (2002–6). In Italy, Prodi’s minority coalition (1996–98) was maintained with the support of the opposition Communist Party and fell when the Communists withdrew their support. As noted earlier, however, our dataset currently does not include information on Italian opposition parties’ pledges. The Irish

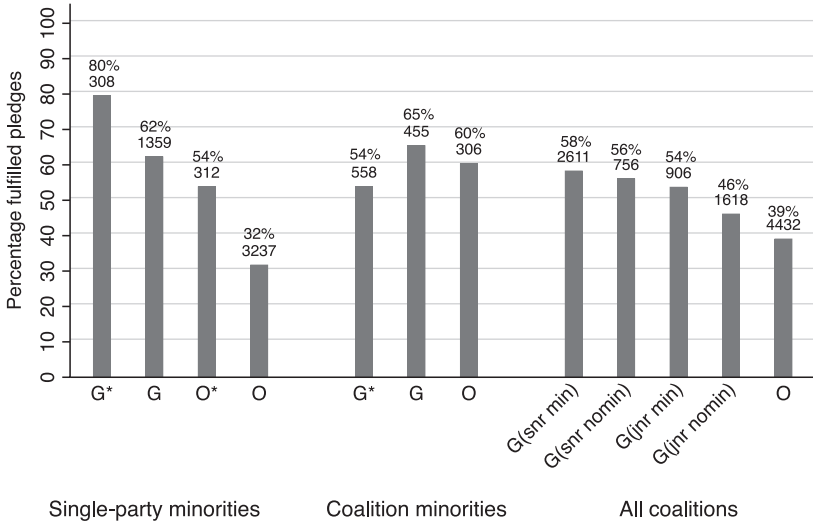


Fig. 4.2. The fulfillment of election pledges in minority governments and coalitions. (Note: Bars refer to the percentage of pledges that were partially or fully fulfilled. Percentages above bars refer to the percentages of pledges that were fully or partially fulfilled; numbers refer to the total number of pledges tested for fulfillment. G = parties that entered government after the elections, O = Opposition parties that did not hold executive office after elections. For the minority governments, we distinguish between governing and opposition parties that had support agreements, G* and O*, and those that did not, G and O. There are no observations for opposition parties with support agreements for coalition-minority governments. “Snr” refers senior coalition partners [i.e., parties that held the chief executive]; “jnr” refers to junior coalition partners. “Min” refers to pledges made by governing parties that held the relevant ministerial post; “nomin” refers to pledges made by governing parties that did not hold the relevant ministerial post.)

minority coalition’s support agreement (1997–2002) was with independent parliamentarians who did not issue election manifestos.

Governing parties in single-party executives with legislative minorities appear to benefit from having support agreements with opposition parties. These Spanish and Swedish parties fulfilled 80 percent of their 308 election pledges. This is considerably higher than the 62 percent fulfillment rate we find in the 11 single-party minority governments without support agreements. It is also higher than the fulfillment percentage we find for single-party majority governments: 74 percent (fig. 4.1). For the four minority coalitions, we find no noteworthy difference between the two governments that had support agreements and the two that did not in terms of pledge fulfillment.

Turning to opposition parties under different types of government, we see that they fulfill a slightly higher proportion of pledges under single-party minority compared to majority governments (34 to 28 percent); however, this difference is even narrower (30 vs. 27 percent) when the US is excluded (its divided governments have relatively high pledge fulfillment for the nonpresidential “opposition” party). Figure 4.2 shows that opposition parties that have a government agreement with a single-party minority government have a significantly higher fulfillment rate of 54 percent, compared to such parties with no agreement. Turning to opposition parties under majority coalitions, such parties have a 38 percent fulfillment rate—about ten percentage points higher than parliamentary single-party minority governments. The opposition figure is highest under coalition minority governments. Due to data limitations, however, this figure for opposition parties facing minority coalitions includes only one Irish government period.

Within all coalition governments, the figures on the right-hand side of figure 4.2 suggest that there is a difference between senior coalition partners, which are those parties that hold the post of chief executive (the prime minister or equivalent), and junior coalition partners, which do not. Senior partners fulfill a higher percentage of their pledges (58 percent or 1,947 of 3,367 pledges) compared to junior partners (49 percent or 1,234 of 2,524 pledges). Moreover, while holding the relevant ministerial portfolio appears to have little or no effect on the fulfillment of senior coalition partners’ pledges, portfolio possession appears to have some effect on the fulfillment of junior coalition partners’ pledges. For junior coalition partners, we find a fulfillment rate 8 percentage points higher if they held the relevant portfolio than if they did not. We will examine the effect of these factors in more detail in the following section.

4.3. Results: Multiple Regression Analysis

The regression models presented in this section exclude status quo pledges because our hypotheses are relevant to pledges to change the status quo. Status quo pledges, which make up 7 percent (1,442 of 20,023) of the pledges included in our study, are more likely to be fulfilled than pledges to change the status quo: 82 percent (1,181 of 1,442) of status quo pledges were fulfilled compared to 43 percent (7,992 of 18,581) of change pledges. Status quo pledges made by governing parties are more likely to be fulfilled than are those made by parties that entered the opposition after the

elections, but opposition parties' status quo pledges are also highly likely to be fulfilled: 88 percent for governing parties' and 72 percent for opposition parties' status quo pledges. Status quo pledges are likely to be fulfilled regardless of the type of government formed, whether it be a single-party government or coalition, with or without a legislative majority.

We present three logit models to examine the impact of various factors on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. The first model includes pledges made by both governing and opposition parties (table 4.1), while the next two models focus on governing and opposition parties separately (table 4.2). Pledges are the units of analysis in these models. All three models are logit models with a dichotomous dependent variable, which indicates whether or not each pledge was at least partially fulfilled.¹ These models exclude status quo pledges and count pledges made by more than one governing party once. If the same or similar pledge is made by more than one party, we assign that pledge to the largest governing party that made the pledge. The exclusion of these pledges accounts for the smaller number of cases in these models compared to the total numbers of pledges reported in the previous section.

The first hypothesis regarding pledge fulfillment (hypothesis 1) was that *the likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for governing parties than for opposition parties*. The first set of coefficients in table 4.1 assesses this proposition while controlling for the effects of other explanations of variation in the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. The exponent of the coefficients are odds ratios. For instance, the odds of fulfillment for pledges made by governing parties in single-party majority governments is 4.32 times that of opposition parties. Taken together, the coefficients for the variables Single-party majority, Single-party minority, Coalition majority, and Coalition minority confirm that being in government significantly increases the likelihood that a party's pledges will be fulfilled. The coefficient for Single-party majority is significantly greater than the coefficients for Coalition majority ($p = .00$) and Coalition-minority ($p = .00$). This indicates that entering a single-party majority government has a significantly greater effect on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment than entering a coalition does. However, the coefficient for Single-party majority and Single-party minority do not differ significantly from each other ($p = .33$), which indicates that the likelihood of pledge fulfillment does not differ significantly for governing parties between these two types of government. The coefficient for Coalition-minority does not differ significantly from zero ($p = .60$), which indicates that opposition parties' pledges are as likely to be fulfilled as are governing parties' pledges in coalitions with legislative minorities. Given our lim-

ited numbers of observations of minority coalitions, we treat this particular finding with caution but note that it is consistent with our hypothesis.

The median mandate thesis argues that holding the median legislator is more important than holding government office for influencing government policy. This led to our third hypothesis on pledge fulfillment, hypothesis 3: *The likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for parties located closer to the median legislator regardless of whether they are part of the governing executive.* In order to maximize the numbers of observations in our model,

TABLE 4.1. Factors affecting the fulfillment of election pledges by governing and opposition parties

	e^b	b (s.e.)	p
Governing status (reference: Opposition)			
Single-party majority	4.32	1.46 (.26)	.00
Single-party minority	3.26	1.18 (.20)	.00
Coalition majority	1.42	.35 (.11)	.00
Coalition minority	1.18	.16 (.31)	.60
% seat share (/10)	1.14	.13 (.04)	.00
Party of median legislator	1.14	.13 (.13)	.30
Pre-election coalition	2.27	.82 (.23)	.00
Pledge agreement	2.23	.80 (.09)	.00
Presidentialism	1.01	.01 (.29)	.98
Semi-presidentialism	.75	-.28 (.27)	.29
Bicameralism	.92	-.08 (.18)	.63
Federalism	.92	-.08 (.14)	.54
EU member	1.09	.09 (.16)	.57
GDP growth	1.12	.11 (.03)	.00
Duration in years	1.23	.21 (.06)	.00
Governing experience (reference: incumbents)			
Opposition parties during campaign with government experience	.71	-.34 (.11)	.00
Opposition parties without government experience	.81	-.22 (.14)	.12
Number of pledges (/10)	.99	-.01 (.01)	.42
Decade (reference: 1970s)			
1980s	.95	-.05 (.26)	.84
1990s	1.68	.52 (.25)	.04
2000s	1.68	.52 (.26)	.05
Subset of pledges tested	1.11	.11 (.21)	.60
Constant	.10	-2.32 (.34)	.00
Log pseudo likelihood		-10,844.93	
Chi-2 (p)		406.28 (.00)	
n pledges (n platforms)		17,765 (190)	

Note: Logit models with dependent variable partially/fully fulfilled (= 1) and not fulfilled (= 0). Standard errors clustered by program. Countries weighted equally. Excludes status quo pledges. Counts pledges made by multiple parties only once (attributing them to the largest party that made them). GDP = gross domestic product.

we include a dichotomous variable in the model in table 4.1, which indicates whether or not the party holds the median legislator. We calculated this dichotomous variable using estimates of parties' left-right positions from the Manifesto Project. Although positive, this variable does not differ significantly from zero.

We ran some additional tests that are not reported in the tables, which suggest that parties' proximity to the median legislator may have some effect. First, we used a scale-measure of proximity to the party of the median legislator rather than the dichotomous measure used in the main analyses. When we do so, we lose observations from four manifestos due to missing values, but the coefficient for this variable is negative and significant as expected. The size of the effect is small in relation to the distribution of the independent variable ($b = -.24$; $s.e. = .09$; $p = .01$; average of distance = .46; $s.d. = .58$). Second, we ran the model in table 4.1 an additional three times: without (1) the governing status variables, (2) without the party size variable, and (3) without both the governing status and party size variables. We did so because we expect that holding the median legislator is likely to increase both the likelihood of entering government office and party size, which in turn increase the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. Indeed, when we remove both the governing status and party size variables (though not each separately), the coefficient for the median legislator variable becomes positive and significant as expected ($b = .85$; $s.e. = .15$; $p = .00$).

On balance we conclude that proximity to the median legislator has a small effect on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment at most and that this effect is mediated for the most part by other variables: the likelihood of holding executive office and party size. Being the median legislative party appears to increase the likelihood of fulfillment for opposition parties' pledges but not for governing parties' pledges. Moreover, holding the median legislator is less important than holding executive office for pledge fulfillment.

We continue our investigation of the hypotheses on pledge fulfillment with the models in table 4.2, which examine governing and opposition parties' pledges separately. These models include some additional variables that only vary within the subset of governing or opposition parties, such as variables that indicate whether governing parties held the post of chief executive or the relevant ministerial portfolio. The separate analyses of governing and opposition parties' pledges in table 4.2 allow us to reassess the first hypothesis (**H 1**) on the difference between governing and opposition parties' pledge fulfillment in different types of governments and to assess the second hypothesis (**H 2**) on the likelihood that governing parties

TABLE 4.2. Governing and opposition parties' pledges examined separately

	Governing only			Opposition only		
	<i>e</i> ^b	b (s.e.)	<i>p</i>	<i>e</i> ^b	b (s.e.)	<i>p</i>
Government type (<i>reference: single-party majority</i>)						
Single-party minority (no support agreement)	1.20	.19 (.19)	.34	1.12	.11 (.20)	.58
Single-party minority (with support agreement)	2.40	.88 (.26)	.00	1.16	.15 (.31)	.64
Coalition majority	.32	−1.13 (.26)	.00	1.29	.25 (.21)	.23
Coalition minority	.31	−1.17 (.32)	.00	1.12	.12 (.41)	.78
Chief executive	1.38	.32 (.14)	.02			
Relevant portfolio	1.24	.21 (.13)	.11			
Ideological range	1.05	.05 (.14)	.73			
Herfindahl index	.48	−.73 (.42)	.08			
Party is part of support coalition				2.36	.86 (.37)	.02
% seat share (/10)				1.13	.12 (.06)	.05
Party of median legislator	.97	−.03 (.13)	.83	1.63	.49 (.18)	.01
Pre-election coalition	1.60	.47 (.25)	.06	1.93	.66 (.21)	.00
Pledge agreement	1.94	.66 (.09)	.00	2.89	1.06 (.12)	.00
Presidentialism	.32	−1.13 (.38)	.00	1.32	.28 (.34)	.41
Semi-presidentialism	1.38	.32 (.31)	.31	.99	−.01 (.27)	.98
Bicameralism	1.30	.26 (.19)	.17	1.00	.00 (.21)	.99
Federalism	.78	−.25 (.19)	.19	.97	−.03 (.20)	.87
EU member	.74	−.30 (.22)	.18	1.11	.11 (.22)	.63
GDP growth	1.10	.10 (.03)	.00	1.13	.12 (.03)	.00
Duration in years	1.34	.29 (.06)	.00	1.06	.06 (.09)	.49
Governing experience (<i>reference: incumbents</i>)						
Opposition parties during campaign	.75	−.29 (.15)	.06	.60	−.51 (.12)	.00
No prior experience	.46	−.78 (.15)	.00	.93	−.07 (.16)	.66
Number of pledges (/10)	1.00	.00 (.01)	.98	.99	−.01 (.01)	.24
Decade (<i>reference: 1970s</i>)						
1980s	.81	−.21 (.28)	.46	.78	−.25 (.21)	.24
1990s	.82	−.20 (.28)	.48	1.45	.37 (.26)	.15
2000s	.97	−.03 (.24)	.89	1.28	.25 (.25)	.32
Subset of pledges tested	.57	−.56 (.19)	.00	1.13	.13 (.23)	.59
Constant	1.14	.13 (.55)	.81	.14	−1.97 (.45)	.00
Log pseudo likelihood		−4,778.49			−5,759.67	
Chi ² (<i>p</i>)		541.24 (.00)			470.73 (.00)	
<i>n</i> pledges (<i>n</i> platforms)		7,770 (81)			9,995 (109)	

Note: Logit models with dependent variable partially/fully fulfilled (= 1) and not fulfilled (= 0). Standard errors clustered by program. Countries weighted equally. GDP = gross domestic product.

will fulfill their pledges in different government types. Hypothesis 2 posited that *parties that form single-party majority governments are more likely to fulfill their election pledges than are parties in governments that are compelled to share power with other parties.*

For governing parties, the type of government in which it participates, whether single-party or coalition, with or without a support agreement, significantly affects the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. By contrast, for opposition parties, the type of government faced does not significantly affect pledge fulfillment. The coefficients for governing type in the “Governing only” model in table 4.2 are relevant to the first finding. The coefficient for the variable “Single-party minority (no support agreement)” is insignificant, which indicates that governing parties in this type of government have the same likelihood of fulfilling their pledges as parties in single-party majority governments do. By contrast, governing parties in single-party minority governments with support agreements are *more* likely to fulfill their pledges than single-party majority governments are. This is fully in line with the descriptive comparisons presented in figures 4.1 and 4.2, where we found the highest percentage of pledge fulfillment among single-party minority governments with support agreements. Governing parties in coalitions, both with and without legislative majorities, are less likely to fulfill their pledges than parties in single-party governments are. However, the coefficients for governing type are all insignificant in the “Opposition only” model in table 4.2. These insignificant coefficients mean that there is no significant difference between opposition parties facing different types of government in terms of the likelihood that their pledges will be fulfilled.

We can now also reconsider the third hypothesis (H 3), on pledge fulfillment, which referred to the impact of holding the median legislator. Table 4.2 shows that governing and opposition parties also differ with respect to the effect of their proximity to the median legislator. For governing parties, there is no evidence of such an effect. For opposition parties, by contrast, there is a small but significant effect, as expected; pledges by opposition parties that hold the median legislator are significantly more likely to be fulfilled.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses on pledge fulfillment (H 4 and H 5) referred to the impact on pledge fulfillment of holding the post of chief executive or the relevant ministry. The coefficient for Chief executive is positive and significant, as expected. Holding the chief executive post increases the odds that a governing party’s pledge will be fulfilled by 38

percent. The coefficient for Relevant portfolio is also positive but falls short of statistical significance.

We ran additional tests on the effects of holding the chief executive post or the relevant portfolio. These additional tests confirmed the positive effect of holding the chief executive post and suggested that for junior coalition partners there is a pledge fulfillment payoff in holding the relevant portfolio. The governing parties included in the first model in table 4.2 include those in single-party governments, which by definition hold both the chief executive and the relevant portfolio. We ran additional models on subsets of governing parties in coalitions. The effect of holding the chief executive remains the same in the subset of coalition cases as in the broader set of governing party cases. The coefficient for Relevant portfolio still falls short of statistical significance in the subset of coalition cases ($b = .23$; $s.d. = .12$; $p = .07$). However, if we examine the pledges made by senior and junior coalition parties separately, we find that, while portfolio allocation has no significant effect on the fulfillment of senior partners' pledges ($b = .09$; $s.d. = .18$; $p = .61$), it has a positive and highly significant effect on the fulfillment of junior partners' pledges ($b = .33$; $s.d. = .13$; $p = .01$). This supports the patterns we found in the descriptive comparisons in figure 4.2.

The sixth hypothesis on pledge fulfillment (**H 6**) was that *governing parties that are subject to fewer institutional constraints are more likely to fulfill their election pledges*. The evidence does not support this expectation. Given the countries included in our study, we include variables for Presidentialism, Semi-presidentialism, Bicameralism, Federalism, and EU membership in the model. With the exception of Presidentialism, the broad institutional controls do not have significant effects. Presidentialism is the same as a dummy variable for the US. The significant negative coefficient for Presidentialism indicates that pledges made by US parties that go on to hold the presidency are less likely to be fulfilled than are pledges by parties in other systems. These variables are also included as controls in the other models and have no significant effects in those models.

The evidence supports the seventh and final hypothesis (**H 7**), which posits that *pledges of opposition parties with formal support agreements with minority governments are more likely to be fulfilled than are pledges made by opposition parties without such agreements*. The exponent of the coefficient "Party is part of support coalition" in table 4.2 is 2.36, which indicates that the odds of pledge fulfillment by opposition parties with support agreements are 2.73 times the odds of pledge fulfillment for other opposition parties. As noted above, these support agreements took a variety of forms. These

included written and unwritten agreements in Spain. In Sweden, support agreements included the placement of administrative officials from opposition parties in ministries, and detailed written documents.

Agreement between parties on specific pledges, as distinct from broad support agreements, also has a significant and positive effect on the fulfillment of both governing and opposition parties' pledges. This effect is particularly pronounced for opposition parties, which supports the idea that many opposition parties' pledges that were fulfilled were fulfilled as a consequence of the fact that governing parties made similar pledges. The exponent of the coefficient for Pledge agreement is 2.89 in the model of opposition parties' pledges, which indicates that the odds of opposition parties' pledges being fulfilled are almost three times greater if they explicitly agreed with pledges made by other parties. By comparison, the exponentiated coefficient for governing parties is much lower, albeit still significant, at only 1.94. Similarly, if a pledge was part of a platform by a pre-election coalition, it was more likely to be fulfilled. This effect is particularly strong for parties that entered the opposition after the elections.

Figure 4.3 depicts these key findings as predicted probabilities. For governing parties, the highest probabilities of pledge fulfillment are for parties in single-party governments, both with and without legislative majorities. Within governing coalitions, pledges of the senior partners, which hold the chief executive post, are significantly more likely to be fulfilled than pledges of the junior coalition partners. However, the effect is not a large one, as indicated by the fact that the confidence intervals overlap. Pledges of opposition parties are significantly less likely to be fulfilled than are those of governing parties, but the predicted probabilities indicate that the differences are not always large. Most opposition parties' pledges have probabilities of being fulfilled comparable to those of governing parties in coalitions, particularly of junior coalition partners, since most of the confidence intervals for opposition parties' pledges overlap those of governing coalition parties. The effect of agreement on specific pledges has a marked effect on the probability of pledge fulfillment for opposition parties. The presence of a support agreement significantly increases the likelihood of fulfillment for opposition parties' pledges. However, there is a wide confidence interval around the estimate for the probability of pledge fulfillment for opposition parties with support agreements given both the modest size of this effect and the fact that we have relatively few observations of opposition parties with such agreements. Similarly, the effect of proximity to the median legislator, while significant, is small in size when depicted as predicted probabilities.

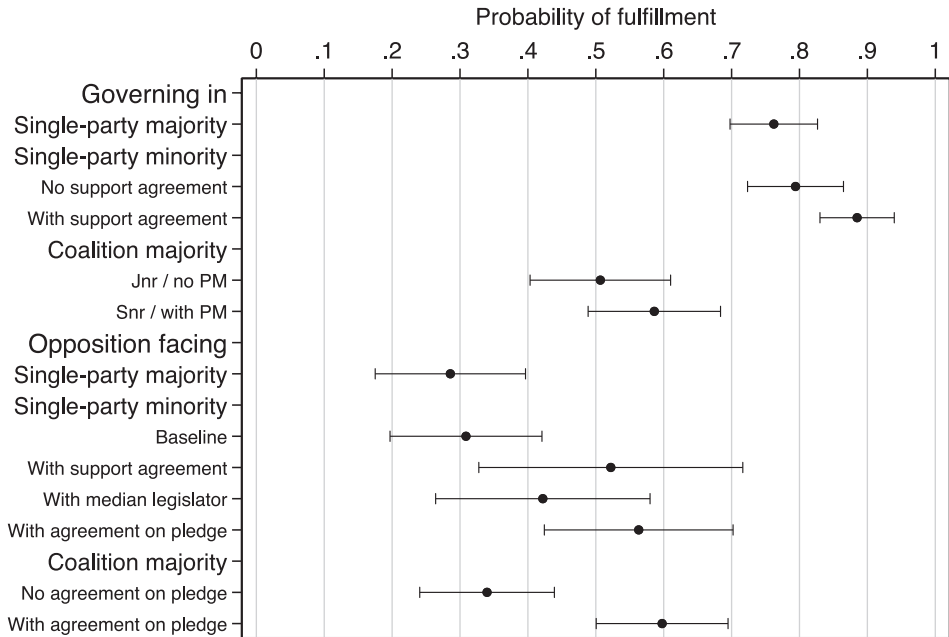


Fig. 4.3. The probability of pledge fulfillment by governing status. (Note: Bars refer to the 95 percent confidence intervals that pledges will be at least partially fulfilled. The estimates were derived from the models in table 4.2. Other variables held at their relevant mode [for categorical variables] or mean [for scale variables] values. The "Baseline" category for opposition parties facing single-party minority governments refers to pledges made by opposition parties that are not part of a support agreement, that do not hold the median legislator, and that are not in agreement with pledges made by other parties.)

Of the control variables included in the models, three are noteworthy. First, the state of the economy has a positive and significant impact on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment for both governing and opposition parties. Second, government duration has a significant and positive effect on pledge fulfillment for governing parties' pledges but not for opposition parties' pledges. Third, the effects of prior governing experience—at the time of the election campaign—appear to differ for parties that go on to govern (governing parties) and those that go on to oppose government (opposition parties) after the election. For governing parties, the likelihood of pledge fulfillment is significantly higher for campaign-period incumbents than for those with no prior governing experience, but the difference between incumbents and nonincumbent parties with prior gov-

erning experience is insignificant. By contrast, for opposition parties, the likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for campaign-period incumbents than for campaign-period nonincumbent parties with previous governing experience, while the difference between incumbents and nonincumbent parties with no prior experience is insignificant. The finding for opposition parties might suggest that incumbents make promises reflecting ongoing government policies that are fulfilled even if those parties are forced into the opposition after the election.

4.4. Summary of the Main Findings

With respect to pledge fulfillment, our findings indicate that pledges are an important guide to what parties do in government. There is also evidence that some types of institutional constraints affect the differences we find in the likelihood that pledges are fulfilled. While the above analyses reveal a series of intricate relationships, the following findings are the main ones.

- Parties in most countries we study fulfill clear majorities of their election pledges at least partially if they go on to hold executive office after the election. Of all pledges made by governing parties, 60 percent were fulfilled. However, we observe substantial variation across countries and government types with respect to the likelihood of pledge fulfillment.
- In relation to the first and second hypothesis on pledge fulfillment (**H 1** and **H 2**), we find that the likelihood of pledge fulfillment is higher for governing parties than for opposition parties, and this difference is greatest in single-party majority governments compared to most governments in which parties are compelled to share power. However, we also find that single-party minority governments, both with and without support agreements, have levels of pledge fulfillment at least as high as those of single-party majority governments. Single-party minority governments with support agreements have the highest rate of pledge fulfillment. For opposition parties' pledges, there is no significant difference in the likelihood of fulfillment depending on the type of government they face.
- The evidence does not provide strong support for our expectation that parties' pledges are less likely to be fulfilled if those parties are farther from the median legislator (**H 3**). We find a weak

effect in some specifications in our model for both governing and opposition parties but not in all. Pledges by opposition parties are somewhat more likely to be fulfilled if those parties hold the median legislator, while there is no apparent effect for governing parties. In general, we conclude that holding executive office is more important than holding the median legislator for pledge fulfillment.

- Within governing coalitions, senior coalition partners, which hold the chief executive post, are more likely to fulfill their pledges than junior partners (**H 4**). There is some evidence that the possession of the relevant ministerial portfolio positively affects the fulfillment of junior coalition partners' pledges but not senior coalition partners' pledges, which only partly supports hypothesis 5.
- Broad institutional constraints, such as semi-presidentialism, bicameralism, federalism, and EU membership, do not significantly affect pledge fulfillment, which is not in line with hypothesis 6. An exception is US presidentialism, which appears to lead to a lower likelihood of pledge fulfillment by parties of the president compared to other single-party executives.
- The fulfillment of opposition parties' pledges is mainly attributable to agreements with other parties, particularly governing parties. Pledges made by opposition parties with support agreements with minority governments are more likely to be fulfilled than are pledges of opposition parties without such agreements (**H 7**). Such support agreements also boost the likelihood that pledges of governing parties in minority single-party governments will be fulfilled. Opposition parties' pledges that agree directly with those of other parties are significantly more likely to be fulfilled. Opposition parties' pledges that appeared in pre-election coalitions, which also indicates interparty agreement, are also more likely to be fulfilled.

The pattern that emerges with respect to fulfillment is that the mechanisms of interparty power sharing and interparty agreement affect pledge fulfillment most significantly. In general, these factors are more important in explaining variation in pledge fulfillment than are other institutional differences among countries (such as federalism) or ideological positioning of parties in relation to the median legislator. The following country chapters explore some of these intricate effects in more detail.

NOTE

1. The data have a hierarchical structure to which a multilevel model could be applied. There are, however, few observations at some of the higher levels (12 countries and a maximum of seven different election programs within any of our governments), which makes multilevel modeling problematic.

FIVE

The United Kingdom

Terry J. Royed

5.1. Introduction

As is true for most of the countries in this book, party manifesto pledges play a visible role in politics in the United Kingdom, particularly during campaigns. A question time held prior to the 2015 general election was typical: in response to the Labour leader's accusation about breaking a promise, Prime Minister David Cameron reeled off a list of manifesto pledges that had been kept, with specific details on actions taken.¹ That same election yielded a spectacular example of the potential consequences of breaking pledges, as the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) suffered a defeat of historic proportions, winning the lowest number of seats and votes since 1970 and plummeting from being the third-largest party in Parliament to fourth place (tied with the small Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland). The defeat was widely attributed to the fact that the party had broken a prominent 2010 manifesto pledge to abolish university tuition fees.²

This chapter examines the degree to which governments fulfill their manifesto pledges in the United Kingdom, looking at the period 1974 to 1997, during which there were five elections and governments: a Labour government, 1974–79, followed by four Conservative governments in 1979–83, 1983–87, 1987–92, and 1992–97. In order to assess differences between parties, as well as to investigate the ability of the

opposition to achieve its goals, Labour manifestos for 1979 and 1983 are also examined.

The basic characteristics of the British “Westminster model,” at least as practiced from 1945 to 2010 in Britain, are well known. It is a system in which single-party majority governments usually govern. (This chapter does not cover the [rare] coalition government of 2010–15). Due to strict party discipline and weak legislative committees, among other factors, the system is one in which the executive dominates. There is a bicameral legislature, but the upper house, the House of Lords, has delaying power only. In addition, by convention, according to the “Salisbury Doctrine,” the Lords does not vote down a government bill mentioned in its election manifesto. The UK system is thus one with few “veto points” (Tsebelis 2002), and we should expect high pledge fulfillment there. Previous studies have confirmed that substantial majorities of pledges are fulfilled (Rose 1984; Rallings 1987; Royed 1996). This chapter extends Royed (1996) by adding three more governments.

The “responsible parties model” assumes not just that parties make and keep pledges but that these pledges are nontrivial and relate to real policy changes. There are different views about the degree to which this is true in Britain. The “adversary theory of party politics” is the idea that when new parties come to power they undo what the previous government has done, leading to big swings in policy (the term is used in Rose 1984; and Rose and Davies 1994). Finer (1975) complained of this tendency and argued for electoral reform as a remedy. Steinmo (1993, 206) found some evidence for such swings with tax policy. On the other hand, there are a variety of possible reasons that the Westminster system might *not* lead to dramatic policy change.

Rose (1984) suggests that, even though British parties in fact fulfill a large majority of their pledges, “something stronger than parties” determines policy. He argues that parties make primarily “doable” pledges about which there is mostly consensus; in addition, unexpected events can intervene, and “secular trends” can override parties, including “social conditions, pressure group demands, climates of public opinion and journalistic fashion” (Rose 1984, 145). Rose and Davies (1994) make the case that “policy inheritance” leads to incrementalism in policy. Peter John and his colleagues (2013) detail a variety of factors that might promote policy stability, including the influence of the civil service and the dominance of economic interests regardless of incumbent.³ Finally, Pierson (1994) notes that, while the Westminster system indeed allows for speedy policy change, the heightened

accountability of the system might tend to inhibit policymakers from making unpopular changes (such as welfare state retrenchment).

In light of these different expectations about policy change, in addition to pledge fulfillment data this chapter looks at a number of specific examples of policy pledges and actions taken (or not). A thorough attempt to address the question of the impact of parties on policy change is beyond the scope of one short book chapter, but it is hoped that a quick overview will be instructive.

5.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in the United Kingdom

Britain's single-member district plurality (SMP) system led to single-party majority governments in every election over the period 1945–2010, with the exception of a brief minority government in 1974 and periods when a government lost its initial majority (1977–79 and 1996–97). Over this entire period, no party ever won more than 50 percent of the vote; instead governments are frequently the result of the “manufactured majority” effect of SMP. This chapter concentrates on the two parties that have alternated government in the post–World War II period: Conservative and Labour.

The ideologies of the current two main parties have changed over time. The first two columns of table 5.1 show the Manifesto Project's ideology (Rile) score for manifestos during 1974–92, as well as averages for the periods before and after.⁴ The period prior to 1974 was arguably one of a “collectivist consensus” in politics; post–World War II, a Labour government created a variety of social programs, and Conservative governments that followed didn't aspire to extensively reduce the role of government. This began to change with the shift toward neoliberalism within the Conservative Party beginning with the 1974 manifesto and increasing with the selection of Margaret Thatcher as leader in 1975. The third column of the table shows “polarization,” defined as the difference between Conservative and Labour ideology scores. The data show a high level of polarization between the two parties in the 1974–92 manifestos, and it is mainly the rightward shift of the Conservatives driving this, although the shift to the left in Labour's 1983 manifesto brought polarization to its peak. A decline in polarization is seen beginning in 1997 due to the significant rightward shift of the Labour Party, followed by a leftward shift of the Conservatives.

In Britain the process of producing party manifestos varies between

TABLE 5.1. Party ideologies, context variables, and pledge data

	Ideology by year†			Seats held by government (%)	Misery index	Average annual growth
	Conservative	Labour	Polarization (Conservative-Labour)			
Average, 1951–70	−7.6	−24.9	17.3			
1974	11.4	−27.5	38.9	50.2‡	23.8	2.1
1979	24.4	−26.6	51.0	53.4	21.8	.98
1983	29.0	−39.2	68.2	61.1	16.2	3.7
1987	30.5	−13.6	44.1	57.7	14.1	1.9
1992	27.9	−30.4	58.3	51.6	11.4	2.5
1997	25.7	8.1	17.6			
Average, 2001–10	15.7	.4	15.3			

†Ideology is from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2015).

‡Labour lost its majority in 1976.

TABLE 5.2. Data on content of pledges: type of change

Type of change	Conservatives (1979, 1983, 1987, 1992)			
	Total		Range	
	%	<i>n</i>	Low (year)	High (year)
Status quo	18.7	125	6.3% (1979)	21.8% (1987)
Cut	5.2	35	3.2% (1987)	13.6% (1983)
Expand	10.2	68	8.4% (1979)	13.5% (1987)
Tax cut	3.1	21	1.3% (1987)	7.4% (1979)
Tax increase	.3	2	0 (1983–92)	2.1% (1979)
Other	59.4	396	45.5% (1983)	65.3% (1979)
“Review”	3.0	20	1.3% (1987)	5.7% (1983)
Total pledges	100	667	88 pledges (1983)	328 pledges (1992)

Type of change	Labour (1974, 1979, 1983)			
	Total		Range	
	%	<i>n</i>	Low (year)	High (year)
Status quo	7.9	44	4.1% (1983)	19.5% (1979)
Cut	.9	5	.8 (1974, 79)	1.0% (1983)
Expand	36.4	203	28.5% (1979)	38.7% (1974, 83)
Tax cut	1.3	7	0 (1974)	1.6% (1979, 83)
Tax increase	2.9	16	1.6% (1979)	3.5% (1983)
Other	49.7	277	46.3% (1979)	50.8% (1983)
“Review”	.9	5	.3% (1983)	1.7% (1974)
Total pledges	100	557	119 pledges (1974)	315 pledges (1983)

TABLE 5.3. Agreement between pledges and policy emphasis

Agreement, disagreement and unrelated (percentages of pledges)††				
Year, total number of pledges	Agreement % (<i>n</i>)		Disagreement % (<i>n</i>)	Unrelated % (<i>n</i>)
1979 (<i>n</i> = 226)	6.6 (15)		2.6 (6)	90.7 (205)
1983 (<i>n</i> = 409)	2.7 (11)		7.6 (31)	89.7 (367)
Policy emphasis				
Conservatives (1979, 1983, 1987, 1992)				
	Total		Range	
Policy	%	<i>n</i>	Low (year)	High (year)
Economic	31.3	209	26.1 (1987)	44.9 (1983)
Social welfare	19.6	131	16.9 (1992)	25 (1979)
Resources	11.9	79	8 (1979)	16.6 (1987)
Civi rights and liberties	3.6	24	1.3 (1987)	9 (1979)
Crime	8.9	59	6.7 (1983)	9.6 (1987, 92)
Education	9.4	63	4.5 (1983)	13.4 (1987)
Other domestic	15.2	101	7.9 (1983)	20.7 (1992)
Total pledges	100	667	88 pledges (1983)	328 pledges (1992)
Labour (1974, 1979, 1983)				
	Total		Range	
Policy	%	<i>n</i>	Low (year)	High (year)
Economic	32.1	179	27.8 (1979)	42.5 (1974)
Social welfare	24.0	134	20.2 (1983)	24.2 (1974)
Resources	11.5	64	7.5 (1974)	14.3 (1979)
Civi rights and liberties	9.4	52	4.8 (1979)	11.3 (1983)
Crime	3.2	18	1.6 (1979)	4.4 (1983)
Education	6.4	36	2.4 (1979)	7.8 (1983)
Other domestic	13.4	75	7.9 (1983)	22.2 (1979)
Total pledges	100	557	119 pledges (1974)	315 pledges (1983)

††Agreement/disagreement is computed as agreement between Party A and Party B = (# of pledges of Party A that agree with pledges of Party B + # of pledges of Party B that agree with pledges of Party A) / (total pledges of Party A + total pledges of Party B).

the parties. The Labour Party process is laid out in Clause V of the party constitution. For most of the period covered here, the National Executive Committee (NEC) and parliamentary leaders together determined which elements of the party program would be included in the manifesto (Kavanagh 1981, 15). (More recently more individuals have been involved.) The party program, in turn, is determined by the Party Conference. Manifesto writing has sometimes involved conflict between the NEC (which has a broad membership) and parliamentary leaders, with the NEC occasionally criticizing Labour government policy and proposing alternatives (16). For the 1979 manifesto, however, parliamentary leaders had developed various tactics for “outflanking the NEC,” including delaying formal consideration of the manifesto until the last minute and exercising control over the choice of drafters (17). In 1979 this resulted in Prime Minister (PM) Callaghan’s “largely successful bid to write his own manifesto,” which in turn led to a backlash by the NEC after the electoral defeat (19). The 1983 manifesto was influenced by this backlash and Conference votes in favor of left-wing policies to pacify activists (Butler and Kavanagh 1984, 60). The manifesto was famously referred to by Labour MP Gerald Kaufman as the “longest suicide note in history” (Clark 2008) for its swing to the far left.

On the Conservative side, the leader and parliamentary party are in firm control of the process: “The only non-parliamentarians who are influential are the Research Department Director and the party Chairman . . . and both hold office at the leader’s pleasure” (Kavanagh 1981, 21). When in government, Cabinet ministers are typically asked to submit their proposals for what to include in the manifesto (Butler and Kavanagh 1984; Hogg and Hill 1995). Leaders have had different views on the key purpose of manifestos and what they should contain. One person involved with preparing the 1983 manifesto is quoted as saying, “Unlike previous governments we did not want to make lavish promises, raise expectations and then disappoint them” (Butler and Kavanagh 1984, 41). This contributed to making that year’s manifesto the shortest in our sample. On the other hand, a participant in the drafting of the 1992 manifesto suggested that details are needed so that all candidates know the party line for all possible policies: “I would rather have a manifesto that’s criticized for being long than a manifesto that left the prime minister or other major spokesman exposed in a campaign” (interview with the author, June 1999). This view of manifestos as detailed policy guides for all members of the party to follow perhaps contributed to the length of the 1992 manifesto, which was nearly twice as long as the next-longest Conservative manifesto included here (1987).

Britain did not have fixed electoral terms for the period covered

here; elections were required at least every five years.⁵ Governments have often called elections sooner than the full five-year deadline. For example, during the postwar period 1945–2017, there were 19 elections, an average of one every 3.8 years. This included a few very short term governments; other than those, the most common length of term was four to five years, give or take a few months. The five governments considered here lasted three years and nine months (Labour, October 1974–79), four years and seven months (Conservative, 1979–83), four years exactly or within one month of that (Conservative, 1983–87 and 1987–92), and four years and ten months (Conservative, 1992–97). Only the first government was ended involuntarily by a no-confidence vote, and all are close enough to the norm of four years to be considered essentially full-term governments.

Next it is useful to consider the institutional and economic context in which the governments analyzed here functioned. The last three columns of table 5.1 show the percentage of seats held by the governing party immediately after each election, the “misery index” (which refers to the combined total of inflation and unemployment), and average annual growth rates for each government period.⁶ The following discussion considers these contextual variables and their likely impact on pledge fulfillment.

To begin, the Labour government of 1974–79 was formed with a bare 50.2 percent majority after the October 1974 election, which was called after a brief period of minority Labour government (March through October 1974).⁷ These were the years of the oil crisis and double-digit inflation. The period began with Harold Wilson as prime minister, but he resigned in March 1976 after a budget defeat and was replaced by James Callaghan. In September 1976, the government requested a loan of 3.9 billion dollars from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which required heavy cuts in public expenditures in exchange. In March 1977, the government lost its majority following by-elections, and the “Lib-Lab pact” was negotiated, under which Labour agreed to accept some Liberal policy proposals in exchange for the support of the Liberals. The pact ended in September 1978, after which the government functioned as a minority government with no explicit support. The winter of 1978–79 became known as the “Winter of Discontent” due to widespread strikes by public sector unions. The government lost a no-confidence vote in March 1979, leading to a new election.

The four Conservative governments that followed faced a variety of circumstances. The Conservatives won the 1979 election with a bare majority of 50.2 percent. The economy dominated the campaign of 1979 and

remained an issue throughout the government. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was firmly in the neoliberal camp of the party, but at the time of her election the party remained divided between her neoliberal wing and more traditional conservatives. By the 1983 election, economic growth was beginning to recover, and this (and possibly the victory in the Falklands war the previous year) benefited the Conservatives, allowing them to win 61.1 percent of the seats. They campaigned for a continuation of their neoliberal policies. In the campaign of 1987, the Conservatives were able to boast of declining unemployment and inflation rates; nevertheless, their majority declined somewhat to 57.7 percent. Thatcher became increasingly unpopular during her third term, particularly with the onset of a recession by 1990 and her government's passage of a new "poll tax" at the local level, which caused protests and riots. She was challenged in a party leadership election in November 1990 and resigned after failing to achieve the requisite majority on the first ballot. John Major became prime minister. The 1992 election was Major's first as PM. The recession had deepened, but the Conservatives managed a narrow majority of 51.6 percent. By December 1996 the party had lost its majority due to by-elections and governed as a minority until the May 1997 election, which was won by Labour.

Based on all this, how might we expect pledge fulfillment to vary over time? First, the 1974–79 Labour government had two marks against it: a very small majority, that turned into a minority several years in; and an unusually poor economy. If these things matter, we should expect the lowest rate of pledge fulfillment for that government. For the Conservative governments that followed, the 1983–87 government was in the strongest position, with both a large majority and a stronger economy; nearly tied for favorable conditions would be the 1987–92 government. We should expect the highest rate of pledge fulfillment for those governments. The 1979–83 and 1992–97 governments both had small majorities. Although the latter became a minority toward the end, it benefited from a stronger economy compared to the former. We might expect pledge fulfillment for both to be higher than that of Labour and lower than that of the middle two Conservative governments.

5.3. Research Design

Work on the British case followed the broad definition of election pledges, as described in chapter 2, and these are the pledges discussed in this chapter (for the statistical analysis in chapters 3 and 4, a subset of pledges coded as

being narrowly defined was used). It should be noted that a large majority of pledges—83.7 percent—fit the narrow definition of pledges, and there is not much variance in this by year or by the main policy areas. Fulfillment rates for all pledges combined versus narrowly defined pledges alone are nearly identical.

Work on this chapter includes “outcome” pledges, as defined in chapter 2. While governments cannot control outcomes to the degree that they control actions, it could be argued that a true test of mandate theory should include all pledges regardless of the degree of control policymakers have over their fulfillment. Having said this, for all government parties, outcome pledges were only 3 percent of all pledges, and their inclusion (or not) does not influence the conclusions.

The UK data include all *domestic* public policies, with pledges divided into seven policy areas, as discussed below. The decision to exclude foreign policy was largely pragmatic, for covering more policy areas would have necessitated reducing the number of years covered.

Pledges were identified by first reading through the manifestos and marking “potential pledges,” then going through and reexamining them to make a final decision. A reliability test was carried out with two coders who went over one manifesto; agreement was reached between the author and coders 84 percent of the time. Like most of the chapters of this book, pledges were coded as not fulfilled, partially fulfilled, or fully fulfilled.

Multiple sources were used to investigate pledge fulfillment. As a starting point, for major changes two types of sources were useful: scholarly summaries of government policies (such as Kavanagh and Seldon 1989; Riddell 1992) and the end-of-term legislative summaries found in *Parliamentary Affairs*. For less high profile pledges, for the Conservative governments the *Campaign Guides* published by the Conservative Research Department were invaluable. Obviously, they have a bias toward claiming high pledge fulfillment, but generally enough detail was provided that such claims could be independently evaluated (i.e., specific legislation was cited). The Labour Party did not quite have a comparable source, but for the 1974 government there were a number of useful policy-specific pamphlets published in 1976–78. Some of the more highly specific pledges in all years required reading the legislation itself. Multiple government department publications were also used.

In spite of this variety of sources, some pledges remained “untested,” and thus they are missing data. For government parties, 15.6 percent of all pledges (and 11.8 percent of “narrow” pledges) are untested; these are spread relatively evenly across all policy areas.

5.4. Election Pledges in the UK

What types of pledges did the parties make during this period? To what extent did the parties' pledges differ in ideology or issue emphasis? Table 5.2 begins the analysis with a breakdown of pledges for the parties that went on to form governments after the election, as well as the parties that went on to be in opposition after the elections of 1979 and 1983 (Labour in both cases). Pledges are categorized according to "type of change," as discussed in chapter 2: maintaining the status quo, cutting government, expanding government, increasing taxes, cutting taxes, change other than cutting/increasing spending or taxes, and "review" pledges. Shown are the total numbers for each party combined, as well as the *range* for each party; highlights of individual years are also discussed below.

Starting with status quo pledges, it should be noted that, as discussed in chapter 3, the biggest determinant of status quo emphasis is incumbency, with the exception that the Labour Party manifesto of October 1974 shows little status quo emphasis (5.9 percent of pledges), even though Labour were the incumbents. This makes sense when we consider that they had only been in government for seven months before dissolving the weak minority government. In other words, much of their agenda remained unfulfilled and was simply promised again in their second 1974 manifesto. If they are included as a nonincumbent, along with 1979 Conservatives and 1983 Labour, the average status quo emphasis for such parties is 5.4 percent of pledges, compared to 20.6 percent for incumbents.

Turning to other types of change, we find a predictable result: Labour emphasizes "expand" pledges significantly more than Conservatives do (36.4 compared to 10.2 percent). Party differences with other pledge types are less pronounced: cutting government (5.2 percent of all Conservative pledges compared to .9 percent for Labour), increasing taxes (.3 percent of Conservative pledges compared to 2.9 percent for Labour), and cutting taxes (3.1 percent for Conservatives compared to 1.3 percent for Labour). The largest category of pledges for both parties is consistently "other change" (change that does not clearly increase or decrease spending or taxes): 59.4 percent of Conservative pledges and 49.7 percent for Labour.

Using the data on expand, cut, tax increases, and tax cuts, an index of polarization between the parties can be computed for 1979 and 1983, the years for which we have data for both parties. This measure is simply the sum of the difference in emphasis between the parties on these four pledge types. By this measure, polarization in the UK increased from 32.6 in 1979 to 46.5

in 1983. This is consistent with the Manifesto Project Dataset (table 5.1). This is notable because the Manifesto Project's ideology measure is based on coding of all statements rather than just specific pledges; in other words, it seems that the ideological composition of *particular pledges* appears to track the ideological *tone* of manifestos as a whole. (While two years is obviously a limited amount of data, chapter 6 shows, with more years, a Pearson's correlation of .874 between the two polarization measures for the US).

Another way to examine party differences using pledge data is to look at the degree to which there is direct agreement or disagreement between the parties (as defined in chapter 2). The top rows in table 5.3 show that a large majority of pledges—roughly 90 percent in both 1979 and 1983—neither directly agree nor disagree. We saw in figure 3.6 that the UK has the lowest proportion of pledges (of all cases in this book) on which parties directly agree; table 5.3 shows that this already low figure declines between 1979 and 1983. This is consistent with the polarization data based on expansion or contraction of government, and the Manifesto Project ideology measure.

Turning now to examining emphasis on specific policy areas, pledges were divided into seven categories: economic, social welfare, natural resources, civil rights/liberties, crime, education, and “other” policy.⁸ The next rows of table 5.3 show that both parties consistently place high emphasis on economic and social welfare pledges. Economic policy is the most emphasized policy area in all years, and social welfare policy is the second-most-emphasized policy for all parties and years except the Conservatives in 1992 (when “other” policy pledges came in second). For the most part, the results are consistent with the work of John et al. (2013, 33), who find that the majority of policy domains do not receive differential emphasis by the parties in Queen's Speeches⁹ This is not to say that there may not be important differences between the parties in terms of the *specifics of what they are pledging* within each area, and that is discussed below.

5.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in the UK

We turn now to a discussion of the fulfillment of election pledges during this period. We saw in figure 4.1 that the UK has the highest overall pledge fulfillment rate for government parties in our 12 countries. Table 5.4 allows us to look at variation in pledge fulfillment rates by government; it presents the results for all pledges using the broad definition. For government parties, between 75.7 and 89.7 percent of pledges were at least partially fulfilled. There is, then, some variance, though not a lot: in all

cases, the Westminster system is efficient at fulfilling a large number of pledges. Fulfillment is lowest for 1974 pledges and highest for 1983 and 1987, consistent with our expectation based on institutional and economic contexts. Table 5.4 also shows that UK governments tend to fully, rather than partially, fulfill their pledges. This, we saw in figure 4.1, contrasts with countries that tend to have more power sharing, in which partial fulfillment is more common.

What about opposition parties? We have data for two manifestos: Labour in 1979 and 1983. About 33 and 15 percent of pledges, respectively, were at least partially fulfilled. Given the strong executive in the UK system, one might ask how *any* opposition pledges could be fulfilled. Looking at Labour in 1979, if we eliminate fulfilled status quo pledges and fulfilled pledges on which the parties agreed, we are left with 18 percent that are at least partially fulfilled. In other words, some of Labour's action pledges were apparently consistent with Conservative preferences even though they were not expressed in the Conservative manifesto. These include some Labour pledges to expand government.

TABLE 5.4. Pledge fulfillment in the United Kingdom

Fulfillment	1974		1979				1983			
	Labour government		Conservative government		Labour (opposition)		Conservative government		Labour (opposition)	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Fully	62.1	(64)	70.3	(64)	23.3	(27)	75.6	(62)	7.9	(22)
Partially	13.6	(14)	8.8	(8)	9.5	(11)	13.4	(11)	6.8	(19)
At least partial	75.7	(78)	79.1	(72)	32.8	(38)	89.0	(73)	14.7	(41)
Not	24.3	(25)	20.9	(19)	67.2	(78)	11.0	(9)	85.3	(237)
Total	100.0	(103)	100.0	(91)	100.0	(116)	100.0	(82)	100.0	(278)

Fulfillment	1987		1992	
	Conservative government		Conservative government	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Fully	86.0	(117)	83.0	(225)
Partially	3.7	(5)	4.4	(12)
At least partial	89.7	(122)	87.4	(237)
Not	10.3	(14)	12.5	(34)
Total	100.0	(136)	100.0	(271)

Note: Total numbers of pledges don't match those presented in tables 5.2 and 5.3 because those tables include pledges for which fulfillment is not determined.

Thus far we have not addressed the *substance* of pledges. One way to address this is to look at what happens to fulfillment rates if we exclude status quo pledges. As it turns out (results not shown), excluding such pledges barely affects fulfillment for any government: rates are slightly lower for each government, but barely: the percentage point differences (comparing all pledges to just change pledges) are, respectively, 1.2, .3, 1.3, 2, and 1.3. In other words, fulfillment rates are high even for pledges to change the status quo. It could still be possible, though, that parties carry out mainly small, insignificant changes. The best way to address the question of the degree to which parties pledged and carried out substantial change is to look at examples. We turn to that now. The focus will be primarily on economic and social policies. For the first two Thatcher terms, Royed (1996) provides additional detail.

Labour Government, 1974–79, PMs Wilson and Callaghan. Economic pledges that were fulfilled included creation of a National Enterprise Board to administer publicly owned share holdings, two nationalization pledges, a number of pro-labor pledges (including one undoing the previous Conservative government's changes), and a pledge to impose an extra tax on oil companies' profits from North Sea oil.

In social policy, it might be expected that the IMF-imposed spending cuts led to many broken promises. Yet pledge fulfillment remained relatively high because a number of new benefits were created in the early years of the government. A particularly significant change was fulfillment of the party's pledge to create a new state earnings-related pension scheme (SERPS); this was touted as the greatest breakthrough on pensions since Beveridge (Toynbee and Walker 2004, 111). Also fulfilled were pledges for a new invalid care allowance and new benefits for the disabled. With the National Health Service (NHS), creation of the Resources Allocation Working Party (RAWP) helped fulfill a pledge to "reduce regional inequality of standards."

Some changes were made that were *not* pledged, including linking benefits to the higher of earnings or prices, rather than just prices, and increasing dental and optical charges in the NHS. Unfulfilled pledges included one to "continue the progressive elimination of prescription charges" in the NHS and to phase out private beds in hospitals.

Conservative Governments, 1979–97, PMs Thatcher and Major. The many policy changes of the Thatcher era are a well-documented story (see, e.g., Dunleavy et al. 1993; Kavanagh and Seldon 1989; Riddell 1992). For

the purposes of this book, it is useful to address the degree to which those changes were presaged by party manifestos. Starting with the 1979 manifesto, ten pledges designed to curb trade union power and four to cut taxes were nearly all fulfilled. Privatization of the National Freight Corporation and the (recently nationalized) aerospace industry was begun, while a pledge to privatize the (recently nationalized) shipbuilding industry went unfulfilled (it was carried out by the next government). A pledge to restrict the powers of the (recently created) National Enterprise Board was met.

In social policy, the biggest changes proposed (and fulfilled) were five different pledges related to the sale of council housing. Pledges to tax unemployment and short-term sickness benefits were met (the one area where taxes were increased), while at the same time a pledge to exempt war widows' pensions from taxes was met. A pledge to honor the increases in retirement pensions promised by Labour just before the election was met, while a pledge to "phase out the earnings rule" on pensions (the rule whereby pensioners lose their pensions if they earn more than a set limit) was not.

In contrast to the 1979 Conservative manifesto, key Labour pledges in 1979 included abolishing all charges in the NHS, phasing out private beds in NHS hospitals, opposition to the sale of council housing, increases in certain benefits, expanding the National Enterprise Board, a new wealth tax, conclusion of planning agreements with major companies, and an industrial democracy commission, among others. None of these was fulfilled.

The 1983 Conservative manifesto fulfilled at least partially more pledges pertaining to curbing labor unions, pledges to privatize eight different industries, a pledge to attract private capital into the gas industry, and one to further develop enterprise zones. Social welfare pledges fulfilled included giving more council tenants the "right to buy," extending the "right to buy" scheme in various ways, and extending the Tenants' Charter to enable council tenants to make repairs on their own and be reimbursed. Regarding the NHS, a pledge to put some services out for competitive bids was met; on the other hand, a pledge to control staff numbers was not. A pledge to abolish the "earnings rule" in pensions was again not met.

It is notable that one significant change in social policy was *not* pledged: the 1986 Social Security Bill reduced the proportion of people's earnings going into SERPS and provided incentives for private provision of pensions.

The 1983 Labour manifesto called for, among other things, withdrawal from the European Economic Community (EEC), abolition of the House of Lords, renationalization of industries privatized by the previous govern-

ment, further nationalizations, a wealth tax, and a slew of new programs and regulations.

The changes in economic policy proposed in the 1987 manifesto were not as extensive as in the prior manifesto, reflecting the fact that the previous two governments had already accomplished a big policy shift toward neoliberalism. Two new privatization pledges, a pledge to liberalize liquor licensing, and two pledges to create new Urban Development Corporations (designed to redevelop tracts of derelict land) were all met. A significant pledge not met was one to abolish the existing system for funding local governments and replace it with what became known as the "poll tax." This was enacted but then abandoned after massive protests (which in part led to the resignation of Thatcher and the installation of Major as prime minister).

In social welfare policy, having implemented the "right to buy," most of the 1987 manifesto's housing pledges fell under the headings "A Right to Rent" and "Rights for Council Tenants," and all but one of these were fulfilled. A pledge to "give substantial tax incentives to personal pensions" was met, but government actions actually further encouraged private pensions, as a 1988 reform allowed people to opt out of SERPS, in which case they received a National Insurance rebate of 5.8 percent paid into a personal pension. This *unpledged* change represented a significant shift in the direction of privatization of pensions. Another significant pension change was the 1989 abolition of the "earnings rule." The Conservatives had pledged this in both 1979 and 1983 but oddly not in 1987.

The manifesto's health-related pledges dealt with improving services and completing further building. It is notable that these pledges did not explicitly promise major reform of the type enacted with the 1990 NHS and Community Care Act, which entailed "some of the most sweeping changes to the . . . NHS since its creation" (Graig 1999, 152). The bill laid out a series of reforms based on the principle of creating an "internal market": separation of purchasers and providers of health services.

As table 5.4 shows, the 1992 Conservative manifesto contained an unusually large number of pledges. Seven more on privatization were all met, and an eighth (concerning Northern Ireland) was not met. More tax cut pledges were also met, although not one calling for "full relief against inheritance tax on most business assets." More industrial relations legislation was pledged and passed, including making the automatic deduction of union membership dues without written authorization unlawful.

The 1992 manifesto was the only one in which social welfare pledges

were not the second-most-emphasized area, making up only 16.9 percent of all pledges. The main accomplishments of the Major administration in this area were (1) consolidation of previous changes, in the sense of introducing small improvements; (2) a new focus on improvements in public services; and (3) the introduction of some small new programs, including a new disability benefit and a grant for after-school child care.

The second-most-emphasized policy area in the manifesto was “other” policy, much of which pertained to the Citizen’s Charter, which had been introduced by the previous Major government; this pertained to setting goals for improvement of a variety of public services.

The evidence thus far suggests considerable support for the adversarial model. The Thatcher government elected in 1979 made significant policy changes that the Labour Party opposed. The 1983 Labour manifesto pledged to undo these changes, while the winning Conservative Party proceeded with its neoliberal agenda and the following two Conservative governments consolidated it. Had Labour won in 1979 or 1983, and had it fulfilled its key pledges, the Thatcher revolution would have been reversed and the trajectory of future policy would have shifted.

However, we know that the period covered here represents a particularly polarized one in British politics. It might be argued that, with the decline in polarization starting in 1997, change in party control may matter less for policy change. While we lack complete pledge fulfillment data for the more recent period, a brief overview of the 1997 manifestos and the first Blair government allows us to examine one more change in party control in a period of less polarized parties.

Labour Government, 1997–2001, PM Blair. The Labour Party’s shift to the right, seen in table 5.1, reflects changes that began with the selection of Tony Blair as leader in 1994 and his creation of “New Labour.” He successfully proposed revising Clause IV of the party’s constitution, which had expressed commitment to public ownership of industry. Accordingly, the 1997 manifesto contained no pledges to renationalize any industries. In a number of other areas, the party pledged to maintain the status quo, including maintaining the Conservatives’ planned spending ceilings for their first two years in office. Both parties pledged to continue with low inflation targets. In keeping with that, Labour fulfilled a pledge to make the Bank of England independent of partisan influence (the Conservatives said nothing on this). The parties held similar positions on welfare reform, both pledging support for “welfare-to-work” programs. On the NHS,

both parties pledged to increase funding in real terms, to decrease waiting time, and to increase the number of doctors and nurses (although Labour pledged to increase them more).

On the other hand, many of the parties' pledges on taxes and social policy reflect traditional party differences. The Conservatives pledged to reduce the basic income tax rate while Labour fulfilled a pledge to lower the lowest rate. The Conservatives had a number of tax cut proposals that Labour did not. Labour fulfilled a pledge to fund welfare reform with a windfall tax on recently privatized industries. Labour had more extensive and detailed pledges on social policy, most of which were fulfilled. The manifesto also pledged to "end the Conservatives' internal market in health care," while the Conservatives pledged to encourage more GP (general practitioner) fundholding.¹⁰ Labour's NHS restructuring, which replaced GP fundholding with a new scheme, arguably at least partially fulfilled the pledge.

There were significant party differences on pension policy, with the Conservatives pledging continued incentives for private pension funds while Labour made and kept pledges to retain the basic state pension and increase it in line with prices, along with other extensions. A Labour pledge to retain SERPS but change it to help those with caregiving responsibilities was not met: SERPS was replaced with a new "Second State Pension" targeted at the poor and those with carer responsibilities.

Labour pledged, and enacted, a minimum wage, while the Conservatives opposed it. The Conservatives also opposed signing the European Union's (EU's) Social Chapter, and the Labour government fulfilled a pledge to sign it shortly after taking office.

Constitutional reform is worth mentioning as an area where the parties disagreed and major change took place. Labour partially fulfilled a pledge to "end the hereditary principle in the House of Lords" by reducing the hereditary positions to 92; the Conservatives opposed Lords reform. Labour kept pledges to allow separate referendums in Scotland and Wales on the creation of regional legislatures, and regional assemblies were then created; the Conservatives opposed regional devolution. Labour made and kept a pledge to hold a referendum in London on creating a new directly elected city government and mayor. Finally, there was a pledge to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, which was met. The Conservatives opposed a new Bill of Rights on the grounds that it would transfer power from Parliament to the courts, which is what Labour's incorporation of the Convention tends to do.

5.6. Conclusions

We have seen that both the Labour and Conservative parties use manifestos to make proposals for significant, substantive change; that governing parties at least partially fulfill between 76 and 90 percent of their pledges; and that most are fully, not partially, fulfilled. Poor economic circumstances and smaller or nonexistent majorities tend to reduce fulfillment. For the most part, during this period voters who based their choice on party pledges should have gotten what they expected, at least in the areas of domestic policy we have discussed.¹¹ Opposition parties fulfill only a negligible number of pledges. We do see a small number of policy changes that were enacted without being pledged—pension changes in the second and third Conservative governments and the 1990 NHS reform stand out. This arguably goes against a mandate model as much as does unfulfilled pledges. Nevertheless, given the large percentage of fulfilled pledges, the UK performs essentially as we would expect a “responsible party system” to perform.

In terms of the substantive policy changes in this period, this chapter has highlighted the degree to which those changes were promised by party manifestos. Analysis of both parties’ 1979 and 1983 manifestos shows that had the election results been different, very different policies would have resulted, assuming pledge fulfillment rates similar to what we have found here. By the time Blair was elected in 1997, the Labour Party had accepted many of the changes of the previous 18 years. It could be argued that this suggests support for the “policy inheritance” view of policy change (Rose and Davies 1994). At the same time, however, the Blair government enacted some significant changes of its own, especially dramatic constitutional change. The Conservatives opposed these changes at the time, but once they returned to power in 2010 it was with a manifesto that for the most part did not pledge to undo Labour reforms—again, accepting their policy inheritance. However, to argue that policy inheritance matters should not lead one to downplay the role of political parties in producing change. A party in power at a given point makes changes that are different from those of the opposition party, and that affects the future trajectory of policy. As Pierson (1994, 2000) and others argue, policy is path dependent. This chapter has shown that *parties are essential in changing the path of policy*. Nowhere is this more dramatically illustrated than in the Conservatives’ fulfilled 2015 pledge to hold a referendum on withdrawal from the EU and to abide by the results; Labour had no such pledge and had the party been elected no referendum would have been held. Nevertheless, given the vote to leave, the 2017 Labour manifesto pledged to continue negotiations

for Brexit, although the parties differed significantly on the details of the negotiations.

Having argued that, contrary to the conclusions of some scholars, the UK truly does operate like a “responsible party system,” it is worth briefly considering the normative implications of such a system. Is high pledge fulfillment necessarily good? This cannot be addressed without considering the fact that, while the system clearly enables the majority party to accomplish its priorities to a significant degree, in the entire post–World War II period the winning party did not receive a majority of the vote; for the elections discussed here, the winning party averaged only 42 percent of the vote. In the 2015 election, a mere 36.8 percent of voters gave the Conservatives a slim majority government.¹² One might reasonably question whether a party supported by a minority of voters *should* follow through with almost all of its pledges, without consideration for the wishes of other parties. The response of proponents of the “responsible parties model” is that if voters are displeased, they can always throw the party out, choosing an alternative that promises change. However, to the extent that some major changes may significantly change the set of feasible future policies, that defense of the model may be undermined.

NOTES

1. Prime Minister’s questions, March 4, 2015; available at <https://www.c-span.org/video/?324649-1/british-prime-ministers-questions>

2. The LDP since 2010 had been in a rare (for the UK) coalition government with the Conservatives, and many LDP members of parliament (MPs) voted to go along with legislation proposed by the Conservatives that would have tripled existing university tuition. Liberal Democratic leader Nick Clegg later apologized for making the pledge, saying, “I will never again make a pledge unless as a party we are absolutely clear about how we can keep it” (Wintour and Mulholland 2012).

3. They themselves are not in that camp; they support a theory they call “focused adaptation,” which suggests neither continuous stability nor dramatic swings but something in between.

4. Formerly the Manifesto Project was known as the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). See chapter 1, note 1.

5. In 2011 the Fixed Term Parliament Act was passed, setting a five-year term. However, elections can still be called early if there is a no-confidence vote or if two-thirds of House of Commons members vote for it.

6. The term *misery index* was coined by the American economist Arthur Okun, who chaired the Council of Economic Advisors under President Lyndon Johnson. It came into prominence in the 1970s when the US was in the grip of “stagflation” (simultaneous high inflation and high unemployment).

7. Because of the very short length of the first 1974 Labour government, we do not include it in our analysis.

8. **Economic policy** includes pledges related to outcomes such as inflation, and

so on; general spending (spending in specific areas would fall in the relevant subject category); taxes (some taxes for specific purposes are included in the relevant subject area); regulation/deregulation; economic development (pledges to promote growth, including in particular regions or sectors); some trade policies (pledges that can be enacted legislatively); infrastructure (including transportation); and industrial relations or labor policy (policies on trade unions, wages, employee rights, and so on, other than social benefits counted under social welfare policy).

Social welfare policy includes pledges related to programs designed to improve the health, incomes, and welfare of the population (excluding education, which is considered a separate area). Thus, pledges included cover pensions, health care, housing, child and family benefits/leave, programs to alleviate poverty, job training programs, and unemployment compensation.

Natural resources policy includes pledges related to pollution control, land use and planning, agricultural policy, energy policy, fishing policy, water policy, and forestry.

Civil rights/liberties policy includes pledges related to policies designed to promote the rights and interests of racial minorities, women, the handicapped, gays, and other minority groups, including immigrants. Also included are pledges pertaining to rights of the accused, free speech/press, and privacy.

Crime policy and **Education policy** are self-explanatory.

“Other” policy includes pledges related to the democratic process or the functioning or organization of government. Examples include pledges concerning central/regional/local government relations, Northern Ireland policy, reorganization of government, campaign finance, and pledges on the European Union (except for those on the Common Agricultural Policy, which were counted under natural resources).

9. Queen’s Speeches, or Speeches from the Throne, although made annually by the Queen, are written by the government. They present the government’s planned agenda for the upcoming parliamentary session. It is worth noting that the conclusion of John et al. (2013) contradicts the saliency theory of party competition, which posits that parties compete primarily by means of differential issue emphasis (Budge et al. 2001).

10. GP fundholding refers to a new program to give GPs more financial and managerial control over their practices.

11. An important exception is that after the terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001, the UK, like the US, made some changes in security and foreign policy that weren’t anticipated. Many Labour supporters were bitterly disappointed over the Blair government’s involvement in the Iraq War.

12. It is worth noting that in that election the UK Independence Party (UKIP) won 12.6 percent of the vote, and it was arguably the desire to cater to those voters that led PM Cameron to support the referendum on Brexit. In this case, 49.4 percent of the voters—nearly a majority—voted for either the Conservatives or UKIP and thus for a party calling for the EU referendum.

The United States

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6.1. Introduction

Compared to many of the countries examined in this book, party platforms in the US probably receive less attention during election campaigns. During presidential election years, what attracts media attention is presidential candidate promises, whether supported by the party platform or not. This lack of attention might lead us to expect low pledge fulfillment in the US. In addition, a number of institutional characteristics of the US presidential system make it more difficult to make policy changes than in most parliamentary systems.

In spite of these institutional obstacles, studies have found a relatively high rate of pledge fulfillment (Pomper and Lederman 1980; Royed 1996; Royed and Borrelli 1997, 1999). This chapter adds to these studies by including all domestic policy areas for six presidential terms: the Carter presidency (1977–80) through the second Clinton presidency (1997–2000). The focus will be on explaining the relative success of the two parties, as well as assessing the degree to which parties pledge and enact substantive policy changes.

6.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in the United States

The US has a presidential, federal system with a bicameral legislature. The House of Representatives has 435 members elected every two years under the single-member district plurality (SMP) system, and the Senate has 100 members, two elected from each state for six-year terms, with one-third of them chosen every two years. The president is directly elected every four years. The national party platforms come out only at each presidential election. They are thus making pledges that are intended to be fulfilled during the next president's four-year administration, which includes two congressional terms during which party control may change.

Both the SMP and presidential systems provide incentives for two parties to thrive, and so two parties dominate more than in any other country examined in this book. Compared to parliamentary systems, these parties are less centralized and disciplined. The different electoral bases of the House, Senate, and presidency provide for divergence across institutions; the federal nature of political parties, as well as the diversity of US states, also contributes to intraparty diversity.

The platforms are approved at the party conventions, which also approve the presidential nominees. The basic process of drafting and approving platforms is similar for the two parties. For each, the platform-writing process begins with the appointment by the national party committees of a Drafting (or "Executive") Committee. Typically, one or two people are charged with actually writing the platform. Committee members are generally people with extensive political or governmental experience (which may include congresspersons and senior staffers, party leaders, state and local officials, and former members of the executive), and sometimes a small number of leaders of party-affiliated interest groups. (For typical membership, see Borrelli 2001, 437–39; Jordan, Webb, and Wood 2014, 174–75; in 2012 the Republican writing committee was comprised entirely of members of the Republican National Committee).¹ In most years, public hearings are held at which the committee receives input; the number, timing, and location of these hearings varies. Witnesses at these hearings include public officials, individuals, corporations, and interest groups (Fine 1994a, 1994b).

Platforms are usually "presidential-candidate-centered" documents (Maisel 1993–94, 697). However, when there has been a drawn-out nomination battle, the eventual losing candidate(s) may have influence, as was the case with the Republicans in 1976 (Weinberg 1977–78) and the Democrats in 1980 (Malbin 1981); on the other hand, in 1992 Clinton support-

ers successfully opposed most changes proposed by the losing candidates (Borrelli 2001).

Once the Drafting Committee has approved a platform, it goes to the full Platform (or “Resolutions”) Committee, which meets during the week prior to the convention to approve a final draft. These committees are made up of a selection of the convention delegates, with a minimum of two delegates from each state and more for larger states (Fine 1991, 779). The final platform is approved by a majority vote of all convention delegates. Floor battles occasionally happen, but party leaders try to avoid this (Malbin 1981, 127–32).

Overall, the platform-writing process is dominated by elites. However, in recent years some interest groups have adopted a strategy of getting their preferred members chosen as delegates to the Republican convention. Usher (2000, 889) notes that the national Republican Party, unlike the Democrats, does not mandate that all potential delegates obtain prior approval from a campaign, and many state parties “allow grassroots activists to gain control over delegate selection” (889). After 1988 socially conservative Christian groups pursued this strategy. Over the 1976 to 1996 period, the proportion of Republican delegates belonging to such groups increased from less than 3.5 to 36.7 percent (893). This is one possible reason for a perceived shift to the right in the 1996 Republican platform (“Conservative activists” 1996). In fact the party’s presidential nominee—Bob Dole—explicitly disavowed the platform, claiming he hadn’t read it (“Platform Politics” 1996). The platform appeared to be more conservative than previous ones by some indicators: it had more “pro-life” pledges than previous platforms and called for the abolition of a number of Cabinet departments and smaller agencies. This was in spite of the fact that some evidence suggests that House Republicans had moved toward the center by the summer of 1996 (Salant 1996; Holmes 1996). In other words, there is some reason to believe that this particular platform may have reflected the views of elected officials and party elites less than prior ones.

More actors are involved in legislating in the US than in most parliamentary systems. In order to pass a bill, the House, Senate, and president must all agree on the same version. Relatively low party discipline and two equally strong legislative houses with different electoral bases means that passage of executive preferences is more uncertain than in most parliamentary systems. In addition, Senate rules allow for a filibuster, in which a minority of senators can prevent a vote on a bill by refusing to end debate; currently, a filibuster can be ended by a vote of cloture, which requires 40 votes. Use or threatened use of the filibuster has become more frequent in

recent decades, meaning that effectively a supermajority of 60 percent is required to pass much legislation (Binder and Smith 1997; Sinclair 2012).²

Separate direct election of the executive and two houses means that “divided government,” in which different parties control the three institutions, is possible. From 1957 to the present day, divided government has been in place more than 70 percent of the time, and this was the case during five of the six presidential terms considered here. For purposes of the comparative analysis in this book, divided governments in the US were classified as minority governments because executives are controlled by one party and that party does not have majority control of the legislature. Conceptually, however, some have argued that American divided government is comparable to a coalition government in that compromise between more than one party is required for legislation to pass (Sundquist 1988–89; Fiorina 1992). However, if divided governments are like coalition governments, they are coalitions that include *all* the parties that win legislative seats—virtually unheard of in true coalition governments. Such a conceptualization poses an interesting issue: how can “responsibility” be envisioned in a system in which, as Budge and Hofferbert (1990, 120) put it, “*both parties may have an electoral mandate?*” One answer to this question is that “responsibility” can be said to exist when *more institutional control by a given party yields greater policy success for that party*. The study of pledge fulfillment allows us to investigate whether or not this is the case.

In order to see where the parties stood ideologically during the period discussed here, data from the Manifesto Project Dataset are useful.³ The first two columns of table 6.1 show the ideology of the party platforms over time. While both parties’ ideology varies, one trend is clear: the Republicans shifted decisively to the right in 1980 and 1984, never to return to pre-1980 numbers; and the Democrats followed this rightward trend in 1988 and then 1992. The third column of the table shows “polarization,” defined as the difference between the Republicans’ and Democrats’ ideological scores. In the 1976–96 platforms, polarization peaks in the Reagan years, followed by a decline.

Scholars of American parties will realize that the Manifesto Project data on *platform* polarization presents a very different picture from much of the current political science literature, which emphasizes steadily increasing polarization since the 1970s (for a review of the voluminous literature on polarization, see Green, Coffey, and Cohen 2014). Why? Much of that literature is based on a polarization measure using Pool and Rosenthal’s (2007) DW-Nominate scores, which compute each member’s ideology from congressional roll call data. The fourth column of table 6.1 pres-

ents this measure for the House, showing that polarization has *increased steadily* since the 1970s and at a greater rate more recently. (The Senate shows the same upward trend, but peak polarization is about 10 percentage points lower than the House). This polarization measure tells us that over time the members of each party in each house of Congress have tended to vote more frequently with other members of their party, and each party's members are further from the center *as the center is defined based on a given congressional agenda*. As Ensley, Tofias, and Marchi (2014, 110) note, "What may be considered a very conservative or liberal vote in one period may appear much less extreme at a different point in time."⁴ Put together, the first four columns of table 6.1 suggest that the parties were most polarized in their substantive *views* (based on platform content) in the Reagan years and have been less polarized since, while at the same time congressional *voting records* show increased differences between the two parties. The latter is also captured by congressional voting data on party unity: party discipline increased for both parties in this period (not shown).

Increased party discipline in a parliamentary system would be expected to facilitate party pledge fulfillment, but in the US presidential system both divided government and the existence of the Senate filibuster mean that greater party unity might have the potential to *impede* productivity.⁵ Furthermore, single-party control of both chambers is no guarantee of ideological agreement between the two, as a result of the different electoral bases of the chambers, as well as the fact that only one-third of the Senate changes with each biennial election. Data on interchamber polarization (not shown) show that in the Clinton years such polarization was relatively high even with Republican control of both chambers; House Republicans were more conservative than their Senate counterparts.

In the US Congress, holding a majority is crucial to enacting an agenda because the majority party chairs all committees and subcommittees. Legislative committees are quite powerful in the US; they are particularly important in the House, where because of the larger size of the body the majority party strictly controls the agenda and voting procedures (Cox and McCubbins 2005). Party control is thus crucial.

The next two columns of table 6.1 present data on party control of Congress and the presidency. First, there is a "congressional control" index for each presidential term, derived by assigning one point for each house controlled by the Democrats per congressional term. With two congressional terms per presidential term, the measure ranges from zero to four. (Republican control would thus be four minus Democratic control). The next column shows a "total institutional control" index created by adding

TABLE 6.1. Party ideologies, context variables, and pledge data

Platform year (and winning president)	Ideology, Manifesto Project Dataset†			DW-Nominate score data	Degree of control by Democrats		Economic context	
	Democrats	Republicans	MPD Polarization	House of Representatives Polarization‡	Congressional control††	Total‡‡	Misery index†††	Avg GDP growth‡‡‡
Average, 1952–72	–17.7	4.6	22.3	.48	—	—	—	—
1976 Carter (D)	–19.8	6.6	26.4	.50	4	6	16.3	3.3
1980 Reagan I (R)	–21.2	22.4	43.6	.56	2	2	4.6	3.1
1984 Reagan II (R)	–14.1	33.6	47.7	.61	3	3	9.8	3.9
1988 Bush (R)	–7.0	29.4	36.4	.65	4	4	10.7	2.3
1992 Clinton I (D)	12.3	30.4	18.1	.77	2	4	8.9	3.4
1996 Clinton II (D)	8.8	24.2	15.4	.87	0	2	6.8	4.5
Average, 2000–2012	3.5	27.9	24.4	.87	—	—	—	—

Note: D = Democrat; R = Republican; Reagan I = Reagan’s first term.
†Volkens et al. 2015.
‡Averaged over each presidential term. Senate polarization shows the same rising trend, reaching a lower figure of .74 for the second Clinton term (http://voteview.com/Political_Polarization_2014.htm).
††One point for each house controlled by the Democrats, *per Congressional term*. Range = 0 to 4. Republican control = 4 (Democratic control).
‡‡Congressional control plus two points for controlling the presidency (one point for each term). Range = 0 to 6. Republican control = 6 (Democratic control).
†††Misery index = inflation plus unemployment. Source for both is the US Bureau of Labor, <http://data.bls.gov/>
‡‡‡Average annual growth rate averaged over the presidential term. Source is the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, <http://www.bea.gov/national/>

TABLE 6.2. Data on content of pledges
Type of change

Type of Change	Democrats				Republicans			
	Total	Range (percentage of pledges in each category)			Total	Range (percentage of pledges)		
	%	(n)	Low (year)	High (year)	%	(n)	Low (year)	High (year)
Status quo	18.2	(199)	8.5 (1984)	36.4 (1996)	22.5	(275)	13.7 (1996)	28.2 (1992)
Cut	.8	(9)	0 (1976)	1.8 (1984,92)	5.6	(68)	2.9 (1988)	10.0 (1980)
Expand	24.4	(266)	15 (1996)	28.3 (1980)	9.0	(110)	3.4 (1984)	12.5 (1996)
Tax cut	2.0	(22)	0 (1988)	5.2 (1996)	8.4	(103)	5.5 (1996)	17.2 (1984)
Tax increase	1.8	(20)	0 (1996)	3.6 (1984)	.1	(1)	0 (all but 1980)	.7 (1980)
Other change	52.1	(568)	42.8 (1996)	60.6 (1984)	53.7	(656)	43.6 (1980)	60.4 (1996)
“Review”	.6	(7)	0 (1992,96)	1.2 (1984)	.7	(9)	0 (1984, 92)	1.4 (1988)
Total # pledges	100	(1,091)	114 pledges (1988)	240 pledges (1980)	100	(1,222)	87 pledges (1984)	279 pledges (1988)

TABLE 6.2—(continued)

Agreement, disagreement, and unrelated (percentages of pledges)††††

Year, total number of Pledges	Agreement		Disagreement		Unrelated	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
1976 (n = 438)	19.9	(87)	4.3	(19)	75.3	(330)
1980 (n = 380)	8.2	(31)	11.0	(42)	80.8	(307)
1984 (n = 252)	7.1	(18)	9.1	(23)	83.7	(211)
1988 (n = 393)	10.4	(41)	3.8	(15)	85.7	(337)
1992 (n = 422)	12.8	(54)	9.5	(40)	80.1	(338)
1996 (n = 428)	11.9	(51)	5.6	(24)	82.5	(353)
TOTAL	12.2	(282)	6.6%	(163)	81.1	(1,875)

††††Agreement/disagreement computed as agreement/disagreement between Party A and Party B = (# of pledges of Party A that agree/disagree with Party B + # of pledges of Party B that agree/disagree with Party A) / (total pledges of Party A + total pledges of Party B). So, if all “agree” pledges in a given election were the identical pledge, then, if there are nine such pledges, the total number of “agreed” pledges shown above would be 18. See chapter 3 for a discussion of the computation of agreement and disagreement.

one point to the congressional control index for each congressional term in which the Democrats controlled the presidency (so two points per presidential administration). We can see that the only full administration that enjoyed united government was Carter’s. There are two periods in which presidents faced a Congress completely controlled by the other party during the entire administration: Bush’s presidency and Clinton’s second term. In the remaining three periods, presidents faced either a divided Congress or a change in control of Congress at midterm elections. Under Reagan I, there was a Democratic House and Republican Senate. This continued into the first half of Reagan II, after which the Democrats retook the Senate in the 1986 midterm election, giving Reagan a united Democratic Congress for the second half of his last term. United Democratic Congresses continued throughout Bush’s term and in the first half of Clinton I. In the 1994 midterm election, the Republicans gained control of both houses and maintained it throughout Clinton II.

While party control is important, in the US holding a majority is no guarantee that the party leadership will get what it wants; hence, the *size* of the majority may matter. The largest majorities for the period in this chapter were enjoyed by the Democrats during the Carter years; in the *first half* of the term, they held the only filibuster-proof majority in the Senate during the period covered here (61 percent). The Democrats maintained large House majorities during the Reagan and Bush years and into the first half of Clinton I. Republican majorities in this period were smaller, never rising above 55 percent in the Senate and 53 percent in the House.

The last two columns of table 6.1 provide data with which to summarize economic conditions during this period—both annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth (averaged for each presidential term) and the “misery index” (a summary measure that represents the unemployment and inflation rates combined).⁶ Four-year averages tend to smooth out extreme values, particularly for growth, but the misery index does show that the Carter years (which experienced prolonged “stagflation” as an outcome of the oil crisis) had by far the worst economy, followed by Reagan I and then Bush.

Having laid out the contextual environment during our period, what are our expectations about pledge fulfillment? Which party can we expect to win in a given term? The most obvious expectation is that united government should lead to higher pledge fulfillment for the governing party than for any party under divided government. Unfortunately, our sample only provides us with one case of completely united government (Carter), and this also happens to be the period with the weakest economy. We would also expect, other things being equal, that a weak economy would tend to undermine pledge fulfillment for all parties. Our prediction for the Carter years would thus be uncertain. For cases of divided government, one possibility is that the president’s party will always win. Pomper and Lederman (1980) find this to be true in all but two administrations for 1944–76 platform pledges. Another possibility is that *total control of institutions* matters; we will refer to this as our “total institutional control hypothesis.” If this is the case, then based on table 6.1 the Democrats would be more likely to win under Carter, Bush, and Clinton I; the Republicans under Reagan I and Clinton II; and under Reagan II, the performance of the two parties would be very similar.

Before addressing the issue of pledge fulfillment, however, it is necessary to address issues of methodology.

6.3. Research Design

Work on the US case followed the broad definition of election pledges as described in chapter 3, and this chapter discusses the results for these pledges. (To ensure comparability for the comparative statistical analysis, a subset of pledges was coded as being narrowly defined and was used for all such analyses in this book.)

The data include “outcome” pledges, as defined in chapter 3. While governments cannot control outcomes to the degree that they control actions, this chapter takes the view that a true test of mandate theory should include all pledges regardless of the degree of control policymakers have over their fulfillment. Having said this, such pledges are only 4.1 percent of all pledges. Fulfillment results show that average fulfillment of such pledges is about the same as for all pledges combined.

Finally, the data include all domestic public policy, divided into seven broad policy areas, discussed below. The decision to exclude foreign policy was largely pragmatic: the labor-intensive nature of the work meant that covering more policies would have necessitated reducing the number of years covered.⁷

Pledges were identified by first reading through the platforms and marking “potential pledges,” then reexamining the potential pledges to make a final decision. A reliability test was carried out with two coders who went over one platform; agreement was reached between the author and coders 84 percent of the time. As in most of the chapters of this book, pledges were coded as not fulfilled, partially fulfilled, or fully fulfilled.

In testing pledge fulfillment, the unit of analysis was the four-year presidential term; to be considered fulfilled, a pledge had to be met prior to the next president taking office.⁸ Multiple sources were used to determine fulfillment. The most frequently, and usually first, source used was a publication called *Congress and the Nation* (CATN) published by Congressional Quarterly Press. It comes out every four years and summarizes legislative activity for each presidential term. If nothing was found in CATN related to a pledge, for pledges likely requiring legislation the next step was to look in the online database THOMAS, which includes the text of all bills introduced and their status. For various outcome pledges (such as unemployment and inflation) the decision was made to compare averages for the relevant presidential term with the average for the prior administration.

Some pledges necessitated looking at spending commitments, which then required making a decision rule about how to measure spending. The fiscal year in the US runs from October 1 through September 30. Presidents and the Congress elected with them come to power in January in the calendar year following the presidential election. At that point, the government is operating with a fiscal year budget created by the previous incumbents; a budget fully controlled by the newly elected president won't be in place until October. Therefore, for each term considered here, the first budget year is counted as the calendar year two years after the election

year—for example, budgets for the Carter years are counted as having been in place from 1978 to 1981.

6.4. Election Pledges in the United States

We turn now to an analysis of the types of pledges made by parties. First, of the 2,313 pledges analyzed here, 63.5 percent, or 1,469, fit the narrow definition of pledges as described in chapter 3. A total of 67.4 percent of Republican pledges are narrow, compared to 59.1 percent for Democrats, and the Republicans have a higher proportion of narrow pledges in each year. The range is 47.4 to 71.5 percent for Democrats and 59.7 to 81.6 percent for Republicans. Each party's highest proportion of such pledges is found in its 1984 platform.

The top portion of table 6.2 shows the breakdown for all pledges according to the "type of change" pledged: maintaining the status quo, cutting versus expanding government, increasing versus cutting taxes, change other than cutting/increasing spending or taxes, and "review" pledges. The breakdown for all pledges by each party is compared, along with the range within each party. For status quo pledges, while the Republicans have slightly greater emphasis on such pledges, the main difference (not shown), consistent with the findings in chapter 3 is between incumbents and non-incumbents of the presidency: 26.2 percent of pledges versus 13.9 percent.

Looking at the degree to which parties pledge to expand or cut both spending and taxing tells us something about the ideology of the parties in the traditional socioeconomic sense. Here we see that the parties behave as we might expect and as confirmed for other countries in chapter 3: 24.4 percent of all Democratic pledges are to expand government, compared to only 9 percent for the Republicans. The gap between parties is narrower when it comes to cutting government, cutting taxes, and increasing taxes.

We used the data on degree of emphasis on cutting/expanding spending and taxes to construct a measure of ideological difference between the parties. Our measure is the sum of all the differences in emphasis on cut, expand, tax cut, and tax increase pledges. The result is a measure of ideological polarization based on specific pledges; this measure tracks closely with the Manifesto Project measure, with a Pearson correlation of .874. In other words, *evidence of ideology based on specific pledges is similar to evidence based on total platform content.*

Another way to assess the content of pledges is to examine relative emphasis on different policy areas. Pledges were divided into the seven categories of economic, social welfare, natural resources, civil rights/liberties, crime, education, and “other” domestic policy.⁹ For both parties, economics is the most emphasized area, followed by social welfare and then natural resources (results not shown). For the Democrats, such pledges make up 26.6, 19.9, and 16.2 percent of all pledges, respectively; the Republican figures are 25.5, 19.3, and 15.0 percent. The fourth- and fifth-most-emphasized areas are civil rights/liberties and “other” domestic pledges for the Democrats, with the reverse order for the Republicans, followed by crime and then education for both parties. There is some variance in these rankings across years, and Democrats emphasize natural resource and civil rights and liberties policies a bit more while Republicans emphasize crime and “other” policies a bit more.

Finally, we can examine the degree to which parties agree or disagree with one another using the definitions of agreement/disagreement presented in chapter 3. The bottom portion of table 6.2 present the results. Looking at the totals, 12.2 percent of all pledges are in agreement with the other party, and 6.6 percent are in disagreement. As with the majority of countries, a large majority of pledges are not directly in agreement or disagreement. The year 1976 stands out as having the most consensus between the parties. The least amount of consensus is found in the 1980 and 1984 platforms, the only years for which agreement is below 10 percent; disagreement is also relatively high for those years. This corresponds with both the Manifesto Project data and our data based on types of pledged change: by all measures, during the Reagan years the parties were most distant in their agendas.

6.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in the United States

We turn now to a discussion of the fulfillment of election pledges. Table 6.3 presents the results for all pledges. Turning first to the bottom right set of columns, we can see that 58.3 percent of all 2,313 pledges were at least partially fulfilled. The president’s party does somewhat better than the non-presidential party (64.4 compared to 52.9 percent); this is consistent with Pomper and Lederman’s (1980) finding. This is not to say that the president’s party always does better: the exception in this period is the

G. H. W. Bush years, when the Democrats had a higher fulfillment rate. Democrats on the whole do slightly better than Republicans—60.7 compared to 56.1 percent. This slight edge may reflect the Democrats' greater strength in Congress during the period.

Turning to the administration by administration results, in terms of relative party performance, the Democrats beat the Republicans in all terms except the Reagan years. However, in most years, *both* parties at least partially fulfilled a majority of their pledges. The two exceptions are the Democrats in Reagan's first term and the Republicans in Clinton's second. We can also see that it is rare for a party to *fully* fulfill a majority of its pledges; this is true only for the Democrats, first under Bush and then Clinton's second term. A substantial number of pledges are partially fulfilled, with the proportion varying from 9.8 percent (Republicans, Clinton II) to 22.4 percent (Democrats, Carter). This reflects the fact that the US system, with its multiple veto points and supermajoritarian aspects, often requires compromise to get things done.

Before turning to an analysis of the impact on fulfillment of the contextual factors outlined above, we look at how fulfillment might vary by the *types of pledges themselves*. Starting with broadly defined versus narrowly defined pledges, the bottom right-hand columns of table 6.2 shows that the fulfillment rate for narrowly defined pledges alone is a bit lower (55.4 percent) than for all pledges combined (58.3 percent). The per-term results (not shown) show that there are three cases in which the reverse is true: fulfillment is higher for narrow pledges than for all pledges combined: both parties' 1980 pledges and the Democrats' 1992 pledges. The average gap in fulfillment rates (between all pledges and narrow-only) is 2.5 for Democrats and 2.7 for Republicans. Most of the time both parties fulfill a majority of even narrowly defined pledges, with the same two exceptions noted in the paragraph above for all pledges, plus the additional exception of the 1976 Republicans.

Consistent with chapter 4, we expect that pledges on which the parties agree should be easier to fulfill. Fulfillment rates (at least partial) for "agreed" pledges are identical for both parties, rounding to 71 percent for each (results not shown). We might expect that the small number of pledges on which the parties directly disagree would be less likely to be fulfilled, and this is also confirmed; such fulfillment for Democrats was 42.7 percent (compared to 60.7 percent overall fulfillment) and for Republicans 53.8 percent (compared to 56.1 percent overall). Apparently when

TABLE 6.3. Pledge fulfillment in the United States

Fulfillment	Carter, 1977–80			Reagan, 1981–84			Reagan, 1985–88		
	Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)		Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)		Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)	
Fully	43.1 (100)	39.8 (82)		30.8 (74)	42.9 (60)		38.2 (63)	41.4 (36)	
Partially	22.4 (52)	15.0 (31)		16.3 (39)	15.7 (22)		12.1 (20)	18.4 (16)	
At least partial	65.5 (152)	54.8 (113)		47.1 (113)	58.6 (82)		50.3 (83)	59.8 (52)	
Not	34.5 (80)	45.1 (93)		52.9 (127)	41.4 (58)		49.7 (82)	40.2 (35)	
Total	100.0 (232)	100.0 (206)		100.0 (240)	100.0 (140)		100.0 (165)	100.0 (87)	
G. H. W. Bush, 1989–92									
Clinton, 1993–96			Clinton, 1997–2000						
Fulfillment	Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)		Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)		Democrats % (n)	Republicans % (n)	
Fully	57.0 (65)	46.2 (129)		47.3 (79)	43.5 (111)		56.1 (97)	36.9 (94)	
Partially	16.7 (19)	17.9 (50)		21.0 (35)	11.8 (30)		11.0 (19)	9.8 (25)	
At least partially	73.7 (84)	64.2 (179)		68.3 (114)	55.3 (141)		67.1 (116)	46.7 (119)	
Not	26.3 (30)	35.8 (100)		31.7 (53)	44.7 (114)		32.9 (57)	53.3 (136)	
Total	100.0 (114)	100.0 (279)		100.0 (167)	100.0 (255)		100.0 (173)	100.0 (255)	
All pledges vs. narrow pledges									
Presidential vs. nonpresidential party			Democrats vs. Republicans						
President's party % (n)	Nonpresidential party % (n)		Democrats % (n)		Republicans % (n)		Both parties all pledges % (n)		
							Both parties narrow pledges only % (n)		
Fulfillment									
Fully	46.5 (501)	39.6 (489)	43.8 (478)		41.9 (512)		42.8 (990)		
Partially	18.0 (194)	13.3 (164)	16.9 (184)		14.2 (174)		15.5 (358)		
At least partially	64.4 (695)	52.9 (653)	60.7 (662)		56.1 (686)		58.3 (1,348)		
Not	35.6 (383)	47.1 (582)	39.3 (429)		43.9 (536)		41.7 (965)		
Total	100 (1,078)	100 (1,235)	100.0 (1,091)		100.0 (1,222)		100.0 (2,313)		
							44.6 (655) 100.0 (1,459)		

Note: President's party shown in bold.

there was direct disagreement in this period, the Republicans tended to win. We would also expect status quo pledges to be easier to fulfill than other pledges. In fact, both parties fulfilled about 88 percent of their status quo pledges (not shown).

If we examine at least partial fulfillment rates for each party and year just for pledges *to change the status quo*, the same pattern of winners and losers holds true as for all pledges: the Democrats win for 1976, 1988, 1992, and 1996 and the Republicans for 1980 and 1984.

What do these fulfillment results suggest about the impact of party control of institutions on pledge fulfillment? Looking at winners and losers, as noted above, in five of the six terms, the president's party wins. Going beyond presidential control, does the "total control of institutions index" shown in table 6.1 matter? Table 6.3 shows that the Republicans are the winners only in the Reagan years; this is also true when status quo pledges are excluded. Since Republican control is at its first- and second-highest levels in that period, the result is consistent with the total institutional control hypothesis. However, Republican total control is *also* at its maximum for the Clinton II period (since the Republicans controlled both houses throughout the entire term), and yet the Democrats win by a significant margin. Republican performance for these three terms might lead us to conclude that control of *both* the presidency *and* some part of Congress are necessary for winning; however, the results for the Democrats don't support this. They manage to win under Bush with only congressional control and under Clinton II with only presidential control. It seems that neither the total control variable nor something modified to more heavily weight the presidency works to *fully* explain all our results.

There are several possible factors that may explain the unusually low performance of the Republicans on their 1996 pledges. First, when they took over Congress in 1995, it was their first time as a majority party in both houses since 1953–54, and as chapter 4 found, a long period out of office may hurt a party in enacting an agenda. In addition, emphasis on the investigation and impeachment of Clinton inevitably meant less attention to policy. Finally, as noted earlier, there is evidence that the 1996 platform may have been less representative of the views of actual lawmakers than previous platforms were. For all these reasons, the Clinton II results may be something of an outlier.

Thus far we have not attempted to assess the substantive significance of pledges made and policies carried out. In the following we enumerate some

key successes and failures of each administration, focusing mainly on economic policy. For help in identifying significant pledges, we draw on David Mayhew's dataset on "important" legislation (Mayhew 2005). Generally, although not always, we have found that such legislation relates to one or more pledges; when it doesn't, that is arguably worth noting in itself, in that making significant changes that weren't pledged runs counter to a responsible parties model. For more extensive discussion of the Reagan years, see Royed (1996). Royed and Borelli (1997) discusses social policy from Carter through G. H. W. Bush; the following adds examples from the Clinton years.

Carter, 1977–80. The Carter administration is frequently viewed as something of a policy failure because of some high-profile losses, but the Democrats did at least partially fulfill 65.5 percent of their pledges, and for economic policy the figure is 71 percent. A pledge to enact a "complete overhaul" of the tax system was not met, while some more specific tax pledges were. A Democratic pledge to increase taxes on "all income of upper income groups" was broken; instead, in 1978 Congress passed, over Carter's veto threats, a substantial capital gains tax *cut*, fulfilling a Republican pledge. Another broken Democratic pledge was not enacting a bill to allow construction labor to picket an entire site for a grievance against a single subcontractor, in spite of the fact that the previous Democratic Congress had passed it (President Ford had vetoed it).¹⁰ On consumer protection, a number of Democratic pledges *were* met. In addition, Mayhew (2005) sees four deregulation laws as significant: those involving airlines, banking, trucking, and railroads. Neither party specifically pledged any of these regulatory changes.

Reagan I, 1981–84. In this first term, the Republicans "won" over the Democrats on both economic policies (64.9 to 48.5 percent fulfillment rates) and social welfare (57.7 to 41.3 percent). The Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) of 1981 fulfilled a number of Republican pledges, including a pledge to index tax brackets; this meant a loss of "automatic" increases in revenue resulting from inflation and growth.¹¹ Other successful Republican economic pledges concerned conducting cost-benefit analyses on proposed regulations and loosening enforcement of health and safety regulations. Failed pledges included those to cut payroll taxes, enact enterprise zones (this was pledged again and fulfilled in Reagan II),¹² and enact a youth minimum wage (the Democrats successfully pledged to oppose this). On the other hand, the Democrats succeeded in closing some tax loopholes that favored the rich, curbing some tax deductions, and ensur-

ing at least a 15 percent minimum tax on all corporations. They failed in pledges to increase the minimum wage and enact plant closing legislation, among others.

Reagan II, 1985–88. In this term, the Democrats beat the Republicans on economic policy (60.9 to 55.9 percent) while the Republicans again won on social policy (61.5 to 54.2 percent). One highly significant economic policy action was the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Anti-deficit Act. This created a set of procedures for guaranteeing that deficits would decline; it was not pledged by either party, but it did help fulfill pledges by both to bring deficits down. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 was designed to simplify and rationalize the tax code, and it fulfilled at least partially four Republican and three Democratic pledges and broke one for each.

Bush 1989–92. The Democrats have higher fulfillment rates than the Republicans for this period with both economic (72 to 56.5 percent) and social (78.6 to 66.7 percent) policies. The best-known promise of the 1988 campaign, also reflected in a platform pledge, was Bush's Republican convention statement: "Read my lips: no new taxes." That and a number of Republican tax *cut* pledges were jeopardized by a recession, which by 1990 had increased budget deficits. Initially Bush proposed big spending cuts and no new taxes; however, the Democratic majority was firmly opposed. After long negotiations the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 was passed. It included increases in the top marginal individual income tax rate (fulfilling a Democratic pledge) along with other tax increases.

Clinton I, 1993–96. United Democratic control over Congress during the first half of this term helped the Democrats win handily on economic policy, 76.6 to 45.3 percent, although the Republicans edge them out in social welfare policy, 66.7 to 60.5 percent. The Democrats pledged to raise taxes on the wealthy, while the Republicans pledged to oppose all tax increases. The 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act gave the Democrats a win, introducing a fourth bracket for top earners and an additional surtax imposed on the top 1.2 percent of earners. The Republicans made 14 specific tax cut pledges, only two of which were at least partially fulfilled. Another significant change was an increase in the minimum wage enacted in 1996 in spite of the Republican majority elected in 1994. (Nevertheless, the Democrats were unsuccessful with their only minimum wage pledge, to *index* it).

Mayhew (2005) finds three significant social policy enactments in this period, all of which pertain to party pledges. First, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, previously vetoed by Bush, was passed and

signed by Clinton, fulfilling a Democratic pledge and breaking a Republican one. It mandated 12 weeks of unpaid leave for family emergencies. The 1996 Kennedy-Kassebaum insurance reform bill fulfilled a number of both Republican and Democratic pledges; it prohibited discrimination on the basis of medical history in employer-provided plans. Finally, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act represented the biggest change in means-tested welfare programs since their creation; it fulfilled five Republican and two Democratic pledges and broke one Democratic pledge; this legislation helped to give the fulfillment edge to the Republicans for this term.

Clinton II, 1997–2000. The Democrats won handily on economic policy, 80.5 to 49.0 percent. The Republicans stepped up their efforts to cut taxes, with 11 such specific pledges, including an across-the-board 15 percent cut to marginal rates; the latter and many others were not met. In contrast to their 1992 platform, all five Democratic tax pledges were pledges for *cuts*, and three of those pledges were fulfilled. The parties agreed on a new tax credit of 500 dollars per child (fulfilled). On the other hand, attempts by Republicans to abolish the estate tax entirely were vetoed by Clinton in 1999 and 2000 (the Republican platform had pledged only to reduce estate taxes for farmers, a pledge that was partially met). The Republicans won partial fulfillment of a pledge to cut the top capital gains rate by 50 percent (it was reduced from 28 to 20 percent). Both parties pledged to achieve a balanced budget, and, aided by a strong economy, this pledge was met.

Fulfillment rates for social policy are quite high for both parties, although the Republicans won, 79 to 71 percent. These high rates for both parties are partly due to the fact that both made a relatively large number of low-profile pledges that were fulfilled by increased funding in real terms for existing programs. Two of Mayhew's (2005) major social laws for the period did not pertain to any party's pledges: the creation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP, or CHIP), which provides matching funds to states that provide health insurance for children; and reform of the system for adopting foster children. A third major social law was a 1998 reform of public housing, which fulfilled slightly different pledges by both parties.

Thoughts on Post-2000. The period since 2000 has been one of increasingly polarized voting in each house and at times greatly increased interchamber polarization. This has contributed to more government shutdowns and an increasing number of scholars and pundits diagnosing the system as dysfunctional. However, a brief review of Mayhew's

significant legislation suggests that similar numbers of important laws were enacted in each Congress from 2001 to 2010 as were enacted in earlier years, and many relate to key pledges.¹³ During the first G. W. Bush administration (during which party control was united Republican for three of four years), major tax cut legislation fulfilled at least partially a number of Republican pledges. A significant social policy enactment was the creation of a new Medicare prescription drug benefit (pledged in the Democratic, though not the Republican, platform). The No Child Left Behind Act was a huge education reform that blended many of both parties' 2000 pledges (and there was significant overlap between them). The second G. W. Bush term (which had first united and then divided government) resulted in failure for Bush's two major domestic initiatives, privatization of Social Security and immigration reform. On the other hand, a number of Mayhew's important laws for the period clearly relate to pledges of both parties.

Turning to the Obama years, Mayhew's data show that the first two years of the first Obama term (united Democratic control) were legislatively quite productive and primarily reflected Democratic initiatives. The Affordable Care Act fulfilled a number of Democratic pledges, though also some of the Republicans'. The stimulus package of 2009 and financial services regulation of 2010 reflected mainly Democratic priorities. The take-over of the House by the Republicans in 2010 brought a huge spike in interchamber polarization, and it is perhaps not surprising that Mayhew finds only three important laws for 2011 and four for 2012.¹⁴ Looking at the first Obama term as a whole, however, it is quite possible that the productivity of the first two years outweighs the deadlock of the next two in terms of pledge fulfillment. The second Obama term likely produced lower pledge fulfillment for both parties, given divided government throughout and extremely high interchamber polarization in the first two years. Failure to enact immigration reform, in spite of both parties' pledges in their platforms and campaigns, is one prominent example of gridlock. However, this review of pledges and policies over time has shown that it is common for major policy reform (e.g., welfare and health care reform) to be on the agenda during multiple administrations before it is enacted.

6.6. Conclusions

We have shown, first, that both parties usually fulfill a majority of their pledges, and this is true whether broadly or narrowly defined pledges are

considered. Second, some evidence suggests that total party control of institutions *does* matter for pledge fulfillment—the winning party tends to be the one that controls more institutions—although Republican 1996 pledges are an exception for a number of reasons.

In addition, it is clear that parties frequently pledge and carry out quite substantial policy change. The platforms are not limited to trivial or “doable” actions. How does this system’s performance compare to a typical parliamentary system? Figure 4.1 showed that the fulfillment rate for the president’s party in the US is on the low side relative to other single-party governments and on the high side for coalition governments. To be more specific, the fulfillment rate for single-party parliamentary governments in this book is 72 percent, for coalition governments 54 percent, and for the US president’s party (narrowly defined pledges) 62 percent. There is also a difference between the US and parliamentary systems in terms of opposition party performance: US nonpresidential parties fulfill about 50 percent of their narrowly defined pledges, compared to about 28 and 39 percent for parliamentary single-party and coalition governments, respectively. Thus, the US system in this period of mostly divided government fulfilled more of a balance of both parties’ pledges than did single-party parliamentary systems; the balance is similar to that of coalition governments, but overall fulfillment tends to be higher in the US. The US system has elements of both majoritarian and consensus-style systems, as defined by Lijphart (2012); this study of pledge fulfillment suggests that, at least during this period, when it comes to performance the results are consensus oriented.

While we have not attempted to systematically measure the degree to which important policy change is *not* pledged, our brief overview of Mayhew’s significant social and economic legislation during the period does turn up a number of cases of significant changes that were not pledged and were not always due to unexpected events or changing conditions. Given that members of Congress, particularly committee chairs, are independent policy entrepreneurs and agenda setters to a greater degree than in most parliamentary systems, it might be expected that such instances would be more common in the US. Nevertheless, the norm is for significant policy change to be preceded by platform pledges.

NOTES

1. *Current* executive branch officials are forbidden by law to participate formally in partisan or campaign work under the Federal Hatch Act. Presidential advisers often take leaves of absence or resign their posts in order to work on presidential campaigns.

2. Filibusters are not allowed during the budget process, for ratifying treaties, or (effective only after the period analyzed in this chapter) for confirmation of presidential nominees.

3. Formerly the Manifesto Project was known as the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). See chapter 1, note 1.

4. Poole and Rosenthal's DW-Nominate score does make statistical adjustments in the data to allow for valid comparisons of congressional records over time; Ensley, Tofias, and Marchi (2014) argue that the adjustments are inadequate and propose alternative measures, which lead to somewhat different results. However, neither measure gets at how *party agendas* may have changed over time; both measures show the same upward trend—very unlike the platform-based measures.

5. The assertion that divided government causes gridlock has been systematically tested by a number of scholars. Mayhew (1991) finds that an almost equal number of “significant” laws are passed under both united and divided government. His results have been challenged by a number of scholars who find that divided government does inhibit productivity (Kelly 1993; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Binder 1999; Jones 2001; Coleman 1999).

6. The term *misery index* was coined by the American economist Arthur Okun, who chaired the Council of Economic Advisors under President Lyndon Johnson. The term came into prominence in the 1970s when the US was in the grip of “stagflation” (simultaneous high inflation and high unemployment).

7. It is worth noting that there might well be reason to expect somewhat different fulfillment patterns for foreign compared to domestic policy, for two reasons. First, the president is generally a dominant actor in foreign policy, and so we might expect that the president's party would tend to have higher pledge fulfillment in foreign, relative to domestic, policy. Second, though, it is also the case that perhaps more than domestic policy, foreign policy is influenced by external actors and events. This might lead us to expect *lower* fulfillment rates for foreign, as compare to domestic, policy pledges.

8. A note about the timing of fulfillment is in order. Since the president (as well as the Congress elected at the same time) doesn't take office until January following the November elections, “lame duck” presidents and Congresses continue in office until then (although there is generally a long holiday break). This means that it is possible that pledges may be met *after* a presidential election is held. For example, 1996 pledges could be fulfilled at any time from 1997 to 2000, even after the 2000 election, because incumbency doesn't change until 2001.

9. **Economic policy** includes pledges related to outcomes such as inflation and so on; general spending (spending in specific areas would fall in the relevant subject category); taxes (some taxes for specific purposes are included in the relevant subject area); regulation/deregulation; economic development (pledges to promote growth, including in particular regions or sectors); some trade policy (pledges that can be enacted legislatively); infrastructure (including transportation); and industrial relations or labor policy (that is, policies on trade unions, wages, employee rights, and so on, other than social benefits counted under social welfare policy).

Social welfare policy includes pledges related to programs designed to improve the health, income, and welfare of the population (excluding education, which is considered a separate area). Thus, pledges included Social Security; policies related

to private pensions, health care, housing, child and family benefits/leave; programs to alleviate poverty and address job training and unemployment compensation.

Natural resources policy includes pledges related to pollution control, land use and planning, agricultural policy, energy policy, fishing policy, water policy, and forestry. **Civil rights/liberties policy** includes pledges related to policies designed to promote the rights and interests of racial minorities, women, the handicapped, gays, and other minority groups, including immigrants. Also included are pledges pertaining to rights of the accused, free speech/press, and privacy.

Crime policy and **Education policy** are self-explanatory.

“Other” policy pledges are related to the democratic process or the functioning or organization of government. Examples include pledges concerned with central/regional/local government relations, reorganization of government, and campaign financing.

10. As an explanation for the breaking of multiple Democratic economic pledges, Hacker and Pierson (2010) emphasize the increase in this period of business lobbying and fundraising, and they attribute losses for traditional liberals on labor law, taxes, and consumer protection to this.

11. Pierson (1994, 16) cites the indexing of taxes as an important example of what he calls “systemic retrenchment”: retrenchment of the state that does more than cut a particular tax or program but rather restructures policy in such a way that all future policies exhibit retrenchment.

12. Enterprise zones are urban areas in which taxes and regulations are reduced to encourage development.

13. Mayhew’s continually updated data on important laws may be found at <http://campuspress.yale.edu/davidmayhew/datasets-divided-we-govern/>

14. Mayhew notes that the increased use of huge omnibus bills makes a count of numbers of laws problematic, but he also argues that these years clearly lacked productivity. <http://campuspress.yale.edu/davidmayhew/files/2015/05/dataset-DWG-laws-2013-14.pdf>

SEVEN

Canada

François Pétry and Dominic Duval

7.1. Introduction

Previous research shows that a large majority of Canadian manifesto pledges are usually fulfilled. Rallings (1987) found that Canadian parties kept 72 percent of their campaign promises between 1945 and 1979, and Monière (1988) found that the Progressive-Conservative government of Brian Mulroney kept 74 percent of its promises between 1984 and 1988.¹ These results date back several decades and/or are not based on the comparative coding used in this book. There is a need for an up-to-date assessment given the recent transformation of the Canadian party system (Bittner and Koop 2013), including the coming to power of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) in 2006. The CPC was created in 2003 with the aim of replacing the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) in power, reversing several Liberal policies and, more generally, setting a new Conservative political agenda for Canada.

This chapter looks at pledge fulfillment by the four Liberal governments between 1993 and 2006 and by the three Conservative governments between 2006 and 2015. The first three governments in our sample (Jean Chrétien, 1993–2004) were majority governments and so was the third Harper government elected in 2011, while the three governments in between (Paul Martin, 2004–6, and Stephen Harper, 2006–8 and 2008–11) were minority governments. We first investigate whether the performance

of majority governments has differed from that of minority governments in terms of pledge fulfillment. The result is negative. There is no evidence that minority governments fulfill fewer pledges while they are in power. We then examine whether there are differences in the types of election pledges fulfilled by the Liberals and Conservatives. The answer is a qualified yes. Faithful to their center-right ideology, the Conservatives fulfilled more pledges to contract government spending and/or cut taxes than the Liberals did. In line with previous evidence that pledge fulfillment is facilitated by interparty agreement (Thomson et al. 2017), we also examine whether governing party pledges in agreement with pledges by the opposition are more likely to be fulfilled in Canada. We also look at possible differences in the way interparty agreement affects pledge fulfillment by the Liberals and Conservatives. We find little evidence that interparty agreement influences pledge fulfillment in Canada. Finally, in line with previous findings that governments' capacity to fulfill pledges varies with a change in the level of financial resources available to them (Praprotnik 2017b; Thomson et al. 2017; Pétry, Duval, and Birch 2018), we examine the extent to which pledge fulfillment is affected by changes in the budget balance. We find that a positive (negative) budget balance increases (decreases) the likelihood of pledge fulfillment.

7.2. Elections, Parties, Manifestos, and Governments in Canada

Canada has a parliamentary federal system. At the national level, the government uses the Westminster model: power resides mainly in the lower house, the House of Commons, and strict party discipline facilitates a powerful executive. The electoral system is single-member district plurality. Due to this system, since the creation of the federation, power at the national level has alternated between two dominant parties—specifically, a center-left Liberal Party and, on the right, a Conservative Party that has gone through several iterations in terms of name and philosophy. At the same time, since early in the federation, third parties (and more recently fourth and fifth parties) have won seats at the national level and had significant influence at the provincial level. The existence of a powerful third party has frequently prevented the plurality winner from obtaining a majority in national elections. Of the 22 governments formed in Canada from 1945 to 2011, 10 have been minority governments. All these governments have been single-party governments. Recent minority governments

have not relied on formal agreements with opposition parties to govern, passing legislation with the support of one or another opposition party on a bill-by-bill basis.

The CPC was created in 2003 by the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance Party (formerly the Reform Party), which had itself split from the Progressive Conservatives in 1993. The split was triggered by Conservative politicians from Ontario and western Canada who had grown dissatisfied with the moderate ideology of the Progressive Conservatives and wanted a return to a true center-right ideology that coincided better with what they claimed was the new center of political gravity in Canada.

The LPC has dominated federal politics for much of Canada's history, holding power for almost 70 years in the twentieth century. The Liberals have been referred to as Canada's "natural governing party." But this description may no longer be accurate. In fact, there were only two Liberals out of the four most recent Canadian prime ministers who were reelected (Pierre E. Trudeau and Jean Chrétien). The other two were Brian Mulroney of the Progressive Conservative Party and Stephen Harper of the Conservative Party. The ideology of the Liberals has been characterized as center-left, although it may be more accurate to describe it as a catchall or "brokerage" party, intent on maximizing its appeal to the electorate by adopting popular policies, even if this means blurring its ideology.

The New Democratic Party (NDP) was born in 1961 of the merger of the Canadian Labour Congress and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. It always came in third in federal elections behind the Conservatives and Liberals, but in 2011 it won more seats than the Liberals and became the official opposition. The NDP is an ideological party of the left (it is a member of the Socialist International), although, judging by the content of its recent election manifestos, some observers have raised the possibility that its ideology is shifting toward the center of the political spectrum (Bittner and Koop 2013; Pétry 2014a).

The remaining parties are the Bloc Québécois (BQ), a regional party that runs candidates only in Québec on a single-issue program of defending the interests of that province in Ottawa while waiting for Québec's independence, and the Greens. The BQ and the Greens are not analyzed here. The Liberals and Conservatives are the main cast of characters in this chapter, with the NDP analyzed only to measure the extent to which it agreed with the party in power.

Canadian parties present their election manifestos in the form of comprehensive single-policy documents containing large numbers of specific

promises. This was not always the case. The party manifestos of the past contained few substantive promises. Party planks were often presented in separate pamphlets; it was rare to have an entire manifesto released at once. The change in manifesto format coincided with the Red Book manifesto of 1993, officially titled *Creating Opportunities: The Liberal Plan for Canada*, which led the Liberals to electoral victory. The Red Book was unusual in its length—112 pages—and in how specific it was; it also gave costs for each promise. This was intended to signal that after being in opposition for almost a decade the Liberal Party had a plan for governing in a new era. The Red Book set a new standard for election manifestos. Since then, party manifestos of all the parties, not just the Liberals, have been expected to present comprehensive manifestos containing many substantive promises.

By providing detailed plans for governing that are publicized widely during election campaigns, the manifestos of the post-Red Book era have helped reinforce the capacity of governments to translate their election commitments into policy actions (Flynn 2011). To show that they took their campaign promises seriously, the Chrétien Liberals issued a report card in 1996 to check on whether they had kept their Red Book promises. More recently, Prime Minister Stephen Harper personally reminded his cabinet ministers of campaign promises in his mandate letters to them, and he made sure that they worked effectively to fulfill the party's election pledges.

7.3. Research Design

As with the rest of the chapters in this book, we focus on pledges contained in officially sanctioned party manifestos put out during election campaigns. However, we differ somewhat from most of the other chapters in our first step of identifying election pledges. Our research project stems from the tradition of manifesto research that gives focus to so-called quasi sentences as a unit of analysis of the policy content of party manifestos (see the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) Database at <http://manifesto-project.wzb.eu>). The first stage in our analysis consists of dividing election manifestos into distinct statements identical, in virtually all cases, to the CMP “quasi sentences.”² Thereafter, in a second step, we decide whether the statement is an election pledge or not. In this second step of the analysis, our definition of election pledge follows the narrow operationalization of an election pledge as described in chapter 3. Here we analyze pledges across all policy areas. The final stage divides pledges included in the analy-

sis into “pledges fulfilled,” “pledges not fulfilled,” and “pledges partially fulfilled.” Whether election pledges have been fulfilled is assessed based on content analysis of government press releases, laws and regulations, throne and budget speeches, and annual reports and budget plans from government ministries and agencies.

Pledges were classified and matched with government actions by teams of trained research assistants. Reliability tests were conducted on the identification of pledges as opposed to rhetorical statements, and on the classification of pledges as “fulfilled” or “not fulfilled.” Coders agreed 95 percent of the time on the identification of pledges, and 87 percent of the time on which pledges were “fully,” “partially,” or “not” fulfilled. Cases in which coders initially disagreed were reconciled after a second round of coding. A few cases that remained unresolved after this second round were resolved with the help of experts.³

7.4. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Canada

Out of the 3,955 quasi sentences in the manifestos in our sample, 828 (21 percent) qualified as pledges. We counted 164, 58, 83, and 87 pledges in the Liberal manifestos of 1993, 1997, 2000, and 2004, respectively. These pledges represent 13 percent on average of the total number of quasi sentences in these manifestos. There were 192, 101, and 143 pledges in the 2006, 2008, and 2011 Conservative manifestos, respectively. These represent 24 percent on average of the total number of statements in these manifestos. The Conservative manifestos of 2006, 2008, and 2011 contain significantly more pledges on average than the Liberal manifestos of 1993, 1997, 2000, and 2004 do. We should not read too much into this, however, as the number of pledges has increased as well in recent NDP and LPC manifestos, a trend that is consistent with the Swedish case, where all parties seem to have made more pledges over time (Naurin 2014a).

Table 7.1 displays the rates of pledge fulfillment for each governing party between 1993 and 2011. The data indicate that governing parties in Canada continue to fulfill at least partially most of their pledges, as they did in the past. The average proportion between 1993 and 2011 (68 percent) is comparable to the proportions found by Rallings (1987), Monière (1988), and Flynn (2011) for Canadian governments of the past. The rate of fulfillment has varied between a low of 53 percent (1993) and a high of 77 percent (2000) for the governing Liberals and between a low of 62 percent (2008) and a high of 84 percent (2011) for the governing Conservatives.

TABLE 7.1. Pledge fulfillment in Canada

	Chrétien I Liberal	Chrétien II Liberal	Chrétien III Liberal	Martin Liberal	Harper I Conservative	Harper II Conservative	Harper III Conservative	All
	Nov. 1993– May 1997	June 1997– Nov. 2000	Dec. 2000– June 2004	July 2004– Dec. 2005	Feb. 2006– Sept. 2008	Nov. 2008– May 2011	June 2011– Sept. 2015	1993–2015
Fulfillment	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>	% <i>n</i>
Fully	37 61	45 26	76 1	64 8	60 8	53 9	77 7	59 10
Partially	16 26	21 12	1 1	7 72	15 68	54 63	110 84	485 69
<i>At least</i>	53	66	77	63	130	62	120	565
<i>partially</i>								
Not	47	34	23	28	32	38	16	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	164	58	83	87	192	101	143	828

The low rate for the Liberals in 1993 is an outlier that will be explained later in the chapter.

The data in table 7.1 do not support the expectation that minority governments fulfill fewer pledges than majority governments do. The minority governments elected in 2004, 2006, and 2008 fulfilled 67 percent of their pledges on average, a percentage that is not statistically different from the 69 percent of pledges fulfilled on average by the majority governments elected in 1993, 1997, 2000, and 2011. The Canadian data support the claim that minority governments are just as effective policymakers as majority governments are (Strøm 1990; Godbout and Høyland 2011). In fact, the evidence shows that Canadian minority governments are capable of fulfilling as many (if not more) pledges as majority governments do *while they last*. The majority Liberal government elected in 2000 fulfilled one and a half pledges per month on average (60 pledges over 40 months), while the minority Liberal government elected in 2004 fulfilled four pledges per month on average (60 pledges over 14 months). The minority Conservative government elected in 2006 fulfilled five pledges per month on average (143 pledges over 28 months), and the minority Conservative government elected in 2008 fulfilled two pledges per month on average (62 pledges over 29 months).⁴ Although there is some variation from one government to the next, recent Canadian minority governments have fulfilled more, not fewer, pledges per month than did the majority government elected in 2000.⁵ The paradox can be explained by the fact that the rate of pledge fulfillment is not uniform throughout a government mandate. After an initial period of sustained pledge fulfillment, diminishing returns start to take hold, provoking a marked decrease in the marginal rate of fulfillment (Pétry and Duval 2015; Pétry and Birch 2016; Duval and Pétry 2018). As we reach a government's second anniversary, which is the average duration of minority governments, the flow in the rate of fulfillment of election promises that have not yet been kept starts to decrease precipitously, and by the third anniversary it is reduced to a trickle.

7.5. Type of Pledge

Party pledges are classified according to whether they promise to keep the status quo or initiate a policy change. Change-oriented pledges are further subdivided into pledges that “expand” or “contract” the size of government and pledges to make “other changes” not associated with government spending or taxation. Table 7.2 presents the number of pledges ful-

TABLE 7.2. Pledge fulfilment by pledge type

	Chrétien 1 Liberal		Chrétien 2 Liberal		Chrétien 3 Liberal		Martin Liberal		Harper 1 Conservative		Harper 2 Conservative		Harper 3 Conservative		All	
	Nov. 1993–May 1997	%	June 1997–Nov. 2000	%	Dec. 2000–June 2004	%	July 2004–Dec. 2005	%	Feb. 2006–Sept. 2008	%	Nov. 2008–May 2011	%	June 2011–Sept. 2015	%	1993–2015	%
Type	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Status quo	50	6 (12)	50	1 (2)	73	8 (11)	100	2 (2)	67	8 (12)	64	7 (11)	86	6 (7)	67	38(57)
Expand	54	21 (39)	65	22 (34)	77	41 (53)	74	14 (19)	69	25 (36)	61	19 (31)	85	35 (41)	70	177 (253)
Contract	56	9 (16)	0	0	50	1 (2)	0	0	75	3 (4)	50	1 (2)	83	5 (6)	63	19 (30)
Other change	53	51 (97)	68	15 (22)	82	14 (17)	72	47 (65)	67	94 (140)	63	36 (57)	83	74 (89)	68	331 (488)
Total pledges	53	87 (164)	66	38 (58)	77	64 (83)	72	63 (87)	68	130 (192)	62	63 (101)	84	120 (143)	68	565 (828)

% = percentage of pledges fulfilled in each category; *n* = number of pledges fulfilled in each category (with total number of pledges in each category in parentheses)

filled (in percentage of the total number of pledges) by each successive government in each category. Looking at the last column of table 7.2 we see that 67 percent (38 out of 57) status quo pledges were fulfilled. Of the pledges to expand public spending, to contract public spending, and to make other changes, 70, 63, and 68 percent, respectively, were fulfilled. Canadian pledges to maintain the status quo are not more likely to be fulfilled than average.⁶ In any case, status quo pledges have little impact on overall pledge fulfillment given their small number.

Half the pledges fulfilled by the Liberals between 1993 and 2006 fall in the “other change” category compared to 40 percent falling in the “expand spending” category (and less than 10 percent falling in the “contract spending” category). In contrast, 65 percent of the pledges fulfilled by the Conservatives between 2006 and 2015 fall in the “other change” category compared to 26 percent falling in the “expand spending” category (and 9 percent falling in the “contract spending” category). The Conservatives fulfilled particularly high proportions of pledges in the “other change” category during their first and third mandates. This reflects the “New Conservative Agenda” of the party, centered on an ambitious program to undo Liberal policies of the past and replace them with right-wing policies intended to “stand up for Canada.” “Stand up for Canada” was the title of the Conservatives’ 2006 election manifesto. Its main priorities in domains not involving government spending and taxation were changing the rules of administrative accountability, cracking down on violent crime, and reforming health care.

The data summarized in table 7.2 indicate that the Liberal Party did not make and subsequently fulfill larger percentages of expansionary pledges than the Conservative Party did. Neither did the Conservative Party make and subsequently fulfill large percentages of pledges to contract spending and/or cut taxes. This finding is surprising in light of the ideological difference between the Liberals and Conservatives. The CPC is positioned to the right of the LPC on left-right scales based both on expert surveys and on the CMP coding of party manifestos.⁷ It also contradicts the hypotheses in chapter 3 in this volume linking the type of pledges to party ideology. Note, however, that the finding is very much dependent on whether or not we include the 1993 Liberals in the analysis. If we choose to exclude the 1993 Liberals from the calculation, an outlier by many standards, then the Conservatives appear to make and fulfill significantly more pledges to contract spending on average.

7.6. Interparty Agreement

Another characteristic that might affect pledge fulfillment is whether a pledge by the governing party is in agreement with a least one opposition party, the expectation being that a pledge in agreement with the opposition is more likely to be fulfilled. To test this expectation, table 7.3 displays the percentage of pledges fulfilled by each successive government depending on whether they agree, disagree, or are unrelated to the pledges of the parties in opposition. We use the operationalization of agreement/disagreement presented in chapter 3. Party A's pledge is in agreement with a pledge by party B if the complete fulfillment of party B's pledge means that A's is at least partially fulfilled. Party A's pledge is in disagreement with a pledge by party B if the complete fulfillment of party B's pledge means by definition that party A's pledge is not fulfilled. Pledges that neither agree nor disagree are unrelated. Looking at the first column of table 7.3, we see that out of the 164 pledges in the 1993 Liberal manifesto, 11 agreed, one directly disagreed, and 152 were unrelated to pledges by the Progressive Conservatives. The one Liberal pledge in disagreement was fulfilled (100 percent fulfillment rate), 8 of the 11 pledges in agreement were fulfilled (73 percent), and so were 78 of the 152 unrelated pledges (51 percent). Of the same 164 pledges in the 1993 Liberal manifesto, 9 agreed with, none directly disagreed with, and 155 were unrelated to pledges by the Progressive Conservatives. Seven of the 9 pledges in agreement (86 percent) and 80 of the 155 unrelated pledges (52 percent) were fulfilled.

The overwhelming majority of pledges written in the Liberal manifesto of 1993 were unrelated to the pledges found in the manifestos of the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP in that election. Of the few pledges in agreement with opposition pledges in 1993, 75 percent were fulfilled. This is a significantly higher percentage than the percentage of Liberal pledges unrelated to opposition pledges that were fulfilled, 51 percent. The data display similar patterns for Liberal pledges in 1997, 2000, and in 2004. Overall, the average rate of fulfillment of Liberal pledges is 59 percent for pledges unrelated to opposition pledges and 82 percent for pledges in agreement with opposition pledges.

For the Conservative governments, most of the CPC's manifesto pledges were also unrelated to pledges made by opposition parties. However, unlike the Liberal governments, Conservative governments were as likely to fulfill pledges that were in agreement with and those that were unrelated to opposition pledges. More precisely, the average rate of fulfillment was 74 percent for unrelated pledges and 77 percent for pledges in

TABLE 7.3. Pledge fulfillment by interparty agreement between the governing party and opposition parties

	Chrétien I Liberal		Chrétien II Liberal		Chrétien III Liberal		Martin Liberal		Harper I Conservative		Harper II Conservative		Harper III Conservative	
Governing party → Opposition party ↓	Nov. 1993– May 1997	June 1997– Nov. 2000	Dec. 2000– June 2004	July 2004– Dec. 2005	Feb. 2006– Sept. 2008	Nov. 2008– May 2011	June 2011– Sept. 2015							
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Agree with Conservatives†	73	8 (11)	100	2 (2)	82	18 (22)	100	6 (6)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unrelated to Conservatives	51	78 (152)	64	35 (55)	75	45 (60)	70	57 (81)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Disagree with Conservatives	100	1 (1)	100	1 (1)	100	1 (1)	—	0 (0)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total Conservative	53	87 (164)	66	38 (58)	77	64 (83)	72	63 (87)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Agree with NDP	78	7 (9)	86	6 (7)	82	27 (33)	80	8 (10)	67	6 (9)	100	1 (1)	—	0 (0)
Unrelated to NDP	52	80 (155)	63	32 (51)	73	36 (49)	71	54 (76)	64	122 (181)	62	61 (98)	84	119 (141)
Disagree with NDP	—	0 (0)	—	0 (0)	100	1 (1)	100	1 (1)	100	2 (2)	50	1 (2)	50	1 (2)
Total NDP	53	87 (164)	66	38 (58)	77	64 (83)	72	63 (87)	68	130 (192)	63	63 (101)	84	120 (143)
Agree with Liberals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	63	5 (8)	100	2 (2)	100	3 (3)
Unrelated to Liberals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	67	124 (183)	62	61 (99)	84	115 (137)
Disagree with Liberals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	1 (1)	—	0 (0)	67	2 (3)
Total Liberal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	68	130 (192)	63	63 (101)	84	120 (143)

% = Percentage of pledges fulfilled in each category; *n* = number of pledges *fulfilled* in each category (with total number of pledges in each category in parentheses). Thus, of the 11 Liberal pledges of the Chrétien I period that agreed with the Conservatives, eight, or 73%, were fulfilled.

Note: The table shows governing party pledges that agree, disagree, or are unrelated to the main opposition party and the NDP, except for the Harper 3 years, during which the NDP was the main opposition party.

†Progressive Conservative before 2004.

agreement with pledges by the opposition. Conservatives' pledges were slightly more likely to be fulfilled if they were in agreement with opposition pledges, but the difference is not statistically significant.

7.7. Financial Resources

Looking at the variation in pledge fulfillment across successive governments, there is a noticeable drop in the average rate of pledge fulfillment

by the Conservatives between 2006 and 2008 (from 71 to 62 percent). The drop is especially pronounced in the “expand spending” category (from 96 to 67 percent), but it is observed in all pledge categories. Among the better-known pledges that the minority government of Stephen Harper failed to fulfill after the 2008 election were several new government spending projects, the most expensive one being the plan to purchase F-35 jet fighters. The evidence shows that the unusually low percentage of pledges fulfilled by the Conservatives after the 2008 election is due in part to the financial meltdown of 2008, which provoked very severe and unexpected budget deficits in fiscal years 2009–10 and 2010–11, thereby forcing the Harper government to renege on several promises (Pétry and Duval 2015, Pétry and Birch 2016).⁸

The same unfavorable budget balance situation that explains the mediocre pledge fulfillment performance of the 2008 Harper government also explains the unusually low rate of pledge fulfillment by the first Chrétien government, elected in 1993. The recession of the early 1990s led to a worsening of the budget balance, which forced the Chrétien Liberals to renege on the fulfillment of several key promises in their Red Book election program to expand social programs such as child care and social security (Prince 2006). By contrast, the growing yearly budget surpluses of the early 2000s enabled the third Chrétien government and the Martin government to enact their policy proposals more freely. The positive correlation coefficient (0.47) between the average budget balance during the first two years and the percentage of pledge fulfillment of each government in our sample serves as a reminder of the powerful impact of the budget balance on the capacity of governments to fulfill campaign promises.⁹

7.8. Conclusion

Despite the fact that a majority of Canadian citizens believe that their political leaders do not try to keep their election promises (Pétry 2014b), the data indicate that the Liberal and Conservative governments of the period 1993–2015 kept 68 percent of their campaign pledges on average. This is in line with past studies, which find equally high levels of consistency between Canadian party promises and subsequent government actions. Consistent with the hypothesis in chapter 4 of this volume, Canada’s above-average performance in promise keeping is explained primarily by the fact that Canadian governments are always single-party executives. Single-party executives are better equipped than coalitions or divided gov-

ernments to implement specific agendas based on a set of coherent policy ideas, and they can better manipulate the political process to fulfill their campaign promises (Royed 1996; Thomson et al. 2017). One important advantage of single-party executives in this respect is their capacity to centralize power in the hands of the party leader/prime minister (Savoie 2003). The centralization of power in the hands of recent Canadian party leaders has allowed them to mobilize effectively the resources they needed to place campaign promises and their eventual fulfillment at center stage of their leadership.

In the introduction to this chapter we asked whether minority governments have fulfilled as many pledges as majority governments have. Although the proportion of pledges fulfilled by the three minority governments in our sample appears smaller than the proportion of pledges fulfilled by the majority government, the difference is too small to be statistically significant. Furthermore, the relevant factor to consider here is the time each government had to fulfill its campaign pledges before the next election. Judging by this standard, it appears that the reason why the four majority governments in the Canadian sample fulfilled more pledges is that they lasted longer than the minority governments.

Do the Conservatives differ from the Liberals in the types of pledges they propose and subsequently fulfill? Looking first at the pledges proposed in party manifestos, the data show that both Liberal and Conservative manifestos include many more pledges to change policy than to keep the status quo in their manifestos. The parties differ somewhat as to the type of change they promise in their manifestos. Consistent with the hypotheses in chapter 3 of this volume, the Liberals between 1993 and 2006 devoted more manifesto space to expansionary pledges (37 percent) than the Conservatives did in their manifestos between 2006 and 2015 (25 percent), while the Conservatives devoted much more manifesto space to “other changes” (66 percent) than the Liberals did in their manifestos (34 percent). Liberals and Conservatives have devoted roughly equal manifesto space to tax-cutting pledges.

When we examine what types of pledges are more likely to be fulfilled by which party, we find little difference between the parties. The Liberals are as likely as the Conservatives to make pledges to contract public spending, and the Conservatives are as likely as the Liberals to make pledges to expand public spending. Note, however, that almost all the Liberal pledges to contract spending are concentrated in one manifesto, the Liberal Red Book of 1993. When the data from the 1993 manifesto are deleted from calculation, it appears that the Liberals fulfilled considerably fewer pledges

to contract spending than the Conservatives did. This is in line with the expectation that Liberals and Conservatives fulfill pledges differently and in accordance with their respective left-right ideological positioning. In addition, the Conservatives fulfilled substantially more pledges to change policies unrelated to public spending and taxation than the Liberals did, even though they were not always successful in fulfilling them.

Both Liberal and Conservative pledges are more likely to be fulfilled if they are in agreement than if they are unrelated to opposition pledges. However, the difference in percentages is much more noticeable for the Liberals than for the Conservatives. Last but not least, we find that the availability of greater financial resources (measured by positive budget balances) enables parties to fulfill more of their campaign pledges.

NOTES

1. Flynn (2011) finds a 75 percent rate of fulfillment between 1984 and 2008 over a reduced set of Canadian party pledges.

2. The only exceptions are when a pledge occupies more than one quasi sentence. We did not encounter cases in which one quasi sentence included more than one pledge in this study.

3. The pledge data for this chapter are posted in the Polimeter section of the Poltext website (Poltext: <https://www.poltext.org/en/home>). The Polimeter also provides an up-to date tally of pledge fulfillment by the current governments in Canada and in Québec.

4. Federal elections were held at least once every five years until 2007 when the Harper government passed an amendment to the Canada Elections Act instituting fixed election dates every four years. The amendment fulfilled the letter of a promise in the 2006 Conservative manifesto. However, the spirit of the promise was broken when Stephen Harper called a snap election in 2008.

5. The observation that minority governments can be as effective as majority governments in fulfilling pledges while they last is not unique to Canada. See Artés and Bustos (2008) and Pétry, Duval, and Birch (2018) for similar findings in Spain and in Québec, respectively.

6. Removing the data for 1993 from the calculation increases the rate of fulfillment of status quo pledges to 71 percent, no higher than the percentage of fulfilled pledges to expand government spending and/or cut taxes.

7. Two expert surveys conducted in 2000 (Laver and Benoit 2006) and 2008 (Pétry, Collette, and Klingemann 2012) place the Conservatives at +33 and +60, respectively, on a left-right standardized scale where +100 represents the Extreme Right and -100 represents the Extreme Left. The surveys place the Liberals at +6 both times and the NDP at -59 and -42, respectively. Using the same metrics, the CMP/MARPOR left-right scale places the Conservatives at +18, the Liberals at -12, and the NDP at -23 on average over the period 2000–2011 (Pétry 2014a).

8. Another factor at the source of the low percentage of pledges fulfilled by the 2008 Harper government was the hyperpartisanship in Parliament, which made

it difficult to find support for its legislative agenda among opposition benches. It has been claimed that the hyperpartisan parliamentary environment was largely of Prime Minister Harper's own making (Martin 2010; Wells 2014). The Conservatives' first act after winning the 2008 election was to eliminate the government subsidy to political parties, a measure intended to cripple their opponents' party machines. The government prorogued Parliament twice during the period before it was toppled by a no-confidence vote in March 2011.

9. This is to take into account the fact that most pledges have been fulfilled at least in part by the end of the mandate's second year.

EIGHT

Spain

Joaquín Artés

8.1. Introduction

The Spanish political and economic situation has attracted much attention over the years because of the poor economic performance of the country during the financial crisis, political instability due to a rise in nationalism in some regions, and recurrent corruption scandals among politicians in all levels of the administration. All these negative economic and political outcomes have greatly affected the popularity of political parties and have generated increasing distrust in the political process among Spanish people. The barometer published by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) shows that by the end of 2016 more than 66 percent of Spanish people considered the political situation bad or very bad. This number was even higher during the peak of the economic crisis in 2012 (75 percent). It was twice as high as at the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 and 15 points higher than at the end of the previous economic crisis in 1996.

A possible explanation for Spanish citizens' distrust is that bad economic times in combination with frequent minority governments could dampen the capacity of politicians to enact policies.¹ This chapter contributes empirical background to such an unexplored hypothesis by analyzing the fulfillment of the electoral pledges of three Spanish parties during the four electoral cycles that took place between 1989 and 2004.

Spain is among the youngest democracies of the countries included in

this book. The first general elections in Spain took place in 1977. Since then, the party system evolved into a combination of imperfect bipartisanship at the national level with two main parties and the presence of strong regional parties in areas such as Catalonia and the Basque country. The two main parties at the national level are the left-wing Spanish Socialist Worker's Party *Obrero Español* (PSOE) and the right-wing People's Party (PP).² These two parties share approximately 80 percent of the votes across the elections and constituencies analyzed in this study and have alternated in government since the victory of the PSOE in 1983.³

There are 350 seats in the Spanish parliament. Seats are allocated following the D'Hondt rule in each district. There are 52 electoral districts (50 provinces and 2 autonomous cities). Each of the 50 provinces receives at least two representatives. The African cities of Ceuta and Melilla receive one representative each. Each of the remaining 248 seats is apportioned to each province according to population. Due to this system, rural areas with small populations are overrepresented while populated areas like Madrid or Barcelona are underrepresented. This feature, combined with the D'Hondt rule favoring large parties in each district, has led regionally concentrated parties to obtain a considerable share of seats in the national parliament. As a result, the nationalist parties have been key players in the formation of the government when neither of the two main parties obtained an absolute majority of the seats. Several minority governments formed in the last two decades have been sustained with the help of the regional nationalist parties, particularly the Catalan nationalist party *Convergence and Union* (CiU).⁴

This chapter covers four elections that took place under a variety of government types and economic situations: (1) a left-wing single-party majority government (from 1989 to 1993), (2) a left-wing-single party minority government that was supported in the parliament by the Catalan nationalists of CiU (from 1993 to 1996), (3) a conservative single-party minority government that was also supported in the parliament by the Catalan nationalists of CiU (from 1996 to 2000), and (4) a conservative single-party majority government (from 2000 to 2004).

The time period studied covers a period of economic crisis from 1992 to 1996 and two periods of economic growth before and after the crisis. The period chosen allows us to study the differences in fulfillment between single-party majority governments and minority governments, the gains in terms of program fulfillment for the parliamentary partner of the two minority governments, and the effects of government types on the fulfillment rates of parties in opposition.

The main finding of this chapter is that, despite Spanish people's high levels of distrust of their politicians, the Spanish political system has been able to produce fulfillment results that are comparable, if not higher, than those of other political systems analyzed in this book. The two main Spanish parties, when in government, obtained fulfillment rates close or above 70 percent regardless of whether they enjoyed a majority or a minority government. The chapter thereby illustrates the result described in chapter 4—that single-party minority governments are surprisingly efficient forms of government. It is also interesting that when in opposition the two main parties obtained higher fulfillment rates during the minority government periods than during the absolute majority periods. Thus, pledge fulfillment is higher for both opposition and government parties during single-party minority governments. In addition, this study shows that the minority governments greatly increased the fulfillment rates of the parliamentary partner of the party in government regardless of the ideology of the main party.

8.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Spain

Our sample covers the four elections that took place in 1989, 1993, 1996, and 2000. The two main Spanish parties, the left-leaning PSOE and the conservative PP, alternated in government during this period. Other important actors of Spanish politics are United Left (IU), CiU, and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).⁵ The United Left is situated to the left of PSOE on the left-right scale. The Convergence and Union is a Catalan nationalist party, and PNV is a Basque conservative nationalist party. Both nationalist parties are considered to be centrally located between PSOE and PP on the left-right scale although closer to PP. These three parties are crucial actors when the winner of the election does not obtain an absolute majority of the seats, as in 1993 and 1996.

The Spanish Socialist Worker's Party held office during the first two electoral cycles analyzed in this study (1989 and 1993). It was in opposition during the other two (1996 and 2000). During the first period (from 1989 to 1993), PSOE was able to form a single-party majority government for the third time in a row. During the years preceding the 1989 election, the Spanish economy did very well, growing at an average rate of 4 percent a year. After the 1989 election, the economic situation worsened quickly, and Spain faced a recession in 1992. The unemployment rate also increased dramatically, and by the beginning of the 1993 electoral campaign it was close to 20 percent.

The bad economic situation had a negative impact on PSOE's electoral results in the 1993 election. However, PSOE was still able to form a minority government that was sustained in power with the parliamentary help of CiU, PNV, and another small party called *Coalición Canaria*. There was no formal written agreement between PSOE and any of its parliamentary partners. Strictly speaking, only CiU's support would have been needed to form a government as neither of the other two parties had enough parliamentary seats on its own to guarantee enough support for PSOE to form a government. *Convergence and Union* was not the only small party that could have allowed PSOE to form a government. In fact, in terms of ideology, IU was a priori a more likely candidate to support PSOE because both parties are left-leaning and strongly agree on many issues, particularly those related to social policy. However, the strong opposition of IU to the Maastricht Treaty, along with differences in their approaches to dealing with the recession, made it impossible for the parties to reach an agreement. The minority government of PSOE, sustained with the help of CiU, was stable until the end of the legislative session. By that time, the economy had started to recover. However, PSOE faced many corruption scandals during the years prior to the 1996 election. These scandals were related to illegal campaign financing and corruption engaged in by high-level government officials, several of whom were prosecuted and found guilty of embezzlement of public funds, fraud, and tax evasion.⁶

The People's Party won the elections in 1996 but did not obtain enough support to form a single-party majority government, which led to a minority government sustained thanks again to the parliamentary support of CiU. This time CiU pushed to document the parliamentary deal in writing to make it harder for PP to dishonor the deal once the president was elected. An alternative to the minority government could have been a coalition government formed between PP and CiU, but CiU considered that entering into a national government could actually be detrimental at the regional level. Its leaders thought that a written agreement to support the PP minority government would be the optimal strategy with which to obtain favorable policies for Catalonia without incurring the political cost of being part of the national government. The agreement between PP and CiU was not difficult to reach due to the proximity of both parties in terms of economic policies. During this period, the Spanish economy was characterized by a strong recovery: strong economic growth and a considerable decrease of the unemployment rate. The good health of the Spanish economy at the end of the legislative session allowed PP to win the

2000 elections again, this time with enough support to form a single-party majority government.

The 2000–2004 electoral cycle was characterized by two facts: good economic performance and the Madrid bombings three days before the 2004 election. At the end of the legislative session, unemployment was at historically low rates, there was no public deficit, and the gross domestic product (GDP) had been growing for eight years in a row. Due to the good economic indicators, PP was expected to win the 2004 election. However, PP lost the election to PSOE, one of the factors being the terrorist attack that occurred in Madrid three days before voting day and the way the PP government dealt with it (see Montalvo 2012).

The process of writing the electoral programs is similar for all parties in our sample. Programs are usually written by a committee of each party, which often takes into account the proposals of different interest groups such as unions, industry representatives, and specific groups interested in each area of policy. This means that many pledges included in the programs have been suggested by interest groups and are therefore likely to be “voter friendly.” This process also leads to Spanish electoral programs that are quite lengthy in terms of both overall number of pages and total number of pledges, with some running well over 200 pages (e.g., PP’s 1996 program was 251 pages long and PSOE’s 1996 program was 232).

8.3. Research Design

The sample used in this chapter is composed of pledges contained in the manifestos of the party in government and the main opposition party, as well as those of CiU, which was the key parliamentary partner of the minority governments formed in 1993 and 1996. Overall the analysis covers 4 elections and 12 programs: 8 programs of the 2 main Spanish parties and 4 of CiU.

While I use the same electoral manifestoes that were analyzed in previous studies of Spanish pledges (Artés 2013; Artés and Bustos 2008), the approach in this chapter is different. Previous analyses were performed using what chapters 1 and 2 in this book label as a broad definition of *pledge*. In this chapter I show results using the narrow definition and compare them with the results obtained when the broad definition is used (see definitions in chapter 2). The final sample used in this study includes a total of 2,263 pledges, of which 1,451 (64 percent) satisfy the narrow definition (i.e., they can be fulfilled by only one specific action).

This chapter includes only the “economic” policy pledges, following Artés (2013) and Artés and Bustos (2008). That is, I exclude all promises related to foreign policy, the judicial system, or the political organization of the country and most of the pledges related to welfare programs and social issues. Economic pledges are defined as those that fall under one of the following subject categories: economic policy in general, fiscal policy, commerce, transportation, labor market, agriculture, tourism, energy, industry, financial markets, telecommunications, and housing.⁷ The most notable differences between the parts of the manifestos included in this study and those included in studies of other countries are related to education and health care policy, as well as some welfare programs, which I do not include unless they have economic implications. On the other hand, the definition I use is quite broad and includes some policies that other chapters might categorize as belonging in areas such as housing, labor market, agriculture, and energy.

In addition, some of the promises that in other studies, such as those on the US, would be included under welfare policy and social issues are coded under the category “labor market” as long as they have labor market implications. I therefore analyze some welfare programs, such as unemployment and retirement, but I do not include pledges related to programs for the poor or care for the elderly (if they do not have public finance implications) because they do not have direct implications for the performance or the organization of the labor market. In this chapter, “fulfilled” and “partially fulfilled” pledges are collapsed into one category.

In order to determine whether a pledge had been acted upon, the primary source of information was the legislative record of the government and the parliament. For pledges that implied changes in taxes or public expenditures I also checked the annual budgets. In addition, a very valuable source of information proved to be the parties’ annual reports when available. I also used specialized books and journals, direct phone calls to different policy departments and field experts, the internet, and several other sources. In cases in which the information needed to verify fulfillment was provided by a third party (an expert or the person responsible for a policy department), I asked that person to provide administrative or legislative documents that would confirm the information provided, and I made my own assessment of fulfillment based on those documents.

I was able to determine whether the pledge was fulfilled for 1,951 out of all 2,262 pledges (86.25 percent). In the subsample of narrow pledges, information was found on 1,328 out of 1,444, or 91.96 percent of the pledges. In

other words, for less than 15 percent of all pledges and less than 10 percent of the narrow pledges, I did not find enough information to claim that the pledge was either fulfilled or unfulfilled. It is reasonable to assume that most of the pledges for which I did not find information to evaluate fulfillment were likely not enacted. However, as I have no definitive evidence of this, I treat the pledges for which no information was found as missing. I also analyzed the results indicating that the missing pledges as not fulfilled, and the same patterns hold.

The percentage of pledges for which I was able to find information on fulfillment for each party is as follows: 84.55 percent for CiU, 87.82 percent for PSOE, and 87.48 percent for PP. The manifesto with the lowest rate of pledges for which information was found is the PP's 1996 manifesto (85.05 percent) while the manifesto with the highest percentage also belongs to PP, in this case the manifesto of 1989 (100 percent). In the case of the subsample that uses the narrow definition of *pledge*, percentages are higher: 91.75 percent for CiU, 90.35 percent for PSOE and 93.92 percent for PP.

Regarding the coding of the subject category and type of pledge, other studies previously performed inter-coder reliability tests using the broad definition of *pledge* and found more than 90 percent agreement between independent coders in the coding of the variables that refer to the subject category and the type of pledge (Artés and Bustos 2008, 312). As the subsample of narrow pledges uses a different definition of *pledge* than the one used in previous studies on Spain, I performed a reliability analysis of this definition of *pledge*. A research assistant was asked to choose from the original sample of pledges that satisfy the broad definition those that fitted the narrower definition as well (for the electoral program of PSOE in 1996). Her subsample included 87 percent of the pledges that I had previously selected using the same definition.

8.4. Election Pledges in Spain

I start the analysis of the results with a description of the differences in the types of pledges proposed by each party. I focus first on the percentage of pledges of the two main parties that are in direct agreement. If we denote the number of pledges of PP that agree with PSOE as PP_PSOE and the number of pledges of PSOE that agree with PP as PSOE_PP, a way to summarize overall direct agreement between the two parties is:

$$\frac{(\text{PSOE\_PP} + \text{PP\_PSOE})/(\text{Total Pledges of PSOE} + \text{Total Pledges of PP}) \times 100$$

In our case, and using the narrow definition of *pledge*, this statistic yields a value of 7.4. In other words, only 7.4 percent of the pledges of the two main parties directly agree with each other. The number is still small, 11.6 percent, when the broad definition of *pledge* is used. Agreement is similar on each year in our database (e.g., using the narrow definition of *pledge*, I find 12.32 percent of agreed pledges in 1989, 12.64 percent in 1993, 9.52 percent in 1996, and 12.9 percent in 2000).

The differences between the two main parties are also apparent when we look at table 8.1, which summarizes the number of pledges of each party classified by the most relevant subject categories. I focus on fiscal and labor market policy because these categories are the most salient and that is where the differences are most obvious. According to the categorization I use, pledges classified as fiscal policy are those related to changes to the tax system or the budget in the macroeconomic sense. On the other hand, labor market policy includes pledges related to changes in labor market conditions of workers and employers. These seem to work very well to distinguish the ideologies of the two main Spanish parties.

Table 8.1 shows that the manifestos of the two parties differ significantly in the relative emphasis on these categories, while CiU seems to be close to PSOE in the emphasis on labor market issues and close to PP in the emphasis on issues related to fiscal policy. The left-leaning PSOE includes a much higher percentage of pledges related to the labor market compared to PP. On the other hand, PP devotes much more attention to measures related to fiscal policy compared to PSOE. More than 20 percent of the economic pledges of PP are related to this category, which is twice as much as the percentage included by PSOE. Overall this result is hardly surprising from a campaigning point of view. The type of pledges related to labor markets that a left-leaning party would include in a manifesto would

TABLE 8.1. Electoral pledges by subject field, all pledges

	PSOE		PP		CiU	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Labor market	23.33	(136)	6.73	(44)	18.46	(189)
Fiscal policy	9.60	(56)	22.17	(145)	19.14	(196)
Other	67.06	(391)	71.10	(465)	62.40	(639)
TOTAL	100	(583)	100	(654)	100	(1,024)

likely benefit employees versus employers while the opposite is likely true for conservative parties.⁸ As labor market is therefore an area in which leftist parties have a comparative advantage with most voters, they seem to emphasize it more in their programs. Similarly, PP emphasizes pledges related to the tax system because they usually imply a reduction in taxes, which is generally perceived as a positive thing.

An example of the different emphasis based on the relative perceived strengths of each party is the 1993 election. One of the most salient campaign issues at the time was the high unemployment rate. Both parties pledged to pass a new labor market reform. The one proposed by PSOE pledged to eliminate fixed-term contracts, so that there would be no differences in severance payments among workers with different contracts. It argued that the difference in severance payments between the two contracts contributed to firms hiring workers under fixed-term contracts instead of under permanent contracts to avoid making severance payments. The Spanish Socialist Worker's Party also pledged to create new types of contracts for minorities and groups more affected by unemployment and to introduce different training plans for workers. On the other hand, PP pledged to reduce taxes (i.e. payroll taxes) so that firms would have a greater incentive to hire workers. Although the goals of both reforms were the same, the tools were different, with the socialist plan directly favoring workers' conditions and the conservative plan favoring business conditions. The analysis of pledges shows that both parties may have perceived the labor market to be an issue in which PSOE had a comparative advantage, which led PP to try to reduce the emphasis on pledges related to this issue and PSOE to increase it.

There are also large differences in the emphasis of political parties on different types of pledges when pledges are coded by whether the fulfillment of the pledge would imply an increase in the public sector (more taxes or more public spending), a decrease in the public sector (fewer taxes or less public spending), a legislative change with no implications for public budgets, and other pledges that imply the promise to maintain the status quo. The majority of the pledges of each party (64 percent for PSOE and 75 percent for PP) require a legislative change that has no direct implications for a public deficit. However, sharp ideological differences appear when analyzing the rest of the pledges. As expected from a socialist party, PSOE includes a much higher percentage of pledges to increase the public sector across the years (27.95 percent) than PP (8.7 percent) does. Conversely, PP includes a higher percentage of pledges that imply a reduction in the public sector (14.68 percent of all pledges) than PSOE (4.97 percent) does.

Looking at the emphasis on different types of pledges over time reveals that in the two elections that took place after a period of economic expansion (1989 and 2000) both parties included a relatively larger number of pledges to increase the public sector and a smaller number of pledges to reduce it. In the elections of 1993 and 1996, which were held under much worse economic conditions, both parties included a relatively lower number of pledges to increase the public sector and a greater percentage of pledges to reduce it. For example, PSOE included more than 35 percent of pledges to increase the public sector in the two programs pledged after periods of economic expansion and less than 25 percent in the programs of the 1993 and 1996 elections, during which the economic situation was worse. Similarly, PP included close to 20 percent of pledges to reduce the public sector in the programs written after a period of worse economic times and less than 10 percent in the programs of 1989 and 2000, during which the economy was doing better. Since Keynes, many economists have suggested that fiscal discipline should be maintained in periods of economic growth to compensate for fiscal deficits when the economic situation worsens. Despite some specific pledges promising to maintain a balanced budget, the emphasis on different types of pledges among Spanish parties does not suggest that they will pursue greater fiscal discipline when the economic situation improves, nor that they will pursue expansionary policies during a recession. This result seems to be confirmed when one looks at CiU's pledges. Overall, CiU includes a much larger number of pledges to decrease the public sector than to increase it (which puts CiU close to PP along this dimension). In addition, the elections with the larger percentage of pledges to increase spending were those of 1989 and 2000, both of which followed long periods of economic expansion.

8.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Spain

Tables 8.2 and 8.3 show fulfillment rates for each election and party for all the pledges (table 8.3) and a subsample of narrow pledges (table 8.2). The comparison of tables 8.2 and 8.3 reveals that both definitions of *pledge* lead to the same overall conclusions. Looking at the percentage of fulfilled promises, we can see that parties that held the executive (PSOE in 1989 and 1993 and PP in 1996 and 2000) were able to implement approximately 70 percent of their pledges during their terms in office regardless of their ideology and majority status. On the other hand, parties in opposition achieved much lower percentages of fulfillment. The Spanish Socialist

TABLE 8.2. Pledge fulfillment in Spain, under a narrow definition of pledge

1989						1993						1996						2000					
Single-party majority						Single-party minority						Single-party minority						Single-party majority					
PSOE (M)	PP	CiU	PSOE (m)	PP	CiU†	PSOE (m)	PP	CiU†	PSOE (m)	PP	CiU†	PSOE (m)	PP	CiU†	PSOE (m)	PP	CiU†	PSOE (M)	PP (M)	CiU	PSOE	PP (M)	CiU
% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
At least partially fulfilled	74.07 (40)	31.76 (27)	76.83 (63)	45.95 (34)	53.33 (80)	76.83 (63)	45.95 (34)	53.33 (80)	56.25 (72)	72.16 (70)	54.48 (79)	56.25 (72)	72.16 (70)	54.48 (79)	32.60 (30)	66.08 (76)	39.46 (73)	32.60 (30)	66.08 (76)	39.46 (73)	32.60 (30)	66.08 (76)	39.46 (73)
Not fulfilled	25.92 (14)	68.23 (58)	23.17 (19)	54.05 (40)	46.67 (70)	23.17 (19)	54.05 (40)	46.67 (70)	43.75 (56)	27.84 (27)	45.51 (66)	43.75 (56)	27.84 (27)	45.51 (66)	67.40 (62)	33.91 (39)	60.54 (112)	67.40 (62)	33.91 (39)	60.54 (112)	67.40 (62)	33.91 (39)	60.54 (112)
Total	100 (54)	100 (85)	100 (82)	100 (74)	100 (150)	100 (82)	100 (74)	100 (150)	100 (128)	100 (97)	100 (145)	100 (128)	100 (97)	100 (145)	100 (92)	100 (115)	100 (185)	100 (92)	100 (115)	100 (185)	100 (92)	100 (115)	100 (185)

Note: Parties that entered the government after the election are in bold type. M = party leading a majority government;

m = party leading a minority government.

†Party supporting the minority government.

TABLE 8.3. Pledge fulfillment in Spain, all pledges

	1989					1993					1996					2000				
	Single-party majority					Single-party minority					Single-party minority					Single-party majority				
	PSOE (M) % (n)	PP % (n)	CiU % (n)			PSOE (m) % (n)	PP % (n)	CiU† % (n)			PSOE % (n)	PP (m) % (n)	CiU† % (n)			PSOE % (n)	PP (M) % (n)	CiU % (n)		
At least partially fulfilled	73.68 (56)	35.59 (42)	28.12 (45)			77.88 (88)	47.52 (67)	49.52 (105)			55.10 (108)	68.52 (111)	58.33 (147)			33.85 (43)	70.44 (112)	41.28 (97)		
Not fulfilled	26.31 (20)	64.40 (76)	71.88 (115)			22.12 (25)	52.48 (74)	50.47 (107)			44.90 (88)	31.48 (51)	41.67 (105)			66.14 (84)	29.56 (47)	58.72 (138)		
Total	100 (76)	100 (118)	100 (160)			100 (113)	100 (141)	100 (212)			100 (196)	100 (162)	100 (252)			100 (127)	100 (159)	100 (235)		

Note: Parties that entered the government after the election are in bold type. M = party leading a majority government;

m = party leading a minority government.

† Party supporting the minority government.

Worker's Party was in opposition following the 1996 and 2000 elections and fulfilled 55.10 and 33.85 percent of all its pledges, respectively. The results are very similar for PP: 47.52 percent of 1993's pledges fulfilled and 35.56 percent of 1989's.

Tables 8.2 and 8.3 also show that the type of government formed after an election does have an impact on the ability of all parties to act on their pledges but only opposition parties. For the two main parties forming a minority government (PSOE in 1993 and PP in 1996) this type of government does not seem to constrain their ability to implement their programs. In fact, the percentages of fulfilled pledges are slightly greater for both parties during the periods in which they enjoyed minority governments compared to the periods in which they enjoyed majorities. This is an unexpected result because majority governments do not need to negotiate with other parties to obtain parliamentary support for their policies and therefore are less constrained. In addition, the two majority governments of PSOE in 1989 and PP in 2000 corresponded to periods with relatively better economic conditions compared to the two periods of minority government. This result is consistent with the results in chapter 4, which found no significant advantage for minority governments.

While for parties in government fulfillment is similar regardless of the type of government, for parties in opposition fulfillment rates are higher when there is a minority government. The People's Party was able to implement 47 percent of its pledges during the minority government of PSOE but only 35 percent during the period of PSOE's absolute majority. Similarly, PSOE was able to implement 55 percent of its pledges during the 1996 term but only 33 percent during the absolute majority government of PP (see table 8.3). These results indicate that the need for the minority government to negotiate policies with other parties in the parliament benefited not only the parliamentary partners but also other parties. This could be a result of CiU being ideologically centered between PP and PSOE, which may have forced the governing parties to move closer to the center, helping other parties to achieve their goals too.

The analysis of CiU's fulfillment results shown in tables 8.3 and 8.4 helps us to understand why the two main parties attained high fulfillment rates during the minority government periods and shows what type of benefits a parliamentary partner may obtain in exchange for its parliamentary support. The fulfillment rate of CiU is much higher during the two periods in which it supported the minority governments of PSOE and PP. In both 1993 and 1996, CiU was able to implement close to 55 percent of its pledges. In the two terms in which CiU's support was not required,

it implemented only one-third of its pledges. According to these results, being a parliamentary partner of the party that formed the minority government allowed CiU to increase the fulfillment rate of its manifesto by more than 20 percentage points. This result provides a rationale for parties to enter into an agreement to support a government without being part of it.

A combined analysis of the results obtained for CiU, PP, and PSOE points to the conclusion that the two main parties accepted some of CiU's pledges in exchange for support for their economic programs. This exchange was not detrimental to either of the two main parties in terms of pledge fulfillment, which may be explained by the fact that many of the CiU pledges were related to obtaining more autonomy for the Catalan government. The 1996 written agreement between CiU and PP, by virtue of which CiU gave parliamentary support to PP, is a good example. Most of the claims included in the agreement were related to Catalonia obtaining more power for the regional government in some areas of policy such as labor markets and taxation. For example, one of the main clauses of the agreement supported passage of a new finance plan for the country's autonomous regions (*comunidades autónomas*) that would give the regions more autonomy in collecting taxes. The agreement included also several clauses intended to transfer to Catalonia areas of policy that at the time belonged to the national government, including worker training and some unemployment programs. The agreement was honored by PP during the 1996–2000 term, and in exchange CiU acted as a stable parliamentary partner, supporting every law that PP took to the parliament.

Overall, the analysis of the Spanish case confirms chapter 4's comparative finding that minority governments perform as well as or better than majority governments. This chapter also brought out some additional findings. Some results have been found regarding pledge fulfillment in other countries, which suggests a new hypothesis related to types of government. In particular the results of the Spanish case support the following hypotheses.

1. Parliamentary partners that help to sustain a minority government obtain significant advantages in terms of program fulfillment.
2. Minority governments also allow some parties in opposition that are not supporting the government in the parliament to fulfill a greater proportion of their pledges compared to single-party majority governments.

The high percentages of fulfillment raise the question of whether important pledges were also acted upon. A qualitative analysis of the manifestos shows that many important pledges were fulfilled. For example, the main pledges of both PP and PSOE in 1993 and 1996 were related to passing a new major labor market reform. Both parties did pass comprehensive labor market reforms in 1994 and 1997, and each reform mostly followed what was pledged in the campaign. Similarly, many important tax reforms proposed in the manifestos were implemented after the campaign, including a new income tax in 1998, which was pledged by PP in 1996, and a new business tax in 1995, which was pledged by PSOE in 1993. Therefore, many important pledges seem to have been fulfilled during the periods analyzed in this chapter.

8.6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have identified and studied specific economic pledges in Spanish electoral manifestos. The analysis leads to the conclusion that parties put different emphasis on different types of pledges depending on their ideology. Therefore, pledges seem to be good indicators of parties' positioning.

In addition, I have tested the degree to which pledges were fulfilled. I find that the pledges contained in the manifestos are overwhelmingly acted upon. This result is in agreement with the increasing literature on this topic for other countries and party systems. I have found that fulfillment is high even when minority governments were formed, similar to the results for Sweden and Portugal in other chapters of this volume. Given the lower fulfillment rates for coalition governments presented as well in this book, the results point to minority governments as a rational government type in terms of policy gains.

The high fulfillment rates raise interesting questions regarding the relationship between policies and pledges in the case of Spain. Since the current crisis began in 2008, Spain has experienced some of the worse economic conditions among European countries, yet this research shows that in the years prior to the crisis politicians mostly did what they said they would do when in power.

The results in this chapter raise an additional and related question. If politicians do what they say they will, why are people blaming them? Spanish voters are among the most critical when it comes to politicians' willingness to keep election promises. As many as 63 percent of the Spanish

respondents in a 2006 International Social Survey Programs (ISSP) survey answered that they did not agree with the statement that members of parliament try to keep the promises they made during election campaigns (Naurin 2011, 71). How are high fulfillment rates consistent with Spanish voters' high levels of distrust of the political system? A potential explanation is that the 30 percent of pledges that are not implemented may be the most important ones. However, our qualitative analysis found that many relevant pledges are implemented.

Alternatively, even if some relevant pledges are implemented, another explanation may be that media pay much more attention to unfulfilled pledges, which in turn causes voters to perceive that most things politicians say they will do during a campaign will not be done. In addition, a third potential explanation consistent with high fulfillment rates and low levels of trust in the political system is that some politicians do more than what the manifesto calls for. Politicians may fulfill pledges and also implement additional policies not included in the manifesto or they may enact promised policies but at the same time be corrupt or engage in other unethical behaviors. Disentangling the reasons why politicians fulfill promises despite voters' beliefs about their lack of fulfillment is, therefore, next on the pledge research agenda.

NOTES

1. Minority governments have been associated with, among other things, political crises, instability, and failures of interparty bargaining. See Strøm (1984) for a discussion.

2. The acronyms correspond to the names in Spanish. PSOE stands for Partido Socialista Obrero Español. PP stands for Partido Popular.

3. During the last few years (which are not analyzed in this study) the emergence of new parties such as Podemos and Ciudadanos has eroded the support for the two main parties.

4. The acronym corresponds to the name of the party in Catalan: *Convergència i Unió*.

5. The acronyms correspond to the names in Spanish. IU stands for *Izquierda Unida* and PNV stands for *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*.

6. See Heywood (2007) for a description of recent corruption cases in Spain.

7. Usually it is easy to identify the economic parts of Spanish manifestos by looking at the section titles. However, in order to be more systematic, I decided to include pledges in the analysis only if after a careful analysis I determined that the subject matter of the pledge had economic content according to the typical content of a course on Spanish economic policy. To determine the content of a "typical course" I followed a widely used textbook: *Política Económica Española* (Spanish Economic Policy), by Gamir (ed.) (2008). This book is structured in chapters, each

of which analyzes different areas of policy. If I could determine that the subject of the pledge belonged to the policy areas included in the book, I included it in the analysis. The choice of categories corresponds also with the policies analyzed in the book, although I merged some categories that were related.

8. Although it is not shown in the chapter, I also coded the pledges according to who would benefit if the pledge were to be fulfilled. I considered that a pledge would be beneficial to workers if it explicitly indicated so and that it would benefit businesses or entrepreneurs also if the literal wording of the pledge explicitly mentioned it. Not surprisingly, PSOE has a greater percentage of pledges that would benefit workers and PP has a higher percentage of pledges that would benefit entrepreneurs and businesses.

Portugal

Marco Lisi, Catherine Moury, and Ana M. Belchior

9.1. Introduction

Portugal is a fascinating laboratory for studying pledge fulfillment for a number of reasons. It is a relatively young democracy: on April 25, 1974, a military coup paved the way for democratization. The inclusion of Portugal, together with Spain and Bulgaria, in this volume thus enables us to ascertain whether parties in young democracies, which are generally viewed as being more corrupt and exhibiting weaker rule of law and lower levels of bureaucratic quality (for a revision see Keefer 2007), are as likely to fulfill their election pledges as are parties in more established democracies.

Portugal has a semi-presidential system. Although the role of the president has been limited since the constitutional reform adopted in 1982, the president still has significant powers. Therefore, the government has had to deal with—or at least consider the possibility of—the president’s intervention. This is especially true when there is a situation of cohabitation, in which the president’s party differs from that of the government.

Over the last 25 years Portugal has had different types of government (majority and minority coalitions and majority and minority single-party governments). Portugal is notable for having a high proportion of ministers—slightly less than 50 percent in the whole democratic period—who did not have any previous political experience (Pinto and Tavares de Almeida 2018). The prevalence of “independent” ministers (party sympa-

thizers who are very close to parties and party leaders but have not formalized their membership) and junior ministers (those without previous experience as an elected representative at the national or local level) has been a common practice not only because of the technical legitimacy they provide but also because Portuguese political parties are weakly anchored in society and the prime minister has an autonomous coordinating function within the executive (Lobo 2005).

Portugal has experienced enormous variation in its aggregate economic performance in the past decades. As noted by the Portuguese sociologist António Barreto, just before joining the European Union (EU) in 1986, Portugal was the most economically backward country in Europe, with “the lowest income per capita, the lowest amount of industrialized product, the lowest level of productivity per employee, . . . the highest level of illiteracy and the smallest amount of social security coverage and public health services” (Barreto 1999, 96–97). In the decade following membership, foreign investment and trade rose dramatically, and European aid flowed generously. These developments converged to create continuous economic growth at a higher level than the EU average in the 1990s, but Portugal fell into recession in 2003. Although it partially recovered in 2004, it again returned to negative growth following the global recession in 2008, and the government had to call international lenders to rescue the economy in 2011.

Portugal is also an interesting case due to the significant tendency of its citizens to distrust political institutions, to feel dissatisfied with the performance of democracy (Teixeira, Tsatsanis, and Belchior 2013; Magalhães 2014; Belchior 2015), and to generally perceive electoral promises as not fulfilled. More than 80 percent of Portuguese citizens agreed in 2014 that parties and members of parliament (MPs) do not try to fulfill the promises made during campaigns.¹ (Using an entirely comparable question, similar findings were reached in 2012 for Spain, where 87.2 percent of respondents disagreed with the premise that parties try to keep their promises.)² According to the International Social Survey Programme,³ out of 33 countries (democracies and nonconsolidated democracies around the world), in 2006 Portugal ranked twenty-seventh, above only Russia, Taiwan, Poland, Latvia, Croatia, and Israel. A mere 14.7 percent of the Portuguese respondents agreed that MPs try to fulfill their promises when they reach parliament.

Our selected governments consist of a minority government (with no formal cooperative agreement with an opposition party) that held office during Portugal’s “golden years” (Guterres I, 1995–99) and a majority

one that was in charge during a period of poor economic performance (Sócrates I, 2005–9). Both were socialist single-party governments, thus holding constant the ideology and the number of parties in government. “Independent” ministers and junior ministers (usually university professors and managers) made up more than one-third of the government in both cases. During Guterres’s government, there was an ideological congruence between the president (the socialist Jorge Sampaio) and the parliamentary majority. By contrast, after 2006 Sócrates had to govern with a president from the center-right majority (Cavaco Silva). Feelings of political distrust and dissatisfaction grew during this period.

9.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Portugal

Since Portuguese democracy was established in 1974, four parties have largely dominated the political scene: two mainstream parties, the left-center Socialist Party (PS) and the right-center Social Democratic Party (PSD); plus two smaller and more ideologically anchored ones, the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), which has run in a coalition with the Portuguese Greens (PEV) since 1991, the Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU) on the left wing, and the conservative Social Democratic Center (CDS-PP) on the right. The Left Bloc (BE), a leftist-libertarian movement party founded in 1999, has also joined the Portuguese electoral scenario.

The PS played an important role in the democratization process by defending the need to accept the western model of liberal democracy and a strong pro-European stance. The PSD combines distinct and heterogeneous orientations among both the party elite and sympathizers. Ideological heterogeneity and flexibility are the main characteristics of the PSD, more so than of the PS. These two centrist parties have led every government since democratization.

The electoral system has contributed to the consolidation of both party organizations and the party system. In order to represent the new political forces, the Portuguese constitution adopted a proportional system of representation. There is substantial variation in terms of district size. In fact, although the average district magnitude is relatively high (12), there are only two large districts (Lisbon and Oporto) where small parties can easily elect MPs. The main implication of this is that the effective threshold of representation is quite high for small parties. Overall, fringe parties have been marginal in parliamentary proceedings and have had a very weak impact on party system dynamics and policymaking processes (Jalali 2007).

In addition to these institutional characteristics, two important political factors have contributed to the stabilization of the party system and the affirmation of a majoritarian pattern of government in which power has alternated between the two main parties. The first is the permanent exclusion of PCP from the governmental arena. The communists have continued to adhere to an orthodox ideology based on anticapitalist orientations and a strong emphasis on state intervention in the economy, and their opposition to European integration was made clear prior to the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty and with entry into the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (Lobo and Magalhães 2011). This led the PS to move gradually toward the center of the political spectrum, especially with the decline of PCP's electoral support since the mid-1980s. The second, as several authors have noted (Jalali 2007; Van Biezen 2003), regards the weak societal roots of PS and PSD. Both PS and PSD have preferred to adopt a catchall strategy with a heterogeneous support base rather than representing specific social groups.

It is worth reiterating the Portuguese semi-presidential system. Although the role of the directly elected president has been limited since the constitutional reform adopted in 1982, the position still has significant powers (Amorim Neto and Lobo 2009). First, the president has the discretionary power to dissolve parliament, and President Sampaio made use of this prerogative in late 2004 to dismiss the contentious Santana Lopes government even though it had the support of the absolute majority of MPs. Second, every bill must be approved by the president of the republic. Bills that have been vetoed by the president should be voted on again in parliament, requiring in this second round an absolute majority of MPs in office, in the case of simple bills, and a two-thirds majority of MPs in office for a series of specific bills to be adopted.⁴ The president of the republic must then, necessarily, enact the bill within eight days.

In periods of cohabitation, the party of the president therefore has quite a powerful tool with which to prevent the government majority from pushing ahead measures that depart from the opposition's preferences. Additionally, the president has the prerogative to send the bill to the Constitutional Court, which will assess the bill's constitutionality. If a bill is considered unconstitutional, the parliament might amend it and sent it back for promulgation or confirm it by an absolute majority of deputies in office (or two-thirds depending on the content of the bill). As a result, the president can not only directly oppose government laws—through veto powers or referral to the Constitutional Court—but also indirectly shape government policies given that the executive has to take into account the

president's expected reaction. This is particularly important in the case of cohabitation. President Cavaco Silva, a PSD president since 2006, governed with a socialist prime minister, and he made extensive use of his veto powers and opposed government bills or proposals on several occasions (Freire and Pinto 2010).

Finally, the Portuguese parties are seen as highly cohesive and party centered, and, in line with this, party discipline has generally been considered to be strong (Braga da Cruz 1988; Leston-Bandeira 2004; Lobo, Pinto, and Magalhães 2012, 33–34). This follows a tendency that was established immediately after the transition to democracy. The emerging democratic parliament was supported in cohesive party groups, which have from the onset been the main unit of parliament's structure. The president's powers notwithstanding, compared to those of other countries, the Portuguese political system is acknowledged as having a small number of veto players and few counterweights to governmental action (Lobo, Pinto, and Magalhães 2012, 37–41). As a result, from an institutional point of view, the executive faces few obstacles to its course of action, having wide leeway to implement its programs, even as a minority.

9.3. Research Design

We began this project after the research group had formulated the coding guidelines described in chapter 3. We coded pledges according to the common definition of “broad” pledges but also identified the subset of “narrow” pledges. We included pledges related to outcomes, as well as those related to actions.

For evaluation fulfillment, our main source was a database of government decisions that has been edited by the Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda (National Printing House and Mint, owned by the Portuguese government) since 1975. The database includes all decisions taken by public institutions (legislation, ministerial and presidential decrees, etc.) and allows key word search. We distinguished between “fully fulfilled” and “partially fulfilled” pledges. If we found a decision congruent with the pledge, the pledge was then considered fulfilled. If we did not find any laws or cabinet decisions after submitting carefully selected key words, the pledge was considered unfulfilled. We relied on official statistics released by international organizations to determine whether outcome pledges were fulfilled.

In order to guarantee the reliability of the identification and codification of promises, and posterior assessment of its fulfillment, at least two

coders were simultaneously working on different manifestos, and simple intercoder tests of cross-validation were routinely run for each manifesto. The tests were supported in the random selection of a sample of manifestos' pages/pledges and its identification, codification, and assessment done by a different coder. The process was repeated till the level of compliance approached 100 percent.

9.4. The Drafting of Party Manifestos

In this section, we present and compare the process of drafting the manifestos of the PS prior to the governments under study (1995–99 and 2005–9). Given that party manifestos play a key role in determining ministerial actions, it is important to understand who drafts them and how the process unfolds. We observe a great deal of variation within the same party in relation to the actors involved and specifically to the degree of inclusiveness of such a process.

The 1995 socialist manifesto was drafted in a very innovative way. Three years before the elections, after Guterres had been elected as secretary-general in 1992, the party statute was amended, and the National Congress ceased to be the main deliberative organ. A biennial National Convention was to be introduced to prepare the election program, which would include ex-officio leaders and every citizen who wished to participate, providing that the relevance of his or her contribution was recognized (Lisi 2009). The idea was to appeal to specialists in different areas in order to hear their responses to the problems in Portuguese society and also to react to the increasing detachment of citizens from political parties. This detachment was visible in a decline in party membership and party identification, a high rate of electoral volatility, and growing levels of abstention (Jalali 2007; Lisi 2015).

These changes in the party's statutes allowed the secretary-general to create a new, more inclusive process for elaborating the party's programmatic priorities: the so-called Debate on a new majority (*Estados Gerais para uma nova maioria*). The *Estados Gerais* took place from October 1994 to March 1995 and was organized in six different thematic panels: education, politics of solidarity, development and employment, culture, political system, and Portugal in Europe and the world. More than one hundred sessions mobilized approximately 30,000 people throughout the country. Each panel involved a number of experts, forming a coordination council in the area addressed, and was open to party members, sympathizers, and

citizens (Ferreira-Pereira 2008). The sessions led to a “legislative contract,” which consisted of the commitments the PS promised to fulfill if it won the following elections.

The official party program for the October 1995 elections was drafted by a commission composed of equal numbers of party leaders and experts who participated in the *Estados Gerais* as coordinators. Although the contents of the final election manifesto reflected the conclusions of the different working groups involved in the previous debate, the party leadership controlled the final outcome, and therefore the electoral program did not straightforwardly draw on the “legislative contract.” The main areas featured in the election program were the regulatory role of the state and the fight against poverty and social exclusion, with great emphasis also being placed on “non-ideological issues” such as the modernization of infrastructure, investments in new technologies, and an increase in administrative efficiency (Guedes 2012).

At the legislative elections held in October 1995, PS defeated PSD but fell short of an absolute majority by four MPs. One-third of government portfolios (ministers and junior ministers) were held by independents, who had taken on a relevant role in the drafting process of the party program (Lobo 2003). Nonetheless, with several governmental reshuffles undertaken in 1997, the importance of the *Estados Gerais* independent elite within the government dwindled, to the benefit of the partisan figures (Ferreira-Pereira 2008). In fact, the prime minister’s inner circle of loyal supporters acquired new and increased responsibilities within the government, thus strengthening the centralization of the decision-making process not only through the coordination role played by Guterres but also through the personal links established with his political entourage. This shift was also to definitively mark the end of the *Estados Gerais* spirit.

In contrast, the drafting of the Sócrates 2005 manifesto was less well planned, mainly because elections were held one year ahead of schedule. António Vitorino, one of the main figures in the previous round of debate and very close to former prime minister Guterres, was given responsibility for the coordination of the program. Sócrates relied to a great extent on the core political figures of Guterres’s government.⁵ In contrast to the *Estados Gerais*, the draft of the 2005 party manifesto was mostly an elite-driven process. The coordinator of the program distributed the responsibility for the elaboration of the main policy orientations among both party leaders and independents. Experienced socialist figures (mainly ex-officeholders) helped prepare the measures to be implemented in some core areas such as pensions, unemployment, and justice once in government. In addition,

an important role was also played by independents, especially well-known figures from universities who were ideologically close to the party.

The highly centralized drafting of the 2005 manifesto is in stark contrast to the more open process adopted under Guterres's leadership. However, some public events were organized around the main thematic areas. In January 2005, just weeks before the start of the campaign, eight seminars were held on different policy areas (foreign policy, quality of life, economic and social policies, education, and culture). This set of events was called the "New Frontiers Forum" (Fórum Novas Fronteiras), and it aimed to resemble the *Estados Gerais* to some extent and recover the "myth" of participatory democracy and open decision-making processes. These events were opportunities to attract media attention and disseminate the main policy orientations but also to build consensus among the main historical leaders and well-known public figures.⁶ All in all, this strategy was mostly a media-oriented initiative with the main objective of maximizing the vote and without the openness and broad range of inclusiveness of the *Estados Gerais*. However, the drafting of the 2005 party program resembled the process followed in 1995 insofar as it took place outside the main party bodies and was an important step in the preparation of the future government team. This also had obvious implications for internal accountability, especially when government policies do not reflect previous party pledges.

The PS program, called the "Government Manifesto for Portugal: Believing Again" (*Compromisso de governo para Portugal: Voltar a acreditar*) was structured around five main areas: economic development and growth, social policies, quality of life and sustainable development, foreign policy, and the quality of democracy. The main idea of the program was to bring about a "technological shock" in order to spark economic development. A series of measures were devised to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the Portuguese economy, namely by improving computer and internet access, making investments in research and development, and growing high-tech industries (PS 2005, part 2; Freire and Lobo 2006). Besides public investments in new technologies and incentives meant to stimulate economic modernization, strong emphasis was placed on education. The socialists also emphasized the need to strengthen social and economic cohesion by reducing the burden on the poorest segments of the population. The modernization of infrastructure (transport, energy, etc.) and the reform of labor market laws were two other important measures intended to stimulate economic growth and midterm convergence toward the EU. The manifesto also promised not to raise any taxes but

planned to bring state finances under control to allow the economy to grow once again.

In terms of party fortunes, PS in 2005 obtained its best result ever in national parliamentary elections with 45 percent of the vote and a majority of seats in parliament (121 out of 230), something it had never previously been able to achieve. In the new government, half the ministers were independents (Pinto and Tavares de Almeida 2018, 122). Not only were technocrats included, but government decision-making structures were based mostly on young party cadres. Both independents and the new party cadres belonged to the Coordination Council of the New Frontiers Forum. Contrary to the more open and all-encompassing governmental experience under Guterres, Sócrates excluded the party notables from both government and partisan offices. The effect of this was to reinforce Sócrates's personal leadership over the executive and to subordinate the extraparlimentary party, thus facilitating the implementation of government policies.

All in all, the comparison between the 1995 and 2005 processes of drafting the party manifestos reveals both similarities and differences—similarities because, in both cases, the main programmatic orientations were elaborated outside the national party organs. The actors involved did not respond to party members or to party structures. This is important in terms of the strategic and programmatic autonomy enjoyed by socialist leaders. Nevertheless, and in both cases, the party leadership controlled the final outcome. The drafting process also encompassed important differences since, compared to the “Estados Gerais,” the 2005 process was more centralized, exclusive, and short. It also had less visibility and was less participative than that of 1995. The possible consequences of these differences for pledge fulfillment are not clear. On the one hand, a more inclusive process raises the expectations of a very wide variety of people who might hold the government accountable and contribute to a higher fulfillment of pledges. On the other, a more exclusive process entails greater control of the program by the party leadership, perhaps leading to the exclusion of less realistic pledges, which in turn makes fulfillment easier.

9.5. Election Pledges in Portugal

This section addresses the following questions. Do Portuguese parties make specific pledges? To what extent do parties fulfill them? And to what extent do pledges differ? Regarding the number of pledges made by the

Portuguese parties in parliament for the elections of 1995 and 2005, it is evident that mainstream parties do make a large number of specific (testable) statements in their manifestos. Mainstream parties' manifestos contained around 300 testable statements (including both "broad" and narrow "pledges"), most of which promised change. Not surprisingly, PSD—which was the incumbent in both 1995 and 2005—promised less change than did its PS counterpart. The smaller parties also made a substantial number of electoral pledges: CDU made 322 and 240, respectively, CDS-PP around 150 in both years, and BE 144 in 2005. Most of them promised change, especially the left-wing parties.

The first Guterres government, of 1995, which completed its full four-year term in office, failed to achieve a majority. By contrast, Sócrates was able to win the first ever overall majority in 2005, obtaining an absolute majority of seats in the parliament. Does this make a difference in the fulfillment of pledges? Table 9.1 shows the percentage of pledges at least partially fulfilled by party and type of pledge (status quo versus change). Indeed, Guterres I at least partially fulfilled 85.5 percent of its action pledges compared to 76.1 percent for Sócrates I,⁷ meaning that the minority government outperformed the majority. The level of at least partially fulfilled pledges is, as expected, much lower across opposition parties. Even PSD, the largest opposition party, only fulfilled 61.7 percent of its pledges in 1995 and 26.9 percent in 2005. The other, smaller opposition parties fulfilled between 22 and 43 percent of their manifestos' pledges. On average, opposition parties fulfilled at least 36 percent of their manifestos' promises.

Not surprisingly, pledges promising changes are generally less likely to be fulfilled than those promising to maintain the status quo. More than 90 percent of PS's status quo pledges were fulfilled in both years, and significantly high percentages of fulfillment of such pledges are also noticeable across opposition parties (especially for CDU, although absolute numbers are low).

These results provide support for the finding in chapter 4 that the absence of an absolute majority of parliamentary seats does not prevent the incumbent party from fulfilling a large proportion of its pledges. In Portugal we even observe the opposite pattern, whereby the minority government had a substantially higher rate of fulfillment (as already acknowledged for the Portuguese case; see Moury and Fernandes 2018). However, it has to be said that the conditions were more favorable for Guterres than for Sócrates. The latter had to deal with a president from another party in the last three years of his term. If we consider both Constitutional Court referrals and presidential vetoes, President Cavaco was more active in

TABLE 9.1. Proportion of pledges at least partially fulfilled by type of pledge

	PS		PSD		CDS-PP		CDU		BE	
	1995	2005	1995	2005	1995	2005	1995	2005	1995	2005
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Status quo	100 (10/10)	93.8 (15/16)	80.8 (21/26)	45.8 (11/24)	60.0 (3/5)	25.0 (4/16)	88.9 (8/9)	87.5 (7/8)	33.3 (1/3)	
Other change	84.9 (225/265)	74.9 (182/243)	59.6 (140/235)	25.2 (68/270)	41.5 (59/142)	28.3 (36/127)	41.6 (127/305)	27.6 (61/221)	22.1 (31/140)	
Total pledges	85.5 (235/275)	76.1 (197/259)	61.7 (161/261)	26.9 (79/294)	42.2 (62/147)	28.0 (40/143)	43.0 (135/314)	29.7 (68/229)	22.4 (32/143)	

Note: Values in parentheses are the number of at least fulfilled pledges divided by the total number of pledges in the manifesto.

exerting his institutional powers than previous presidents had been during their first mandates (Freire and Pinto 2010, 108–110). Cavaco vetoed important policies such as a new law on the concentration of mass media, the reorganization of the National Gendarmerie (GNR), and a new statutory law for journalists. In all cases, the socialist government decided not to oppose presidential vetoes and put a halt to the policies implemented. Only one of these vetoes, however, the one that concerned the new statutory law, had been included in the socialist program.

Another crucial difference between the two governments concerns the economic conditions under which they operated. While Guterres I witnessed continuous and strong positive growth (on average 4 percent), Sócrates had to govern with initially small (around 1 percent for 20056 and 1.8 percent in 2007) and then negative (2008–9) growth rates.⁸ Another factor that may explain the lower fulfillment rate for the Sócrates I government is the lack of internal unity around the prime minister (resulting in the presentation of an alternative candidate from the PS ranks, Manuel Alegre, at the 2006 presidential elections.)⁹ Although the data do not allow making inferences regarding the different processes by which manifestos were elaborated, it is interesting to note that Guterres I's more inclusive and debated program had reached such a significant performance regarding pledge fulfillment, even under a minority government, compared to the Sócrates majority.

A qualitative analysis of the decisions taken by the two governments under study indicates that both governments fulfilled many important pledges, many of which were substantially important and expensive. For example, the Guterres government created the promised minimum wage for all (Programa de Rendimento Mínimo Garantido, RMG), made available free treatment for every pregnant woman and newborn infected with AIDS, and granted every child free milk and lunches at school. It also reformed the school and health system, built new infrastructure, and reformed unemployment benefits so as to increase their duration and the level of benefits for part-time workers. Significant successes were also achieved in the economic area. The government's main road map aimed at further integration in the EU and the adoption of the single currency, and these were achieved. Moreover, the socialist government kept its promise to reduce unemployment and the public debt. Under Guterres's leadership, PS fostered the introduction of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the public administration and education systems and passed a new law improving consumer protection and public services. Finally, important environmental policies were implemented: following

the programmatic orientations of the election manifesto, the government launched the construction of the “Alqueva” dam and set forth a program for cleaner technologies and renewable energies, as well as for the development of the agriculture sector, especially in underdeveloped areas in the interior of the country.

Although the country’s modernization and the expansion of welfare policy crosscut both PS’s and PSD’s 1995 manifestos (Guedes 2012), the remarkable emphasis of Guterres’s government on social welfare policies was not shared by PSD’s electoral stances at the time. No emblematic measure was put forward in this area and, in contrast to PS, ambitious promises were made in the field of state reform, namely concerning the electoral law.

To achieve the fulfillment of these pledges, the minority government led by Guterres had to make ad hoc agreements with the opposition on each piece of legislation: with CDS-PP and/or PSD for budget; with PSD for measures regarding European integration, constitutional revision, and referendums; and with PCP for more social measures. Very few bills tabled by the government were rejected (10 out of 252). In return, the adoption rate for bills tabled by the opposition was unusually large (66 out of 173 for the radical left and 73 out of 220 for the rightist opposition parties PSD and CDS-PP (Filipe 2002). However, the government was sometimes unable to get its way. This was the case, for example, with the revision of the electoral law that was not passed by parliament.¹⁰ The other important bills that were not passed (a series of privatizations and the introduction of quotas for women in parliament) did not originate in the manifesto.

As far as the Sócrates government is concerned, PS in 2005 committed itself to bringing the deficit below 3 percent by 2008, and indeed in 2007, one year ahead of schedule, the deficit fell to 2.5 percent. To reach this goal, the Sócrates government carried out strong measures, including an ambitious privatization plan of several public companies. As mentioned in the manifesto, the government also raised the retirement age of public servants to 65 years and approved a pension reform plan in which workers had to choose between working longer and increasing their pension contributions.¹¹ Sócrates was also successful in implementing a postmaterialist agenda through a second referendum on abortion, held in February 2007, and the introduction of a gender quota. As promised in the manifesto, key reforms in education were also undertaken of which the Mathematics Action Plan (PAM) and Training Program in Experimental Science Teaching are good examples (Afonso and Costa 2009). The government also introduced a program called “New Opportunities,” which strived to encourage adults to complete their secondary education. Another

important promise that was carried through was the National Health Plan 2004–2010, which devoted special attention to four areas: cardiovascular diseases, cancer, AIDS, and the health of older people or citizens in a situation of dependency (Asensio 2008). Another significant achievement was the modernization of public administration through implementation of the “Simplex” program, which consists of a set of measures aiming at simplifying and improving public services and the relationship between citizens and the state. Finally, the “technological shock” pledge was implemented by means of the Technological Plan to advance the EU’s Lisbon Agenda in knowledge, technology, and innovation. This plan included measures such as the installation of broadband in all Portuguese schools and an innovative agreement with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Bill Gates to teach computing skills to one million Portuguese. However, one key promise that citizens certainly remember was the pledge not to raise taxes. Just after taking office, Prime Minister Sócrates broke this promise when it was decided to increase the value-added tax (VAT) by 2 percent effective immediately.¹² The socialist government also failed to guarantee a minimum pension of 300 euros for all and to create 150,000 new jobs in order to reduce unemployment. The pledge to improve citizens’ medical care was broken by the decision to close medical emergency service facilities, especially in the interior of the country. This led to a government reshuffle in 2008 after intense internal criticism. Other broken promises include the refusal to hold a referendum for the approval of the EU’s Constitutional Treaty and the introduction of tolls on some motorways.

The reduction of state spending and the consolidation of public accounts, along with an emphasis on increasing productivity, are at the core of PSD commitments in 2005. Important promises for public administration reform were also part of PSD’s electoral manifesto, such a pledge to regulate private-public partnerships in order to ensure that the financial interests of the state will not be not harmed and several other proposals intended to reduce state spending and increase its revenue. The Social Democratic Party seemed to converge with PS when both parties proposed measures to extend working lives, increase privatization, and not raise taxes.

When comparing pledges made by PS and PSD, distinguishing among pledges that were in agreement, those that disagreed, and those that were unrelated, the main finding is that only a small proportion of pledges (ranging from 2.1 to 3.7 percent) explicitly disagreed. Direct agreement was somewhat more common, ranging from 12.2 to 16.1 percent. Between 1995 and 2005 the parties moved slightly toward greater agreement and less disagreement. However, the large majority of pledges in both years were unrelated.

Freire (2006) suggests that the two main Portuguese parties are less polarized than other European parties that have dominated their party systems. This is mainly a consequence of the willingness of PS to target moderate voters and compete directly for PSD's social base, a strategy that was particularly clear under Guterres's leadership (1992–2001). Moreover, the fact that Guterres's PS was unable to obtain a parliamentary majority in the legislative elections of 1995 and 1999,¹³ together with the need to respect the economic criteria for entry into the EMU, fostered some convergence with center-right parties, especially PSD (Lobo and Magalhães 2004).

Using data from the Comparative Manifestos Project, Guedes (2012) shows that PS and PSD (1991–2009) have similar priorities; technology and infrastructure, expansion of the welfare state, and the effectiveness of the government and administration are in each case the three most developed areas in the respective parties' manifestos. However, the author also demonstrates that the two programs are far from equivalent. The Socialist Party refers more often than the PSD to themes associated with the left: expansion of the welfare state, expansion of education, regulation of the market, and social justice. On the other hand, PSD refers more often than its counterparts to more rightist themes such as law and order, productivity, political authority, free enterprise, and morality.

Table 9.2 shows the fulfillment rate of the two PS manifestos under study, distinguishing between pledges referring to actions and those referring to outcomes. The fulfillment rate is higher for both action and outcome pledges for the Guterres government than for Sócrates I. Indeed, Guterres I at least partially fulfilled 84 percent of its action pledges compared to 76 percent for Sócrates I. The difference is even greater for the few outcome pledges: 80 percent of these were fully fulfilled (92 percent at least partially) during Guterres I, while Sócrates I fulfilled 62 percent fully (76 percent at least partially). These results show that Guterres's minority

TABLE 9.2. Pledge fulfillment in Portugal by PS governments

	Action pledges				Outcome pledges			
	1995		2005		1995		2005	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Full	75.4	(178)	63.0	(145)	79.5	(31)	62.1	(18)
Partial	8.9	(21)	13.0	(30)	12.8	(5)	13.8	(4)
<i>At least partial</i>	84.3	(199)	76.1	(175)	92.3	(36)	75.9	(22)
Not	15.7	(37)	23.9	(55)	7.7	(3)	24.1	(7)
TOTAL	100	(236)	100	(230)	100	(39)	100	(29)

performed better than Sócrates's majority regardless of whether the pledge was action or outcome oriented.

9.7. Conclusions

What is more important for the high fulfillment levels of pledges, an absolute majority of seats or economic growth? The Portuguese cases analyzed herein suggest that it is the latter. Guterres I, a minority government but in a period of continuous growth, fulfilled a considerably larger share of its pledges than did Sócrates I, which could count on an absolute majority but not economic growth. The latter government had considerable difficulties in fulfilling "expensive" pledges and those regarding outcomes. The two cases presented here also demonstrate that the way in which manifestos are drafted can vary greatly even within the same party from one election to another. An inclusive process of drafting the manifesto does not prevent a relatively high level of fulfillment of the party program. More generally, openness to the influence of nonparty members was greater under the Guterres I government than under Sócrates, who maintained very tight control of internal party dynamics. During Sócrates's time in power, ministers were completely subordinate to the party leadership, factionalism was very low, and the government's inner core was based on Sócrates's political entourage. This means that internal party democracy (in drafting the manifesto and in government) does not prevent—and might even enhance—the success of a governing party in fulfilling its promises. Further research should address the consequences of internal democracy for pledge fulfillment. If it is the case that democratic and inclusive processes lead to higher levels of pledge fulfillment, this would be an important normative finding in favor of this kind of process.

Another factor that may have influenced the low rate of pledge fulfillment by the majority Sócrates government is the role of the president. We have seen that the capacity of the president to influence government activity was based on both formal (veto and constitutional referral) and informal powers. During the cohabitation period, President Cavaco tried to change the content of several policies, especially those relating to "new politics" issues and institutional matters. In this case, the socialist government either desisted from putting such reform proposals into action or substantially changed their content. Although most of these measures had not been included in the PS program, the president's intervention illustrates his potential power over electoral program implementation, as it

suggests that the president might be more inclined to oppose new policies than those that had received some legitimacy through the party manifesto. From this perspective, our findings partially depart from the comparative results obtained in chapter 4 and emphasize the potential role of cohabitation in constraining pledge fulfillment.

Overall, the Portuguese case confirms that most parties make a large number of election pledges and that a clear majority of these are fulfilled. Compared to other cases included in this volume, Portugal validates the fact that governing parties show higher levels of pledge fulfillment than opposition parties do. The Portuguese governments we examined fulfilled percentages of pledges similar to those of governments in other democracies in which single-party governments are commonplace, and higher percentages in the countries in which coalition governments are the norm (see chapter 4). These comparisons demonstrate that a relatively young democracy and one in which governments typically have a large proportion of “technocrats” can perform relatively well in terms of the fulfillment of election pledges.

The percentages do not tell us everything, however, and the relative prominence of partially broken pledges may be a significant factor in shaping citizens’ views. This point is illustrated vividly by the breaking of a very famous PS pledge not to raise taxes early in the Sócrates I government. Although the government might fulfill a reasonable proportion of its pledges, the breaking of important promises might have a substantial impact on citizens’ assessments. Thus, the salience of party pledges is an important aspect when investigating the functioning of accountability mechanisms, particularly the capacity of voters to punish and reward governments for their actions.

NOTES

1. Ana Belchior and Augusta Correia, 2015, Panel Survey of the Portuguese population, First and Second Waves, Project “Public Preferences and Policy Decision-Making. A Longitudinal and Comparative Analysis,” PTDC/IVC-CPO/3921/2012, CIES-IUL and ISCTE-IUL—Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

2. CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas), “Congruencia ideológica entre electores y representantes políticos,” study no. 2930, http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/EN/I_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=13624

3. ISSP, International Social Survey Program, “Role of Government IV,” study ZA4700, <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=4700>

4. The bills that require a two-thirds majority to override a presidential veto relate to the declaration of a state of siege or emergency, the organization of the

armed forces, the organization of the Constitutional Court, and the regulation of elections.

5. Sócrates himself was junior minister in the first Guterres government, and his political position was strengthened after the government reshuffle in 1998 when he became adjunct minister to the prime minister. He became one of the “inner core” figures in the second Guterres government.

6. For example, both António Guterres and Mário Soares appeared at these events in support of the new leader. The Nobel Prize winner José Saramago also participated in one of these events (see *Expresso*, January 22, 2005).

7. The calculation also includes the promises on which no conclusion was reached regarding its fulfillment (i.e., “no decision” promises).

8. The source for 1995–2008 is Silva da Fonseca (2008).

9. At the beginning of 2009, Sócrates I was also involved in a corruption scandal (Jalali 2012).

10. A second bill revising the electoral law was presented and passed, but this did not fulfill the pledges made in the manifesto.

11. This reform also included a “sustainability coefficient,” which automatically adjusts pensions according to life expectancy, taking into account the entire lives of employees (rather than ten years), and an adjustment to the contribution according to the employee’s number of children (Royo 2010).

12. The government decided to decrease the VAT just before the election. Nonetheless, this promise was coded as not fulfilled.

13. In 1999, PS gained exactly 50 percent of the available seats.

Sweden

Elin Naurin

10.1. Introduction

Sweden is one of the countries in this book where governing parties fulfill the largest proportion of their pledges. Two of the most efficient types of governments found in chapter 4 are common in Sweden: single-party minority governments and pre-election coalitions. In this chapter I provide some background on pledge fulfillment by these governments, and I explain in more detail our knowledge about pledge fulfillment in the Swedish case. The chapter includes analyses of fulfillment of all pledges made in the Social Democratic election manifestos for the elections of 1994, 1998, and 2002, as well as all pledges made in the joint coalition manifestos of the Alliance for Sweden in 2006 and 2010. It also reports data on four opposition parties' ability to fulfill economic pledges, namely pledges made by the largest opposition party during the periods 2002 to 2006 (the Moderate Party) and 2006 to 2010 (the Social Democrats), as well as by two smaller opposition parties during 2002–6, one with a written postelection agreement with the minority government (the Green Party) and one without such an agreement (the Centre Party).

10.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Sweden

Sweden has a proportional parliamentary system. The unicameral parliament “the Riksdag” has 349 seats that are distributed via an adjusted odd-number method. Of these, 310 are fixed constituency seats and 39 are leveling seats that correct the deviations in proportional national distribution when the fixed constituency seats are distributed. The threshold to enter the Riksdag is 4 percent. Governments are elected via a negative investiture rule, which means that a government can be appointed as long as a majority of (all) the members of parliament (MPs) does not vote *against* it. Typically, Swedish governments are said to be “tolerated” by the Riksdag rather than “supported” by it. This facilitates minority governments. In fact, minority governments are more common in Sweden than in any other Western European country. On average since World War II, about 35 percent of the Western European governments have been minority governments. In Sweden, that number is above 80 percent (Lindvall et al. 2017; Seki and Williams 2014). Another explanation sometimes put forward as to why minority governments are so often elected in Sweden is that opposition MPs are allowed to debate and influence the governing parties’ MPs via the strong and “working” (as opposed to the Westminster “talking”) type of parliamentary committees (Strøm 1990; Mattson 2016). Furthermore, in Swedish politics, the left-right dimension is strong. This has given the Social Democrats, who have often held the median position, a strong negotiating position. Consequently, most of the minority governments have been single-party governments consisting of only the Social Democrats (Bergman 2000). The increased support of the anti-immigration party Sweden Democrats complicated government formation after the election of 2014 (see Aylott and Bolin 2015), but traditionally government formation has been swift by international standards, often taking only a couple of weeks (Lindvall et al. 2017; Bergman 2000). Furthermore, the system holds few formal veto players that can block the decisions of the unicameral parliament and, with very few exceptions, governments stay in power for the full election period (which since 1994 is four years) (Lindvall et al. 2017; Bäck and Bergman 2016).

Parties in Sweden are generally considered strong and cohesive (Erlingsson, Kölln, and Öhberg 2016; Jensen 2000). During the period 1994 to 2010, the country had seven parties in the parliament that, according to surveys carried out by the Swedish National Election Studies Program (Oscarsson and Holmberg 2013, 225), were fairly easily placed on a left-right continuum by the electors in all four elections in the following

way; the Left Party, Social Democratic Party, Green Party, Centre Party, Liberal Party, Christian Democratic Party, and the Moderates. In 2010 the anti-immigration party Sweden Democrats, entered the parliament.

Policywise, Sweden is a comparatively well functioning welfare state where the electorate has high acceptance of public solutions. Historically, the country has been characterized by a consensus culture creating politics of compromise rather than of conflict. The typical description of the Swedish decision-making machinery (at least during the investigated period) is that it has a focus on “what works” and on finding solutions rather than on seeing every problem through a focused ideological lens (Mattson 2016; Persson 2016; Petersson 2016).

A few words are called for on the specific governments studied in this chapter. All the minority single-party governments here studied are coded as having formal agreements in place (see chapter 4 for further discussions on this). In 1994 the Social Democrats came from a short period of opposition to form a minority government and could reach a majority with any of the other parties in the parliament. The party received 45.3 percent of the vote (and 46.1 percent of the seats) with a program that promised severe cuts in subsidies and higher taxes but preservation of core welfare services. The election period was characterized by the handling of the severe economic crisis that struck the country the year before. Systematic majority collaborations were crucial in getting the economy back on track, and the government chose to engage first the Left Party and later the Centre Party in a longer parliamentary alliance. During parts of the election period officials of the Centre Party were placed inside the government administration.

In the 1998 and 2002 elections, the economy was considerably more stable, but the Social Democrats received much less support: 36.4 and 39.8 percent of the vote, respectively (which led to 37.5 and 41.2 percent of the seats). However, they remained in power with the help of systematic parliamentary collaboration with the Left Party and the Green Party. In both 1998 and in 2002, these collaborations were formalized and spanned many issues. After the election of 2002, the three parties even agreed on a written and public “121-point program” pledging joint policies in a number of areas.

In order to break the Social Democratic dominance of Swedish politics, the four center-right parties (the Moderate Party, Liberal Party, Centre Party, and Christian Democrats) formed the Alliance for Sweden in 2004. In the first election after its formation, in 2006, the Alliance for Sweden received a majority of the seats in the parliament (51 percent based on 48.2

percent of the votes) and placed a shocked Social Democratic Party on the bench of the opposition. In the campaign, the alliance had emphasized that once in power its agreement on a common set of pledges would facilitate their quick fulfillment. After the election, internal government institutions such as the Political Coordination Secretariat (*Samordningskansliet*) in the Prime Minister's Office were created and made sure that joint obligations were respected and few new ones were brought forward. The government was strong also in the sense that the severe economic crises that struck the world in 2008 left Sweden comparatively unharmed. In 2010 the alliance once again put forth a joint manifesto. This time also the Social Democrats produced a similar, though considerably less coherent, pre-election coalition, together with the Left and Green parties, called "the RedGreens" (*de Rödgröna*). For the first time, the Social Democrats campaigned without an election manifesto of their own. While the Alliance for Sweden lost its majority position in 2010, it continued to govern in the minority, based on 49.3 percent of the votes and 49.5 percent of the seats. Hence the period 2006 to 2010 featured a minority coalition government with a joint election manifesto. Collaboration with opposition parties was not formalized in the same ways as in earlier minority governments, but the government struck several large policy agreements with the Green Party. The expectation of the fulfillment of pledges from the Alliance for Sweden's joint manifestos should be higher than for individual coalition parties' manifestos in other contexts. Our comparative analyses in chapter 4 show that coalition agreements in general provide reciprocal control to the collaborating parties and that such control helps ensure that agreements are carried out. Chapter 4 also shows that the specific pledges on which coalition parties agree are more often fulfilled than are other pledges.

Taken together, expectations of Swedish parties' general ability to fulfill election pledges during the studied period should be fairly high. The Social Democrats' minority governments all had parliamentary agreements in place, and the coalition governments campaigned on joint election manifestos. As of this writing, however, the Social Democrats govern together with the Green Party in an unusual (and small) minority coalition government. Furthermore, the political agenda is increasingly reflecting more than just the left-right dimension, including green/alternative and immigration issues (Lindvall et al. 2017). Moreover, the system has been described as taking "a Madisonian turn" by strengthening the power of subnational-level and EU institutions. It has also shifted power away from the parliament to experts in the judiciary and the independent central bank (Bergman and Strøm 2011). Together these features might give us a

reason to come back to the current (and possibly future) election periods with expectations of somewhat lower pledge fulfillment.

How are election manifestos created in Sweden? There is a general lack of systematic overview of the way Swedish political parties are organized and how they make decisions internally (for a description, see Erlingsson, Kölln, and Öhberg 2016). In an effort to (among other things) seek understanding of which pledges get included in Swedish manifestos and which do not, I conducted interviews with party secretaries and the group leaders of the parties in the Riksdag after the 2010 election (see Naurin 2016). The conclusion I drew from these interviews was that the Swedish parties let a group of individuals at the top of the party suggest the content of the manifesto, which then is agreed on by the entire party, either by letting the whole party discuss the content in detail or by letting the party leadership make the final decision. Two parties (Green and Left) discussed and decided on formulations openly within the party. These parties needed to start the manifesto-writing process earlier than other parties, often several months before the election. In contrast, the Social Democrat and Alliance for Sweden manifestos here investigated were presented only two or three weeks before the election in order to attract the most attention as late as possible in the campaign. These manifestos were created in centralized processes that included only a few persons at the top of the party. However, the question of who has the power to decide on exact formulations of the manifestos of parties in Sweden is one that remains to be systematically studied—and one that appears particularly important in light of the high fulfillment rates of manifesto pledges that I find.

10.3. Research Design

The Swedish election pledge studies are performed within the Swedish National Election Studies Program (SNES). Analyses of pledges in election manifestos and the subsequent policies have therefore evolved in connection with analyses of voters' (Naurin 2011; Naurin and Oscarsson 2017; Lindgren and Naurin 2017; Naurin, Soroka, and Markwat 2019) and individual politicians' (Naurin 2014b, 2016) views of election pledges. An inclusive rather than exclusive definition of election pledges has been the consequence of this, which means that this chapter presents data on both the narrow and broad definitions of pledges described in chapter 2.¹

All pledges of governing parties are analyzed in the Swedish case, but only economic pledges are analyzed for fulfillment by the opposition par-

ties. Economic pledges are defined widely following Artés and Bustos (2008) and Artés (2013) and include pledges in the areas of agriculture, labor market, fiscal policy, industry, energy, tourism, transportation, economic policy, financial system, telecommunications, commerce, housing, and competition policy.

As regards the sources of fulfillment in the Swedish case, all pledges checked for fulfillment have been analyzed using at least four sources: (1) the yearbook of the Riksdag (*Riksdagens årsbok*); (2) the yearbook of the government administration (*Regeringskansliets årsbok*); (3) the document “Important Laws and Regulations” (*Viktiga lagar och förordnanden*), which is presented every six months by the government; and (4) articles from the newspaper *Riksdag och Departement*, which at the time was a weekly independent newspaper that aimed to cover all major decisions made within the parliament and the government. For outcome pledges, relevant statistical overviews are consulted. Often sources of information are combined with informant interviews via telephone or email enquiries to responsible ministries, institutions, and subject experts.²

10.4. Election Pledges in Sweden

Sweden is among the cases in this book in which parties have increased their pledge making considerably during recent decades (see chapter 3). In 1991 a Swedish voter would have encountered 371 pledges if he or she had read all the parliamentary parties’ election manifestos. By 2010 that number had more than tripled (to 1,195 pledges), and in 2014 more than quadrupled (to 1,775). When broken down into numbers per manifesto (since the numbers of parties and alliances have increased), Swedish parties included on average 46 pledges in their election manifestos in 1991 and 1994. From 1998 to 2014 the average number of pledges made in Swedish parties’ election manifestos was 72 (1998), 104 (2002), 120 (2006), 149 (2010), and 222 (2014). The increase in pledge making has been general rather than particular in the sense that all parties show similar developments (though with occasional drops at different time points). Both narrow and broad pledges increased during the period, but the share of broad pledges increased on average somewhat more.³

All in all, 879 pledges have been evaluated for fulfillment in Sweden, of which 580 (65.9 percent) are narrow pledges (and hence are included in the comparative analyses of chapter 4). The least specific government manifesto during the studied period was the 1998 Social Democratic manifesto,

where less than half of the pledges (45.8 percent) were narrow. The most specific government manifesto was the joint coalition manifesto of the Alliance for Sweden in 2010 (80.3 percent of the pledges were narrow). In between came the 2002 Social Democratic manifestos (56.3 percent narrow pledges), the 2006 Alliance for Sweden manifesto (56.9 percent), and the 1994 Social Democratic manifesto (61.0 percent).

What type of election pledges are made in Sweden? If we look at an average among the three investigated Social Democratic governments, the most frequent pledge type was “expand” pledges (51.4 percent), after which came “other change” (36.2 percent). “Cuts” and “tax increases” only appear in the 1994 manifesto, which was put forward during the economic crisis (then with 16.9 and 1.2 percent, respectively). Tax cuts are rarely pledged by the Social Democrats, on average 2.8 percent over the three governments, as are pledges to review (1.2 percent) and keep status quo (2.8 percent). For the two Alliance for Sweden governments, the average for the expand pledges is lower (35.1 percent), which is in accordance with the results in chapter 4, where center-right governments are less focused on expansion pledges. The “other change” pledges are instead more frequent for the alliance governments (44.2 percent). Furthermore, tax cuts are more common than for the Social Democratic manifestos, on average over the two alliance periods 6.4 percent. Tax increases are 1 percent of the alliance pledges. For the 2010 alliance government, the status quo and review pledges represent comparatively large portions of the manifesto (11.8 and 7.2 percent, respectively, of that manifesto). For the 2006 manifesto, the numbers are similar to those of the Social Democratic governments (3.5 percent for status quo and 1.5 percent for review). The relatively larger proportion of status quo and review pledges in 2010 reflected the fact that the Alliance for Sweden used the manifesto to claim that it was on the right track in a number of areas where it had begun work in its first government of 2006.

Subjectwise, the studies of Swedish parties’ election pledge making support the general view of the book that parties make pledges in areas that are salient and important both for the citizens and for the parties themselves. Håkansson and Naurin (2016) present a detailed overview of pledge making in Sweden, but it makes sense to summarize their analyses for the governments included in this book. Most pledges are made in the areas of social welfare, education and research, the environment, employment, and economics. The Social Democrats made most of their pledges in the social welfare area during their time in government. They dedicated on average 22.2 percent of their pledges to the social welfare area over the course of

the three governments. The second- and the third-most-common area was education and research (15.6 percent) and employment and labor market (13.5 percent). For the two governments of the Alliance for Sweden, the most common area of pledges was the environment (19.9 percent), social welfare (17.8 percent) and education and research (12.2 percent), which possibly mirrors the role of the three smaller parties in the coalition, where the Centre Party stressed environmental issues, the Christian Democrats social welfare issues, and the Liberal Party education and research. The Moderate Party is traditionally a strong advocate of the rights of enterprises, as well as of lower taxes. Such issues are found in the categories "Economic" and "Enterprise," which together accounted for 16.6 percent of the manifestos on average over the two governments.

For all governments, only a few pledges were categorized as outcome pledges. The Social Democrats made 3 (5.1 percent) outcome pledges in 1994, 6 (8.3 percent) in 1998, and 6 (5.4 percent) in 2002. The Alliance for Sweden made only 1 (0.5 percent) in 2006 and 22 (7.9 percent) in 2010.

Chapter 3 showed that Sweden, next after Germany and the Netherlands, is among the contexts in our data where one party's pledge more often is similar to another party's pledge (see fig. 3.6). Sweden has comparatively many parties, which we found in chapter 3 correlates with the probability of pledges being made by more than one party. However, as in all contexts, most Swedish pledges are not directly related to the pledges made by other parties.

Table 10.1 takes the most recent Social Democratic minority government as an example in an analysis of the agreement between parties' pledges. This is the government in which the most analyses of fulfillment of opposition party pledges is performed. The table illustrates the relations among pledges made by the parties that entered parliament after the 2002 election and includes all pledges made by parliamentary parties at the time. Each column refers to the pledges made by one of the parties, while the rows indicate the relationship between that party's pledges and other parties' pledges. As described in chapter 3, a pledge made by a party can be classified as being in agreement, in disagreement, or unrelated to the pledges made by another party.

Table 10.1 shows that a clear majority of the pledges made in the 2002 election were unrelated to other parties' pledges. The largest percentage agreement is 25.0 percent, which was the share of the Liberal Party's pledges that were in agreement with a Christian Democratic pledge. The lowest percentage of agreement is 2.7 percent, which was the proportion of the Moderate pledges that were in agreement with a pledge made by

TABLE 10.1. Relations among pledges in parties' manifestos in the 2002 Swedish election

	Left	SocDem	Green	Centre	Liberal	Moderates	ChrDem
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Agreement with Left		8.0 (9)	24.2 (15)	4.9 (7)	8.0 (7)	2.7 (3)	3.9 (5)
Disagreement with Left		0.9 (1)	0	0.7 (1)	2.3 (2)	5.5 (6)	3.1 (4)
Unrelated to Left		91.1 (102)	75.8 (47)	94.4 (135)	89.8 (79)	91.8 (101)	93.0 (119)
Agreement with SocDem	13.6 (12)		9.7 (6)	8.4 (12)	11.4 (10)	7.3 (8)	8.6 (11)
Disagreement with SocDem	1.1 (1)		0	0	1.1 (1)	0.9 (1)	0
Unrelated to SocDem	85.2 (75)		90.3 (56)	91.6 (131)	87.5 (77)	91.8 (101)	91.4 (117)
Agreement with Green	17.0 (15)	6.3 (7)		5.6 (8)	10.2 (9)	3.6 (4)	7.0 (9)
Disagreement with Green	0	0		0	1.1 (1)	1.8 (2)	0
Unrelated to Green	83.0 (73)	93.8 (105)		94.4 (135)	88.6 (78)	94.5 (104)	93.0 (119)
Agreement with Centre	8.0 (7)	17.9 (20)	12.9 (8)		23.9 (21)	17.3 (19)	18.0 (23)
Disagreement with Centre	2.3 (2)	0	0		1.1 (1)	0.9 (1)	0
Unrelated to Centre	89.8 (79)	82.1 (92)	87.1 (92)		75.0 (66)	81.8 (90)	82.0 (105)
Agreement with Liberal	5.7 (5)	8.0 (9)	14.5 (9)	13.3 (19)		14.5 (16)	16.4 (21)
Disagreement with Liberal	2.3 (2)	0.9 (1)	1.6 (1)	0.7 (1)		0	0.8 (1)
Unrelated to Liberal	92.0 (81)	91.1 (102)	83.9 (0)	86.0 (123)		85.5 (94)	82.8 (106)
Agreement with Moderate	3.4 (3)	7.1 (8)	6.5 (4)	14.0 (20)	17.0 (15)		14.8 (19)
Disagreement with Moderate	6.8 (6)	1.8 (2)	3.2 (2)	0.7 (1)	0		0.8 (1)
Unrelated to Moderate	89.8 (79)	91.1 (102)	90.3 (56)	85.3 (122)	83.0 (73)		84.4 (108)
Agreement with ChrDem	6.8 (6)	13.4 (15)	11.3 (7)	14.7 (21)	25.0 (22)	19.1 (21)	
Disagreement with ChrDem	3.4 (3)	0	0	0	1.1 (1)	0.9 (1)	
Unrelated to ChrDem	89.8 (79)	86.6 (97)	88.7 (55)	85.3 (122)	73.9 (65)	80.0 (88)	
Total	88	112	62	143	88	110	128

Note: As a guide for reading this table, the column labeled “Left” indicates that the Lefts’ 2002 manifesto contained a total of 88 election pledges. The row labeled “Agreement with SocDem” indicates that 12 of these 88 Left pledges (13.6%) were consensually related to pledges made by the Social Democrats. The row labeled “Disagreement with SocDem” indicates that 1 of these 88 Left pledges (1.1%) was in direct disagreement with a Social Democratic pledge. The row labeled “Unrelated to SocDem” indicates that 75 of these 88 Left pledges (85.2%) bore no direct relation to Social Democratic pledges.

the Left Party. The governing Social Democratic Party shows the highest agreement levels with the Center Party (17.9 percent) and the Christian Democrats (13.4 percent), which were outside the parliamentary agreement at the time. The lowest level of agreement is instead found for one of the parties that the Social Democrats chose to collaborate with in the parliament after the election of 2002, namely, the Green Party (6.3 percent in agreement).

The Social Democrats made only four pledges that were in disagreement with other parties' pledges (one with the Left Party, one with the Liberal Party, and two with the Moderates). The highest percentage for disagreement in 2002 is found between the Left Party and the Moderates, which were placed at opposed ends of the ideological spectrum at the time. Six of the 88 Left pledges are in disagreement with a Moderate pledge (6.8 percent), and six of the 110 Moderate pledges are in disagreement with a Left Pledge (5.5 percent).

10.5. Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Sweden

Moving on to the analyses of fulfillment, this chapter includes analyses of 879 pledges. Table 10.2 demonstrates that the studied Swedish governments fulfill a large proportion of their pledges. The Social Democrats fully fulfilled 86.4 percent of its 1994 pledges, 83.3 percent of the pledges made in 1998, and 81.3 percent of its 2002 pledges. The Alliance for Sweden fully fulfilled 75.7 percent of the pledges it made in its joint election manifesto 2006 and 77.8 percent in 2010. When I collapse the fulfilled and the partially fulfilled pledges, the at least partially fulfilled rate is between 78.7 and 90.2 percent of the pledges. The lowest percentage is found for the 2006 majority coalition government. When looking only at the narrow pledges, which we do in chapter 4, fulfillment rates are slightly lower. This is consistent with analyses of other contexts (see chapter 8 on Spain and chapters 5 and 6 on the UK and US).

What policies are hidden in the numbers in table 10.2? To give a few examples, in 1994 the government managed to fulfill the pledge to decrease general unemployment, but it did not manage to fulfill the pledge to lower the youth unemployment rate to the percentage it set out. The 1994 government also fulfilled its pledges to roll back several of the policies that the previous right-wing government had implemented, such as deteriorations in unemployment insurance and employment rights. In 1998 the Social Democrats made and fulfilled important pledges to increase child benefits

TABLE 10.2. Pledge fulfillment in Sweden

	Governing parties					Opposition parties			
	Social Democrats			Alliance for Sweden		Moderates	Green Party†	Centre Party	Social Democrats
	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2002	2002	2002	2006
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Narrow pledges									
Fully fulfilled	91.7 (33)	75.8 (25)	77.8 (49)	68.7 (79)	76.8 (172)	16.7 (8)	47.1 (8)	23.3 (7)	35.7 (5)
Partially fulfilled	0	12.1 (4)	1.6 (1)	3.5 (4)	4.5 (10)	4.2 (2)	5.9 (1)	6.7 (2)	0
<i>At least partially fulfilled</i>	<i>91.7 (33)</i>	<i>87.8 (29)</i>	<i>79.3 (50)</i>	<i>72.1 (83)</i>	<i>81.2 (182)</i>	<i>20.8 (10)</i>	<i>52.9 (9)</i>	<i>30.0 (9)</i>	<i>35.7 (5)</i>
Not fulfilled	8.3 (3)	9.1 (3)	17.5 (11)	27.0 (31)	18.3 (41)	79.2 (38)	47.1 (8)	70.0 (21)	42.9 (6)
No measures available	0	3.0 (1)	3.2 (2)	0.9 (1)	0.4 (1)	0	0	0	21.4 (3)
TOTAL PLEDGES	36	33	63	115	224	48	17	30	14
Broad pledges									
Fully fulfilled	78.3 (18)	89.7 (35)	85.7 (42)	85.1 (74)	81.8 (45)	38.5 (5)	50.0 (2)	22.2 (2)	65.0 (13)
Partially fulfilled	2.6 (1)	2.6 (1)	2.0 (1)	2.3 (2)	1.8 (1)	7.7 (1)	0	0	0
<i>At least partially fulfilled</i>	<i>82.6 (19)</i>	<i>92.3 (36)</i>	<i>87.7 (43)</i>	<i>87.3 (76)</i>	<i>83.6 (46)</i>	<i>46.1 (6)</i>	<i>50.0 (2)</i>	<i>22.2 (2)</i>	<i>65.0 (13)</i>
Not fulfilled	17.4 (4)	7.7 (3)	12.2 (6)	11.5 (10)	16.4 (9)	53.8 (7)	50.0 (2)	77.8 (7)	35 (7)
No measures available	0	0	0	1.1 (1)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL PLEDGES	23	39	49	87	55	13	4	9	20
All pledges									
Fully fulfilled	86.4 (51)	83.3 (60)	81.3 (91)	75.7 (153)	77.8 (217)	21.3 (13)	47.6 (10)	23.1 (9)	52.9 (18)
Partially fulfilled	1.7 (1)	6.9 (5)	1.8 (2)	3.0 (6)	3.9 (11)	4.9 (3)	4.8 (1)	5.1 (2)	0
<i>At least partially fulfilled</i>	<i>88.1 (52)</i>	<i>90.2 (65)</i>	<i>83.0 (93)</i>	<i>78.7 (159)</i>	<i>81.7 (228)</i>	<i>26.2 (16)</i>	<i>52.3 (11)</i>	<i>28.2 (11)</i>	<i>52.9 (18)</i>
Not fulfilled	11.9 (7)	8.3 (6)	15.2 (17)	20.3 (41)	17.9 (50)	73.8 (45)	47.6 (10)	71.8 (28)	38.2 (13)
No measures available	0	1.4 (1)	1.8 (2)	1.0 (2)	0.4 (1)	0	0	0	8.8 (3)
TOTAL PLEDGES	59	72	112	202	279	61	21	39	34

Source: For governing parties, Naurin (2014a); Lindvall et al. (2017). For opposition parties, Thomson et al. (2017).

Note: The table shows all pledges found in government parties' manifestos and economic pledges found in opposition parties' manifestos. The total is 879. "No measures available" means pledges for which information was not sufficient to judge the promise at the time of the investigation, even though the promise was specific enough to be defined as a promise. In some of these pledges, the relevant statistics were not yet available, and in others there was not yet a common understanding of what statistics should be used among the sources.

†Partner with the minority single-party government at the time.

and pensions. They also, for example, made pledges that concerned being tougher on organized and economic crime, which they could fulfill. They did not manage to fulfill the pledge on the right of all children to have licensed teachers, and they failed on creating legislation allowing everyone who wants to work full time instead of part time to do so. In 2002 the government fulfilled the pledge to supply funding for 4,000 more police officers and to abolish the ability of employers to make use of parental leave as part of notice when employees are laid off from their jobs. However, it failed to deliver on the pledge that would have forbidden employers to make exceptions to the rule that the last person employed is the first to be let go. It also, again, failed to deliver on the pledge that employees would have the right to work full time. Another unfulfilled pledge was that the employment rate of the country would reach 80 percent by 2004. A well-known example of a fulfilled pledge by the Alliance for Sweden in 2006 was the pledge to lower income taxes for low- and medium-wage earners with at least 45 billion Swedish kronor. Another one was the pledge to allow for a tax reduction for household services, which is one of the more hotly debated pledges in recent Swedish political history, popularly known as the RUT-reduction (“Rut” is both an abbreviation of “tax reduction for household services” and a female name typical of a traditional housemaid). An example of a broken pledge was the 2006 pledge by the Alliance for Sweden to abolish the so-called temporary austerity tax for high-income earners. The pledge was subject to debate among the four parties, and it is an example of a pledge that was unfulfilled due to a lack of true support among all the coalition parties.

Table 10.2 shows that partially fulfilled pledges are relatively rare (6.9 percent for the 1998 government is the highest proportion). Partially fulfilled pledges in the Swedish case are for example pledges that are decided on after a promised date but still within the election period. The pledge of the Alliance for Sweden to introduce a cost ceiling for dental care costs by July 1, 2007, is partially fulfilled since the proposition was accepted by the Riksdag on April 2, 2008—one year after the target date, but still within the election term. Other examples of partially fulfilled pledges are those for which there is obvious action that is similar to what was promised but not precisely the same. In the Swedish case, the government sometimes comes up with technical strategies for social benefits that are slightly different from those described in its manifesto. If the general idea of the pledge is respected, even though policy does not exactly follow the design laid out in the pledge, the pledge is coded as partially fulfilled. The best-known such pledge is the maximum fee for child care services that the Social Demo-

crats pledged in 1998. The pledge declared a specific amount (700 kronor), but the construction of the fee instead became more income related, so some parents had to pay more than 700 and some paid much less.

The variation between the governing and opposition parties is broadly in line with the analyses in chapter 4. Opposition parties' pledge fulfillment is considerably lower than that of the governing parties, but two opposition parties fulfill at least partially more than 50 percent of their economic pledges. The Green Party in 2002 had a written postelection agreement with the minority government of the Social Democrats, which was not the case for the Moderate and Centre parties at the same time. Pledge fulfillment for the Green Party is 52.3 percent at least partially fulfilled pledges, while for the Moderate and the Centre parties the same number is 26.2 and 28.2 respectively. The Social Democrats fulfilled at least partially 52.9 percent of their economic pledges in opposition from 2006 to 2010. While this is clearly lower than what they achieved when in government, it is double what the comparable Moderates achieved during their time in opposition in 2002 (26.2 percent at least partially fulfilled economic pledges). Of the Social Democratic pledges that were not in agreement with those of any other party, 47.1 percent were at least partially fulfilled, so the higher percentage of fulfillment is not explained by the Social Democrats making unusually similar pledges 2006. The result is in line with our overall conclusion in chapter 4 that opposition parties with previous governing experience, or that come directly from incumbency, have an advantage compared to other opposition parties. In 2006 the Social Democrats came from a long period of incumbency and had long experience of governing, which was not the case for the Moderates in 2002.

10.6. Conclusions

This chapter has shown that governing parties in Sweden fulfill a large proportion of pledges under varying types of government. The minority single-party governments studied were found to have fulfilled the highest proportion of their election pledges, but the coalitions of 2006 and 2010 came close. The Swedish case strengthens research claiming that minority single-party governments are efficient (see Strøm 1985; Cody 2008). Their strong performance in pledge research points to the importance of examining minority single-party governments as the special constitutional situation they represent and of separating them from minority multiparty governments and majority single-party governments. Furthermore, the

analysis supports the conclusion that a joint election manifesto facilitates the fulfillment of the pledges of coalition governments. In comparison to coalition parties in other countries that use individual manifestos, the Alliance for Sweden fulfilled a larger proportion of its pledges. Taken together, therefore, the lesson from the Swedish case is that parties in similar situations benefit from staying single in the cabinet or teaming up in advance if they want to fulfill their election pledges.

NOTES

1. The identification of Swedish pledges and the division of pledges into different categories have been subjected to detailed reliability tests, see for example Håkansson and Naurin 2016, footnotes 2–5.

2. Details may be found in Naurin 2014a; and Lindvall et al. 2017.

3. For details about the period 1991–2010, see Håkansson and Naurin 2016. For the election of 2014 (which is investigated for this chapter), the numbers include all pledges in all official manifestos of parties entering the parliament after the election. This means the manifestos of the Left Party, Green Party, Social Democrats, Centre Party, Liberal Party, Christian Democrats, and Sweden Democrats and the joint manifesto of the Alliance for Sweden. It should be noted that there was a slightly greater increase in broad pledges compared to specific pledges between 1991 and 2010 (Håkansson and Naurin 2016). This increase did not continue between 2010 and 2014.

Ireland

Robert Thomson, Rory Costello, and Edwina Love

11.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the fulfillment of Irish parties' election pledges during the period 1977–2016. Ireland is a relevant testing ground for examining the effect of different types of governments and economic conditions on pledge fulfillment. During the time period considered here, the Irish electoral and party systems produced governments of four distinct types: majority and minority coalitions, as well as majority and minority single-party governments. The Irish governments we examine in this chapter also varied considerably in terms of the economic conditions they faced, including the heyday of the Celtic tiger in the late 1990s and early 2000s and the deep recession following the financial crisis that hit in 2008. By examining variation in pledge fulfillment across these governments, we hold constant important features of the political culture, party system, and electoral system that may also account for some of the variation in pledge fulfillment. Consequently, we are able to draw more certain inferences about the effects of different types of government and economic conditions on pledge fulfillment than would be the case if we could only examine variation across countries.

Section 11.2 gives a brief overview of the electoral and party systems of Ireland, as well as the governments we include in our analyses. Section 11.3 describes how we measure election pledges and their fulfillment.

Section 11.4 describes the election pledges made by parties and the relations among those pledges. Section 11.5 examines pledge fulfillment and examines the extent to which different types of government and economic conditions were associated with different rates of pledge fulfillment. Section 11.6 concludes by highlighting some of the main findings and their implications for comparisons with other countries.

11.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Ireland

Ireland is a tough test of the proposition that election pledges matter, because the electoral and party systems accentuate the importance of localism and personality politics. Irish elections are conducted using the single transferable vote system of proportional representation. This infrequently used system allows voters to choose candidates rather than parties in multi-seat constituencies. Voters rank the candidates in order of their preference, and a quota is calculated based on the number of votes cast divided by the number of seats in the constituency plus one. First-preference votes are counted first, and subsequent preferences are taken into account if the required number of candidates does not meet the quota. Some consequences of this system include the prevalence of “personality voting,” the high value placed on constituency work by elected representatives, and the relatively large numbers of independent representatives (Sinnott 2005).

We consider eight parties over the entire time period of the present study, although not all parties existed at the same time. These eight parties include all major parties according to a broad definition that includes all nationally organized parties that won at least two parliamentary seats. Six of these eight parties participated in government at some time during the 1977–2016 time period examined here. The two largest parties are Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. One of these two parties has been in government throughout this period but never together. Unlike the situation in most other European countries, these two main parties do not lie on opposite sides of the left-right divide. Their origins lie in differences over the national question rather than social or economic conflict, and both are essentially center-right parties (Mair and Weeks 2005). According to Laver and Budge (1992, 43), “The lack of a strong left-right dimension and the role of traditional loyalties in determining patterns of party support have meant that intense ideological competition has rarely been presented as the basic motivation of Irish politicians.” Traditional loyalties date back to the early years after Independence. The split in Sinn Féin in the 1920s

over whether or not to accept the Treaty of Independence that divided Ireland led to the formation of two parties: Fianna Fáil, which had been the antitreaty faction; and Fine Gael, the pro-treaty faction. The Labour Party, whose origins predate both of these other parties, failed to take up a party position on the issue of the acceptance or rejection of the treaty. The Labour Party in Ireland has always been much smaller than social democratic parties in other European countries; it typically receives 10 to 15 percent of the vote, with a particularly strong performance of 19 percent of the vote in the 2011 election.

In addition to Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the Labour Party, which are generally considered to be the main contenders for government, the Progressive Democrats, the Democratic Left, and the Green Party have also participated in government at various times. The Progressive Democrats (PDs) championed free market policies in Ireland. They held office as a junior coalition partner with Fianna Fáil in four governing periods considered here. The PDs were members of the coalition for the entire terms: 1989–92, 1997–2002, and 2002–7. They also joined the government that formed in 2007. However, due to a decline in electoral support, the PDs began the process of disbanding in 2008, while their leader stayed on as an independent. Another small party that has participated in government is the Democratic Left, which formed in 1992. The Democratic Left held office together with Fine Gael and Labour in 1994–97. It merged with the Labour Party in 1999. The Green Party's 1997, 2002, and 2007 manifestos are included in the present study. In 2007 the Greens participated in government office for the first time. Parties that were in opposition during the time period considered here are the Workers Party and Sinn Féin. The Workers Party was the predecessor of the Democratic Left, and we include its manifestos of 1982, 1987, and 1989. Sinn Féin's 2002, 2007, and 2011 manifestos are also included. Sinn Féin has traditionally focused on the unification of Ireland, and it also has strong socialist leanings.

The time period from 1977 onward is a reasonable starting point for the analysis of election pledges because the 1977 Irish parliamentary election is considered to have been a watershed in the development of comprehensive party platforms. Prior to this election, "Irish electioneering could be summarized as consisting primarily of four elements: short-termism, localism, voluntarism and machine politics" (Farrell 1994, 221–22). Although both Labour and Fine Gael had been publishing manifestos for decades, 1977 was the first time that Fianna Fáil issued one. Fianna Fáil's conduct in the 1977 election campaign displayed a higher level of professionalism than in previous elections (Farrell and Manning

1978, 154). From 1977 on, party manifestos were taken seriously by all the party leaderships as an aid to winning or maintaining votes and negotiating with other parties in coalitions.

As observed in other chapters, there is little systematic comparative research on how election manifestos are written. For most Irish parties in the period studied here, the process by which manifestos were formulated was informal and top-down. This is in line with Kavanagh's brief comparison of the manifesto formulation process in the UK and several other countries, where he noted that the "least formal approach is found in Ireland," where "proposals are usually declared by the party leader" (1981, 24). Irish party constitutions are generally silent on how manifestos are to be developed (Däubler 2012, 55). Manifestos are typically produced by a small team of senior party staffers (such as the party policy director and political advisers) working with senior members of the parliamentary party (including the party leader). However, there is evidence that the process has become somewhat more inclusive in some parties in recent years. The Green Party and Labour Party began to give a greater role to party members in 2007 and 2011 respectively (66; Suiter and Farrell 2011, 33–34). Similarly, Fine Gael conducted a survey of the party membership soliciting policy suggestions when drawing up its 1997 election manifesto, although very few actually responded (Garry and Mansergh 1999, 85).

Interest groups are also consulted by most parties, although interviews with those responsible for drafting manifestos suggest that their impact on policy tends to be small. There may also be a degree of coordination with prospective coalition partners when writing manifestos, although again this tends to be relatively minor (Däubler 2012, 60–61). One noticeable change is that parties have become more professional in terms of the research carried out by the manifesto preparation team, with larger parties in particular making increasing use of public opinion polls and focus groups to gauge the potential level of interest in different policy proposals (*ibid.*, 58).

Manifestos in Ireland used to be written quite late in the electoral cycle (sometimes after the election had been called), but since the 1990s parties have become more organised in this regard, often beginning the process a year or two years prior to the anticipated election date (Garry and Mansergh 1999, 84). Even when a manifesto is written well in advance of an election, it might not be published until relatively late in the campaign. For example, Fine Gael published its 2011 election manifesto just ten days prior to the election in order to attract maximum publicity (Suiter and Farrell 2011, 31).

We include nine governments, each of which lasted over a year and

was the first government to form after an election. The governments of shortest duration included were the 1992–94 Fianna Fáil/Labour government, which lasted just under two years, and the 1987–89 Fianna Fáil government, which lasted two years and four months. The other seven governments lasted three and a half years or longer, which in principle gives parties sufficient time to fulfill their election pledges. We exclude two short-lived governments that held power within this period: the eight-month Fine Gael/Labour coalition of 1981–82 and the nine-month minority Fianna Fáil government of 1982. We also exclude the Fine Gael/Labour/Democratic Left coalition of 1994–97 because this government did not form immediately after an election. Rather, it formed when the Labour Party left the coalition with Fianna Fáil, which it had formed after the 1992 election, to form a new coalition. These cases are examined in more detail elsewhere (Thomson and Costello 2016). Here we focus on the nine governments that are most relevant for comparative analyses.

The nine governments we study in this chapter exhibit marked variation both in the presence and type of interparty power sharing and in economic conditions. The composition and type of the nine governments we include are summarized in table 1.1 in chapter 1. Six of the nine governments are majority coalitions: the governments that formed in 1982, 1989, 1992, 2002, 2007, and 2011. The remaining three governments include each of the other three main types: a single-party majority government formed in 1977, a single-party minority government formed in 1987, and a minority coalition formed in 1997.

These governments faced radically different economic conditions during the period examined here. Governments in the early 1980s managed an economy with sluggish growth and strained public sector finances. By contrast, governments in the late 1990s and early 2000s had managed a booming economy. Economic growth reached its peak in the 1997–2002 governing period with an average of 9.1 percent. It was not until after 2007 that the Irish economy entered a period of economic crisis. According to World Bank figures, the Irish economy shrunk by 3.0 percent in 2008 and 7.0 percent in 2009, and continued to contract in the following two years. The 2007–11 period contains one of the most dramatic economic crises experienced by a western government in recent decades. It revealed that Ireland's previous growth had coincided with an unsustainable property bubble and imprudent lending practices. When the property bubble burst and the international supply of cheap credit dried up, Ireland faced a truly dire economic situation. The government's decision to bail out Irish banks in 2008 put further pressure on public finances in a context of ris-

ing unemployment and soaring costs of government borrowing in international bond markets. This led to an international troika of the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) granting a bailout to the Irish exchequer in 2010 (Murphy 2011). Many observers concluded that the Irish government was effectively no longer in charge of running the country. The sitting coalition of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party fell, and both governing parties were punished severely by voters in February 2011, after which a new coalition consisting of Fine Gael and the Labour Party took office.

11.3. Research Design

The election pledges examined here were sourced from parties' manifestos. We include the election manifestos or equivalent documents published by all the major parties prior to the election, regardless of whether they went on to participate in government after the election. We follow the narrow definition of election pledges given in chapter 2. The distinguishing feature of the narrow definition is that it stipulates that for a statement to be a pledge the manifesto writers must provide us with criteria on the basis of which we can examine whether the pledge was fulfilled. Our choice of more specific and directly testable statements is appropriate in the Irish context because parties are quite detailed when setting out their policy intentions, as will become clear in the next section.

This chapter integrates information from several related research projects on Irish pledges. This means that, although the data are comparable, different choices were made concerning the policy areas and types of pledges included in different periods. Due to limited resources, the 2002 pledges we study are limited to socioeconomic pledges (Costello and Thomson 2008). Socioeconomic pledges include pledges that fell under the jurisdiction of seven government departments: the Department of Finance; the Department of Social and Family Affairs; the Department of Health and Children; the Department of Education; the Department of Environment and Local Government; the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment; and the Department of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform. The 401 socioeconomic pledges made by the six main political parties that competed in the 2002 election cover approximately half the total pledges made by each party. Mansergh's (2004) study compared the rate of fulfillment of pledges made by Irish parties in the area of economics with pledges from all other policy areas and found no significant difference

between them. The data from the manifestos of 1977–97 include pledges to “review” certain policy areas as pledges because these reviews are also official government actions. Analyses of later manifestos do not include these pledges. The data from the manifestos of 1977–97 exclude status quo pledges while the data from later manifestos include status quo pledges. The data on the 2002 and 2011 manifestos include outcome pledges, whereas the data on other years do not. These differences concern a small percentage of the total pledges made and do not affect the main findings, as the analyses below will confirm.

11.4. Election Pledges in Ireland

Irish parties make a considerable number of pledges, and the number appears to have increased since 1977, as the analyses in chapter 3 revealed. This is also the conclusion we reach if we focus only on pledges to change the status quo. On average, each party (or, in the case of National Coalition in 1977, each group of parties) made 95.3 change pledges ($n = 36$). This calculation excludes the manifestos of 2002 for, which we have only socioeconomic pledges, which make up around half of the pledges. The Spearman rank correlation between year and the number of pledges is .69 ($p = .00$; $n = 36$), indicating a trend whereby more recent manifestos have more pledges. Pledges to maintain the status quo make up a small minority of pledges in Irish manifestos. In the 16 Irish manifestos that were coded for status quo pledges, status quo pledges made up only 4.6 percent of all pledges. Status quo pledges are sometimes of considerable importance and are not necessarily easy to fulfill. For example, the Progressive Democrats promised not to increase taxation on employment in their 2002 manifesto. New taxes were imposed on employees’ benefits in 2004, which means that this pledge of nonaction was not fulfilled.

The most common type of pledge is pledges to expand particular programs or make changes that would imply increases in government spending, followed by pledges to cut taxes. We systematically categorized pledges from 42 manifestos into the categories of expansionary pledges, pledges to cut programs, tax cuts and tax increases, and outcome pledges. On average 34.6 percent of pledges in the 42 manifestos were pledges to expand programs, while 6.7 percent of the pledges were to cut taxes. There were relatively few pledges to cut programs (on average 0.8 percent across the 42 manifestos) or increase taxes (2.2 percent of pledges). Pledges to bring about certain outcomes made up 1.1 percent of the pledges on average. For

example, in 2002 Fianna Fáil's expansionary pledges included promises to end hospital waiting lists, reduce class sizes in schools, and increase the numbers of policy officers. The Greens and Sinn Féin's 2002 manifestos did make a small number of pledges to increase taxes, the Greens on environmental pollution and Sinn Féin on the rich. However, promises to cut taxes were more popular with the larger parties.

To illustrate the relations among pledges made by different parties, table 11.1 gives more detail on the 2002 pledges on socioeconomic issues. Each column refers to the pledges made by one of the parties, while the rows indicate the relationship between that party's pledges and other parties' pledges. A pledge made by a party can be classified as being in consensus, in disagreement, or unrelated to the pledges made by another party. Most pledges are not directly related to the pledges made by other parties. In some cases, it is clear that if a pledge is made by only one party it is likely that none of the other parties will support implementing it in the next government period. For example, the 2002 Progressive Democrats' manifesto contained pledges to privatize most of the publicly owned electricity and gas companies and seaports. None of the other parties stated explicitly whether or not it would keep these companies in public ownership, but it is unlikely that any of them would have supported these privatizations. In other cases, other parties do not explicitly support or oppose a pledge, but it is unclear what their policy positions are on the basis of the information in their manifestos. For example, the Progressive Democrats' 2002 manifesto also contained a detailed pledge to increase tobacco taxes. While the other parties did not take a position on this issue, it is conceivable that they were in favor of the measure. Despite the ambiguity caused by the absence of clear relationships between the pledges of different parties, unrelated pledges still provide information about where the priorities of different parties lie.

When pledges are related to those of other parties, they are generally related in the sense of agreeing with those other parties' pledges rather than disagreeing with them. For example, in 2002 Fianna Fáil, the Progressive Democrats, Fine Gael, Labour, and Sinn Féin all supported relaxing the eligibility criteria for the carers' allowance, a subsidy given to people who provide unpaid care to the ill and elderly, although some parties were more ambitious in relation to this issue than others. Similarly, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the Progressive Democrats all pledged to cut hospital waiting times. Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Labour all pledged to increase the number of hospital beds.

On a small number of key issues, manifestos provide clear alterna-

TABLE 11.1. Relations among election pledges on socioeconomic issues in the 2002 manifestos in Ireland

	Sinn Féin (SF)	Greens	Labour	Fine Gael (FG)	Fianna Fáil (FF)	Progressive Democrats (PD)
Agreement with SF		17.5 (10)	20.7 (23)	22.6 (14)	18.4 (9)	8.8 (6)
Disagreement with SF		1.8 (1)	0.9 (1)	0	2.0 (1)	5.9 (4)
No Relation to SF		80.7 (46)	78.4 (87)	77.4 (48)	79.6 (39)	85.3 (58)
Agreement with Greens	18.5 (10)		10.8 (12)	14.5 (9)	18.4 (9)	10.3 (7)
Disagreement with Greens	1.9 (1)		1.8 (2)	3.2 (2)	4.1 (2)	2.9 (2)
No Relation to Greens	79.6 (43)		87.4 (97)	82.3 (51)	77.6 (38)	86.8 (59)
Agreement with Labour	40.7 (22)	21.1 (12)		38.7 (24)	40.8 (20)	30.9 (21)
Disagreement with Labour	1.9 (1)	3.5 (2)		4.8 (3)	4.1 (2)	5.9 (4)
No Relation to Labour	57.4 (31)	75.4 (43)		56.5 (35)	55.1 (27)	63.2 (43)
Agreement with FG	18.5 (10)	15.8 (9)	19.8 (22)		30.6 (15)	23.5 (16)
Disagreement with FG	1.9 (1)	3.5 (2)	2.7 (3)		4.1 (2)	5.9 (4)
No Relation to FG	79.6 (43)	80.7 (46)	77.5 (86)		65.3 (32)	70.6 (48)
Agreement with FF	14.8 (8)	12.3 (7)	18.0 (20)	24.2 (15)		27.9 (19)
Disagreement with FF	1.9 (1)	3.5 (2)	1.8 (2)	3.2 (2)		1.5 (1)
No Relation to FF	83.3 (45)	84.2 (48)	80.2 (89)	72.6 (45)		70.6 (48)
Agreement with PD	11.1 (6)	8.8 (5)	15.3 (17)	27.4 (17)	30.6 (15)	
Disagreement with PD	9.3 (5)	3.5 (2)	3.6 (4)	6.5 (4)	2.0 (1)	
No Relation to PD	79.6 (43)	87.7 (50)	81.1 (90)	66.1 (41)	67.3 (33)	
TOTALS	54	57	111	62	49	68

Note for reading this table: The second column labeled “Sinn Féin” indicates that its 2002 manifesto contained a total of 54 election pledges. The row labeled “Agreement with Greens” indicates that 10 of these 54 Sinn Féin pledges (18.5%) were consensually related to pledges made by the Green Party. The row labeled “Disagreement with Greens” indicates that one of these 54 Sinn Féin pledges (1.9%) was in direct disagreement with a Green pledge. The row labeled “No relation to Greens” indicates that 43 of these 54 Sinn Féin pledges (79.6%) bore no direct relation to Green pledges.

tives. These involve pledges that if fulfilled would mean by definition that pledges of other parties were unfulfilled. For example, in 2002 Fine Gael and Labour pledged to freeze income tax rates. The Progressive Democrats, by contrast, pledged to reduce the top rate from 42 to 40 percent. The Greens also pledged to reduce taxes on labor but in coordination with increases in environmentally friendly taxes. Fianna Fáil did not make a specific pledge on tax rates, but it did make pledges on the overall tax burden.

Research on election manifestos often assumes that it is “in the media that the document [manifesto] makes its main impact on electors” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Ian Budge 1994). Costello and Thomson (2008) give one of the few, albeit limited, assessments of this assumption. They examined all reports in the *Irish Times*, the main quality broadsheet, during the three-week campaign preceding the 2002 general election. This is a limited assessment because it covers only one media source. However, we would not expect to find more coverage of pledges in other newspapers or media. Of the 401 socioeconomic election pledges contained in the 2002 manifestos, 160 (39.9 percent) were reported on at least one day. For example, attention was devoted to the parties’ plans for reforming health care insurance, their taxation policies, and their pledges on child care. There was substantial variation among the parties in the extent to which their election pledges were covered, with the largest parties’ pledges receiving most attention. By far the most coverage was given to Fine Gael’s election pledges, with more than 90 percent of them mentioned. Just over half of Fianna Fáil’s pledges were mentioned. A total of 38 of Labour’s 111 pledges were also mentioned. For the other three parties, lower percentages of their pledges were mentioned in media reports, ranging from 19 to 28 percent.

11.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Ireland

We now turn to pledge fulfillment in the period 1977–2016. For each of the pledges examined, we referred to relevant legislation, ministerial decisions, spending allocations, parliamentary records, and official reports, depending on the content of what was promised. For example, we judged as fully fulfilled Fianna Fáil’s 2002 pledge to establish a training fund of up to €2,500 per person for unemployed people facing serious barriers to employment. The High Support Process was introduced by the National Training and Employment Authority in 2003. In 2006 a total of €2,500 per person was made available under this scheme to resource the relevant

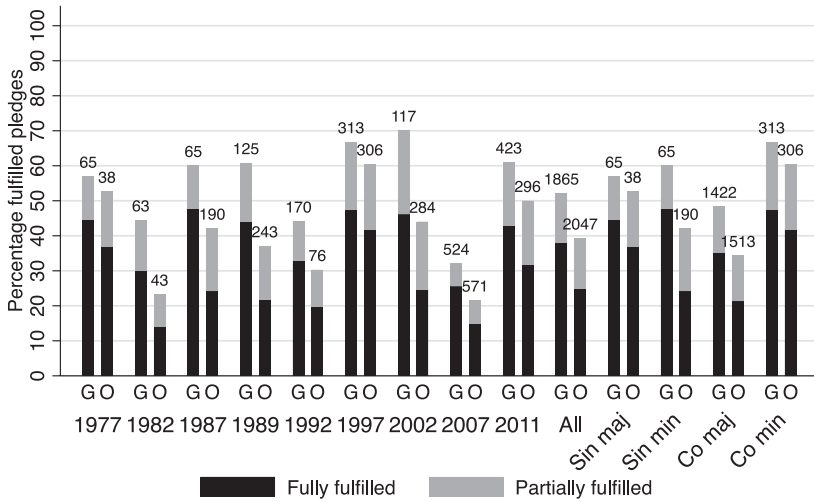


Fig. 11.1. Pledge fulfillment in Ireland

interventions such as counseling and supplemental training. The Progressive Democrats' 2002 pledge to reduce the top income tax rate from 42 to 40 percent was only partially fulfilled because the top rate had been reduced to 41 percent by 2007. Our strict definition of what a pledge is makes the study of pledge fulfillment easier than if we were to include more general statements as pledges, but we still had to make judgment calls on difficult cases in which we had to balance partly conflicting evidence.

Figure 11.1 summarizes the evaluations of pledge fulfillment. Over the entire time period, pledges made by parties that entered government office after the elections, which we refer to as "governing parties" regardless of whether they were in office before the elections, have a slightly higher rate of pledge fulfillment than pledges made by parties that entered the opposition do. Of the 1,865 pledges made by governing parties, 972 (52.1 percent) were at least partially fulfilled and 708 (38.0 percent) fully fulfilled. Of the 2,047 pledges made by opposition parties over the entire time period, 804 (39.3 percent) were at least partially fulfilled and 511 (25.0 percent) fully fulfilled. The difference between governing and opposition parties' pledge fulfillment, though not large, is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 64.92$ and $p = .00$ for the comparison between governing and opposition parties' pledges that were at least partially fulfilled).

Ireland provides variation in different types of government: minority and majority coalitions and single-party governments. Figure 11.1 shows that there is variation in pledge fulfillment among different types of government, but these differences are not entirely in line with our theoretical expectation. Moreover, these differences in power-sharing arrangements are overshadowed by the impact of the state of the economy. Contrary to the hypothesis formulated in chapter 4, the minority coalition that held power between 1997 and 2002 fulfilled most pledges of both the governing and opposition parties: 66.8 percent of governing parties' pledges and 60.5 percent of opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled at least partially. This is higher than the percentages of pledge fulfillment for parties that governed alone. The single-party majority government of Fianna Fáil, 1977–82, fulfilled 56.9 percent of its pledges at least partially, while the single-party minority government of Fianna Fáil, 1987–89, fulfilled slightly more, 60 percent, of its pledges at least partially, despite governing for a shorter period. The most common type of government in Ireland and our sample, majority coalitions, fulfilled the lowest percentages of pledges. Of the governing parties' pledges, only 48.3 percent were partially or fully fulfilled, while 34.3 percent of opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled. The differences in fulfillment rates across government types are significant for both governing and opposition parties ($p = .00$).

In line with the results of the general analyses in chapter 4, there is a very high correlation between the percentage of governing parties' pledges that are at least partially fulfilled and the average rate of economic growth during the years in which the parties governed ($\rho = .81$; $p = .00$; $n = 17$). The highest rates of average economic growth were in the governing period 1997–2002 and 2002–7, with 9.14 and 5.55 respectively. These are also the periods with the highest percentages of pledge fulfillment for governing parties in addition to high percentages of fulfillment for opposition parties. By far the worst economic conditions were in the period 2007–11. Although the growth rate was healthy in 2007, the financial crisis hit in 2008 and the years thereafter, giving an average growth of –1.3 percent of GDP. This was also the period in which the lowest percentages of governing and opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled.

The dramatic economic events that took place during the 2007–11 governing period also illustrate how politicians can feel compelled to take decisions they could not have foreseen during the previous election campaign. In the year of the 2007 election campaign the Irish economy grew by 5.2 percent, an enviable growth rate for a developed country by any standard. The following year the economy was in the midst of one of the

worst crises ever to hit a developed country. As property prices tumbled and the supply of international credit dried up, several of Ireland's major banks faced insolvency. In response, in late September 2008 the Irish government guaranteed to cover the liabilities of the banks. The full implications of this decision were not foreseen at the time: "The banks had not been completely up front about their liabilities, and the guarantee was eventually to encompass a much larger sum than originally envisaged" (Mair 2011a, 3). Mair and other observers note that this momentous decision was taken under extreme time pressure by a small number of senior Fianna Fáil politicians. There was little time for debate or deliberation, and the main opposition party, Fine Gael, did not oppose the decision. The liabilities amounted to more than double Ireland's GDP. These enormous liabilities compounded by a contraction of the economy increased the costs of government borrowing to unsustainable levels. This subsequently led to an international bailout, as a part of which international institutions effectively took over much of the management of public finances.

The impact of economic conditions, and in particular the global financial crisis, on pledge fulfillment in Ireland is also evident in the relatively high percentage of Fianna Fáil's 2011 pledges that were fulfilled despite the fact that the governing coalition consisted of Fine Gael and Labour (Costello, O'Neill, and Thomson 2016). Of the four parties we examined in 2011, Fianna Fáil had the highest percentage of fulfillment despite being an opposition party. Of Fianna Fáil's 129 pledges in its 2011 manifesto, 86, or 66.7 percent, were partially or fully fulfilled. Three months before the election, the government was forced to accept an €85 billion financial assistance program from the European Union (EU) and IMF, which came with significant conditions attached. To meet the requirements of the assistance package, the Fianna Fáil-led government produced a National Recovery Plan, setting out a series of measures designed to address the huge gap in public finances. For the first three years of the Fine Gael-Labour government, the country was officially part of this EU-IMF program. Both Fine Gael and Labour were committed to working within the broad terms of the bailout, although both parties wanted to renegotiate aspects of it. Only Sinn Féin opposed the bailout outright. Even after the country formally exited the program, the government continued to be subject to regular postprogram surveillance by the EU and IMF. Only seven Fine Gael pledges clearly specified reversing elements of the National Recovery Plan, and most of these (4 of 7) were not fulfilled. Labour made slightly more pledges to reverse aspects of the plan (12 in total); two of these were fully fulfilled while four were not fulfilled. The high level of fulfillment for

Fianna Fáil pledges can be partially explained by the new government's adherence to the National Recovery Plan. One quarter of all Fianna Fáil pledges (32 of 129) came directly from the plan, and fulfillment was highest for these pledges (72 percent fulfilled at least partially).

In a more detailed analysis of the impact of economic conditions, Thomson and Costello (2016) formulated and tested the impact of two economic mechanisms on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment using data from Ireland. First, parties tend not to fully adjust their pledges to the prevailing economic conditions, such that their pledges tend to require at least somewhat more resources than the prevailing economic conditions allow. Consequently, when economic conditions are more favorable, pledges are more likely to be fulfilled. This finding supports the commonly held belief that parties do not always make pledges that are economically realistic. Second, parties are to a considerable extent at the mercy of unpredictable economic developments. Therefore, when economic conditions deteriorate after the election, election pledges are less likely to be fulfilled. Thomson and Costello found that the effect of changes in economic growth is particularly pronounced for pledges to cut taxes. The effects of economic performance on pledge fulfillment suggests that at least some of the factors affecting pledge fulfillment are difficult or impossible for parties to control.

Within coalitions, responsibilities must be distributed among the coalition partners. The party that holds the prime ministership has a distinct advantage in terms of pledge fulfillment. Considering all the pledges made by parties that went on to form coalitions (both minority and majority coalitions), pledges made by parties that held the prime ministership were more likely to be fulfilled than those of the junior coalition partners. The percentage of pledges at least partially fulfilled is 59.5 (497 out of 836 pledges) for prime ministerial parties in coalitions compared to only 44.4 percent (399 out of 899 pledges) for junior coalition partners ($\chi^2 = 39.38; p = .00$).

Another aspect of power sharing in coalitions concerns the distribution of ministerial portfolios. The allocation of ministerial portfolios among governing parties has been identified as a prominent mechanism of coalition governance (Laver and Shepsle 1994, 1996). Indeed, the evidence from Ireland shows that the allocation of ministerial portfolios affects pledge fulfillment. Of the 1,013 pledges made by governing parties that held the relevant portfolio in coalitions, 571, or 56.4 percent, were at least partially fulfilled. Of the 722 pledges made by governing parties that did not hold the relevant portfolio in coalitions, only 325, or 45.0 percent, were at least

partially fulfilled. This difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 21.76$; $p = .00$).

11.6. Conclusions

Compared to other countries, it appears that in Ireland relatively low percentages of election pledges are fulfilled. In addition, there is not a marked difference between governing and opposition parties in terms of pledge fulfillment if we consider the entire 1977–2016 period. These findings are in line with our observations that the Irish political system is characterized by localism and small ideological differences between the main parties. However, the analyses also show clearly that there are particular types of governments in which parties are more likely to fulfill election pledges. Single-party governments with and without legislative majorities had higher rates of pledge fulfillment than did governing parties in majority coalitions, which is the most common type of government in Ireland. However, we found a high percentage of pledge fulfillment in the minority coalition that governed in 1997–2002, a period of strong economic growth.

Within governing coalitions, some parties' pledges are more likely to be fulfilled than others. Control of the prime ministership, which was held by the largest of the governing parties in Ireland, either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael, has a strong effect on pledge fulfillment. The importance of prime ministerial government, and indeed the trend toward presidentialism, has been observed in comparative studies of executives in several countries (e.g., Peters, Rhodes, and Wright 2000). In addition, the allocation of ministerial portfolios appears to affect pledge fulfillment in Ireland, with higher percentages of pledge fulfillment in areas where governing parties controlled the relevant ministerial post. This finding, which is also supported by research on coalition governments in the Netherlands (Thomson 2001), is in line with the portfolio allocation model of government formation developed by Laver and Shepsle (1994, 1996). According to this model, the allocation of ministerial portfolios functions as a guarantee that the government will carry out the policies agreed to by the coalition parties.

The momentous decisions taken by the Irish government in 2008 in response to the economic crisis are perhaps the most striking example of government actions that were not preceded by election pledges. The orthodox view is that there was little choice but to issue a blanket guarantee that the state would cover the liabilities of Ireland's troubled banks. How-

ever, some observers disagree with this view, pointing to the variation in responses to financial crises across different countries. The Icelandic government, for instance, refused to bail out its banks after consulting with citizens. The chapters in this volume contain other examples of governments responding to unforeseen developments by taking important decisions that were not announced in previous election campaigns. A less dramatic example can be found in the Dutch case, where the Christian Democrat–Labour Party coalition that was in office in 1989–94 undertook radical welfare reforms in response to sharp increases in claims without having proposed them in their 1989 manifestos (Thomson 2001). The present study is not concerned with the effectiveness of such policies or even with the question of whether governments had more room to maneuver than they claimed. What is most relevant to the focus of this book is that these examples show the limitations of the mandate model in which important government actions are predicted by parties' campaign commitments.

Our findings regarding the period after the financial crisis of 2008 address the question of whether voters have meaningful choices when the main direction of public policy appears to be set by international financial organizations in response to economic crises. Shortly before his untimely death in 2011, Peter Mair wrote:

[T]he election outcome [of 2011], however dramatic, will have mattered little in the sense of any real mandate for action. Regardless of the vote . . . the path that will be followed in the coming years will be much the same. (2011b, 296)

Our findings for the 2011–16 period partly confirm this somewhat pessimistic conclusion. Despite the fact that Fianna Fáil was in opposition during that period, a high percentage of its pledges, which were part of the National Recovery Plan agreed on with international financial organizations, were fulfilled. This implies that government policy on many of the issues central to the 2011 election would have been essentially the same if Fianna Fáil had remained in government after 2011. Nonetheless, the governing coalition of Fine Gael and Labour did put its own stamp on government policies despite the international constraints that bound the government, and we would very likely have found lower rates of fulfillment for Fine Gael and Labour pledges had they been in the opposition after the 2011 election. Moreover, as Ireland emerges from the economic crisis, the scope for choice between different policies within the prevailing economic orthodoxy is likely to expand again at least to its precrisis levels.

TWELVE

Italy

Catherine Moury, Nicolò Conti,
and Jorge M. Fernandes

12.1. Introduction

Cabinets in Italy's First Republic (1947–92) were, in the words of Di Palma, able to “survive but not to govern” (1978, 192). The system was one of stability within instability, in which governments often fell and a nonelectoral replacement ensued. The party system was characterized as “polarized multipartism” (Sartori 1976) in which a dominant party—the Christian Democrats (DC)—held the premiership permanently. The political system made a *cordon sanitaire* to exclude the sizable Communist Party from power (Cotta and Verzichelli 2008). Under a unanimous agreement rule, parliamentary party groups enjoyed predominant agenda-setting powers, including small parties, which could considerably delay legislation (Capano and Giuliani 2003, 12–15). Finally, the Constitution provided (and still provides) for a prime minister with very limited powers, two chambers with potentially inconsistent majorities (in which each bill must be passed),¹ and parliamentary committees with strong prerogatives (such as the power to legislate directly). In a nutshell, Parliament dominated the executive and the number of veto players was so high that any significant move from the status quo was extremely difficult.

In this institutional setting, Di Palma (1978) convincingly demonstrates that governing majorities were unable to address the important issues that divided parties and hence to fulfill their electoral pledges. Rather, they pro-

duced a massive amount of legislation that was narrow in scope and served specific constituencies (Capano and Giuliani 2001).² In the early 1990s, Italy faced a significant public debt, the spectacular rise of the regionalist party Lega Nord (LN), extensive political corruption, and government involvement with organized crime, largely unveiled by the so-called *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands), a nationwide anticorruption operation. At the same time, it was necessary to reduce the massive government debt in order to enter the European and Monetary Union (EMU).³ The main Italian party, the DC, was unable to resist all these pressures, and it dissolved and split into several small parties.

A Second Republic was established, with profound institutional changes, marking a watershed in Italian political life. A new mixed electoral system was adopted (D'Alimonte 2005). Moreover, Parliament reformed its standing order in 1997–98 to provide the government, and the Speaker, with greater agenda-setting powers (Zucchini 2011). In addition, the prime minister's position within the cabinet was strengthened (Vassallo 2007). Elections were meant to become more decisive. The electorate could vote for a program and choose a prime minister and coalition team capable of implementing their electoral pledges. Also the system was meant to clarify responsibility (Powell and Whitten 1993).

The 1993 electoral reform did not remove all the obstacles facing governing parties in policymaking. Since then, Italian governments have experienced frequent crises and deadlocks even in the presence of a prime minister with a clear popular mandate. As a result, the change introduced in 1993 did not lessen Italian dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in that country.⁴ As Bull and Rhodes put it, “Ten years later . . . it is fair to speak of a feeling of dashed expectations. The much-vaunted ‘Second Republic’ has clearly not arrived, even if the ‘First’ is apparently clearly no longer with us” (2007, 660).

In this chapter, we appraise political parties' pledge fulfillment in Italy's Second Republic using original empirical evidence. This is arguably a relatively objective way to assess the efficiency of the Second Republic from a comparative perspective. As case studies, we focus on four governments, two center-left (Prodi I and II) and two center-right (Berlusconi II and III),⁵ and measure to what extent they kept their electoral promises. Chapter 17 compares the Italian governments to their counterparts as regards their capacity to fulfill electoral pledges. We show that Italian pre-electoral coalitions fulfill (at least partially), on average, half the promises included in the common programs. Similar to other countries, we find that minority governments do not fare worse than their majority counterparts.

12.2. Elections, Parties, and Government in Italy

This study looks at manifestos for the elections of 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2008. The study of pledge fulfillment covers governments that had drafted a common electoral manifesto before being elected: Prodi I and II (center-left, 1996–98 and 2006–8) and Berlusconi II (center-right, 2001–5).⁶ In this section, we first describe the circumstances in which electoral manifestos were drafted for each of these four governments. Subsequently, we turn to a more general description of the party system's features that might have some influence on parties' ability, or willingness, to fulfill their electoral pledges.

The center-left coalition, the Olive Tree (*Ulivo*), was formed when the Democratic Party of the Left (*Partito Democratico della Sinistra*) moved toward "opening up to the center" in 1994. The ensuing year witnessed a convergence with several small center-left parties, which pledged to support the election of Romano Prodi as prime minister should they win the elections.⁷ Six months before the elections of November 1995, Prodi and a group known as the seven "wise men"—former technocratic ministers and university professors—began drafting a joint electoral program, which would become known as the "Theses of the Olive Tree." Although none of these formulators was a party leader, they all eventually became ministers. Prodi's common manifesto was very long (40,000 words, the equivalent of a 100-page book). This ambitious program covered a broad range of topics and was presented to the congresses of the coalition parties for ratification. Three small parties rejected the document: the Greens, which were not convinced by its environmental policies; and *Patto Segni* and *Socialisti Italiani*, which opposed proposals on institutional reform. Nevertheless, these parties stayed in the pre-electoral coalition and were later given a place in government.

The elections did not give the Olive Tree an overwhelming victory. To be sure, it obtained a small majority in the Senate, but it needed the votes of the Communist Refoundation (RC) to obtain a majority in the Chamber of Deputies.⁸ Less than two years later the government fell when the Communists withdrew their support and the governing coalition failed to win a parliamentary vote of confidence. Two governments ensued, with ever-changing compositions, including parliamentary support from center-right members of parliament (MPs), who extracted policy benefits without bearing the costs of office (Strøm 1990). The two short-lived governments, led by D'Alema (I and II, 1998–2000) and Amato (2000–2001) completed the legislative term without early elections.

On May 13, 2001, the Olive Coalition, led by Francesco Rutelli, lost the general elections against Silvio Berlusconi's center-right House of Freedoms Coalition (Casa delle Libertà). The coalition was formed only a few months before the 2001 general election. Three parties had already coalesced for the 1996 elections: Berlusconi's Forza Italia (FI), the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale (AN), and the Christian Democrat Biancofiore (CCD-CDU). In 2001 they were joined by the radical right-wing ethno-regionalist LN, led by Umberto Bossi, and two other very small parties: the socialist Nuovo Psi (NPSI) and the Partito Repubblicano (PRI). Center-left politicians accused Casa delle Libertà of not having a program. In response, the center-right coalition presented several electoral programs, including "a letter to the Italian people," which was sent to citizens and published on FI's website. Further, it made a "contract with the Italian people," signed on live television, whereby Berlusconi made five broad pledges and formally committed to leave politics if they were not fulfilled. A few days before the elections, FI published a "government plan for the whole parliamentary term" on its website. To be sure, the coalition's manifesto was much shorter than its predecessor, amounting to a little less than 10,000 words. Although party leaders were the main negotiators of the manifesto,⁹ the document was never formally ratified by the rank and file of the parties. The media reported that this program included a deal between Berlusconi and Bossi providing for fundamental LN claims in the program (tax reduction and federalization of the country) in exchange for its membership in the coalition. The program also included pledges dear to the AN and DC, for example, important public works and state aid for the southern regions, the electoral strongholds of both parties (Diamanti 2007). In the May 13, 2001, elections, the center-right coalition won a large majority in both chambers mainly thanks to the seats obtained by Berlusconi's FI (around 30 percent of the seats or nearly 60 percent of the total received by its coalition).

In 2005 Prodi was elected leader of the "Unione"—a coalition of parties of the old Olive Tree and other small centrist and leftist parties. Prodi had increased legitimacy thanks to a primary election, a novelty in Italian political life hitherto. The new coalition took one long year to prepare a program that was even more ambitious and detailed than that of 1996. An 82,676-word program was drafted by all the coalition parties and, despite some internal disagreements, this time all nine ratified it. The Unione won the 2006 elections by a narrow majority of votes, securing a parliamentary majority in the lower but not the upper house. Prodi led the government for 23 months, resigning after losing a vote of no confidence in the Senate.

The withdrawal of support by one of the coalition partners paved the way for early elections.

In 2008 FI and AN merged to create the People of Freedom (Popolo della Libertà, PdL). The newly created party coalesced only with the LN. Unlike the 2001 election, in 2008 there was no pre-electoral agreement. The PdL drafted its own manifesto, as did the LN. Together they won the elections, garnering a large majority of votes in both chambers. However, the government's life (as well as the PdL's) proved to be troublesome, with several members leaving the government to join the opposition over strained relations with Prime Minister Berlusconi. The latter eventually resigned in 2011, to be replaced by a cabinet of technocrats led by former EU commissioner Mario Monti and supported by a grand coalition of parties. As the new cabinet only had an indirect (albeit popular) mandate, ministers were nonelected officials. It lacked an electoral program, but its priority was to implement the necessary austerity measures to rescue Italy from the financial crisis.

Table 12.1 summarizes the information for the four case studies. It presents the duration (in days) of the drafting of the common manifestos, which is a proxy for potential coalition conflict: the higher the number of days, the higher the transaction costs of reaching equilibrium. Also it shows the number of words involved and the number of seats held by the governing parties in the lower chamber. We also identify whether party leaders joined the government,¹⁰ as well as the respective strength of these party leaders.

The process of manifesto creation might lead us to be skeptical about the degree to which parties are committed to their manifestos. Although a large proportion of the negotiators involved in drafting Prodi I's and Prodi II's programs became ministers, the party leaders—except for those of two smaller parties—remained outside the government.¹¹ Future ministers, mainly former negotiators, may have well “internalized” the policies included in the document that they themselves had drafted, but it is unlikely that they would have had the authority to impose a strong commitment to them. Furthermore, Prodi I and Prodi II did not have a majority in either the chamber or the Senate. Berlusconi I, by contrast, not only had an agreement drafted by all leaders of the coalition but also enjoyed the advantage of having all party leaders as cabinet members. Finally, in the case of the Berlusconi IV government, although the two coalition members (PdL and LN) had separate manifestos, they came to a swift understanding. By and large, PdL's program was adopted, with a few fundamental claims from the LN. Berlusconi himself, together with a handful of future

TABLE 12.1. Comparison of Prodi I (1996–98), Berlusconi II (2001–5), Prodi II (2006–8), and Berlusconi IV (2008–11)

Parties	Duration of the drafting process of the common manifesto	Number of words in the manifesto	Pledges (<i>n</i>)	Party leaders who entered government and their weight in seats	Seats of governing parties in the Chamber of Deputies	Seats of governing parties in the Senate
Prodi I (1996–98)†						
DS, PPI, RI, UD, PS, SI, Verdi	180 days	41,500	274	2/7 29% 4% of seats	290/630 (46%)	152/315 (48%)
Berlusconi II (2001–2006)						
FI, AN, LN, CDU-UDC, NPSI, PRI	7 days	9,600	184	3/6 50% 51% of seats	366/630 (58%)	176/315 (56%)
Prodi II (2006–8)						
DS, Margherita, Idv, UDEUR, SI, Verdi, RC, PdCI, MRE	360 days	82,676	294	4/9 44.4% 36.8% of seats (est.)‡	340/630 (54%)	148/315 (47%)
Berlusconi IV (2008–11)						
PdL (FI and AN), LN	<i>No joint manifesto</i>	3,645 (manifesto of PdL)	100	2/2 100% 100%	340/630 (54%)	168/315 (53%)

Note: In April 2005, following regional elections that had been disastrous for the center-right, the government resigned but was formed again a few days later with the same parties. This government has been called Berlusconi III.

Abbreviations: DS = Democratici di Sinistra (Democratic Left), PPI = Partito Popolare Italiano (Italian People's Party), RI = Rinnovamento Italiano (Italian Renewal), UD = Unione Democratica (Democratic Union), PS = (Segni Pact), SI = Socialisti Italiani (Italian Socialists), FI = Forza Italia, AN = Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance), LN = Lega Nord (Northern League), CDU-UDC = Cristiani Democratici Uniti–Unione Cristiana Democratica (Christian Democrats), NPSI = Novo Partito Socialisti Italiani (New Italian Socialist Party), PRI = Partito Repubblicano Italiano (Italian Republican Party), RC = Rifondazione comunista (Communist Refoundation), IdV = Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values), UDEUR = Unione democratici per l'Europa (Union of Democrats for Europe), PdCI = Partito dei comunisti italiani (Party of Italian Communists), MRE = Movimento repubblicani europei (European Republican Movement), PdL = Popolo della libertà (People of Freedom)

†The center-left governments following Prodi did not draft new manifestos, and that is why they are not included here.

‡The figure for La Margherita (the Daisy Party) was calculated for the Senate, as in the Chamber of Deputies there was no independent group for this party but a joined one with DS.

cabinet members, conducted a very hierarchical process, generating a short document (nine pages) but with specific proposals.

There are two pivotal reasons explaining potential difficulties in pledge fulfillment in Italy. First, as Vassallo (2007) notes, Italy has an underdeveloped system of coalition governance. Unlike other countries, for example, Belgium and the Netherlands (Moury and Timmermans 2008), where the formation of coalition governments is preceded by extensive negotiations led by party leaders who often become ministers, in Italy pre-electoral coalitions often have common programs but the drafting process does not include all coalition party leaders. Further, pre-electoral agreements are commonly not ratified by party bodies. Many potentially controversial issues are left intentionally vague, which means conflicts are not as carefully managed in advance as in other countries. Consequently, Italian parties and cabinet members do not have an *ex ante* written agreement that binds them to a common program heightening transaction costs in decision making, and their level of conflictuality is consequently high (Marangoni and Vercesi 2015).

Second, the literature often stresses the great difficulty Italian governments face in getting their bills passed by the legislature if not through consensus by oversized majorities and the limited scope of a majoritarian change in the Second Republic (Borghetto and Visconti 2015; Pedrazzani 2015). The Italian Constitution, the electoral law, and parliamentary rules of procedure contribute to a perfect bicameralism conducive to institutional gridlock (Zucchini 2008). Additionally, parliamentary party group leaders and committees have substantial institutional prerogatives in the lawmaking process (Capano and Giuliani 2003). To be sure, while parties find it advantageous to form pre-electoral coalitions to maximize their electoral chances, there are fewer postelectoral constraints, and it is not uncommon to see a party leave a coalition soon after the election (Diamanti 2007). Small parties have enhanced pressuring and blackmailing capacities due to their pivotal role in forming a minimum winning coalition (Bull and Pasquino 2007; Conti 2008).

Getting bills passed has proven particularly difficult for center-left governments without a strong leadership and a (large) majority in both chambers. For example, while Berlusconi I approved 90 percent of its bills and Berlusconi II 75.7 percent, Prodi I approved only 50 percent of its bills and 36 percent in Prodi II. Despite having substantial parliamentary majorities, Berlusconi's governments also encountered substantial difficulties in getting their bills approved by Parliament through the standard legislative procedure. Center-right governments called for a vote of confidence—a

procedure allowing the executive to give priority to a bill while also rejecting all parliamentary amendments tabled on it—on more occasions than would normally be expected (Vassallo 2007).

Some studies provide reasons to temper an overly pessimistic view. Capano and Giuliani (2001) and Vassallo (2007), for example, demonstrate that the executive uses “decree laws” and “delegating laws” to bypass ordinary legislative procedure.¹² Interestingly, existing studies show that delegated powers are used mainly in policy fields covered in common manifestos, which suggests that parties make a strategic use of these tools for issues on which they agree. For example, in the Prodi I government, immigration, administrative decentralization, fiscal policy, and budgetary institutions were pivotal areas in which the government used delegation procedures to bypass institutional gridlock. Berlusconi II followed a similar procedure for company law, the tax system, national broadcasting, labor market reform, and the construction of infrastructure (Capano and Giuliani 2003; Vassallo 2007).

Parliamentary majority groups seem to be aware of the need to delegate powers to the executive in order to circumvent the cumbersome nature of the ordinary legislative process. Moury (2013) interviewed 21 former Italian ministers or junior ministers, showing that, contrary to common belief, Italian ministers and their party leaders are well informed about other cabinet members’ activities. They can influence and veto initiatives they dislike and sometimes even force a minister to come up with a particular proposal. Most important, almost all (former) ministers interviewed feel they are constrained, at least to some extent, by the common electoral program when making decisions. For many the argument that “something” is written in the program is a powerful one.

12.3. Research Design

To what extent are Italian governments capable of fulfilling their pledges? The two most recent electoral governments (Prodi II and Berlusconi IV, like the others that followed since the end of 2011, were built on postelectoral coalitions bringing together center-left and center-right parties) were coded after the research group met and established strict guidelines for coding pledges according to the narrow and broad definitions discussed in chapter 2. For those governments, the more inclusive definition of a pledge was used, but coders additionally identified which of those pledges met the narrow definition. For the relevant elections, pledges referring to actions

and outcomes were considered. The two oldest governments (Prodi I and Berlusconi II) were coded before the group meetings. For these elections, we identified what we referred to as precise and imprecise pledges, but only pledges referring to actions were coded. Intercoder reliability tests showed that our precise pledges are equivalent to the narrow definition of pledges discussed in chapter 2, but that our initial definition of “imprecise pledges” is less inclusive than the broad definition. In other words, a small number of pledges that would have been included after our group meetings in the definition of broad pledges were in fact left out of our coding of campaign statements made in the first two elections.

To assess fulfillment of a pledge, we first read the reviews provided by the party itself (e.g., *Il programma dell’Ulivo: Le realizzazioni ottenute in questi quattro anni di governo*), by political scientists (e.g., *Politica in Italia*), and by journalists. If no information is found in reviews, we then search the parliamentary databases that include all cabinet decisions on that particular Parliament using key words. We referred to the summaries of financial laws presented by the Council of Ministers to the press to determine whether budgetary pledges were congruent with government decisions, as these summaries identify the key points in financial laws. Due to the difficulty of distinguishing between full and partial fulfillment in our Italian study, we considered that a pledge became a government decision when it was either “fully fulfilled” or “partially fulfilled,” thus merging both categories.

12.4. Election Pledges in Italy

This section compares the total number of pledges made by government and opposition parties and identifies the relationship between the pledges in different manifestos. Due to the difficulty and time-consuming nature of the exercises, we had to limit ourselves to one single election for this analysis. We chose to focus on the electoral programs of the parties presented prior to the general elections of 2001 for two reasons. First, these elections took place almost a decade after the electoral reform of 1993, hence at a time when bipolarism was relatively well institutionalized (Conti and Marangoni 2015). Second, because only three distinct coalitions of parties, each with a clear program, were represented in the First Chamber after the elections, the number is often much higher in Italy. These three programs belonged to the Olive Tree, the House of Freedom, and the RC.

We have identified the total numbers of pledges made by each party and the type of pledge for the legislative election of 2001. A pledge made

by a party can be classified as promising status quo, tax increase, tax cut, or other measures. What first emerges from our analysis is that all parties, particularly those on the left, made a large number of specific, testable pledges. Quite remarkably, the manifesto of the Olive Tree coalition included almost 600 specific pledges and that of the RC almost 500. Even the manifesto presented by Berlusconi, which had been described by political analysts as being very brief, included a considerable number of pledges (184). Interestingly, very few pledges (less than 4 percent) are about the maintenance of the status quo, even when the party was incumbent in the previous legislature (as for the Olive Tree in 2001). It also emerges that a relatively small proportion of pledges (around 6 to 9 percent) concerns tax measures. In that regard, we observe a difference between the parties according to their left-right orientation, especially between the Communists and their counterparts from the center. While the House of Freedom (center-right) has the largest percentage of pledges for tax reduction (8.7 percent), it is closely followed by the Olive Tree (center-left, 6.5 percent). Moreover, these two parties very rarely propose statements in favor of increasing taxation (there was one pledge in each manifesto). The Communists, by contrast, promise to cut taxes as often as they promise to increase them. In fact, their manifesto included 11 specific pledges to increase taxes, for example, taxes on donations, inheritance, and financial transactions.

Further, we analyzed the relationship between the pledges made by a given party and those made by its counterparts. Following chapter 3, we distinguish between pledges that are unrelated, in agreement, or in disagreement with those of the other manifestos. Our data suggest that a large majority of pledges (around 66 percent) are not directly related to the pledges made by other parties. This supports the saliency theory of party competition, which states that parties compete using different issues rather than proposing competing alternatives on exactly the same subjects.

We should be careful, however, not to conclude too hastily that parties communicate with voters about totally different things. All parties mentioned policies in areas such as employment, immigration, social welfare, the EU, and constitutional reforms, albeit to different degrees. Moreover, even if the pledges are not directly contradictory, their goals often are. For example, the Communists promise to ease the requirements for migrants to acquire Italian nationality while the House of Freedom states that it will create a databank with the digital fingerprints of all non-European migrants. Although these pledges were coded as unrelated, they do offer citizens a clear illustration of alternative policy stances about immigra-

tion. Finally, it is sometimes the case that when a party does not address a pledge made by another party, it implicitly means that it does not support the pledge. This is certainly true for politically important pledges such as support for gay adoption (RC), taxation of capital (RC), privatization of companies (House of Freedom), and granting non-European migrants the right to vote in administrative elections (Olive Tree).

Pledges are much more often in agreement with those of other parties than in disagreement. However, we do observe a difference across the ideological spectrum; whereas around one-third of pledges of the two mainstream coalitions agree, this proportion is much lower when the Communists' manifesto is compared to that of the House of Freedom. Nevertheless, there are some specific pledges on which all parties agree, such as increases in public investment for alternative sources of energy, increases in the lowest pensions, or the development of day care facilities for children. Parties are therefore in direct disagreement on a very small proportion of pledges. An example of this disagreement is that when the Communists proposed to increase taxes on inheritance, the House of Freedom wanted to abolish them. But in general differences between the two largest parties or coalitions concern noneconomic issues such as immigration, justice, and moral values.

Conti (2008) made use of data drawn from the party manifestos to show the distance between the programmatic platforms of Italian parties competing for power for six general elections between 1992 and 2008. Using data from the Comparative Manifestos Project, the author built an index of the socioeconomic preferences of the parties based on the emphasis they placed on several policy issues (market regulation, social justice, welfare state expansion, welfare state limitation, and labor groups). His findings show a clear trend over time toward the convergence of electoral programs. Up to and including 2006, he finds that there were still some clear distinctions that made the two coalitions alternatives to each other, but 2008 shows a clear tendency toward similarity between the main parties. The same trend toward convergence is observed within the coalition of parties. At the time of writing (2008), Conti noted that this trend toward extreme convergence within and between coalitions had "opened a space at the extremes of the policy space." The overwhelming success of a new party, the "Five Star Movement," during the last legislative elections of 2013 (with 25.6 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies, more than any other single party) is a clear indication of such a vacancy (Conti and Memoli 2015).

12.5. Fulfillment of Pledges in Italy

As explained above, there are some reasons for optimism about pledge fulfillment in Italy. Table 12.2 presents the results. The table shows that on average governments fulfilled—at least partially—half their pledges, with a minimum for Prodi I (40.7 percent) and a maximum for Berlusconi II (58.7 percent); the latter is the only government that managed to last its entire possible duration. These results are better than pessimists would probably have predicted. Not surprisingly, the fulfillment score of the Prodi I and II governments, which were minority (or quasi-minority) governments that did not complete their mandates, is lower than that of the Berlusconi II government, which had a large parliamentary majority and lasted for four years. Nevertheless, Prodi I managed to fulfill more than one-third (40.9 percent) of 218 pledges in less than two years. Considering the fragmented parliamentary majority, the cabinet anticipated a short-lived legislative term, which introduced incentives for strong pledge fulfillment in the first months of its mandate. If we consider the full range of the three center-left governments that succeeded Prodi during the parliamentary term (1996–2001), the fulfillment scores increase to 56.9 percent. This score is roughly similar that of Berlusconi II (58.5 percent). Prodi's second government, between 2006 and 2008, fulfilled 52.7 percent of its pledges. Berlusconi III, from 2008 to 2011, fulfilled 46 percent of its pledges, which might be attributed to the lack of a common pre-electoral manifesto. However, Berlusconi's decline was almost certainly linked to the financial crisis, which has deprived most European governments of their traditional room for maneuver.

Many important pledges were addressed by each of the governments studied. For example, Prodi I significantly reduced the public debt and deficit, thus enabling Italy to enter the EMU. It profoundly reformed admin-

TABLE 12.2. Pledge fulfillment in Italy

	Prodi I (1996–98) % (n)	All center-left governments (1996–2001) % (n)	Berlusconi II (2001–6) % (n)	Prodi II (2006–8) % (n)	Berlusconi IV (2008–11) % (n)	Average % (n)
At least partially fulfilled	40.7 (112)	57.1 (157)	58.7 (108)	53.6 (149)	50.5 (52)	51.8 (578)
Not Fulfilled	59.3 (163)	42.9 (118)	41.3 (76)	46.4 (129)	49.5 (51)	48.2 (537)
TOTAL	100 (275)	100 (275)	100 (184)	100 (278)	100 (103)	100 (1,115)

Note: Berlusconi II and Berlusconi IV had a majority in both chambers; Prodi II had a majority only in the lower chamber; Prodi I was a minority government.

istrative practices (with the two Bassanini Laws) and substantially restructured the welfare state (introducing cuts to seniority pensions). Prodi I also legalized temporary work, which previously had been prohibited in Italy, and passed a law on immigration that equated the social rights of legal immigrants with those of Italians. It abolished the requirement of establishing that Italian or EU workers are unavailable before importing and hiring non-EU workers. As promised, Berlusconi II introduced important measures to federalize the country further, reforming the labor laws to heighten flexibility, facing important opposition from the left. Additionally, it reduced taxes on profits and income significantly and implemented a pension reform decreasing the minimum age for receiving pensions. The Prodi II government moved significantly on public debt and tax evasion. Further, it liberalized access to protected services and passed a left-leaning reform of corporate taxation. Berlusconi III deepened the reforms introduced in 2001–6 with an emphasis on federalism, law and order, incentives for private enterprise, simplification of public administration, and reform of the education system.

Each of these governments could have done much more. Important pledges that were emphasized during the electoral campaign were not fulfilled. For example, Prodi governments did not follow through on a promised reform of the state, the executive, and the legal system; a conflicts of interest law; or the granting of rights to same-sex couples. The Prodi government also increased taxes when its manifesto explicitly promised not to. The Berlusconi governments did not pass measures to reform the executive, fight tax evasion, and lower general taxation, nor did they pass a definite law on federalization. Although economic growth was promised as an outcome by all governments, Italy experienced a decade of economic stagnation and a worsening of the fundamentals of its economy.

Moreover, many bills based on coalition agreements were rather limited in scope compared to their initial goals. This is the case, for example, in the reform of justice, federalism, and the promotion of entrepreneurship for center-right governments. On the left, this is the case for pledges to redistribute wealth and fight corruption. The external constraints of the EU may have played a role since the government's spending capacity has been dramatically reduced since Maastricht and the advent of the euro. However, many of the aforementioned policies would not imply any serious spending. Rather, their lack of attainment is best seen as a lack of political will by the government. Two examples illustrate that passing a law does not always mean solving a problem or fulfilling a pledge.

The first example concerns the "conflict of interest" issue, which refers to the potential conflict between the public and private interests of those

in government. It is well known that this risk was particularly acute for Berlusconi, to the extent that he controlled half the television channels, a substantial portion of the daily newspapers and magazines, and, through his influence on the advertising market, a good number of periodicals that are nominally independent. An electoral victory would have paved the way for Berlusconi's control of public broadcasting. He promised repeatedly on the campaign trail that he would solve this problem once he became prime minister. In 2001, after a few months in office, Foreign Minister Frattini put forth a bill addressing the issue, which was later approved by Parliament. The legislation introduced the principle that only managers of a firm, not its owners, are deemed as having potential conflicting interests. Consequently, it is doubtful that the conflict of interest involving Berlusconi was resolved. We coded this pledge as "at least partially fulfilled."

A second example relates to the bill included in the Prodi I program on the liberalization of certain sectors (e.g., telecommunications and electricity) that were obstructing competition at consumers' expense. Although the bill was successfully approved in the Parliament, its implementation hinged significantly on regional and local administrations. The latter resisted implementing national-level decisions, hindering the effectiveness of the fulfillment of the pledge by the cabinet.

12.6. Conclusion

Italian governments have experienced frequent crises and deadlocks, policy blockages, and undisciplined parliamentary majorities even in the presence of a prime minister with a clear popular mandate. Despite the major changes introduced with the 1994 institutional reform, incumbent parties have systematically failed to gain reelection. Trust in institutions and support for government are low and decreasing with every legislature. By and large, the honeymoon period with the electorate is soon replaced by rampant disaffection (Memoli 2015).

In this chapter, we examined the fulfillment of the electoral pledges made by Italian coalitions. We observed that Italian pre-electoral coalitions are far from fulfilling their programs to the same extent as single-party governments do. Considering the 1990s institutional reforms, which were aimed at turning Italy into a bipolar system with two blocs offering distinct government options and with the ability to implement them, these findings provide insights into the general dissatisfaction that ensued at the end of the First Republic in 1993.

Evidence in this chapter suggests that Italy is somewhat dissimilar from our general comparative pattern. Indeed, comparative research on pledge fulfillment shows that the divide between coalitions and single-party governments is greater than majority and minority parties (Thomson et al. 2017). This result does not come as a complete surprise considering the large number of veto players that Italian governing parties still face in the policy-making process, as well as the conditions under which common manifestos are drafted. Even though a significant proportion of ministers were negotiators in the manifesto-writing process—and may therefore have “internalized” the deals included in the program—party leaders did not always participate in its drafting. Additionally, some parties chose not to ratify the pre-electoral manifesto. The involvement of all party leaders in the drafting of a precise but parsimonious common program, together with the ratification of this program by all parties, may increase commitment to the deals included in the document.

The glass, however, could also be seen as half full. Despite very difficult constitutional and governmental conditions, one government (Berlusconi II) managed to fulfill almost 60 percent of its pledges. Notably, Prodi I and II ministers managed to keep 41 and 54 percent of their promises, respectively, in less than two years. We have suggested that this respectable score was obtained mainly through government’s use of extraordinary legislative procedures. As Capano and Giuliani have suggested (2003), this illustrates the ambiguous workings of the Italian political system. On the one hand, the government is clearly unable to lead Parliament and therefore finds alternative ways to carry out its duties, mainly by resorting to delegation. On the other hand, Parliament tacitly allows the government to have its way by resorting to a passive position on this. Like Ulysses and the Sirens, Parliament agrees to be bound to the mast as the only means of allowing the executive to govern effectively.

Italian coalition cabinets have more difficulties than their single-party British or Swedish counterparts do. The sharp difference between Italy and the latter two countries (–30 percent) illustrates that Italians are still far from full-fledged “bipolarism,” under which the winning coalition or party can implement a large part of its program. At the same time, despite the institutional weaknesses discussed previously (and the short duration of three governments out of four), Italian governments slightly outperform postelectoral coalition governments. Berlusconi II’s and Prodi II’s fulfillment score is similar to the average score for individual parties with a parliamentary majority forming a postelectoral coalition (e.g., 59 percent on average in the Netherlands and 54 percent in Ireland). Moreover,

Prodi I and II strongly outperform the minority coalitions in Ireland (47 percent on average versus 32 percent of pledges fulfilled). In this regard, the observation that Paolucci and Newell (2008, 283) made for the Prodi II government could apply to some extent to all Italian governments examined in this study: “[The achievements of the Prodi II government are] especially notable precisely *because* of its structural weaknesses” (emphasis in the original).

The advent of an executive of nonelected technocrats in 2011 created a situation in which a government had no pledges to fulfill other than the broad one of rescuing the country from economic failure. After new general elections, a sequence of predominantly center-left cabinets (with the necessary support of a small center-right party and independents) were led by Enrico Letta in 2013 and by Matteo Renzi in 2014–16. Since their formation, these cabinets have made several pledges to implement institutional reforms. Notably, Renzi promised to change the electoral law and create an asymmetric distribution of power between the two legislative chambers. The reforms were put to a popular vote in late 2016 and failed to gain the necessary popular support to change the status quo. Renzi stepped down as prime minister, paving the way for Gentiloni’s rise to the premiership of a caretaker cabinet. Italy’s political system’s capacity to implement reforms and fulfill pledges is once again in question. Future governments will have to address issues of institutional reform if they are to heighten their institutional capacity to fulfill their pledges.

NOTES

1. Deputies are elected on a national basis and senators on a regional one.
2. E. Borghetto, Carammia, and Zucchini (2014) code the attention given to specific policy issues in party manifestos and legislation and find a greater correspondence between party and legislative agendas during the Second Republic terms compared to the longest First Republic term.
3. For a brilliant analysis of the political events at that time see Cotta and Isernia (1996).
4. In 1997, 1998, and 1999, Italy was the only country in the European Union (EU) where the majority of people were not satisfied with the way democracy worked in their country (62 percent). Eurobarometer, <http://ec.europa.eu/COM-MFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart/themeKy/2/groupKy/228/savFile/805/>
5. The two main parties of the Berlusconi III coalition (National Alliance [NA] and Forza Italia [FI]) merged a few months after the elections of April 2008 into a new party, the People of Freedom (PDL).
6. We also considered the Berlusconi III government in the analysis even though the PDL, formed after the merger of Forza Italia and National Alliance in Novem-

ber 2007, did not issue a joint manifesto with its coalition partner, the Northern League. In this case we considered the government manifesto of the PDL because this was the party of the prime minister, as well as the largest of the two coalition parties (37.4 percent against 8.3 percent of seats in the lower chamber).

7. Those parties were Italian People's Party (Partito Popolare Italiano), Segni Pact (Patto Segni), Democratic Alliance (Alleanza Democratica), and Italian Socialists (Socialisti Italiani). For more on this, see Virgilio (1996, 535).

8. The Olive Tree did not make any formal government arrangement with RC. Rather, it made a pact of "desistence" with RC, so that candidates from the latter did not present themselves in most of the electoral districts (inviting voters to vote for the former), while the Olive Tree replicated the strategy for the remaining constituencies.

9. Interview with a former Minister, October 2011.

10. I am relying on Müller's definition of party leaders as "those who internalise the collective interest of the party and monitor the party's other office holders" (2000, 317).

11. Prodi himself did not belong to any party, although he had been close to the old *Democrazia Cristiana*.

12. Decree laws are passed by governments on their own authority and come into force immediately, but they lose their validity if not converted, by Parliament, into ordinary legislation within 60 days. Delegating laws are approved by Parliament but empower the government to issue, on its own authority, legislative decrees pursuant to the objectives set out in the laws themselves.

THIRTEEN

Germany

Mark J. Ferguson

13.1. Introduction

In the fall of 1998, the German government changed hands from the Christian Democratic Party (Christliche Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU/CSU) and its junior partner in government, the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP), to the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD) and its junior governing partner, the Greens (die Gruenen). This new governing period under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder sought to revitalize the German economy, reduce the public-sector debt, and bring about reforms to the traditionally strong German *Sozialstaat*, the social-welfare state. As party leader, Schröder's policies were oriented toward a market philosophy that aimed to solve many of the economic problems Germany had faced since reunification in 1990 (Orlow 1999, 304).

During Schröder's first administration (Schröder I), the economy continued to weaken and unemployment increased, as did a greater reliance on government assistance, increasing the budget deficit to historic highs. After narrowly winning reelection in September 2002, the Schröder II government, 2002–5, sought to promote and implement socioeconomic reforms, as part of the Hartz Commission recommendations, which formed the basis of the "Agenda 2010 programs." This agenda led to internal SPD dissent, resulting in the decision to dissolve the government and call for early elections in September 2005.

The 2005 election resulted in Germany's second grand coalition government since 1966, with Angela Merkel (of CDU) as chancellor. Grand coalitions in Germany include both of the two largest parties, the SPD and CDU/CSU. A second German grand coalition was something that most politicians, especially those of the CDU/CSU and SPD, were not eager to experience, leaving many observers to predict a short governing period under Merkel (Drozdiak 2006, 68). This first government of Chancellor Merkel (Merkel I) defied most experts' predictions and lasted the entire legislative period.

In 2009 Merkel's Christian Democrats were reelected as the largest political faction in the Bundestag, forming a coalition government with the FDP. While arguably ideologically closer to the FDP than the SPD, the CDU/CSU's governing relationship with its coalition partners could be characterized as anything but smooth. Interparty discord over economic policy challenged Merkel's governing cohesion, so much so that in the aftermath of the 2013 federal elections Merkel's Christian Democrats were rewarded with a larger mandate and the FDP failed to meet the 5 percent threshold for representation in the Bundestag.

This chapter examines pledge fulfillment in the Schröder II, and Merkel I and II governments. This allows us to compare fulfillment rates for two "typical" (i.e., nongrand) coalition governments and a grand coalition government. And this allows us to address a question that has received little attention in the comparative literature, namely, How well do grand coalitions governments perform? While having the same set of fulfillment challenges as other coalitions, grand coalitions in Germany are beset with the additional challenge of balancing two traditionally dominant parties with greater ideological distance between them than most coalition partners have. Ideological differences and relatively equal size may produce governing gridlock between the coalition partners (Schmitt and Wüst 2006, 41; Clemens 2010, 2).

Germany has one of the few parliamentary systems with a strong upper house (the Bundesrat), providing an opportunity to compare the performance of such a system to that of systems with a weaker or no upper house. The constitution requires Bundesrat approval of laws that directly affect the states or make constitutional changes, meaning that the Bundesrat may provide an additional veto point to the passage of legislation. This is true whatever the composition of the upper house, but it would be more likely when that house has a majority different from the that of the government, as was true during part of the period considered here.

13.2. Elections, Parties, and Governing Dynamics in Germany

Germany has a federal parliamentary system. Historically, German governments have been coalition governments. The lower house of the German parliament, the Bundestag, is where the government is formed. Members are selected by means of a mixed-member proportional system (MMP) in which half the legislative seats (299) are chosen via a single-member district plurality system and the other half are chosen via a proportional representation (PR) list system. There is a threshold of 5 percent of list seats nationwide or three single-member district seats. The final composition of the chamber must be proportional to the nationwide PR results. There is a base level of 598 seats in the Bundestag, but that number may increase if the percentage of district seats won by a party exceeds the percentage of the vote received nationwide in the list seats; in such a case, other parties win “compensatory” seats to ensure the proportionality of the Bundestag as a whole. After the 2002 election there were 603 seats; after 2005, 614; and after 2009, 622.

In contrast to the Bundestag, the members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the state governments. This means that state elections have the potential to change the composition of the upper house and may produce a partisan majority different from that of the lower house—similar to “divided government” in the US. In Gerhard Schröder’s case, the Bundesrat was controlled by the Christian Democrats for the entirety of Schröder’s second term as chancellor. During the grand coalition of Merkel I, it would be difficult to say what would constitute a “different majority” since the government included both large parties.

The Bundesrat has absolute veto power over matters in which the states have “concurrent powers” according to the constitution. Currently, the number of laws passed by the Bundestag that required Bundesrat consent has been estimated to be nearly half of all laws (*Tatsachen Über Deutschland* 2010, 14; Bundesrat, “Responsibilities,” 2018). In other matters, if there are disagreements the two houses will attempt to resolve their differences, but ultimately the Bundestag can override the Bundesrat. At times the Bundesrat has been an important player in forcing compromise, especially (though not only) when its partisan majority differed from the government’s. Legislation that amends the constitution, affects the German states’ budgetary revenues, and/or affects the states’ administrative jurisdiction falls under the category “consent bills” and requires Bundesrat approval. Overall, consent bills comprise nearly half of all federal legislation (“Responsibilities” 2018).

It is worth noting that Germany's institutional design also includes a strong judicial-review-empowered Constitutional Court (das Bundesverfassungsgericht). This study does not examine the impact of the Constitutional Court, mainly due to the timing of its rulings: from the time of the passage of legislation to a ruling by the court, the government in place at the time of passage has often expired. For example, the court ruled that a section of the Schröder II welfare reforms, the Hartz reforms, were unconstitutional in 2010, five years after the end of the Schröder II government.

Before the mid-1980s, West Germany had two main parties—the CDU/CSU and the SPD—and the smaller liberal FDP.¹ After 1983 the Greens became the second small party with legislative representation. With the unification in 1990, the Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (PDS party) emerged from East Germany's former ruling communist party, the Social Unity Party (SED). For the most part, the PDS remained a regional party with most of its support coming from eastern Germany. It united with the western-German-based Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit—Die Wahlalternative (WASG), which had been formed in 2004 by dissatisfied former SPD members. The two parties merged in 2007, forming the Left Party (die Linke Partei, occasionally styled as die Linke.PDS). The current system might be considered a “two-and-three-halves” system (Klingemann and Wessels 2001, 284). The CDU/CSU and SPD parties are classified as *Volkspartien*, or “people's parties.” Data on the ideology of the parties are presented in section 13.4.

Other than Germany's two grand coalition governments (the first in 1966–69), governments have consisted of either the CDU/CSU or the SPD as the senior coalition partner, with either the FDP or the Greens as the junior. The FDP was the junior partner of one of the two main parties from 1949 to 1966 and 1969 to 1998. The Greens finally broke the FDP's hold on the junior coalition party position in 1998, joining the Schröder-led SPD in the first SPD-Green coalition at the national level, taking over from a CDU/CSU-FDP government led by Helmut Kohl.

Prior to the 2002 federal elections, the economic situation remained problematic: high unemployment, stagnant growth and rising budget deficits. In February 2002, Schröder established the *Kommission Moderne Dienstleistungen am Arbeitsmarkt*, colloquially known as the Hartz Commission. The task of the Hartz Commission was to establish economic and social welfare reform recommendations. Most of the commission's recommendations would eventually comprise the SPD's economic policies in the 2002 federal elections party manifesto.

The results of the 2002 federal elections led to a narrow reelection

victory for the SPD and Greens, forming the Schröder II government. Of the 14 cabinet positions (including that of chancellor), the SPD controlled 11 of 14 ministries, including the main ministries pertaining to economic or social welfare policy. The Greens controlled the remaining three ministries: the office of vice-chancellor (combined with foreign affairs in this government) and environment, as well as the consumer protection, food, and agriculture ministries.

Economic and social welfare reforms remained important policy goals of the Schröder II government. The bulk of the recommendations of the Hartz Commission were encompassed within Schröder's Agenda 2010 reforms, first introduced on March 14, 2003. These reforms were not popular among many within the SPD or with the German people (Brewer 2004), particularly the so-called Hartz IV provision, which restricted the length of time that long-term unemployment and welfare benefits could be paid to a claimant by the state. The Hartz IV provision was eventually approved by the Bundestag in December 2003. After initial opposition from the Christian Democratic-controlled Bundesrat, the Agenda 2010 reform packages were approved in July 2004 and went into effect on January 1, 2005.²

In response to the reforms, a series of "Monday protests" were organized to demand the repeal or amendment of Hartz IV. These protests attracted tens of thousands of protesters in more than 100 German cities (Brewer 2004). However, the Schröder II government remained firm and refused to reconsider the reforms.

Internal divisions within the SPD formed between those who supported the neoliberal economic and social welfare policies of Schröder and those who supported Oskar Lafontaine's call to return to more traditional social democratic policies, leading to a formal split between the two factions. Lafontaine's defection weakened the SPD, and internal SPD challenges to Schröder's policies became more public. In response, Schröder called an early election for September 2005.

As in 2002, the 2005 federal electoral results for the SPD and Christian Democrats were very close, but this time support for both declined, such that each controlled fewer than 36 percent of the parliamentary seats and were unable to form a majority coalition with either of their preferred junior partners. Overall, the SPD lost nearly 10 percent of its electoral support from 2002 and became the second-largest party in the Bundestag. In contrast, the CDU/CSU became the largest party, but it was unable to form a coalition government with its traditional junior partner, the FDP.

As a result, the CDU/CSU and SPD formed the second grand coalition

government in Germany's history, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel of the CDU/CSU. Similar to the *Proporz* system used in Austrian grand coalitions, the 17 cabinet positions were divided nearly proportionally between the two parties, with the CDU/CSU holding eight (including the chancellorship), or 47 percent, and the SPD holding nine, or 53 percent. Ministries involved with socioeconomic policies were divided between the two, with the CDU/CSU controlling the economics and technology ministry, as well as that of family affairs, and the SPD controlling labor and social affairs, as well as the ministries of health and of finance.

The 2005 grand coalition government agreement has been characterized as being highly detailed as to what policies to pursue and how to pursue them (Saalfeld 2010, 85). The government agreement, therefore, did not provide the parties and individual ministers with much room for interpretation because compromises and policy directions were worked out prior to the government agreement.

When considering the impact of grand coalitions on pledge fulfillment, there are two considerations: size and ideology. The Merkel I government controlled more than 71 percent of the legislative seats; such a large majority might be expected to promote high rates of pledge fulfillment. On the other hand, however, grand coalitions might be expected to have greater ideological range than "typical" coalitions and hence have more difficulty reaching an agreement.

Internationally, grand coalitions are considered to be rare political events among western democracies that occur in times of national emergency or when parties experience electoral collapse (Kiss 2008, 4; Helms 2005; Turner 1987). Austria (see chapter 14) is an exception in that since 1945 it has experienced a strong political tradition of grand coalitions between the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) (Kiss 2008; Kraske and Mayr 2008). As another recent example, Romania had a grand coalition government between the Social Democrats and the Liberal Democratic Party until it collapsed after ten months in office in October 2009 (Escritt 2009).

These cases exhibited some negative characteristics: they tended to end earlier than the electoral mandate required, and ideological differences between the coalition partners made governing difficult (Kiss 2008, 4–5; Kraske and Mayr 2008; Bivol 2009). However, not all German scholars have been pessimistic about the prospects for German grand coalitions. Scholars such as Heisenberg and Turner saw their positive aspects and suggested that they may not produce the dire results that one might expect.

Turner (1987) points out that the first German grand coalition of 1966–69 was capable of addressing several important economic and social issues. Heisenberg (2005) suggests that the CDU/CSU and SPD were more similar than dissimilar, especially in economic policy matters, and thus might be expected to find common policy ground.

The final legislative period studied in this chapter is the Merkel II government. In a stunning victory, Chancellor Merkel's Christian Democrats and the Liberal Democrats won the 2009 federal elections, forming Merkel II. There was much eagerness among members of the CDU/CSU and FDP at the prospect of forming the next government. There were several reasons for this optimism. Each party had a history of successful and long governance together, and, most important, each party held similar policy positions on economic and business reforms. Additionally, the FDP had been out of government for nearly a decade, and joining Merkel and the Christian Democrats would have provided a good opportunity to develop a new reputation among the electorate of being a responsible governing partner.

Of the 17 ministries under Merkel II, 11 cabinet positions, including chancellor, interior, finance, labor, and defense, were held by the CDU/CSU, and six, including vice-chancellor, foreign affairs, justice, and economics, were held by the FDP. Under Merkel II, the government held 332 legislative seats, or 54 percent.

Governance could be characterized as anything but collegial. Strong interparty discord between the Christian Democrats and the FDP led to the characterization of the first 100 days as the "most conflicted and acrimonious ever observed" in postwar German political history (Saalfeld 2010, 102). This is a stark contrast to Merkel I, where conflict management between the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats was effectively managed.

Among the strong policy disagreements were tax cuts of \$35 billion agreed to in the coalition talks. The FDP sought to adhere to the agreement, while the CDU/CSU balked at the idea, citing the burgeoning budget deficit (Moore 2010). Making matters worse, the electoral high that the FDP enjoyed in 2009 (15 percent), public support for the party quickly evaporated to below the 5 percent threshold to hold legislative seats in the Bundestag (Müller, Neukirch, and Theile 2012). The public collapse of support for the FDP, compounded by continued internal governing strife, saw the FDP lose representation in the Bundestag in the 2013 federal elections.

13.3. Research Design

In identifying manifesto pledges, I used what chapter 2 described as the narrow definition of election pledges. A total of 1,550 campaign pledges were identified among all the legislative parties in the Bundestag from 2002 to 2013, which covers the Schröder I, Merkel I, and Merkel II governments.

To address intercoder reliability, five coders were asked to identify pledges in portions of the manifestos of each of the parties for both governing periods. The results indicate that there was high level of reliability: an average of 82 percent (2002), 89 percent (2005), and 8 percent (2009) agreement between me and the other coders.

To identify pledge fulfillment, I examined numerous sources that would indicate fulfillment: newspapers, books on each government, magazines, and the German government's and political parties' websites. As in the other chapters in this volume, pledges were classified as fulfilled, not fulfilled or partially fulfilled (see chapter 3).

13.4. Election Pledges in Germany

In this section, I discuss the number and types of pledges made by all parties in the manifestos of 2002, 2005, and 2009. In both election cycles, the political debates were generally centered on reforming the economy and the *Sozialstaat*. However, international events in 2002, in particular the potential of an American-led war against Iraq, brought foreign policy to prominence in the campaign discussions of that year.

The total number of pledges for each party in 2002, 2005, and 2009 were the SPD 136, 116, and 116; the CDU/CSU 91, 108, and 116; the Greens, 152, 89, and 105; the FDP 97, 82, and 112; and the PDS 39, 70, and 111. For each year, the vast majority of pledges promised change, as opposed to maintaining the status quo. Among the center-left parties during this period, an average of 91 percent of SPD pledges, 88 percent of Green pledges, and 91 percent of die Linke.PDS pledges advocated policy changes. Among the center-right parties, an average of 82 percent of CDU/CSU pledges and 86 percent of FDP pledges called for policy changes.

Table 13.1 presents two types of data. The top of the table shows ideology scores (the right-left variable) from the Manifesto Project. Below that are figures showing the degree to which parties directly agreed or disagreed with one another. These arguably provide alternative ways of look-

ing at the ideological distance between the parties. The PDS is excluded as it was not a feasible coalition partner in either year. Starting with the Manifesto Project data, table 13.1 shows, first, that in each election year the order of the parties from left to right was Greens, SPD, FDP, and CDU/CSU. Between 2002 and 2005, the SPD sharply shifted to the left and then returned to a moderate, center-left position in 2009, while the other three parties all shifted to the right. It should be noted that, although there was a strong, noticeable move to the left, the Social Democrats still remained

TABLE 13.1. Relations among pledges in Germany

	2002		2005		2009	
<i>Ideology†</i>						
SPD	4.1		-2.2		-18.3	
CDU/CSU	20.8		25.6		8.7	
Greens	-13.4		-10.4		-13.6	
FDP	4.6		16.9		4.3	
Gov'ts' ideological distance‡ (right-left)	17.5		27.8		-24.5	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
<i>Agreement‡</i>						
SPD-Greens	41	(118)	36	(72)	29	(87)
SPD-CDU/CSU	33	(42)	42	(107)	43	(50)
SPD-FDP	41	(96)	44	(86)	54	(30)
SPD-PDS (Linke)	29	(51)	38	(70)	32	(81)
CDU/CSU-FDP	25	(62)	31	(62)	25	(55)
CDU/CSU-Greens	28	(67)	26	(54)	30	(38)
CDU/CSU-PDS (Linke)	11	(14)	13	(25)	12	(33)
Greens-FDP	26	(65)	29	(44)	22	(35)
Greens-PDS (Linke)	43	(82)	52	(82)	34	(78)
FDP-PDS (Linke)	20	(27)	25	(37)	20	(34)
<i>Disagreement‡</i>						
SPD-Greens	6	(17)	11	(22)	13	(7)
SPD-CDU/CSU	14	(63)	6	(21)	7	(21)
SPD-FDP	12	(26)	16	(32)	3	(23)
SPD-PDS (Linke)	7	(12)	8	(15)	4	(5)
CDU/CSU-FDP	25	(23)	13	(25)	17	(19)
CDU/CSU-Greens	12	(30)	15	(31)	7	(31)
CDU/CSU-PDS (Linke)	28	(35)	22	(42)	17	(32)
Greens-FDP	22	(55)	25	(50)	15	(30)
Greens-PDS (Linke)	2	(4)	1	(2)	0	(0)
FDP-PDS (Linke)	24	(29)	26	(41)	18	(26)

†“Ideology” refers to the “rile” variable in the Manifesto Project Dataset (Volkens et al. 2015).

‡Agreement/disagreement between Party A and Party B = (# of A's pledges that agree/disagree with B + # of B's pledges that agree/disagree with A) / (Total # of A's pledges + total # of B's pledges). See chapter 3 for a discussion of the computation of agreement and disagreement.

a moderate center-left party. The ideological distances for the SPD-Green coalition was 17.5 (Schröder I) and 40.7 (Merkel II), compared to 27.8 for the grand coalition.

Next, table 13.1 examines the extent to which parties' pledges relate to each other. The table shows the percentage of each party's pledges that were in direct agreement, disagreement, or unrelated to the pledges made by each other party in this study, as defined in chapter 3. Separating the 2002, 2005, and 2009 agreement/disagreement scores, we see an interesting trend between the grand coalition partners in 2005. Typically, we should expect the agreement/disagreement results to be consistent with, or at variance with, the Manifesto Project ideology scores. That is, there should be less agreement or more disagreement between the two *Volksparteien* in 2005 and 2009 compared to 2002. What we see is the opposite. We see more agreement and less disagreement between the SPD and CDU/CSU. This suggests that the Manifesto Project scores in the German case, which are based on all statements in the manifestos, including rhetoric, are presenting a somewhat different picture of party positions compared to specific pledges in their respective manifestos, as the agreement/disagreement measure does.

The table presents the relations between the pledges made by each of the main parties represented in the Bundestag from 2002 through the conclusion of the Merkel II cabinet. Several findings are derived from the table. First, the majority of the pledges generally fell within the unrelated category. Second, when we examine the *Volksparteien*, there is a relatively high level of agreement between the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, rising from 33 percent in 2002 to a high of 43 percent in 2009, which is a high level of agreement between the two ideologically opposed parties. This serves to confirm Heisenberg's (2005) observation that the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats had similar policy goals, particularly in the areas of economic and social welfare reform. We see similar high levels of agreement between the SPD and FDP in both election years as well (41 percent in 2002) and (54 percent in 2009).

The level of agreement between the Social Democrats and the Greens fell between 2002 and 2009, as the Social Democrats were in agreement with the Greens 41 percent of the time in 2002 but agreement decreased to a low of 29 percent in 2009. This is interesting as both parties are not only of the same ideological family, center-left, but also governed together from 1998 to 2005, thus having the potential to adopt similar policy positions. As the SPD moderated and moved to implement market and social welfare reforms, the Greens as a party were not fully supportive of weakening the

social welfare protections or implementing market reforms that made it easier to terminate employees.

Third, agreement between the FDP and Greens increased between 2002 and 2009. In 2002 the parties were in agreement on 26 percent of their pledges, declining to 22 percent in 2009. These parties agreed on social issues, as both were advocates of socially liberal policies, for example, same-sex marriage and recreational drug use. However, they also disagreed on economic and social welfare reforms. The FDP supported the reform position of the SPD and the CDU/CSU. Conversely, the Greens' opposition to the reforms best matched the PDS Linke's strong opposition to the reforms. In fact, the level of agreement between the parties increased from 43 percent in 2002 to 52 percent in 2005 but dramatically fell to 34 percent in 2009. However, both parties exhibited extremely low levels of disagreement during the same period.

13.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Germany

Table 13.2 presents fulfillment results for both the governing and opposition parties for Schröder II, Merkel I, and Merkel II, showing the percentages of pledges that were fulfilled either fully or partially. Looking first at the governing parties under normal coalition conditions, Schröder II and Merkel II, we see that the parties in power have a distinct advantage in at least partially fulfilling their pledges. For instance, under Schröder II, the SPD and Greens were capable of at least partially fulfilling 68 percent and 50 percent of their pledges, respectively, yielding at least partial fulfillment of 59 percent of pledges for the government as a whole. As the senior coalition partner, the SPD had a distinct advantage over the Greens in pledge fulfillment. This trend is also evident in Merkel II, as the Christian Democrats at least partially fulfilled 78 percent of their pledges, compared to the FDP's fulfillment of 51 percent. This yielded a result of 64 percent for the coalition government.

Fulfillment rates for the opposition parties under Schröder II varied significantly, from 56 percent for the CDU/CSU to only 33 and 36 percent for the FDP and PDS, respectively. The Christian Democrats' results as an opposition party are lower than the SPD's results, but, surprisingly perhaps, they were higher than the Greens' results as a governing party. If we consider the total fulfillment rate (at least partially) for all opposition parties combined, it is 43 percent. However, the Merkel II opposition had varying results that do not fully match the opposition's results under

TABLE 13.2. Pledge fulfillment in Germany, 2002–9

Schröder II: 2002–5

Fulfillment	Governing parties			Opposition parties		
	SPD % (n)	Greens % (n)	Government % (n)	CDU/CSU % (n)	FDP % (n)	PDS % (n)
Fully	60 (80)	41 (62)	49 (142)	41 (37)	21 (20)	18 (7)
Partially	10 (13)	9 (14)	9 (27)	15 (14)	12 (12)	18 (7)
At least partially	68 (93)	50 (76)	59 (169)	56 (51)	33 (32)	36 (14)
Not	32 (43)	50 (76)	41 (119)	44 (40)	67 (65)	64 (25)
Total	100 (136)	100 (152)	100 (288)	100 (91)	100 (97)	100 (39)

Merkel I: 2005–9

Fulfillment	Governing parties			Opposition parties		
	SPD % (n)	CDU/CSU % (n)	Government % (n)	Greens % (n)	FDP % (n)	PDS % (n)
Fully	39 (45)	46 (54)	42 (99)	38 (34)	28 (23)	16 (11)
Partially	27 (31)	23 (27)	25 (58)	13 (12)	18 (15)	24 (17)
At least partially	66 (76)	69 (81)	67 (157)	52 (46)	46 (38)	40 (28)
Not	34 (40)	31 (37)	33 (77)	48 (43)	54 (44)	60 (42)
Total	100 (116)	100 (118)	100 (234)	100 (89)	100 (82)	100 (70)

Merkel II: 2009–13

Fulfillment	Governing parties			Opposition parties		
	CDU/CSU % (n)	FDP % (n)	Government % (n)	SPD % (n)	Greens % (n)	PDS % (n)
Fully	65 (75)	35 (39)	50 (114)	34 (39)	13 (14)	15 (17)
Partially	13 (15)	16 (18)	14 (33)	19 (22)	18 (19)	13 (14)
At least partially	78 (90)	51 (57)	64 (147)	53 (61)	31 (33)	28 (31)
Not	22 (26)	49 (55)	36 (81)	47 (55)	69 (72)	72 (80)
Total	100 (116)	100 (112)	100 (228)	100 (116)	100 (105)	100 (111)

Schröder II. The first glaring results are those of the SPD, which, despite being in opposition, still saw 53 percent of its pledges at least partially fulfilled, compared to the Greens' and PDS's respective results of 31 and 28 percent. Here the Social Democrats' support for the social reforms of Agenda 2010 continued to match those of the Merkel II government.

Turning to the results for the Merkel I government, we see, first, that the CDU/CSU and SPD fulfilled at least partially 69 and 66 percent of their pledges respectively. In contrast to Schröder II, both coalition partners did nearly equally well. Another difference between the governments is that a higher percentage of pledges was partially, as opposed to fully, fulfilled under the grand coalition than in the previous government: 27 percent of the SPD's pledges and 23 percent of the CDU/CSU's were partially fulfilled, compared to 10 and 9 percent for the previous partners. These results indicate that there was more compromise between the coalition partners under Merkel I and that the chancellor's party did not fully control the policy process.

Examining the grand coalition government as a whole, 234 pledges were made between the two governing parties; 67 percent were at least partially fulfilled, which was higher than the previous government's achievement of 59 percent. If "at least partial fulfillment" is taken as a measure of success, the grand coalition performed better, which might be considered somewhat surprising.

On the other hand, we must keep in mind that the Schröder II government ended early while the grand coalition lasted a full term. In addition, if one defines *success* as full fulfillment only, the chancellor's party in the "typical" SPD-Green coalition, with 60 percent fulfillment, had greater success than either partner in the grand coalition: 46 percent for the chancellor's party and only 39 percent for the junior partner. In other words, the typical coalition gave the chancellor's party most of what it pledged, with little compromise, and gave the junior partner significantly fewer of its pledges. In contrast, the grand coalition, with two nearly equal-sized partners, resulted in only slightly more success for the chancellor's party and quite a bit of compromise for both parties. Some compromises were agreed on in the government coalition agreement of 2005; in addition, the proportional sharing of cabinet positions between the parties may have promoted the acceptance of compromises. A tradition of strong party discipline in Germany meant that backbenchers generally supported the position of the party leadership regardless of their personal ideological positions.

Another factor might help explain the relative success of the grand coalition. Prior to the formation of the grand coalition and among some

commentators, there was a sense of impending doom and failure of the government (see, e.g., Drozdiak 2006, 68). In contrast to the pundits' predictions, the German public held a more positive opinion; they viewed the grand coalition as the "best way to fix the country's economic problems" (Whitlock 2005). It is reasonable to assume that political leaders of both parties were keenly aware of the public's desires. If the electorate perceived that one party was acting as an obstructionist and blocking much needed legislative action, that party may have suffered in the polls come the next election.

The opposition parties during this period exhibited trends similar to those witnessed during the Schröder II government. The Greens, not the largest opposition party in the legislature, nonetheless had the best fulfillment results of the three parties, achieving at least partial fulfillment of 52 percent of its pledges, while the rates for the FDP and the PDS were 46 and 40 percent, respectively. Combined, the opposition parties saw 46 percent of their pledges at least partially fulfilled, just slightly more than during the previous government.

We have seen that both governments fulfilled a majority of their pledges, but to what extent does this mean that significant policy changes took place? Examples of pledges from each government show that party pledges address significant, nontrivial issues. Perhaps the Schröder II government is most remembered not for the pledges it kept but those that were not fulfilled. In the Social Democrats' 2002 manifesto, the party pledged no reductions in unemployment and social welfare benefits. However, through the implementation of the Hartz Commission's recommendations, the Schröder II government reduced unemployment and social welfare benefits. Under *Arbeitslosengeld I* (unemployment benefits), benefits were limited to 12 months and up to 57 percent of a recipient's last net salary. Additionally, under *Arbeitslosengeld II*, monetary benefits were lower than under the *Arbeitslosengeld I* benefits scheme. Under the changes, recipients may be required to accept gainful employment while the state covers the costs of health insurance and allows a recipient to continue to draw *Arbeitslosengeld II* benefits, though at reduced rates based on income. An area of fulfillment success was that the Schröder II government promised to create new avenues to improve training and employment prospects for the unemployed. In 2003 the Schröder II government passed legislation that created the JUMP-Plus program to provide job qualification and training for young adults who qualify for *Arbeitslosengeld II*.

Turning to the 2005 manifestos, the SPD promised to reduce the corporate tax on social capital, which was fulfilled. Pledges of the CDU/CSU

included a status quo pledge to keep the Solidarity Pact Aid, by which eastern Germany was to receive €156 billion during the period 2006–19. The Christian Democrats also promised to increase the value-added tax (VAT) from 16 to 18 percent. Under Merkel I, the increase in the VAT actually exceeded the promised increase to 19 percent in 2006. However, these pledges could be characterized as less controversial promises and easier to achieve. More difficult pledges to fulfill, which were indeed fulfilled, concerned the Christian Democrats' proposed federal reforms and the reduction in the number of legislative acts that require the Bundesrat's approval. As an institution faced with the potential loss of institutional power, the Bundesrat would naturally be interested in protecting its own legislative powers and blocking any attempts to reduce them. However, by the late summer of 2006, the Bundestag and Bundesrat approved the Föderalismusreform Act, which went into effect in September of that same year. The number of legislative acts requiring Bundesrat consent fell from 60 percent to approximately 50 percent ("Responsibilities" 2018).

In a comparative context, both German governments performed relatively well. Schröder II's fulfillment rate of 59 percent is high for a government lasting less than the full term. The grand coalition's rate of 67 percent is higher than average for full-term coalition governments.

Based on these fulfillment results, it appears that having a relatively powerful upper house did not serve as a major impediment to these governments' ability to enact their agendas. Historically, the Bundesrat has been instrumental in either blocking the Bundestag or securing legislative changes from the government. During the late 1990s, the SPD-controlled Bundesrat was successful in blocking tax cuts proposed by the Kohl government (Orlow 1999, 313). König (2005, 1) argues, however, that the Bundesrat has rarely used its veto powers to block legislation. Rather, it appears that conciliation committees, used to reconcile differences between the Bundestag and Bundesrat, in most cases allow the government to avoid dropping legislation entirely. For the period examined here, one major example of an opposition-controlled Bundesrat acting as a veto on government legislation occurred in December 2003 with Schröder's attempt to pass the Agenda 2010 (Williamson 2005). For the most part, however, such examples are rare. Further, with a grand coalition government, arguably neither a CUD/CSU-dominated nor an SPD-dominated Bundesrat would be considered an "opposition." Finally, the 2006 federal reforms may have reduced the ability of the Bundesrat to affect legislation during much of the grand coalition ("German States Agree . . ." 2006; "The Reform of Germany's . . ." 2007).

13.6. Conclusions

This chapter has presented fulfillment results for two types of coalition governments in Germany: “typical” coalitions and a grand coalition. There are some features of the German system that might have been expected to impede pledge fulfillment: a powerful upper house that may have an electoral base different from that of the lower house and may be controlled by an opposition, and the fact that the grand coalition government of 2005–9 was expected to present performance challenges. Ideological differences between the two *Volkspartien* led to some pessimism among politicians and observers, who predicted an early dissolution of the government.

Overall, this chapter illustrates that the German model of government is one in which governing and opposition parties’ pledges are fulfilled at rates comparable to or even higher than those found in other coalition governments. The Schröder II government fulfilled nearly 59 percent of its pledges in spite of being dissolved early, with the SPD having a distinct fulfillment advantage over its junior coalition partners, the Greens. Interestingly, the opposition CDU/CSU saw nearly 56 percent of its pledges fulfilled while collectively the opposition parties as a whole saw nearly 43 percent of their pledges fulfilled.

The grand coalition governing parties performed better than the Schröder II government and most coalition systems examined. Approximately 67 percent of the grand coalition government’s pledges were fulfilled. These results are counterintuitive when we consider the ideological distance between the grand coalition’s governing partners.

Breaking down “at least partial” fulfillment into “full” versus “partial” provides a clue as to the success of the grand coalition. A good portion of its success comes from partially as opposed to fully fulfilled pledges. The Merkel I coalition was able to *fully* fulfill only 42 percent of its pledges, with the chancellor’s party doing slightly better, at 46 percent compared to 39 percent for the SPD. This is considerably less than the SPD’s *full* fulfillment rate of 60 percent under Schröder II. Partial fulfillment rates were 25 percent for Merkel I, compared to 9 percent for Schröder II. In other words, there was more compromise between coalition partners in the grand coalition, and this helped produce a higher proportion of at least partially fulfilled pledges.

These results make sense given what we know about grand coalitions. Compared to “typical” coalition governments, in grand coalitions each party is almost equal in power. No one party is able to dominate the legislative process. As with the Austrian *Proporz* experience, during Merkel I the

party leadership of the CDU/CSU and SPD worked to establish a system of cooperation in which both parties worked to settle policy differences at the party-leadership and ministry levels before ideological differences threatened governing stability. Since neither party fully controlled the policy formation process, and neither party's leadership wished to risk an early termination of government due to ideological grandstanding, legislative compromises were commonplace.

Institutionally, we do not see a consistent impact on pledge fulfillment by the Bundesrat. During the Schröder II government, the Bundesrat forced some changes in the Agenda 2010 legislation. However, on other occasions the effects of the Bundesrat were less evident. Despite the constitutional requirement that it approve all legislation, the Bundesrat has rarely exercised its full veto power over the Bundestag (König 2005). Federal reforms in 2006 may have played a role in further reducing the influence of the Bundesrat on overall pledge fulfillment, especially for the grand coalition.

We have thus found an interesting difference between a "typical" coalition and a grand coalition. Research on more German governments, including the grand coalitions of 1966–69 and 2013–17, is needed to confirm whether this is a robust finding. Research on grand coalitions should be expanded to include other states as well.

NOTES

1. The CDU is political party found in all German states with the exception of Bavaria. In Bavaria the CSU, as the sister party of the CDU, represents the Christian Democratic ideology. At the national level, the parties form a *Fraktionsgemeinschaft*, or parliamentary association, in the Bundestag.

2. In November 2003, the Bundesrat blocked almost in its entirety Schröder's proposed Agenda 2010 over reforms to the labor market, the deficit, taxes, and construction subsidies ("Bundesrat stoppt Agenda 2010 und Steuerreform" 2003; *Welt*, "Der lange Weg bis zur Agenda 2010," 2003). Negotiations between the Bundesrat and Schröder's administration produced agreements to further reductions in unemployment payments and employment termination protections (Folge 15: Rot-Grün und die Agenda 2010 [2002 bis 2005] 2005).

Austria

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14.1. Introduction

Austria is a fairly typical European case in that it combines parliamentary democracy with proportional representation, a multiparty system, and strong corporatist institutions. Policymaking in Austria thus happens within the constraints of coalition government (Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a, 2014b). However, Austria is also an outlier in terms of the strength and pervasiveness of parties in the public sphere. Party membership is still much higher than in most European democracies (Van Biezen, Mair, and Poguntke 2012; Mair and Van Biezen 2001) and so is the party politicization of the public sector (Treib 2012; Ennser-Jedenastik 2014; Müller 1989). More so than in many other countries, Austrian politics is party politics.

The importance of parties in the Austrian political system is closely linked to the quasi duopoly on executive office possessed by the two traditional major parties, the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP). Save for short stints as junior coalition partners by the Communist Party in the 1940s and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) in the 1980s, governing responsibilities after 1945 were exclusively shared by SPÖ and ÖVP, often in "grand coalitions." However, party competition intensified significantly during the 1980s and 1990s as the Greens and especially the FPÖ, after its populist turn under Jörg Haider, began to

undermine the power monopoly of the two major parties (Müller and Fallend 2004; Dolezal 2005). The 1999 election marked the most significant departure from the traditional patterns of consociational postwar politics, pitting a government of the right (formed by the ÖVP and FPÖ) against an opposition of the left (the SPÖ and Greens) (Müller 2000).

The sample of pledges analyzed in this chapter covers the two legislative periods between 1999 and 2006, of which the first was terminated early (in 2002). During those years, two center-right majority cabinets introduced reforms in many policy areas, including an overhaul of the pension scheme, new benefits for families, income tax reform, a stricter immigration and asylum regime, liberalization of utilities, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and reform of the higher education sector (Tălos 2006b). Whereas the two parties had much common ground in economic and welfare policy, as well as on sociocultural issues, disagreements were considerably more frequent with respect to European integration, especially the eastern enlargement of the European Union (EU).

Not least because of the ongoing electoral success of populist radical right parties in Europe, this research endeavor seems especially worthwhile (another ÖVP-FPÖ coalition formed in Austria in December 2017). Furthermore, this focus adds to the existing literature on pledge fulfillment (Praprotnik 2017a, 2017b; Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a). To put the findings into perspective, however, we will compare our results with those of grand coalitions in Austria.

14.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Austria

The October 1999 election brought losses for the then governing parties, SPÖ and ÖVP (down to 36 and 28 percent of seats, respectively), and gains for the opposition parties, the Greens and FPÖ (up to 8 and 28 percent of seats) (Müller 2000). The postelection phase saw lengthy negotiations to continue the grand coalition that had been in power since 1987. Yet, since major policy disagreements between SPÖ and ÖVP could not be resolved and many ÖVP elites felt a strong desire to escape the grand coalition for electoral purposes, a bargain was struck between the ÖVP and the FPÖ. Accompanied by large public protests against the government participation of the FPÖ, the cabinet under the leadership of ÖVP chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel (Schüssel I) was inaugurated on February 4, 2000 (Luther 2001). Opposition to the new coalition was also voiced by many European governments, leading to diplomatic sanctions (Luther 2000). In terms of

governmental organization, the two parties had equal electoral support and thus distributed ministerial portfolios accordingly. Among the key departments, the ÖVP took the ministries of interior, foreign affairs, economic affairs, and education, whereas the FPÖ claimed the finance, justice, social affairs, defense, and transport portfolios.

The experience of governing proved difficult for the FPÖ, and intra-party dissent became impossible to manage for the party leadership in the summer of 2002—not least because Jörg Haider, who did not take a position in government, maintained a role as the “shadow party leader” and thus kept undermining the authority of the nominal party leadership (Luther 2011; Fallend 2004). In September 2002, several leading FPÖ figures (including the party leader, the finance minister, and the head of the parliamentary party group) resigned in response to a meeting of party rebels that denounced a compromise that had previously been negotiated between the warring party factions. The high-level resignations effectively forced the government to call elections before the end of its four-year term. The FPÖ suffered a dramatic loss at the polls, and many of its voters switched to the ÖVP, which had appeared as the much more competent governing party (Luther 2003). However, even though the ÖVP first entered coalition talks with the SPÖ and the Greens, the final outcome in February 2003 was another ÖVP-FPÖ government (Schüssel II), only this time the ÖVP outnumbered the FPÖ three to one in terms of legislative seats. The new power balance also found expression in the distribution of ministerial portfolios (finance, defense, and health were moved into the ÖVP’s column) and in the government’s policy agenda.

Yet, over time, dissent within the FPÖ grew again and peaked in April 2005, when the party leadership, all government ministers, and most members of parliament left the party and joined the newly founded Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), thus ridding themselves of the most ardent intraparty opponents of government participation. The party split was mostly horizontal, leaving the bulk of grassroots activists and members with the old FPÖ (except for the Haider-dominated branch in the southern *Bundesland* of Carinthia) but uniting the office-oriented elites in the BZÖ. Since there was thus almost perfect continuity among party elites in government and parliament, as well as in the policy agenda of the government, we do not count the ÖVP-BZÖ coalition as a new cabinet. The BZÖ leadership clearly felt bound by the FPÖ’s 2002 manifesto and the 2003 coalition agreement with the ÖVP. The FPÖ-BZÖ split thus effectively secured the Schüssel II cabinet a full legislative term.

The broader economic context in which the two Schüssel governments

operated was not favorable at first. While inflation was below 2 percent for much of the observed period, so was economic growth in the early 2000s. Only in 2004 did growth pick up, rising to 3.7 percent in 2006. Unemployment is generally low in Austria, but it did rise from 3.5 percent in 2000 to around 5 percent toward the end of the cabinet Schüssel II.

As important as macroeconomic trends are, the much more relevant context for the government was provided by the rollout of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the 2004 enlargement of the EU. Whereas the ÖVP had always been a staunch supporter of European integration, the FPÖ had firmly moved into the Euroskeptic camp under Jörg Haider during the 1990s. Yet the threats by the FPÖ to veto the eastern enlargement turned out to be mostly campaign rhetoric. The party acquiesced into grudgingly supporting the enlargement, thus leaving many of its manifesto pledges related to its stance toward European integration unfulfilled.

The heightened intensity of political competition during the late 1990s and the Schüssel cabinets, as well as the alignment of the government-opposition divide with the left-right divide produced controversial debates about many of the government's policy proposals (Müller and Jenny 2004). It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the election manifestos written around the turn of the millennium are among the most comprehensive in postwar Austrian politics (Dolezal et al. 2012). Drafting and publishing manifestos prior to national elections has a long-standing tradition in Austria. Until the 1960s policy programs used to be quite short and were published in party newspapers, which had very high levels of circulation. As of the late 1960s, manifestos gained considerably in length, scope, and detail, and parties started to issue them as discrete publications. Since 1990 the typical election manifesto has contained around 10,000 words, with the average peaking in 2002 at almost 20,000 (Dolezal et al. 2012, 881).

Austrian parties take the content of their manifestos very seriously: The manifesto drafting process often involves complex back-and-forth communications between multiple intraparty actors over a period of many months. This process varies considerably not only between parties but also within parties and between elections, but it is generally more involved in the ÖVP and the SPÖ than in the smaller parties (Dolezal et al. 2012, 880). Not least because of their extended networks of ancillary organizations, the ÖVP and, to a lesser extent, the SPÖ allow for broad input from different intraparty and associated groups. By contrast, the other parties pursue a rather tight and centralized drafting process (878).

Manifestos are usually issued no earlier than two months prior to an

election and are officially adopted by a party congress vote or a decision by the party executive. The policies put forward in the manifesto can thus be viewed as having broad support within the party and the official endorsement of the party elites and often even midlevel officials and conference delegates.

14.3. Research Design

The coding of the Austrian data is based on the narrow definition of election pledges as described in chapter 2 of this book.¹ We include both policy action (e.g., legislation or executive decrees) and policy outcomes (e.g., economic growth, unemployment, or energy use) in our analysis. All electoral promises are coded from the four manifestos published by the government parties ÖVP and FPÖ in the runup to the elections of 1999 and 2002, respectively.

Our research on pledge fulfillment is conducted within the framework of the Austrian National Election Study (AUTNES, see www.autnes.at). The project investigates national elections from the perspective of the three most important actors in an electoral campaign: the political parties, the voters, and the media. Among other things, researchers in this project conduct quantitative content analyses of election manifestos. To that end, a new coding procedure has been developed. Natural sentences are broken down into smaller units according to criteria based on grammatical rules only. These units are called statements and contain no more than one policy argument (Dolezal et al. 2016). On average, 2.4 statements are extracted per natural sentence (Dolezal et al. 2014, 64).

Our data collection on pledge fulfillment starts with the original manifesto text. The authors of this chapter and two trained student coders mark all objectively testable propositions in each manifesto. In order to test the reliability of the coding process, a random sample comprising 10 percent of all sentences (but not shorter than 50 sentences) was drawn from each document for double coding by two independent coders. Intercoder reliability for the samples from the four documents is generally high, with Krippendorff's alpha values ranging from 0.84 to 0.95 and percentage agreement scores between 87.6 and 95.2 (for details, see Schermann and Ennsner-Jedenastik 2014a, 571–72).

Our data cover all policy areas. Depending on the type of pledge (outcome or action), our most frequently consulted sources to code pledge fulfillment were the legal database of the Austrian chancellery (ris.bka.gv.at),

the archive of the parliament's website (www.parlament.gv.at), media databases, or official statistics mostly drawn from Statistics Austria (www.statistik.at), and Eurostat (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu).

14.4. Election Pledges in Austria

The election year of 1999 started off with the Carinthian *Land* elections and a historic win for the FPÖ. The FPÖ topped the polls with over 40 percent of the vote and its party leader, Jörg Haider, was subsequently reelected governor by the state diet. When the national elections came closer, the party decided to replicate its then successful campaign strategy and promised to implement a wide range of popular measures at the national level as well. One of these ideas was the Carinthian *Kinderscheck*—monthly payments to parents for children up to the age of six years.

The FPÖ was not the only party to choose families as one of its electoral target groups. Families and family-related policies played a dominant role in the campaign. Just weeks before the election, the Austrian Family Association (Österreichischer Familienbund) launched a people's initiative (*Volksbegehren*) in support of more generous benefits for families with children. Even though the association declared itself politically independent, the initiative's demands coincided with one of the ÖVP's central campaign promises for families: the extension of the parental leave allowance to all social groups. The party advocated that the benefit be paid irrespective of income and employment status, thus, for the first time, including housewives and students as beneficiaries. Also the ÖVP sought to eliminate regulations in the existing policy that were disadvantageous for self-employed parents and farmers (Rosenberger and Schallert 2000, 6–8).

The Social Democrats explicitly opposed the ÖVP's approach on leave benefits in their party manifesto. Instead, the SPÖ promised an increase in existing benefits and, in the medium term, even a tightening of the link between income and benefit rates. Thus, despite the differences in the specific designs of the ÖVP's and FPÖ's models, the general thrust of reform proposals' direction was more similar between the ÖVP and the FPÖ than between the then coalition partners, ÖVP and SPÖ.

Other important campaign topics in 1999 were proposals for tax reform and the fight against unemployment. For example, both parties on the right promised to lower taxes on low and medium incomes. These ideas remained salient for the election campaign in 2002 as well, not least since the planned tax reform was postponed after severe flooding in the summer of 2002, which led to a massive revolt in the FPÖ (covertly egged on by the

shadow party leader Jörg Haider) and early elections in the fall of that year. In 1999 the FPÖ also promised to fight against seasonal unemployment, while the ÖVP wanted to reduce the unemployment rate in general. In 2002, again, measures against unemployment had a high priority on both parties' agendas: the elderly, the disabled, women, apprentices, the self-employed, and farmers should be protected against job loss and supplied with assistance in the case of unemployment.

A non-trivial share of all pledges in the four manifestos is devoted not to introducing change but to preserving the policies already in place. Table 14.1 distinguishes between "change" pledges and status quo pledges. Overall, 20.2 percent of all pledges made by ÖVP and FPÖ in 1999 and 2002 are status quo pledges. This places Austria among those making the most status quo pledges compared to other countries in this book.

Status quo pledges are likely to occur when an existing policy that is supported by a party's sympathizers (or the electorate at large) is suddenly challenged by a political opponent or other external circumstances. In such cases, a pledge to continue an existing policy may play favorably with risk-averse voters. A good example is the ÖVP's 2002 promise not to allow a switch from a selective to a comprehensive school system. This was a response to the left-wing parties' push for moving from a two-tiered to a comprehensive school system after the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had reported mediocre results for Austrian students in 2000. Another factor that may contribute to a party embracing the status quo is, of course, incumbency. After entering government in 1999, the FPÖ's share of status quo pledges rose from 11 to 17 percent. By contrast, the ÖVP, a government party since 1987, framed no less than one in four election pledges as upholding the status quo.

A further aspect of the policies put forward in manifestos is the extent to which parties agree or disagree on specific pledges. To evaluate the relations among pledges, we follow the definition discussed in chapter 3. In 1999 only 9 percent (28 out of 322) of all pledges made by ÖVP and FPÖ

TABLE 14.1. Number and types of pledges in Austria

	ÖVP				FPÖ				Total	
	1999		2002		1999		2002			
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)		
Status quo	28.6	(52)	21.7	(55)	11.4	(16)	16.8	(33)	20.2	(156)
Change	71.4	(130)	78.3	(198)	88.6	(124)	83.2	(163)	79.8	(615)
Total pledges	100	(182)	100	(253)	100	(140)	100	(196)	100	(771)

were in agreement—a figure consistent with earlier studies (Royed 1996, 66; Mansergh and Thomson 2007, 315; Costello and Thomson 2008, 253). However, after governing together for a period, the ÖVP and FPÖ had developed much more of a common agenda, and their manifestos contained substantially more policy proposals that were in accordance with one another. Out of the 450 pledges put forward in the two parties' manifestos in 2002, no less than 84 were in agreement (19 percent). This is also due to the fact that a number of legislative proposals that were already in the pipeline but had to be aborted because of the early elections found their way into the party manifestos.

To give some examples, during the electoral campaign of 1999, both parties promised not to alter existing pensions, not to facilitate naturalization, not to introduce a road-pricing system for automobiles, and not to legalize marihuana (indeed, many "agreed" pledges in 1999 promoted the status quo). After the Schüssel I cabinet, the coalition partners were in agreement on even more issues. Again one major concern was to secure the privileges of the elderly, but agreement had been extended to other issues as well (e.g., not to increase the membership fees of the EU, to keep charging tuition fees at Austrian universities, and to retain a militia component in the army).

What is even more notable than the relatively small share of consensual pledges is the almost complete absence of promises that are in direct disagreement. The only exception to this pattern was, of course, all the more important when in 1999 the parties took opposite views on the question of enlarging the EU. While the ÖVP was strongly in favor of the accession of Austria's postcommunist neighbors (plus Cyprus and Malta), the FPÖ opposed it for a number of reasons, chief among them the fear of detrimental effects on the Austrian labor market, an outflow of consumer spending in the border regions, and greater net contributions to the EU. In the 2002 manifestos we do not find a single case of direct disagreement between the ÖVP and FPÖ. The decision about EU enlargement had largely been settled around the time of the campaign with the European Commission's recommendation in October 2002 to go forward with the enlargement process.

14.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Austria

From the 1999 and 2002 manifestos issued by the ÖVP and FPÖ we extracted a total of 854 pledges. Of these, 83 cases were dropped because

the data necessary to check the fulfillment of the pledges could not be obtained. Of the remaining 771 pledges, 377 were at least partially fulfilled (48.9 percent) with 394 remaining unfulfilled (51.1 percent). Compared to other coalition governments in this book, a fulfillment rate of less than half of all promises is on the low side.

Part of the reason for this may be Austria's corporatist system (Tälös 2006a; although under strain during the Schüssel governments, see Karlhofer 2002), which awards de facto, if not de jure, veto powers to political players outside government and parliament (e.g., to the independently administered social insurance institutions). What is more, federalism demands that many reforms made to the institutional makeup of the state, and also in areas such as health, education, child care, planning, and welfare for the poor, must obtain the consent of the nine *Länder*. While the formal institutions of federalism (notably the Bundesrat, the upper chamber in parliament) are weak, the informal ones, such as the conference of state governors, are strong (Karlhofer and Pallaver 2013). In addition, many policies are formulated at the national level but implemented by the *Länder* through a process called indirect federal administration. Since *Land* executives typically have much leeway in their implementation, national governments often seek broad compromises.

Despite these obstacles, the Schüssel cabinets produced important changes to the policy status quo, which had been relatively stable during the era of grand coalitions between 1987 and 1999. One central project was a series of pension reforms that resulted in substantial retrenchment of the public pay-as-you-go system yet also promoted and subsidized occupational and private pension schemes. These reforms provoked massive opposition from the left-wing parties and trade unions, culminating in the largest general strike in Austrian postwar history (Afonso 2015). Other important—and highly controversial—policy changes were the introduction of the child care allowance, the privatization of state-owned enterprises, and reform of the higher education system. It is safe to assume that none of these measures would have materialized had the SPÖ retained executive office and therefore acted as a veto player (as it did during the grand coalition years). The shift from a grand coalition to a right-of-center cabinet thus produced substantial policy change. Yet, despite the participation in government of a populist radical right-wing party, these changes were mostly in line with what one could expect from a “normal” right-wing government.

Overall, 39 percent of the pledges in the 1999 manifestos were at least partly fulfilled—a figure that rises to 56 percent for the 2002 pledges (see

table 14.2). This, of course, is largely due to the fact that the Schüssel I cabinet was terminated early, whereas the Schüssel II cabinet could serve a full term. Much legislation was actually already in preparation in the years before 2002, yet could not be finished and implemented before that year's snap election. This result compares quite well with the two SPÖ-ÖVP coalitions that followed the Schüssel era. The first such cabinet (Gusenbauer) collapsed early, and the rate of at least partial fulfillment was only 47 percent. The successive cabinet (Faymann I), however, served a full term, and the government acted on 53 percent of its pledges at least partially (Thomson et al. 2017).²

Looking table 14.2 in more detail, the most striking finding regarding the fulfillment rates is the change in the FPÖ's performance between 1999 and 2002. The comparison between these two legislative periods is especially interesting because it shows that pledge fulfillment is also dependent on strategic choices made by parties in the runup to an election. The FPÖ had been a populist protest party throughout the 1990s. This was, of course, reflected in its policy demands (Praprotnik 2017a). Even though the party leadership at some point took deliberate steps (e.g., emphasizing neoliberal economic policies and including references to Christianity in its party program) that would make the party more attractive to the ÖVP as a coalition partner (Luther 2011), it ran on a platform that included many radical demands, at least by the consociational standards of Austrian post-

TABLE 14.2. Pledge fulfillment in Austria

Fulfillment	Schüssel I† (2000–2002) (1999 election)			Schüssel II (2002–6) (2002 election)		
	ÖVP (PM)‡ % (n)	FPÖ % (n)	Total % (n)	ÖVP (PM)‡ % (n)	FPÖ % (n)	Total % (n)
Fully	45.6 (83)	17.9 (25)	33.5 (108)	51.8 (131)	45.9 (90)	49.2 (221)
Partially	4.4 (8)	6.4 (9)	5.3 (17)	6.3 (16)	7.7 (15)	6.9 (31)
<i>At least partially</i>	<i>50.0 (91)</i>	<i>24.3 (34)</i>	<i>38.8 (125)</i>	<i>58.1 (147)</i>	<i>53.6 (105)</i>	<i>56.1 (252)</i>
Not	50.0 (91)	75.7 (106)	61.2 (197)	41.9 (106)	46.4 (91)	43.9 (106)
TOTAL	100 (182)	100 (140)	100 (322)	100 (253)	100 (196)	100 (449)
Seat share	28.4 (52)	28.4 (52)	56.8 (104)	43.2 (79)	9.8 (18)	53.0 (97)

†Cabinet terminated early.

‡PM = prime minister.

war politics. For instance, it promoted the fusion of all 28 social insurance institutions, a full stop to immigration, and mandatory drug testing for all teachers and social workers (none of these proposals was taken up by the government). After its first period in government since the mid-1980s, the FPÖ toned down its rhetoric, and many of its less realistic demands were dropped from the platform, also because it had become clear that there was a good chance the party actually had to deliver on its manifesto promises.

A prime example of such “expectation management” can be observed in the domain of immigration—one of the FPÖ’s core campaign issues. Of the 23 immigration-related pledges the party made in its 1999 manifesto, only two (8.7 percent) were fulfilled at least partially. In 2002 the party slightly narrowed its focus and promised more specific action against immigration-related crime (e.g., human trafficking). The at least partial fulfillment rate on such pledges during the Schüssel II cabinet then increased to 43 percent (nine out of 21 pledges).

A similar adaptation occurred in the area of tax and welfare policy. The FPÖ’s 1999 manifesto made several sweeping and expensive demands (such as the aforementioned *Kinderscheck* and a complete overhaul of the income tax code), of which many remained campaign rhetoric. Only eight out of 32 pledges were acted on (a 25 percent at least partial fulfillment rate). In 2002 the party took a more measured approach (e.g., adapting many of its proposals about the income tax code to obvious political realities, which it then also found easier to follow through with). Of the 32 pledges in the 2002 manifesto, 23 were fulfilled at least partially (a success rate of 72 percent).

Delivering on a manifesto shortly after entering government proved to be difficult for the SPÖ as well. In 2007 it resumed government office in a coalition with the ÖVP. While the ÖVP managed to fulfill 55 percent of its pledges at least partially, the Social Democrats were only able to act on 39 percent of theirs. During their consecutive government period, however, this difference became completely balanced, and both parties were able to fulfill more than half their pledges at least partially.

But this finding is not only driven by a certain amount of expectation management. Also the government parties that determined the course of public policy over the past legislative period made a greater number of status quo pledges in their manifestos. Previous studies on pledge fulfillment in Austria have shown that promises not to alter the current policy have an overwhelming chance of being fulfilled (Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a; Pra-protnik 2017b), as was found for all countries in this book. For the two legislative periods studied here, the at least partial fulfillment rate for status quo pledges is 83.3 percent (130 out of 156), whereas it is only 40.1 percent for

change pledges (247 out of 615). Obviously, a higher proportion of status quo pledges adds to a long-term government party's good performance. The high fulfillment rate of status quo pledges is an especially relevant phenomenon in countries such as Austria, where full party turnover in government is rare and at least one party in each new cabinet retains a position as a veto player.

Finally, it is important to note that coalition bargaining typically has an impact on a government's policy output. From earlier research, we know that pledges adopted in a coalition agreement have a substantially higher probability of being fulfilled (Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a; Praprotnik 2017b). This reflects the fact that coalition negotiations usually take a long time and produce a very detailed program for government action. Policy measures adopted in the coalition contract have therefore already been agreed on (if sometimes reluctantly). Because these documents are public, it is difficult for parties to revoke their support later on. By contrast, proposals that are not contained in the coalition agreement can be vetoed without any loss of credibility. Coalition agreements hence serve as meaningful *ex ante* control mechanisms that limit the freedom to maneuver of individual parties and ministers (Moury 2011b; Müller and Strøm 2008; Strøm and Müller 1999; Thomson 1999b).

In addition, party control of the policy-relevant portfolio is an important determinant of pledge fulfillment (Praprotnik 2017b; Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a). Theoretically, this chimes with the notion of ministerial government—the assumption that ministers are policy dictators within their jurisdiction (Laver and Shepsle 1990, 1996). Empirically, the fact that ministerial autonomy in Austria is comparatively high (Müller 1994) makes this finding less surprising. There is a persistent norm not to interfere too much in the day-to-day business of other ministerial departments, which gives individual ministers a strong position in shaping legislation or vetoing proposals that are not to their liking early in the policymaking process. At least in theory, the importance of ministerial control clearly gave an advantage to the ÖVP during the Schüssel II cabinet, when it took nine portfolios compared to the FPÖ's three.

14.6. Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined the fulfillment of pledges by two right-wing cabinets in Austria. About half of all pledges made by the ÖVP and FPÖ in their 1999 and 2002 manifestos were fulfilled at least partially. This performance is comparable to that of other majority coalition gov-

ernments, yet it is below what many single-party governments are able to deliver, as illustrated in chapter 4 of the book.

The Austrian case is especially interesting because it contributes one of the rare examples of a populist radical right-wing party holding government office for an extended period of time (Minkenberg 2001). Indeed, the differences in fulfillment rates and endorsement of the status quo between the FPÖ's 1999 and 2002 manifestos is a testament to the idea that government participation can have a moderating effect on populist, radical right-wing parties (Akkerman and Rooduijn 2015; Van Spanje and Van Der Brug 2007). The increase in agreed pledges in the two parties' manifestos between 1999 and 2002 is also consistent with this idea.³

Both cabinets saw massive conflicts within the FPÖ between the more office-oriented elites and those who favored a more populist vote-seeking strategy (and were thus less tolerant of the policy compromises necessary to remain in government). In 2002 this led to the early termination of the Schüssel I cabinet and thus a lower overall fulfillment rate. The Schüssel II cabinet could only serve its full term because a party split rid the FPÖ's governing elites (who then moved to the BZÖ) of the party's most ardent dissidents.

Party size did not seem to have a large impact on fulfillment rates. After the 1999 election, both parties were of exactly equal strength in terms of legislative seats and cabinet positions, yet the ÖVP followed through on a much larger share of its promises than did the FPÖ. A better explanation for this discrepancy is the huge gap in governing experience between the two parties. However, a large increase in fulfillment rates between 1999 and 2002 for the FPÖ highlights the party's quick adaptation to government office, which led to more moderate policy demands being put forward than had occurred during its long time in opposition in the 1980s and 1990s. The two parties also converged in many policy areas during their period in office, as evidenced in the increase in pledges that were in agreement between 1999 and 2002.

The Austrian case also highlights the fact that parties do not put forward policies independently. In the Austrian case, even a superficial reading of the 2002 manifestos makes it clear that the ÖVP and FPÖ had arrived at agreement on many policy areas in the first three years of sharing power. Even in the absence of a preelectoral coalition announcement (and, indeed, the continuation of the ÖVP-FPÖ cabinet was by no means a sure thing), many of the policy proposals advanced by the two parties in 2002 were clearly derived from the common governing agenda developed during the Schüssel I cabinet.

The case of the FPÖ adapting to its governing role and moderating many of its policy demands between 1999 and 2002 is a clear illustration of the potential for endogeneity in pledgemaking. Especially in political systems with many constraining influences (e.g., coalition government, federalism, and corporatism), parties are keenly aware—or made aware once in office—of the difference between what they would like to propose and what they will be able to deliver. While voters may discount these constraining factors to some degree, it is probable that parties will moderate their policy promises if they believe that government participation is a likely outcome.

NOTES

1. The dataset used in this chapter represents an adapted version of the dataset used in earlier studies on Austrian pledge fulfillment (Praprotnik 2017c; Scher-mann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a, 2014b). This dataset is in line with the Comparative Party Pledge Group's methodological approach.

2. This fulfillment rate is still substantially lower than that of the Merkel I (2005–9) cabinet. The German grand coalition implemented 69 percent of its pledges at least partially (see chapter 13).

3. Note, however, that the 2017 election campaign saw the ÖVP adopt many of the FPÖ's policy proposals, especially with respect to immigration and the welfare state.

The Netherlands

Robert Thomson

15.1. Introduction

The study on which this chapter is based was completed in 1999 and focused on three Dutch coalition governments that held office between 1986 and 1998 (Thomson 2001). Prior to that study, research on pledge fulfillment had focused on countries where it is the norm for single parties to control the government executive, such as the United Kingdom (Rose 1984; Rallings 1987; Royed 1996), Canada (Rallings 1987), Greece (Kalogeropoulou 1989), and the United States (Pomper and Lederman 1980; Royed 1996). Before the Dutch study of 2001, the authors of an influential textbook on European politics noted that “there is something of a gap in terms of our knowledge of the fulfillment of election pledges in coalition systems of government that are far more typical of modern Europe” (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 1995, 374). Fortunately, we now have more research on pledge fulfillment in coalition governments, as the various chapters in this volume show.

Some political scientists have suggested that we should expect to find a relatively weak link between election programs and government actions in the Netherlands throughout the postwar period as a whole, compared to other coalition systems (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 206–9). These arguments mainly refer to facts that are relevant to the time period before the one considered here: 1986–98. For instance, Klingemann, Hof-

ferbert, and Budge suggest that the closed nature of Dutch politics leads to little real choice between parties for voters and weak responsiveness by parties. Dutch politics up to the 1970s became synonymous with the concept of consociationalism, whereby the country was governed by a cooperative and stable group of elites. One characteristic of this stability was the fact that a Christian democratic party was part of every Dutch government since 1917, even as late as 1994. Under this stable elite, the rest of society was segmented into distinct and stable pillars (Lijphart 1977). The members of each pillar (Protestants, Catholics, socialists, and liberals) had little to do with each other since they each had their own schools, hospitals, media, and political parties. Dutch political scientists have debated the extent to which pillarization ever really existed in the rigid form in which it is sometimes portrayed (e.g., De Rooy 1997; Blom 2000). Notwithstanding this debate, it is clear that the Dutch political system has become markedly more competitive and open since the late 1970s, with more voters switching between parties and different combinations of parties governing together.

Although the Netherlands had a more competitive and open political system in the 1986–98 time period considered here than previously, there are some persistent features of the closed nature of Dutch politics. The first persistent feature is the governing status of the main Christian democratic party, the Christian Democratic Appeal (Christen Democratisch Appél, CDA). The year 1994 marked an important watershed in Dutch government since it was the first time that a coalition was formed without a Christian democratic party. That year was also the first time since 1951 that the main social democratic party, the Labor Party (Partij van der Arbeid, PvdA), and conservative liberal party, the Liberal Party (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD), served in the same government together. They were joined in government by a small social liberal party, Democrats '66 (D66). This dramatic change in the composition of government might be expected to lead to low levels of pledge fulfillment. A new combination of governing parties may wish to change policies in ways that might be resisted by the incrementalism that characterizes much public policy. The evidence, however, shows that there was a relatively high level of pledge fulfillment in the 1994–98 government period.

Another noteworthy feature of the Dutch political system is that after elections the prospective coalition partners conduct lengthy negotiations with each other to formulate detailed government agreements, as well as the allocation of ministerial portfolios. While written government agreements are common in other countries, the amount of time devoted to formulating them and the level of detail they provide are exceptional. For instance, the governments that took office in 1986, 1989, and 1994 took,

respectively, 52, 61, and 111 days to form, which is not exceptional in the period since 1945 (Andeweg and Irwin 2009, 132). This practice might be considered a legacy of the closed elite nature of Dutch consociationalism that could blur the lines of clear accountability; after all, “Who has won when, after an election, a few professional politicians . . . get together in closed rooms and haggle over cabinet portfolios and, presumably, policy?” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 208). Consequently, this chapter examines the extent to which election pledges are supported in government agreements after elections and whether this support means those pledges are fulfilled during the subsequent government period.

In the time period studied here, the Dutch political system was stable compared to the more recent period, particularly since 2001. Given the absence of any evidence regarding pledge fulfillment since 1998, we can only speculate that pledge fulfillment may have been at lower levels in some of the unstable short-lived governments that have held office since then. The instability began in 2001 with the meteoric rise of a party focused on one charismatic leader, the List Pim Fortuyn, or LPF (Andeweg and Irwin 2009, 23–24). Fortuyn succeeded in channeling popular discontent with the mainstream parties into support for his party. He raised issues related to immigration and the challenges faced by a multicultural society with a sizable Muslim minority. Fortuyn was murdered before the election of May 2002. The motive of the murderer was said to be animal rights. Even after Fortuyn’s death, his party received 17 percent of the vote, following which the LPF was included in a short-lived coalition government with the CDA and VVD. The LPF ministers proved to be as ineffective in governing as mainstream politicians were in countering the rise of Fortuyn before his murder. This turbulence continued with the escalation of concerns about the supposed threat of Muslims to modern Dutch society. A former conservative VVD politician, Geert Wilders, formed the Party for Freedom (Partij Voor de Vrijheid, PVV) in 2005 on an explicitly anti-Islam platform. This party has also enjoyed considerable electoral success and provided parliamentary support to a short-lived government 2010–12. This chapter does not focus on this more recent turbulent period, instead considering pledge fulfillment in the comparatively stable period 1986–98.

15.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in the Netherlands

The Dutch electoral system is one of the most proportional systems in the world, which means there is a close correspondence between the percentage of votes cast for a party and the percentage of parliamentary seats that

it receives. The party system has always been relatively fragmented. After the national election of 1989, nine parties were represented in the Lower House (Tweede Kamer) of the Dutch parliament. This study includes only the four main parties, each of which served in government at some point during the 1986–98 period: the PvdA, D66, CDA, and VVD. These four parties were selected for inclusion in this study because they are generally considered to be the ones with governing potential. None of the other parties in the selected time period received more votes than any one of these four parties in national elections. Together these four parties received about 90 percent of the total votes cast in the parliamentary elections of 1986, 1989, and 1994.

Political commentators often refer to the left-right ideological dimension when describing the party system of any country, and the Netherlands is no exception (e.g., Van der Eijk and Niemöller 1983; Van der Brug 1998). Most observers of Dutch politics would place the four selected parties from left to right in the order PvdA-D66-CDA-VVD. This order also generally accords with the positions of these parties on the left-right dimension as defined and measured by the Comparative Manifestos Project, or CMP (Volkens et al. 2015). However, there are some exceptions to this order. The CMP measures report that the CDA was somewhat to the left of D66 in the 1986 election, giving the order PvdA-CDA-D66-VVD. More important, the PvdA was to the right of the CDA in the 1994 election, for an order of D66-CDA-PvdA-VVD. The data on election pledges show a similar shift in the parties' positions in the 1994 elections. The CMP measures show a return to the traditional order of PvdA-D66-CDA-VVD in the 1998 election.

Although the left-right dimension is a useful heuristic, many believe it does not adequately capture the complexity of the Dutch ideological space. Andeweg and Irwin (2009, 70) note that the left-right dimension defined in terms of economic issues, such as income redistribution, gives a different order of parties than does the left-right dimension defined in terms of social issues such as euthanasia. On the economic left-right dimension, the PvdA and D66 take left of center positions while the CDA and VVD take right of center positions. However, on the left-right dimension defined in terms of social issues such as euthanasia, the VVD tends to take "liberal" positions that are in broad agreement with those of the PvdA and D66, while the CDA takes more conservative positions.

I now give a brief description of each of the four main parties, starting with the PvdA, which is a social democratic party. On the socioeconomic issues with which it is most commonly associated, it has historically been

a supporter of a strong welfare state and a progressive system of taxation. Over the years, the influence of the left wing of the party has fluctuated, having been particularly strong during the late 1960s and 1970s. Around the mid-1980s, a reappraisal of the party's main policy stances began, a process that occurred in many social democratic parties across Europe. This reassessment was accompanied by the election of a new party leader, Wim Kok, who steered the party toward more centrist positions. The historical evidence clearly indicates that the time period selected for analysis in this study is one in which the PvdA took relatively moderate stances. If some of the earlier, more radical party programs were included in the analysis, it might be that fewer fulfilled election pledges would have been found, even when the PvdA was in office. Jan Juliaan Woltjer, the Dutch historian, notes the disappointment of the social democrats at how little of their election program of 1972 was enacted during the 1973–77 cabinet, in which the PvdA and other leftist parties were represented (1992, 633–40).

The D66 was formed in 1966. Its founding members, a group of Amsterdam intellectuals, were dissatisfied with the current political system, claiming that voters did not have enough say in decision making. The party is most commonly associated with a number of constitutional measures designed to remedy this situation. These include the introduction of direct elections for the prime minister, elections for city mayors, and forms of direct democracy such as referenda. While supporting the main principles of the welfare state, it seeks to expand individual freedom of choice wherever possible. As a result, the party is often described as “progressive liberal” or “social liberal” to distinguish it from the “conservative liberal” VVD. The electoral support for D66 has fluctuated considerably over the years. The party did particularly well at the 1994 parliamentary election, after which it entered government.

The CDA was formed in 1980 out of three separate Catholic and Protestant confessional parties. The establishment of this new party followed a decline in electoral support for the religious parties in the 1960s and early 1970s. The European Christian democratic outlook, shared by the CDA, attempts to conduct policymaking on the basis of more or less explicit Christian principles. This means that the Christian Democrats take positions around the center of the most important policy dimensions. As a result, the CDA has played a pivotal role in Dutch politics. Between 1917 and 1994, it or one of its predecessors was represented in the governing coalition. A report commissioned by the CDA after its 1994 election defeat concluded that the party had become identified too closely with its role as a governing party. The CDA's governmental orientation is perhaps one of

the reasons why the party had difficulty fulfilling its role as an opposition party during the 1994–98 period.

The conservative VVD is associated with policy initiatives meant to reduce the size and scope of government activity. Between 1982 and 1989, the party participated in two cabinets under the premiership of CDA politician Ruud Lubbers, which attempted to curb the growth of the public sector. Throughout the postwar period, the Liberals have received on average approximately 13 percent of the popular vote in national elections and have been represented in governing coalitions about half the time.

The four main Dutch parties generally formulate their election platforms in an inclusive and consultative way, which accords with the consultative nature of Dutch political culture. Dutch parties formulate their platforms in ways that offer groups in each of the parties ample opportunities to propose detailed amendments, which typically results in a large number of amendments being added to the initial drafts. While the procedures differ by party, they allow a range of internal party groups to influence the content of the program: committees and working groups set up specifically for the purpose of drafting the election program, party-affiliated research bureaus, local party divisions, and parliamentary delegations. Koole (1992, 318–35) describes the general process of establishing an election program by a Dutch party as a series of five steps. While each party generally adheres to these steps, the details of their processes of course differ depending on their organizational structures and administrative capacities. First, a special committee is established to formulate a draft program. The special committee may draw on advice from the party's research bureau, parliamentary delegation, or other actors in the party. Second, the party executive approves the draft program. Third, subnational party divisions and other groups in the party may propose amendments. Fourth, the party executive formulates advice on each of the proposed amendments. Fifth, the amendments and party executive's advice is put to the party council or congress, which votes on the proposed amendments and formally approves the draft program. These inclusive processes result in large numbers of amendments being made to draft programs. For example, the draft programs of the PvdA, CDA, and VVD for the 1986 election were subject to more than 4,000, 1,900, and 3,000 amendments, respectively (Voerman 1994, x). Many of these amendments refer to detailed policy measures. In line with these inclusive processes, the evidence presented in this chapter shows that Dutch programs generally contain substantial numbers of detailed policy proposals that we code as election pledges.

The three governments selected differ with respect to their composi-

tion, to some extent in their duration, and also regarding the economic conditions they experienced. Between 1986 and 1989, there was a center-right coalition consisting of the CDA and the VVD. The CDA changed partners after the 1989 election to form a coalition with the PvdA. After the 1994 election, the so-called purple coalition, consisting of the PvdA, D66, and the VVD was formed. There may be a positive relationship between incumbency and the strength of the program-to-policy link, since parties with more experience may be better at formulating more realistic policy proposals and also have more experience in pushing these policies through. The selection of this time period means there is variation in the government experience held by the governing and opposition parties under investigation. With respect to variation in duration, the first cabinet examined in this study did not last the four years until the next regularly scheduled election. The termination of this cabinet was precipitated by a disagreement between the parliamentary VVD and the government regarding taxation policy. With respect to variation in economic conditions, the 1994–98 coalition enjoyed the most favorable economic situation.

15.3. Research Design

This chapter follows the narrow definition of election pledges referred to in chapter 2. This definition stipulates that for a statement to be a pledge it must meet the criteria on the basis of which researchers can assess whether or not it is fulfilled. This narrow definition is appropriate in the Dutch context since the parties' election programs are detailed documents with many specific pledges, as will become clear in the next section. The mainstream parties recognize the need to give details of what they plan to do. This recognition is evident in the fact that the main parties send their election programs to the Dutch Central Plan Bureau (Centraal Planbureau, CPB), an independent body that calculates the financial implications of the policy proposals contained in each program.

Pledges to bring about certain outcomes are not included. This coding decision does not mean that the congruence between promised outcomes and actual outcomes is of no interest to the empirical evaluation of parties' electoral appeals. Rather, it simply implies the view that when we study the party mandate, the wisdom or effectiveness of government actions is not our primary concern (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 254). All that is being investigated is the program-to-policy link that is central to mandate theory. Moreover, a brief consideration of the likely reasons for

variation in the fulfillment of action and outcome pledges indicates that there is an important qualitative distinction between them. For example, the fulfillment of a party's promise to restrict entitlements to welfare benefits for the unemployed is most likely to depend on the amount of political support for this proposal. By contrast, the fulfillment of a promise to reduce unemployment by 100,000 will depend not only on the political will to take effective policy actions, but also on the international economic conjuncture.

While I identified and compared election pledges from all policy areas, when it came to assessing pledge fulfillment, I took the pragmatic decision to limit the analysis to a subset of pledges on socioeconomic policy, broadly defined. This includes welfare services, housing, health care, education, employment, taxation, and business policy. The 1,005 tested pledges fall for the most part under the policy jurisdictions of six of the 13 government ministries and cover approximately half of all pledges made. Of course, this means that a number of important policy areas were excluded from the analysis. The main excluded policy areas were defense and foreign affairs, constitutional affairs, environmental policy, law and order, and immigration policy.

As in the other country studies in this volume, relevant government decisions were examined to assess whether each pledge was not fulfilled, partially fulfilled, or fully fulfilled. The search for relevant government actions began by reading policy reviews of the main developments in the subfields of socioeconomic policy. These reviews consisted of descriptions of public policy in particular areas written by academics and public policy research organizations. Some of the most useful policy reviews were contained in the *Social and Cultural Report* (*Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport*), published by the Social and Cultural Plan Bureau (SCP) every two years. Annually published reviews of parliamentary debates, classified by subject area, were also consulted (*Parlement en Kiezer*). This general orientation allowed the election pledges to be placed in the context of the important policy developments and debates of the day. The enactment of a number of election pledges could be established on the basis of the information contained in these policy reviews alone. The main part of the search was carried out using a CD-ROM database containing references to and short descriptions of all government decisions taken since January 1, 1986 (*Register op de Staatsblad en Staatscourant*). This database is updated every three months. It allows the user to select references to government decisions using key words. Selections were made using key words contained in the election pledges themselves and words associated with the main policy

themes and developments with which the pledges were associated. If no government actions were found after this extensive search that would constitute at least partial enactment of the pledge in question, the pledge was classified as not fulfilled.

Reliability tests were conducted on the coding of election pledges and the assessment of pledge fulfillment. To measure the reliability of coding election pledges, a research assistant and I independently examined 57 densely printed pages of election programs. We identified a total of 226 statements as election pledges, of which we agreed on 199 (I coded 14 statements as election pledges that the research assistant did not code as pledges, while the assistant coded 13 statements as pledges that I did not code as pledges). To determine the reliability of the assessments of pledge fulfillment, I presented policy area specialists (from the SCP) with a selection of 110 election pledges and asked them to rate the fulfillment of each. The reliability test was conducted in 1998 and referred to pledges from the 1994 election manifestos. The agreement between my coding and their coding was assessed for the original three-category measurement of fulfillment and a recoded two-category variable consisting of the values "not fulfilled" and "at least partially fulfilled." The comparisons revealed relatively more agreement on the basis of this two-category variable ($Kappa = .78$) than on the three-category variable ($Kappa = .70$). While I present the information from the three-category variable, the somewhat higher level of reliability for the two-category variable indicates that we should have more confidence in results based on analysis of the two-category variable.

15.4. Election Pledges in the Netherlands

The sheer numbers of election pledges indicate that specific promises are an important part of electoral discourse in the Netherlands. The largest number of pledges, 261, was found in the PvdA's 1986 election program, while the smallest number, 99, was found in the VVD's 1994 program. As in other countries and time periods, most pledges refer to the policies parties plan to change. No party made a disproportionate number of status quo pledges, and all made a large number of action pledges. The CDA made the highest number and percentage of status quo pledges in 1986 (37 pledges, which accounted for 22.6 percent of all its pledges that year). This might suggest that after a long period of incumbency the party wished to make fewer policy changes than other parties do.

The four Dutch parties offered voters choices among different policy

alternatives. I illustrate these choices, first, by reviewing some examples of parties' election pledges and, second, by examining general patterns in the relations among parties' election pledges. First, consider the following examples of parties' election pledges on welfare benefits, shop closing hours, and taxation. The examples illustrate that parties focus on issues of importance with practical implications for ordinary citizens.

Parties made a range of commitments on welfare benefits that distinguished their electoral appeals. One issue was the system by which welfare payments should be adjusted to maintain their value in relation to incomes. Since 1981 a system of automatic coupling has been in place in the Netherlands. Under this system, each percentage increase in the average income paid to employees should lead automatically to the same percentage increase in welfare payments without the government of the day having to take a decision on the matter. In reality, however, the system of automatic coupling was in many years suspended temporarily. This allowed governments to freeze welfare payments or increase them at rates lower than those of wage increases. In their 1989 election programs, the four parties stated their policy positions on the issue of the system by which welfare payments should be adjusted. The Labor Party stated that the system of automatic coupling would be maintained, while the other three parties made clear that they would replace it with a system under which the government would have to decide yearly on the extent of the increase. This example illustrates not only the differences among parties but also the fact that status quo pledges can be of importance.

The times at which shops are permitted to open for business was a significant practical issue in Dutch politics during the time period considered here. Prior to the legislative changes brought about after 1994, which will be summarized in the following section, shops were permitted to open for only 52 hours each week. They were also restricted in the times of the day during which they could be open: in general, until 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. On Sundays shops were usually closed, although local authorities could permit Sunday shopping four times a year. In their 1986 election manifestos, the VVD, D66, and PvdA all supported the policy of allowing shopkeepers more freedom to decide on opening hours themselves. This issue was not referred to explicitly in the CDA's 1986 manifesto. The shop closing hours issue was also on the agenda in the 1989 election. The VVD and D66 reasserted their demand that the law be liberalized. This time the PvdA did not feature the issue in its manifesto, while the CDA pledged that the present law would be maintained. The 1994 election programs of the PvdA, D66, and VVD all pledged a

substantial liberalization of the regulations governing shop opening times, while the CDA did not mention this issue. These pledges clearly reflect the positions of the parties on the social left-right dimension, whereby the PvdA, D66, and VVD took “liberal” positions while the CDA took a “conservative” position in line with its concerns about protecting the sanctity of Sundays from commercialization.

Taxation is another issue of obvious concern to citizens, and Dutch parties made pledges in this area. The collective tax burden is relatively high in the Netherlands. A substantial proportion of this taxation takes the form of income taxes and social premiums, which are deducted from employees’ gross incomes. The 1986 election programs indicate a substantial amount of consensus among the four parties in their commitment to reducing the tax burden. Testable policy statements were found in four manifestos, each one in favor of reducing taxes that affect wage costs directly. The PvdA’s pledge was somewhat different from the pledges of the other parties on this issue. The PvdA stated that the tax burden would be reduced for those earning up to one and a half times the modal salary. The other parties stated simply that the tax burden on incomes would be reduced, or words to that effect. Similar general pledges were made by the CDA and VVD in their 1989 manifestos, while the PvdA and D66 made no specific pledges on income tax levels. Clearly, these commitments were rather general and offered little choice to voters. In their 1994 election programs, all parties made more specific statements on taxation policy than they had previously, as will be discussed in the next section.

Table 15.1 shows the percentages of pledges made by different parties that are unrelated, related consensually, or related dissensually. As in other countries, the majority of pledges are unrelated. The lowest percentage of unrelated pledges was found in the set of PvdA and D66 pledges in 1986, of which 67.2 percent were unrelated. The highest percentage of unrelated pledges refers to the set of pledges made by the PvdA and CDA in 1994 (78.2 percent). Although unrelated pledges are the clear majority of pledges made, these percentages are somewhat lower than the percentages found in countries where coalition governments are not the norm, for instance, in the US and UK (see fig. 3.6 in chapter 3). One reason for this could be that election manifestos in coalition systems are policy appeals not only to voters but also to other parties that are potential coalition partners.

When pledges made by different parties are related, it is far more common for them to agree than to disagree (table 15.1). Considering pledges from all policy areas made by each pair of parties, the percentages of pledges that agree range from 14.5 to 30.1, while the percentage of

pledges that disagree range from 2.7 to 8.5. As the above examples show, pledges that are in agreement often refer to electorally popular measures, such as cutting taxes, that are unlikely to be opposed explicitly by any mainstream party.

The patterns of agreement and disagreement between the pledges made by each pair of parties reflect other estimates of parties' positions on the left-right ideological dimension. Considering all pledges made by the PvdA and each other party in 1986, the PvdA and D66 agreed most (30.1 percent), followed by the PvdA and CDA (17.2 percent), and then the PvdA and VVD (14.5 percent). This reflects the commonly held view that the parties are ordered PvdA-D66-CDA-VVD on the left-right dimension, which, as mentioned above, also accords with the estimates of the CMP (Volkens et al. 2015). The pledge data also partly reflect the shift in ordering of the four main parties during the 1994 election. Consider all of the pledges made by the PvdA and each other party in 1994. Of these pledges we find most agreement between the PvdA and D66 (26.9

TABLE 15.1. Relations among pledges in the Netherlands

	All pledges			Socioeconomic pledges		
	Agree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Unrelated % (n)	Agree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Unrelated % (n)
1986						
PvdA-D66	30.1 (124)	2.7 (11)	67.2 (277)	31.1 (56)	4.4 (8)	64.4 (116)
PvdA-CDA	17.2 (73)	6.4 (27)	76.5 (325)	20.3 (40)	7.6 (15)	72.1 (142)
PvdA-VVD	14.5 (66)	8.2 (37)	77.3 (351)	16.2 (36)	10.8 (24)	73.0 (162)
D66-CDA	22.5 (71)	3.5 (11)	74.0 (233)	27.8 (42)	3.3 (5)	68.9 (104)
D66-VVD	18.6 (64)	4.7 (16)	76.7 (264)	25.6 (45)	4.0 (7)	70.5 (124)
CDA-VVD	21.6 (77)	4.8 (17)	73.7 (263)	24.9 (48)	4.7 (9)	70.5 (136)
1989						
PvdA-D66	29.8 (105)	2.8 (10)	67.3 (237)	28.3 (43)	5.3 (8)	66.5 (101)
PvdA-CDA	19.6 (67)	8.5 (29)	71.9 (246)	18.5 (30)	13.0 (21)	68.5 (111)
PvdA-VVD	15.0 (44)	8.5 (25)	76.5 (224)	8.1 (13)	11.2 (18)	80.8 (130)
D66-CDA	20.1 (76)	5.6 (21)	74.3 (281)	17.9 (29)	9.3 (15)	72.8 (118)
D66-VVD	21.6 (71)	7.6 (25)	70.8 (233)	17.4 (28)	10.6 (17)	72.0 (116)
CDA-VVD	21.6 (69)	5.0 (16)	73.4 (234)	23.4 (40)	8.2 (14)	68.4 (117)
1994						
PvdA-D66	26.9 (94)	4.9 (17)	68.2 (238)	30.1 (50)	7.2 (12)	62.7 (104)
PvdA-CDA	17.3 (46)	4.5 (12)	78.2 (208)	12.4 (18)	6.9 (10)	80.7 (117)
PvdA-VVD	22.7 (50)	7.7 (17)	69.6 (153)	20.9 (23)	11.8 (13)	67.3 (74)
D66-CDA	19.8 (74)	5.1 (19)	75.1 (280)	22.1 (44)	5.5 (11)	72.4 (144)
D66-VVD	22.3 (73)	6.4 (21)	71.3 (233)	25.0 (41)	7.3 (12)	67.7 (111)
CDA-VVD	25.0 (61)	3.7 (9)	71.3 (174)	24.5 (35)	4.9 (7)	70.6 (101)

percent), then between the PvdA and VVD (22.7 percent), followed by the PvdA and CDA (17.3 percent). This partly reflects the CMP's estimate of the ordering of the parties on the left-right dimension in 1994 as D66-CDA-PvdA-VVD. This also suggests that there was a substantial amount of agreement between the PvdA and VVD on policy issues before they entered government together with D66 in 1994.

15.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in the Netherlands

This section begins by summarizing the fulfillment of election pledges on socioeconomic policy from each election program. I then turn to examples of pledge fulfillment, as well as some examples of government actions that were not foreshadowed by election pledges. The section then considers some general patterns in which pledges are more likely to be fulfilled than others. Among these patterns, I examine the importance of the government agreement and show that pledges supported in the government agreement are more likely to be fulfilled than pledges that are not.

Figure 15.1 shows that pledges made by parties that enter governing coalitions in the Netherlands are more likely to be at least partially fulfilled than not. However, there is considerable variation in rates of pledge fulfillment among parties and governing periods. Of pledges made by parties that went on to govern (which I refer to as "governing parties"), the percentages of pledges fulfilled at least partly ranges from 44.7 percent (PvdA 1989) to 73.2 (PvdA 1994). The percentages for fully fulfilled pledges are 29.0 and 55.4, again for the PvdA in 1989 and 1994, respectively. Of the pledges made by governing parties, 56.7 percent (326 of 575 pledges) were at least partially fulfilled.

This quantitative summary is based on a considerable number of substantively important government actions, as the following examples illustrate. Government actions on the coupling between incomes and the value of welfare benefits fulfilled some pledges and broke others. In the 1989 election, the PvdA promised to keep the automatic coupling, while the other three parties pledged to replace automatic coupling with a yearly decision. The decisions taken by the CDA-PvdA coalition during the 1989–94 period fulfilled the PvdA's pledge on this issue and broke the other parties' pledges. The 1989 government agreement announced that a new law concerning the adjustment of welfare payments would go into effect. Since the principle of automatic coupling was maintained in the new legislation, the new system was not decided yearly in the sense referred to

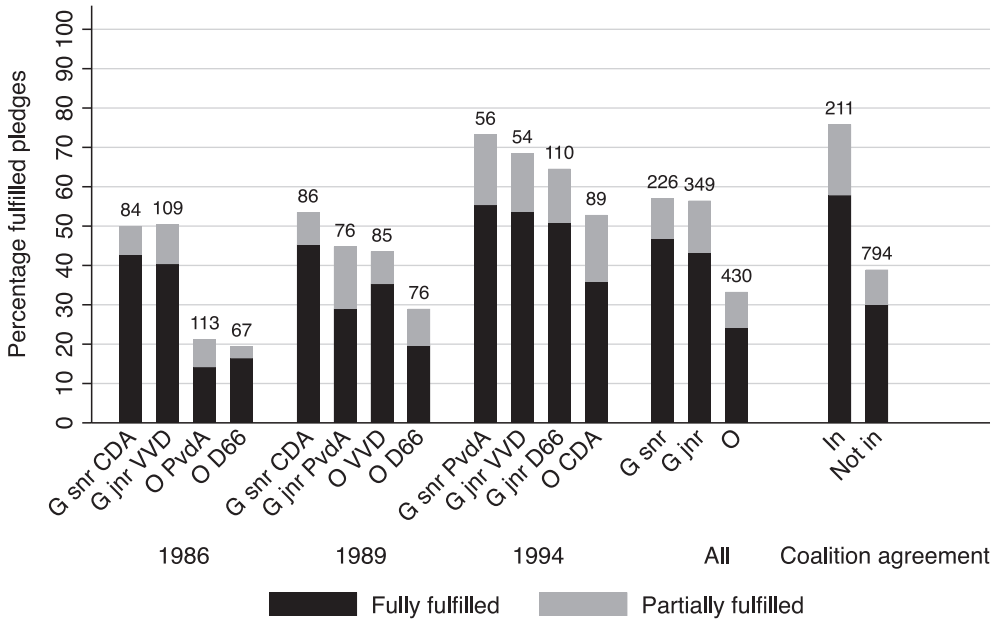


Fig. 15.1. The fulfillment of pledges in the Netherlands. (Note: G = governing, O = opposition, snr = senior [i.e., the governing party that held the prime ministership], jnr = junior [i.e., the governing party or parties that did not hold the prime ministership]. Numbers above bars refer to the numbers of pledges that were tested for fulfillment.)

by the CDA, as well as the two opposition parties. The new law outlined criteria under which governments would be able to suspend the automatic coupling temporarily. If the ratio between the number of welfare recipients and the number of economically active individuals rose above an agreed level, then the government could decide to deviate from the principle of automatic coupling. During the formation of the coalition, the CDA and the PvdA agreed that this ratio should be 86 welfare recipients for every 100 economically active individuals. This ratio was exceeded slightly in 1993, which allowed the government to deviate from the system of automatic coupling. During the discussion of the new legislation in the second chamber, the spokesman for the Christian Democrats indicated that his party would have preferred to replace the system of automatic coupling with a yearly decision (Thisen 1993, 148). The minister responsible for introducing the legislation stated that it meant that coupling was the rule and deviation was the exception (Thisen 1992, 153). Consequently, the PvdA's pledge to maintain the principle of automatic coupling was judged

to be “fully fulfilled” while the other parties’ pledges were categorized as “not fulfilled.”

The purple coalition of PvdA-D66-VVD that held office in 1994–98 enjoyed favorable economic conditions, with a healthy growth rate of on average 3.6 percent during these years. This allowed the government to apply the coupling between wages and welfare payments more often, although it was suspended in 1995. When not coupled to developments in the market sector, benefits were increased in line with inflation. This was a policy that fulfilled the PvdA’s election pledge to implement the law on coupling according to the letter and spirit, which it specified as meaning gross improvements if possible according to the coupling law, and improvements to the net value of benefits if economic conditions necessitate a deviation from the coupling rule. The PvdA’s pledge and the policy line followed in this cabinet period were clearly not in keeping with the VVD’s pledge to freeze the nominal value of welfare benefits at their 1994 levels.

The law on shop closing hours became gradually liberalized during the period studied here, with larger changes taking place when the CDA left government in 1994. The modest changes to the law on shop closing times during the 1989–93 governing period broke the CDA’s pledge to keep the law as it was on this issue and partially fulfilled other parties’ pledges to liberalize the law. The 1994 election programs of the PvdA, D66, and VVD all foreshadowed a more substantial liberalization of shop opening times. In accordance with these pledges, the 1994 government agreement announced that the restrictions in the Shop Closing Law would be reduced considerably. Although the CDA did not make any commitments on this issue in its 1994 manifesto, it opposed the introduction of these reforms. The Shop Closing Law was replaced with another law in 1996, of which the main principle is that shop owners themselves should determine when they open. It is unlikely that such changes would have been introduced if the CDA had been in office.

Taxation policy in the years 1986–89 fulfilled the main parties’ pledges to reduce the tax burden on incomes. However, this proved to be impossible during the 1989–94 period, in which the government faced more challenging economic conditions. In 1989 the CDA confined itself to the general commitment that the total tax burden would not increase. Meanwhile, the VVD expressed its support for a reduction in income taxes. No pledges, even at such a general level, were found in the manifestos of the PvdA or D66. When the CDA-PvdA coalition entered office in 1989, the collective burden of taxation was 45.4 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). During the course of the government period, it increased

to 48.4 percent in 1993 before falling to a level of 45.5 percent in 1994, when new elections were held. Therefore, it cannot be said, as was envisaged in the CDA's 1989 manifesto, that the total burden of taxation would not increase during the 1989–94 cabinet period. In addition, the general reduction in the level of taxation on incomes and salaries supported by the VVD did not occur.

In their 1994 election programs, all parties made more specific statements on taxation policy. The PvdA, D66, and CDA all pledged to reduce the basic of income tax. The 1994 government agreement contained plans to reduce the basic income tax rate, and indeed this was carried out. When the PvdA-D66-VVD coalition took office in 1994, the basic rate of taxation on income was 38.25 percent, compared to 36.35 percent at the end of this government period in 1998. The reduction of the basic rate is clearly in accordance with the policy position supported by the CDA and D66. The fact that the reduction was not of a magnitude supported by the PvdA, which had promised a reduction to 35 percent, means that the PvdA's pledge must be categorized as partially fulfilled.

Not all important policy changes are foreshadowed by election pledges, and Dutch policy regarding disability benefits in the 1989–93 period is a good example of this. During this period a consensus emerged among the main parties that action was needed to curb the growth of expenditures on disability benefits, as the number of people receiving such benefits approached one million, out of a total population of 16 million. It was not until the years after the 1989 election that the true magnitude of the problem became evident. During discussions with employers' organizations and trade unions in the autumn of 1990, a package of measures was agreed on, aimed at restricting the growth of the number of recipients of disability payments (Thisen 1992, 126). These measures focused mainly on labor market policy, such as a tightening of employment protection for those who became disabled and unable to perform some of their regular tasks, which would prevent them from being dismissed and becoming reliant on benefits. Another two important pieces of legislation were introduced in this area in 1991. One of the most controversial measures in this package, particularly within the PvdA, was the restriction of the part of the disability benefit related to the last income of recipients before they became disabled. The income-related part was restricted and was scrapped for people below the age of 32. Although no mention was made of this particular policy change in the PvdA's manifesto, it was pledged that employee insurance programs would remain dependent on the last income earned by the

recipient. The policy change meant that this pledge to maintain the status quo was judged to be only “partially fulfilled.”

These examples suggest that there are particular reasons behind the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of individual pledges. But are there more general patterns or regularities in pledge fulfillment? The first general pattern regarding the fulfillment of election pledges is that parties’ presence in the governing coalition is positively related to the extent to which they fulfill their election pledges. While 56.7 percent (326 of 575) of the pledges made by governing parties were at least partially fulfilled, only 33.3 percent (143 of 430) pledges made by opposition parties were at least partially fulfilled. This varies considerably among the three governing periods. We find relatively low levels of pledge fulfillment by governing parties in the 1989–94 period, when the government faced difficult developments in terms of some welfare programs alongside lower rates of economic growth. By contrast, we find relatively high levels of pledge fulfillment in the 1994–98 period, despite the new combination of governing parties. This could be due at least in part to the buoyant economic conditions. The smallest difference between governing and opposition parties’ rates of pledge fulfillment is also found in the 1994–98 period. An obvious reason for this is that the opposition CDA often took moderate positions on policy issues that were close to compromises reached between the other parties that were in government.

While governing status is clearly important for pledge fulfillment, simple bivariate analyses do not suggest that the roles a party plays in government matter. There is no strong relationship between pledge fulfillment and whether the party receives the prime ministerial post or relevant ministerial portfolios. For instance, the prime ministerial parties in 1986, 1989, and 1994 (CDA, CDA, and PvdA, respectively) fulfilled 57.1 percent (129 of 226) of their pledges at least partially, while the other coalition partners fulfilled 56.5 percent (197 of 349) of their pledges at least partially. Governing parties had similar rates of fulfillment regardless of whether they held the relevant ministerial portfolio.

The negotiations on government agreements are an important stage of the Dutch policymaking process. The government agreement is the document on which the coalition partners agree after the elections, usually after a lengthy period of detailed negotiations. These documents specify the policies that will be pursued by the incoming government. Election pledges that are supported in government agreements are far more likely to be fulfilled than those that are not. Figure 15.1 shows that in each of

the three governing periods, the percentage of pledges that were at least partially fulfilled is almost double for pledges supported in the government agreement than for other pledges; overall the rate is 75.8 percent (160 of 211 pledges) for pledges supported in the agreement and 38.9 percent (309 of 794 pledges) for other pledges.

15.6. Conclusions

The findings reported here suggest that election pledges are an important part of electoral discourse in the Netherlands, as in other countries. Four key facts support this conclusion. First, even before the detailed analysis of election pledges began, we noted the practice followed by the main Dutch parties of sending their election programs to an independent agency that assesses the financial implications of their proposals. Parties must be specific in their commitments if this agency is to make these calculations. Second, Dutch parties make large numbers of election pledges. This was the case even according to the rather narrow definition of pledges used in this chapter, whereby a statement must specify the criteria by which the fulfillment of the pledge is to be evaluated. Third, the qualitative descriptions of specific pledges indicated that pledges are made in relation to important policy developments that have very tangible implications for citizens' lives, such as the value of welfare benefits, shop opening times, and taxation. Fourth, the relationships among pledges clearly correspond to the ideological distances between parties. Parties that are relatively far from each other on the main ideological dimension tend to make relatively fewer pledges that agree with each other.

To a considerable extent, Dutch parties offered voters choices between alternative policies in the election manifestos studied here. The nature of these choices should, however, be considered in light of an important feature of party competition highlighted by saliency theory (Robertson 1976): parties tend to "talk past" each other. Indeed, most of the Dutch pledges were not directly related to pledges made by other parties. Although unrelated pledges inform citizens about parties' priorities, they do not give information on clear alternatives. Moreover, when pledges do relate to each other, they more often than not agree. The prevalence of agreement might correspond to the view that the Netherlands has a consensus system (Lijphart 1999), but this pattern is also found in other systems commonly thought of as more competitive. The findings sug-

gest that the percentage of unrelated pledges among parties is somewhat lower in the Netherlands than in countries where single-party governments are the norm. A reason for this could be that when coalition governments are the norm, manifestos are appeals to prospective coalition partners as well as to voters. This function of manifestos is particularly important in the Netherlands where prospective coalition partners formulate detailed coalition agreements.

The fulfillment rates of election pledges made by parties that go on to form governing coalitions in the Netherlands generally stand at lower levels than they do in single-party governments in other countries. Moreover, the difference in rates of pledge fulfillment between governing and opposition parties appears to be less stark in the Netherlands than in the majoritarian system of the UK. This finding does not imply that the Dutch system is less democratic. There is arguably a more appropriate level of congruence between the electoral support for governing parties, and the extent to which their manifestos are followed by policies in the Netherlands than in the UK. Most British governments are installed with not much more than 40 percent of the popular vote. Such an election result is arguably a mandate for the formation of a coalition, rather than for the formation of a single-party government in which the winning party's manifesto is enacted almost in its entirety (Birch 1975, 63).

In the absence of more evidence on pledge fulfillment in more recent periods, we can only speculate that levels of pledge fulfillment might be lower in the time period since 2002, which has been fraught with instability. A related study of the party mandate in the Netherlands used a completely different approach, based on automated computer analyses of election programs and parliamentary speeches rather than human coding (Louwerse 2012). Since Louwerse used such a different research approach, the findings cannot be compared directly. However, he concludes that even in more recent periods there are high levels of correspondence between what parties say before elections and what parliamentarians of both governing and opposition parties say during governing periods.

Finally, this chapter examined some general patterns in pledge fulfillment using simple bivariate analyses. One finding that is specific, albeit not unique, to the Dutch case is the effect of the government agreement on pledge fulfillment. Pledges that are supported in the government agreement appear to have substantially higher rates of fulfillment than other pledges do. This is of little help to a voter who wishes to choose between parties not only on the basis of their pledges but also on the basis of which

pledges are most likely to be fulfilled, since it is difficult to predict which pledges will be supported in the government agreement when casting a vote. However, this finding does highlight that the coalition negotiations are a crucial stage of the Dutch policy process at which the negotiating parties have a clear opportunity to place their policies on the government's agenda.

Bulgaria

Petia Kostadinova

16.1. Introduction

On April 6, 2001, two months before the country's fifth postcommunist legislative elections, the exiled Bulgarian king, Simeon Saksoburggotski,¹ returned to political life by announcing the creation of a new party, the National Movement Simeon II (NDSV), which subsequently secured 50 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.² A leading slogan of the election campaign was NDSV's "800 days" promise, in which the former king turned politician announced that should he be elected his party's economic and social programs would improve the quality of life for Bulgarians within 800 days.³ The phrase caught on and became emblematic of the hopes and aspirations of voters who propelled NDSV to victory. This slogan also cost the party its legislative majority in the next election. Despite the NDSV-led government meeting nearly two-thirds of its election promises during a period of economic growth, and signing the country's Accession Treaty with the European Union (EU), the "800 days" program is now regarded as one of the biggest failures of both the NDSV and Saksoburggotski personally. The party ceased to be politically viable after the 2009 elections, and the former king is back in Spain, where he had spent much of his life.

The story is indicative of how campaign slogans can make or break elections and the parties that make those promises. For most Bulgarian voters, NDSV represented yet another failed attempt by the political elite

to “fix” the country’s troubles, and few have fond memories of Saksoburgotski as a leader. Yet, by the end of its term in office in 2005, NDSV had the highest rate of pledge fulfillment of any political party in Bulgaria. As in many of the countries discussed in this book, in Bulgaria there exists a disconnect between government performance with regard to election promises and public perceptions of it. Further, research on election promises in postcommunist democracies, and more generally on the applicability of the mandate theory of democracy in the region, is rather limited. Focusing on the latter, Christine Lipsmeyer’s (2009) research uses Comparative Manifesto Project data in the areas of economic reform and support for communism as proxies for governing parties’ mandates and concludes that mandate theory in the postcommunist context is expressed through the distinction between parties that have a favorable view of the communist past and those that do not. More specifically, she shows that election platforms that emphasize greater economic reforms or more privatization do not impact levels of economic transformation measured via the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) transition indicators. However, when a mandate for reform (defined broadly) is measured as favorable to the communist past, expressed also in election manifestos, parties that are less favorable to communism tend to do better in conducting policies of privatization and economic liberalization per the EBRD transition indicators.

In a book discussing the quality of postcommunist democracies, Andrew Roberts (2010) also uses EBRD transition indicators as a measure of policy outcome, but he defines “mandate for reform” differently than Lipsmeyer, coding a party’s agenda as for or against reform, or ambiguous, using secondary sources.⁴ His analysis does not find any evidence that parties with expressed pro-reform views engage in policies of economic transformation. While Lipsmeyer (2009) and Roberts (2010) provide important evaluations of the applicability of mandate theory to the postcommunist context, neither study offers precise measures of what parties promise in election campaigns and subsequently what actions governments take to implement these promises. Kostadinova (2011) uses the approach utilized in this book to capture pledge fulfillment in Bulgaria for the period 1997–2005 and finds that types of pledges and relations among them, as well as the party’s legislative strength, impact fulfillment.

Building on Kostadinova (2013) and expanding the scope to a 15-year period, this chapter presents the first comprehensive long-term analysis of pledge fulfillment in a new democracy and speaks to issues of democratic consolidation in Bulgaria. Do parties in this new democracy offer

alternatives to voters in their election programs? This aspect of democracy is critical, especially for societies facing radical transformations. Once elected to the legislature, are political parties in Bulgaria able fulfill their election promises to an extent similar to that of parties in more established democracies?

16.2. Elections, Parties, and Governments in Bulgaria

Postcommunist Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, with 240 members, and a constitutional maximum of four years between legislative elections. While the electoral system rules have been tweaked frequently, four of the elections discussed in this chapter were conducted under a proportional representation system with a 4 percent threshold. The 2009 vote took place under a mixed electoral system, proportional representation combined with a second vote for a single candidate, and the threshold for minimal share of votes by party was kept at 4 percent.

This chapter discusses the pledges, and their fulfillment, by 14 political parties—both government and opposition—covering promises made during the 1994, 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2009 elections.⁵ In alphabetical order, with respective elections in parentheses, these parties are Ataka (2005, 2009), Blue Coalition (SK, 2009), Bulgarian Business Bloc (BBB, 1994, 1997), Bulgarian People's Union (BNS, 2005), Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP, 1994, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009), Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB, 2009), Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB, 2005), Euroleft (EL, 1997), Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS, 1994, 2001, 2005, 2009), National Movement Simeon II (NDSV, 2001, 2005), People's Union (NS, 1994), Union of the Democratic Forces (SDS, 1994), United Democratic Forces (ODS, 1997, 2001, 2005), and United People's Union (ONS, 1997). The multiplicity of parties and frequent changes in the composition of parliament characterize two broad trends. Prior to 2001 the political spectrum was dominated by the communist successor party (BSP) and the political groups that formed to challenge the communist regime (SDS and ODS). The 2001 elections marked the emergence of populist and extreme parties and the growing political irrelevance of the initial pro-democracy parties.

Five parties were elected to the legislature after the 1994 elections, with the BSP holding a slim majority of seats (52 percent) and forming a coalition government with the agrarian NS. The BBB, the DPS (representing

the ethnic Turkish minority in the country), and the SDS, a party formed in the wake of the postcommunist transition, were the opposition parties in the National Assembly. The BSP-led cabinet lasted 25 months, its early exit from power precipitated by a period of rapid economic deterioration and record levels of hyperinflation (details below). The ODS, the successor of SDS, decisively won the 1997 elections and, controlling 57 percent of the seats in the legislature, formed a single-party government. The BSP took its turn as the main party in opposition, joined by BBB, EL, and ONS. The ODS's single-party government was the first in Bulgaria's postcommunist history to complete its term in office.

The 2001 elections led to the transformation of the party system, namely, the rise of populist and extreme parties, BSP's shifting political fortunes, and the demise of the original pro-democracy parties on the right, tendencies that continue presently. The personality-centered National Movement, Simeon the Second (NDSV), barely qualified to participate in the 2001 elections but won half the seats in the legislature. The NDSV entered into a coalition with DPS, forming a government with Saksokoburggotski as prime minister, and NDSV, controlling 73 percent of the cabinet seats, with DPS and BSP holding two cabinet seats each. Despite BSP's participation in the government, however, the party's parliamentary group abstained from supporting it during the investiture vote and vowed to remain a "constructive" opposition. The ODS was the fourth party with seats in the National Assembly and also remained in opposition. The Saksokoburggotski government went through several reshufflings but managed to stay in power until the next regularly rescheduled elections in 2005.

Four parties from the 2001 legislature (NDSV, BSP, ODS, and DPS) were elected in 2005, although NDSV lost a substantial portion of its support and ODS split into two factions, including the newly formed DSB. In addition to DSB, two other parties, the ultranationalist Ataka and BNS, were also elected. After prolonged negotiations, BSP formed a majority coalition government with NDSV and DPS, making them some of the most unlikely parties ever to have agreed to govern together: a communist successor party, a party led by the king whom the communists exiled from the country, and a party of the ethnic minority that the communist leadership repressed for several decades and also tried to expel from the country.

The governing periods under discussion in this chapter span the early years of democratic transition through the country's accession to the EU. While the next few paragraphs cannot do justice to the enormity of the transformations experienced during this period, several characteristics are worth pointing out. In addition to the opening of the political system after

the collapse of communism, Bulgaria underwent a radical transformation of its economic system, from a command to a free-market competitive economy. Such a transformation involved privatization of state-owned enterprises, liberalization of prices of goods and services that were previously set by the government, and adoption of laws and regulations—such as competition, bankruptcy, and banking rules—needed for the functioning of a market economy.

During its transition, Bulgaria experienced several economic crises and routinely relied on rescue funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a situation that imposed conditionality on the way the government spent money and conducted economic policy. The 1996 economic crisis, preceding early elections the following year, was the most severe, with inflation over 1,000 percent, 13 percent unemployment, and a gross domestic product (GDP) decline of 5.6 percent. Consequently, Bulgaria established a Currency Board, which is still in place, to oversee its monetary policy. Under the provisions of the Currency Board, the Bulgarian currency, the lev, was pegged to the deutsche mark and then in 2001 to the euro at a rate 2:1 with an independent currency authority (the board) licensing and supervising the monetary activities of commercial banks. The currency authority also supervises the public sector budget, the public debt, and agreements with international authorities. Under the management of the nonpolitical Currency Board and with its national currency essentially irrevocably fixed to the euro, Bulgaria's monetary independence, or lack of such, is comparable to that of a Eurozone member. Any of these factors are expected to affect the ability of governments to conduct policy and of parties to fulfill their promises. Finally, during the period included here, Bulgaria became a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), processes that included numerous legal and administrative changes to the country's military and foreign affairs. The discussion in the analysis section thus turns to evaluating the factors that helped explain the variation in pledge fulfillment among governments, in addition to and despite the interference of internal and external constraints.

16.3. Research Design

This chapter follows the narrow definition of pledges, as defined in chapter 2, that is, pledges that are fulfillable by a specific action (or lack of action) or outcome. Both "action" and "outcome" statements are included in the analysis, although, as discussed later, the vast majority of pledges by par-

ties in Bulgaria were coded as “actions.” The author consulted three types of sources to determine if a pledge has been fulfilled. The default source was the online information system of the Bulgarian government’s website, which contains a searchable database of all government decisions and communications since 1990. Full texts of government decisions, proposals, programs, reports, annual budgets, and so on are available. First, a key words search was used to identify a list of documents relevant for each pledge for the corresponding time period. A careful reading through each appropriate document then determined if the pledge was fulfilled or not. In some instances, when pledges referred to the provisions of laws and regulations, the author accessed the legal texts through a variety of databases.⁶ Third, for pledges concerning economic outcomes such as inflation and unemployment rates, data from the EU agency Eurostat were used to verify fulfillment. Each pledge was coded as fully fulfilled, partially fulfilled, or not fulfilled.

16.4. Election Pledges in Bulgaria

The sources and inspirations of the policy commitments that parties in Bulgaria make have not been studied academically, and many parties do not elaborate on the internal dynamics of party programs. Yet some observations can be made with regard to the origins of election platforms in Bulgaria. First, considering the foreign constraints that the country faced during much of the period examined here, commitments to the IMF, EU, and NATO are often found among the pledges, even though the external sources for such pledges are not always explicitly mentioned. For example, ODS’s 1997 platform contained commitments to the establishment of an independent central bank (consistent with IMF requirements) and professionalization of the army (NATO). Platforms issued during the 2001 and 2005 elections contain numerous implicit and explicit references to the EU, such as NDSV’s (2001) pledges to transpose EU laws with regard to visa agreements and repatriation of foreigners and BSP’s (2005) plan to develop a “rating system for higher education compatible with the ones across the EU.” Additionally, some parties explicitly state the external inspirations for their policy programs, such as DPS’s mention of the ideas of European liberalism as underpinning its platforms.⁷ Finally, two of the parties included in the analysis discuss on their websites internal structures responsible for developing election platforms. The BSP details membership in the party’s committee on ideological and programmatic development, and DPS

has assigned individuals to specific policy areas from among the members of its central bureau. Only very recently, during the 2017 elections—not included here—did GERB explicitly mention in the introduction to its platform the role of party experts, ministerial employees, and the general public in generating its election proposals.

The parties elected to Bulgaria's legislature during the five election cycles included in this study made 2,676 pledges. In discussing these promises, the rest of this section focuses on highlighting the differences among parties with respect to the type of change they advocated and the policy areas they addressed. Variation in the extent of agreement among parties is also discussed. The vast majority of pledges, more than 90 percent, involved a promise of some type of government action, with 6.7 percent of pledges referring to an *outcome* and only 2.8 percent referring to the status quo (which is lower than the share of such pledges across all countries). With one exception (BSP, 2005), parties competing as incumbents made a greater proportion of status quo pledges than did parties entering the elections as the opposition, for example, 8.7 percent for BSP in 1997 and 5.2 percent for NDSV in 2005, but zero for ODS in 1997 and 1.4 percent for NDSV in 2001. Overall, just under half the pledges (49.7 percent) refer to actions in the *other* category, with promises calling for *increased government spending* constituting the second most common type of pledge (29.8 percent). Parties in Bulgaria made very few promises to cut *taxes* (6.5 percent) or *government spending* (4 percent), and the emphasis on *tax increases* was minimal (.5 percent).

Looking at the policy areas emphasized by each party, pledges are coded in one of six categories, *economic*,⁸ *education* (including *youth and culture*),⁹ *social welfare*,¹⁰ *natural resources and land*,¹¹ *crime*,¹² and *other*¹³ policies. As in many of the countries included in this book, more pledges (36.3 percent) focus on *economic* issues than on any other policy area. Pledges in the economic policy category include promises for *expanding* or *cutting government spending* and *increasing* or *lowering taxes*, as well as calling for the adoption legislation that has to do with postcommunist economic transformation. *Social welfare* policy statements constitute 13.2 percent of all pledges. *Education, youth, and culture* and *natural resources and land* pledges account for around 10 percent each, and only a small fraction (6 percent) relate to *crime* issues. Around a quarter of pledges (23.4 percent) fall in the *other* policies category. Beyond these broad tendencies, comparing pledges based on the type of change and policy area helps reveals differences among the ideologies and policy alternatives offered. Table 16.1 lists the share of pledges by type of action and policy area for all government parties included in this study.

TABLE 16.1. Government parties' pledges, by type of action and policy area, 1994–2009

	1994		1997		2001		2005		2009
	BSP % (n)	NS % (n)	ODS % (n)	DPS % (n)	NDSV % (n)	BSP % (n)	DPS % (n)	NDSV % (n)	GERB % (n)
Cut	5.1 (5)	8.1 (6)	23.3 (14)	7.2 (5)	10.4% (15)	0 (0)	1.6 (2)	1.3 (1)	0 (0)
Expand	23.5 (23)	16.2 (12)	16.7 (10)	23.2 (16)	37.5% (54)	40 (36)	29.4 (37)	40.3 (31)	28.2 (70)
Other change	45.9 (45)	70.3 (52)	28.3 (17)	47.8 (33)	36.8% (53)	33.3 (30)	50 (63)	39 (30)	58.9 (146)
Status quo	5.1 (5)	2.7 (2)	0 (0)	1.4 (1)	1.4% (2)	14.4 (13)	5.6 (7)	5.2 (4)	0.8 (2)
Tax cut	12.2 (12)	2.7 (2)	18.3 (11)	5.8 (4)	4.9% (7)	5.6 (5)	7.1 (9)	2.6 (2)	2.4 (6)
Tax increase	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.7 (1)	0 (0)	2.1% (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Outcome	8.2 (8)	0 (0)	11.7 (7)	14.5 (10)	6.9% (10)	6.7 (6)	6.3 (8)	11.7 (9)	9.7 (26)
TOTAL	100 (98)	100 (74)	100 (60)	100 (69)	100 (144)	100 (90)	100 (126)	100 (77)	100 (250)
	1994		1997		2001		2005		2009
	BSP % (n)	NS % (n)	ODS % (n)	DPS % (n)	NDSV % (n)	BSP % (n)	DPS % (n)	NDSV % (n)	GERB % (n)
Crime	7.1 (7)	20.3 (15)	0 (0)	1.4 (1)	1.4 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	24.7 (19)	10.8 (27)
Economic	31.6 (31)	28.4 (21)	50 (30)	55.1 (38)	49.3 (71)	36.7 (33)	21.4 (27)	24.7 (19)	30.8 (77)
Education, youth, and culture	8.2 (8)	12.2 (9)	5 (3)	14.5 (10)	11.1 (16)	25.6 (23)	5.6 (7)	15.6 (12)	8.4 (21)
Natural resources	11.2 (11)	8.1 (6)	20 (12)	2.9 (2)	9 (13)	0 (0)	22.2 (28)	5.2 (4)	13.6 (34)
Other	20.4 (20)	13.5 (10)	16.7 (10)	26.1 (18)	11.8 (17)	11.1 (10)	43.7 (55)	7.8 (6)	26.4 (66)
Social welfare	21.4 (21)	17.6 (13)	8.3 (5)	0 (0)	17.4 (25)	26.7 (24)	7.1 (9)	22.1 (17)	10 (25)
TOTAL	100 (98)	100 (74)	100 (60)	100 (69)	100 (144)	100 (90)	100 (126)	100 (77)	100 (250)

Governing parties in Bulgaria differ among themselves and frequently within coalitions regarding the types of actions they propose and the policy areas they emphasize. For example, right of center parties such as ODS and GERB generally made fewer *expand* pledges than did the Socialists or NDSV. Yet GERB (2009) made almost twice as many such pledges as ODS (1997) did, revealing differences among parties on the same side of the ideological spectrum. Within the same governing coalition after the 1994 elections, BSP also emphasized a greater share of expand pledges than did its partner NS. There were important differences in this respect between DPS and NDSV during the 2001 elections, and in 2005 DPS stood out from its coalition partners with significantly less emphasis on expansion than BSP and NDSV. In other types of pledges, during the 1997 elections ODS stood out as the governing party with some of the strongest emphasis on *spending reductions*, as well as *tax cuts*, while (future) coalition partners BSP and NS, and BSP, DPS, and NDSV, differed on these types of pledges during the 1994 and 2005 elections, respectively.

There are also variations with respect to the policy areas emphasized by governing parties, both between and within coalitions. For example, while *economic* issues generally dominate most platforms, their share peaked in 1997 and 2001, to around half of all pledges, and remained at around 20 to 30 percent in other election years. The Socialists and NDSV made more *social welfare* pledges than other parties did. The DPS's emphasis on such pledges is consistently on the low side, while the party's platforms fluctuated in terms of *natural resources* topics, including both the highest and lowest shares of such pledges. Future coalition partners differed significantly with respect to the attention in their platforms paid to *crime* (1994 and 2005), *economic policy* (2005), *education, youth, and culture* (2005), *natural resources* (2001 and 2005), and *social welfare* (2001 and 2005).

In addition to comparing the emphasis that parties place on the type of action they plan to undertake or the subject areas of their pledges, identifying whether the pledges made by one party are supported by other parties provides a further insight into the nature of a country's party system, and such a comparison is often relevant to the success of pledge fulfillment.¹⁴ The average level of agreement among government parties in Bulgaria varies across elections; it was the lowest in 2009 (4.1 percent) and the highest in 1997 (23.7 percent). Across coalition partners, agreement was lowest in 2005 and highest in 1994. The ODS, leading a single-party government after the 1997 elections, had high levels of agreement with its opposition parties, while GERB (single-party minority) did not agree with other parties except BSP during the 2009 elections. Following this overview of dif-

ferences in pledges made by governing parties across elections and within coalitions, the next section provides examples of specific promises, as they are relevant to illustrating differences in levels of pledge fulfillment.

16.5. The Fulfillment of Election Pledges in Bulgaria

Table 16.2 presents the levels of pledge fulfillment in Bulgaria, distinguishing among government and opposition parties. The overall share of fulfilled promises across all parties is 42.9 percent, among the lowest compared to the other countries discussed in this book. The patterns of variation between parties and within governments, though, largely mirror the findings of the comparative analyses.

The period analyzed here features two single-party governments, ODS (1997–2001) and GERB (2009–13). The ODS, which controlled a legislative majority, had the greatest share of fulfilled pledges (61.7 percent), outperforming all other governments. It came to power during a severe economic crisis, and its focus was on restoring the fiscal stability of the country through the “creation of a currency board,” “establishing an independent central bank,” and “reducing inflation to 10 percent.” There was broad agreement within society and among legislative parties that the country’s economic situation must be stabilized, and many of the party’s promises were part of the country’s obligations to the IMF. For example, both BSP and ODS supported the reduction of state subsidies, the introduction of a bankruptcy protection law, and banking sector reform. These conditions, along with ODS being the first government in Bulgaria to complete its term in office, likely contributed to its fulfillment success as a single-party government.

Table 16.2, though, shows that GERB’s single-party *minority* government did not consistently perform better than all coalitions. With a 45.2 percent fulfillment rate, GERB did better than only one coalition government—BSP-NS—while the other two coalitions had a greater share of fulfilled pledges, 54.9 percent (DPS-NDSV) and 60.4 percent (BSP-DSP-NDSV), respectively. Two related questions help address this finding: why did BSP-NS do so poorly overall, allowing GERB to outperform it; and why did GERB do worse than the two other coalition governments? I discuss each in turn.

The BSP-NS government lasted around 25 months, the shortest recorded in the data on Bulgaria, and as the comparative analysis illustrates, duration in government increases the likelihood of pledged fulfill-

ment. This government's term in office also coincided with a period of rapid economic deterioration, culminating in the country's most severe fiscal crisis (1996–97). Growth of GDP has a positive effect of pledge fulfillment in the comparative analysis, and its lack, along with shorter term in office, could account for the lowest fulfillment rate of this government. Further, during the 1994 election campaign, the parties that subsequently

TABLE 16.2. Pledge fulfillment in Bulgaria, 1995–2009
Percentage at least partially fulfilled

	Governing parties				Opposition parties				
	<i>1995–96 (partial term)</i>								
	BSP	NS	Total	BBB	DPS	SDS		Total	
%	48.0	24.3	37.8	38.7	43.8	23.1		30.1	
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(47)	(18)	(65)	(12)	(21)	(30)			
<i>n</i> total	(98)	(74)	(172)	(31)	(48)	(130)		(209)	
	<i>1997–2001 term</i>								
	ODS		Total	BBB	BSP	EL	ONS	Total	
%	61.7		61.7	53.8	60.9	55.3	58.6	56.3	
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(37)		(37)	(28)	(14)	(21)	(17)	(80)	
<i>n</i> total	(60)		(60)	(52)	(23)	(38)	(29)	(142)	
	<i>2001–5 Term</i>								
	NDSV	DPS	Total	BSP	ODS			Total	
%	61.8	40.6	54.9	53.3	54.4			53.8	
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(89)	(28)	(117)	(105)	(98)			(203)	
<i>n</i> total	(144)	(69)	(213)	(197)	(180)			(377)	
	<i>2005–9 term</i>								
	BSP	DPS	NDSV	Total	Ataka	BNS	DSB	ODS	Total
%	57.8	58.7	66.2	60.4	11.1	40.8	36.9	39.5	36.7
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(52)	(74)	(51)	(177)	(3)	(40)	(82)	(32)	(157)
<i>n</i> total	(90)	(126)	(77)	(293)	(27)	(98)	(222)	(81)	(428)
	<i>2009–13 (Partial Term, Minority Government)</i>								
	GERB		Total	Ataka	BSP	DPS	SK	Total	
%	45.2		45.2	7.8	32.1	43.8	21.7	25.6	
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(113)		(112)						
<i>n</i> total	(250)		(250)	(64)	(249)	(16)	(203)	(532)	
Total prime minister's party %	52.6	Total	51.5	Total				37.9	
party %		Government		Opposition:					
<i>n</i> fulfilled	(338)	<i>n</i> fulfilled	(509)	<i>n</i> fulfilled				(639)	
<i>n</i> total	(642)	<i>n</i> total	(988)	<i>n</i> total				(1,688)	

Note: PM's party in bold.

formed a government, but especially BSP, made a large share of pledges related to expansion of government spending, and in the area of social welfare, such as “providing state subsidies for manufacturers producing goods for export,” “expanding the list of goods with price caps,” and “free prescription medications for children.” Such promises are especially difficult to accomplish in a period of economic decline.

In 2009–13, the GERB government also did not complete its term, although its duration fell only a few months short of the constitutionally mandated four years. Additionally, this was the first and so far only minority government in Bulgaria, and the country’s legislators are hardly used to working under such conditions. In fact, during its term in office, the GERB government was subject to five unsuccessful votes of no confidence, among the most experienced by any government in Bulgaria. Dealing with a seemingly continuous challenge to its stay in power, combined with its somewhat shortened term in office, helps account for GERB’s inability to fulfill the majority of its promises and it failed to meet the expectation that single-party governments do better than all coalitions. Finally, GERB entered the 2009 elections as a newly formed political party with no prior national-level legislative experience. Its low success rate is consistent with the results of the comparative analysis demonstrating that lack of incumbency status at the time of the elections reduces the likelihood of pledge fulfillment. Thus, there are multiple possible explanations as to why, contrary to the overall conclusions, the single-party minority government in Bulgaria did significantly worse with respect to pledge fulfillment than did the single party majority one, and in fact worse than two of the coalition governments.

An area where the data for Bulgaria shows conformity with the comparative analysis is the fulfillment rate of the party of the chief executive. The parties that held the prime minister position generally fulfilled a greater share of pledges than their coalition partners did. In the case of the government formed after the 1994 elections, BSP (48 percent) did significantly better than NS (24.3 percent). The only exception to the trend that prime ministers’ parties do better than their coalition partners is BSP (2005–9), whose fulfillment rate of 57.8 percent is roughly on a par with DPS’s (58.7 percent) but lower than that of NDSV (66.2 percent). Why did BSP do worse than the other parties in government during 2005–9? Prior to leading a coalition after the 2005 elections, BSP had been out of power for two electoral cycles, since its then prime minister left office in the spring of 1997. Thus, BSP entered the 2005 elections as a long-term opposition party. On the other hand, the party that competed in 2005 as the incumbent (NDSV) had the highest fulfillment rate of any party in the Bulgaria

dataset, 66.2 percent. Thus, while comparative analysis demonstrates that being an incumbent when making promises offers an advantage, though not in the models that include coalition governments, this might be an area where the data from Bulgaria lead to a different conclusion regarding the importance of incumbency, or lack thereof.

Another reason why BSP had lower fulfillment rates than its coalition partners might have to do with the extent of agreement among parties, which the comparative analysis shows increases the likelihood of fulfillment. As seen in table 16.1, during the 2005 campaign, the future coalition partners tended to emphasize different topics and types of actions, which is reflected in the relatively low level of agreement among them. For example, the average share of pledges on which BSP, DPS, and NDSV agreed was 8.6 percent, lower than within other coalition governments, 14 percent BSP-NS (1994) and 9.9 percent DPS-NDSV (2001). The agreement between BSP-DPS during the 2005 elections was especially low (6.9 percent), while greater share of BSP pledges agreed with those of some opposition parties such as BNS (9.6 percent) or ODS (12.9 percent).

Given Bulgaria's status as a relatively new democracy experiencing rather frequent changes in its party system, it would be interesting to consider the links between party continuity and pledge fulfillment. Of the 14 parties whose election promises are discussed here, only two—BSP and DPS—have been a continuing presence in the country's political life. BSP is of course the successor communist party, and DPS was established in the early years of the democratic transition to represent ethnic minority interests. Many of the other parties that emerged as opposition to communist rule no longer exist, and of those that do, none are politically viable. So do established and longer-lasting parties do better with respect to pledge fulfillment than shorter-lived ones? A summary of the fulfillment data seems to suggest so. On average, across all years, including those when the parties were in opposition, and considering their participation in different types of government, BSP and DPS had some of the highest fulfillment rates in the dataset, 45.4 and 50.2 percent, respectively. The average fulfillment rate for all other parties (no longer existing or relatively new to political life) across all elections and government types is 41.2 percent. These differences, especially between the Socialists and the other parties, seem to indicate that in a new democracy continuity of legislative presence matters and that parties with more experience participating in a country's political life overall are better able to achieve their policy goals than other parties. Of course, these aggregate numbers hide an exception to this tendency. Having emerged in 2001, NDSV took part in two consecutive governments and then disappeared from political life. It fulfilled an average of

63.3 percent of its promises, although its “800 days” slogan, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, overshadowed this accomplishment. Thus in the context of this newer democracy, party longevity and overall political experience seem to matter for the ability of parties to fulfill their promises, but not vice versa, and high rates of pledge fulfillment do not guarantee continued political existence.

Considering the differences in the types of pledges, and their fulfillment, policy implications vary by area. For example, since 1997, major parties on either side of the political spectrum both in government and in opposition, have consistently agreed on the continuation of the country's monetary policy through the Currency Board, as well as on foreign policy objectives such as membership in the EU and NATO. Thus, alternation in government did not result in changes in policy direction on these issues.¹⁵ There is, however, some variation between governments with respect to economic policies. Table 16.3 shows the fulfillment rates of pledges proposing increases in budgetary spending and expansion of government and cuts in such spending and size of government, respectively. The two right-of-center governments in the Bulgarian data (ODS 1997–2001 and GERB 2009–13) fulfilled a lower share of expansion pledges than did the other government parties. The BSP-NS coalition has a similar fulfillment average for such pledges as ODS, but this is largely due to the lower success rate of NS. The two governments formed after the 2001 and 2005 elections, respectively, had the greatest success in expanding government services and spending. Some differences are also evident in the parties' fulfillment rates of cut pledges. After the 1997 election, ODS implemented a large

TABLE 16.3. Fulfillment rates by type of pledge

	Percentage of pledges fulfilled by type	
	Expand	Cut
BSP 1994	15.3	2.0
NS 1994	8.1	1.4
<i>Government average</i>	11.7	1.7
ODS 1997	10.0	28.3
DPS 2001	13.0	2.9
NDSV 2001	27.1	11.1
<i>Government average</i>	20.1	7.0
BSP 2005	23.3	0.0
DPS 2005	21.4	4.0
NDSV 2005	24.7	2.6
<i>Government average</i>	23.1	2.2
GERB 2009	12.4	0.8

portion of its program to reduce spending and government size. However, the government of the other party on the right, GERB, did not achieve any meaningful cuts. The two governments with the participation of the Socialist Party also fulfilled a relatively small share of cut pledges, while the DPS-NDSV government's success in this regard was relatively minor. Thus, changes in the ideological composition of governments in Bulgaria produced some meaningful changes in certain aspects of economic policy, though not consistently through the years.

16.5. Conclusions

This chapter presents the first analysis of pledge fulfillment among political parties in a new democracy over 20 years of postcommunism, 1994–2013. The chapter examines the types and subject areas, as well as their fulfillment, of election pledges made by 14 parties, six of which participated in one of the five governments formed during this period while the remaining eight were opposition parties. The majority of the 2,676 pledges proposed some kind of government action, and many were focused on the political, economic, and legal reforms needed for Bulgaria's postcommunist transitions and EU accession.

The average number of pledges, as well as the variation across election programs, 102 (s.d. = 60.9; $n = 26$), are lower than in the full dataset, and, as pointed out in chapter 3, the number of pledges that parties in Bulgaria made tended to increase over time. Consistent with the overall conclusions across the full dataset, there is no relationship between the number of pledges made and status in government, that is, a government that is incumbent at the time of the elections or in opposition after the elections. However, parties in Bulgaria that subsequently joined coalitions made more pledges than did those that entered single-party governments. While this finding is not replicated in the comparative analysis, it does speak to the mixed expectations derived from earlier research and indicates that in this newer democracy parties expecting to not win an outright majority make more pledges to perhaps give themselves leverage in potential coalition negotiations. Compared to other countries included in this book, parties in Bulgaria made many fewer status quo pledges (2.8 compared to 7.9 percent in the full dataset), perhaps due to the significant transformations that the country underwent during the period discussed here. As in other democracies, though, parties competing as incumbents made a higher percentage of status quo pledges than did parties entering the elections as the

opposition, and the distribution of expand and cut pledges is consistent across ideological categories.

Overall, the data indicate that an average rate of pledge fulfillment in the data included here is comparable to that in countries such as Austria, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands. Consistent with conclusions of the comparative analysis in chapter 4, government parties in Bulgaria fulfill a larger share of their pledges (51.5 percent) than opposition parties do. While normatively it is desirable for parties to fulfill most of their promises, fulfillment rates of Bulgarian parties should be considered in the context of the country's postcommunist transition, which is characterized by frequent elections, unstable governments, short-lived political parties, and severe economic decline, all factors that hamper fulfillment rates. Thus, in this context the finding that, overall, parties fulfilled on average nearly half their election promises, despite significant political and economic challenges, should be seen through a glass-half-full analogy. The analyses suggested several ways in which fulfillment rates in Bulgaria confirm expectations from democratic theory and institutional analysis. For example, participation in government and holding the chief executive facilitated the fulfillment of pledges in this case. However, in contrast to the overall conclusions, the country's only minority government did better than some but not all coalition governments, a finding that is discussed in more length above. Finally, the conclusion that more established parties have better fulfillment rates than short-lived ones do speaks to the impact of institutional development and democratic consolidation on government performance. In other words, as parties become more institutionalized over time and as they gain more experience in political life, as a part of either government or opposition, they will be better able to fulfill their policy agendas.

NOTES

1. The Anglo-Saxon name of Bulgaria's former king is Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a German lineage related to a number of royal houses in Europe. Simeon's grandfather, Ferdinand I, was chosen by the Great Powers to be king in 1887 as Bulgaria was an autonomous region of the collapsing Ottoman Empire and was looking for ways to secure its political independence from Russia. Until 2007 the NDSV remained named after the former king and was later renamed the National Movement for Stability and Progress. The party no longer exists as it failed to gain seats in subsequent elections.

2. An established way, also used in this chapter, to convey the names of parties in countries with non-Latin alphabets is to use the English translation of the full party name but the native language abbreviation, the latter being more recognizable by scholars. For example, NDSV stands for Naciolano Dvijenie Simeon Vtori,

SDS stands for *Sujuz na Democratichnite Sili*, and ODS stands for *Obedinenie na Democratichnite Sili* in Bulgarian. The abbreviation for *Bulgarska Socialisticheska Partia* (BSP) is the same in both Latin and Cyrillic.

3. On this, see <http://www.ndsv.bg/content/315.html> (translation by the author).

4. Roberts' approach mirrors that of Stokes (2001).

5. The country's first two democratic elections, in 1990 and 1991, resulted in short-lived, expert, or caretaker governments, and pledges made during these elections are excluded from this analysis.

6. The government's information system can be accessed through <http://pris.government.bg/>. The most commonly used database of legal texts is <http://www.lex.bg>.

7. The DPS is a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe political group in the European Parliament.

8. This includes pledge statements related to economic conditions or policies.

9. Pledge statements related to education policy, policies affecting young people, and cultural policy. All three are featured prominently and jointly in the election platforms of Bulgarian parties.

10. Pledge statements related to social security, pensioners, and other socially weak segments of society.

11. Pledge statements related to ecological and environmental issues, including land, soil, and forests.

12. Pledges related to addressing crime issues, including corruption.

13. Pledges that do not fit in any of the above categories, including foreign policy matters.

14. The share of pledges in agreement is calculated in the following way: (Pledges of Party A that agree with those of Party B + pledges of Party B that agree with those of Party A) / (total pledges of Party A + total pledges of Party B).

15. Prior to 1997, the Socialists were opposed to NATO and were split on EU membership.

Making and Keeping Pledges

What We Have Learned

Terry J. Royed, Elin Naurin, and Robert Thomson

In chapter 1 we argued that a mandate or responsible parties model, while not the only model for understanding democracy, is consistent with most everyday understandings of how liberal democracies function today. There is a great deal of literature in political science devoted to investigating the “chain of democratic linkage” implied by the model. We have argued that the study of the making and fulfillment of pledges should have a central place in this literature. The primary focus of this book has been on investigating the impact of institutional context (and other variables) on pledge fulfillment. We also addressed a number of questions about the characteristics of party pledges, the answers to which can help develop our understanding of party competition. In this chapter, we highlight the key findings from both the comparative analysis and case studies, consider questions for future research raised by our analysis, and discuss the broader implications of our research.

17.1. The Making of Party Pledges

Although pledge making has received little attention in theories of party competition, in chapters 1 and 3 we argued that the underlying assump-

tions of these theories lead us to expect that parties make substantively important pledges. Most theories of party competition assume that parties are driven by some combination of office-, policy-, and vote-seeking motivations (e.g., Downs 1957; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Laver and Sergenti 2011; Müller and Strøm 2000). All motivations, we argued, compel parties to both formulate and attempt to fulfill pledges. Our findings support our argument. Parties in a wide range of circumstances and with markedly different characteristics make many election pledges. There is also evidence that at least some parties have made larger numbers of pledges in recent years, for instance, in Ireland and Sweden, where we have somewhat longer time-series. The evidence presented in each country chapter shows that parties make substantively important pledges, and we highlight some of this evidence later in this chapter.

Before turning to a summary of the findings regarding the distribution and content of pledges, we briefly address the processes by which parties create manifestos or platforms that contain their pledges.

The Creation of Manifestos

The country chapters briefly reviewed the processes used by parties for formulating their election manifestos. The process potentially affects the types of pledges that a party chooses to make and is therefore consequential. The differences in processes that have been identified raise questions that would benefit from more systematic future research.

Arguably the most important thing to know about the process, from the point of view of the potential influence on pledges, is *who* is involved; in particular, how inclusive is the process when it comes to party insiders versus outsiders? More specifically, it is useful to know the extent to which different groups and individuals are involved, including party leaders and likely heads of government, other potential future policymakers (members of the executive or legislature), key interest groups associated with the party, and rank-and-file party members or members of the public with no party association.

How might differences in these areas affect the pledges that parties make and their fulfillment? In their chapter on Portugal, Lisi, Moury, and Belchior suggest that there are two possibilities. On the one hand, a more inclusive process might bring more public attention to promises and increase incentives for the government to fulfill its pledges. On the other hand, such a process might also result in more ambitious and

potentially less politically realistic promises being made, as compared to a process tightly controlled by party leaders who are more aware of the constraints of governing. Naurin's chapter on Sweden similarly indicates that when the Social Democrats included the wishes of the unions in their manifesto, this led to pledges that were more difficult to fulfill.

Most of the countries included here follow a process that is relatively tightly controlled by party leaders, with some consultation of other groups. There are some differences across parties, time, or countries that are clear. In Portugal the Socialist Party pursued a much more inclusive and lengthy process in 1995 compared to 2005. It also ended up with a higher pledge fulfillment rate in 1995, suggesting support for the view that an inclusive process enhances fulfillment, but the economy was also significantly stronger in that period, complicating the picture. Royed's chapter on the UK showed that the Labour Party has a more inclusive and less centrally controlled process than the Conservatives do. The one Labour government included in that chapter had the lowest pledge fulfillment rate of the period, suggesting the opposite conclusion about the impact of an inclusive process compared to Portugal, but again economic conditions figured into the explanation for this.

In the US, both parties' processes appear to be inclusive relative to those of the other countries in that public hearings are typical and platforms are voted on at televised party conventions. However, there is variance over time. For both parties, the party's presidential nominee is usually influential, and members of Congress serve on the platform committees. There is some evidence that the involvement of right-wing activists on the Platform Committee of the Republican Party in 1996 led to a platform that was more focused than previously on morality issues, as well as more extreme in some of its antigovernment pledges. Royed and her colleagues then hypothesized that the nature of the 1996 Republican platform helps to account for the fact that the party then had the lowest fulfillment rate of any in the period, despite controlling both houses of Congress for the entire presidential term.

The Frequency and Distribution of Election Pledges

Our findings indicate that parties of all types and in all circumstances generally make election pledges, which we argued is in line with the most prominent theories of party competition. We also investigated, and in

some respects found, variation in the distribution of parties' pledges. This variation relates mainly to the kinds of pledges made by parties with different characteristics and in different contexts.

Incumbents versus challengers differ in their pledges. Not surprisingly, we find that incumbents make more status quo pledges. It should be noted that this does not necessarily make such pledges trivial or less meaningful than pledges for change, although in some cases they may be—for example, a pledge to “continue to fund the public pensions system” in a country where no one challenges that system. Alternatively, if other parties *are* challenging that status quo, asserting support for it is more significant.

To what extent do different parties directly agree with or oppose one another? We find that in most countries, the majority of pledges are unrelated to those of other parties in the sense of neither directly agreeing or disagreeing—that is, the fulfillment of Party A's pledge does not bring about either the fulfillment or breaking of Party B's pledge. Germany and the Netherlands are an exception to this pattern; in those countries, minorities of pledges are unrelated. When pledges do relate to those of other parties, they are more often in agreement than disagreement. We did, however, find that direct disagreement was just as prevalent as direct agreement, or nearly so, in the UK and US systems.

Our finding that the majority of pledges are “unrelated” in this way is somewhat consistent with the saliency theory of party competition (Robertson 1976; Budge, Robertson, and Hearl 1987). This theory is premised on the idea that parties compete by placing *differential emphasis on issue areas* rather than by directly disagreeing on specific policies. However, a lack of direct disagreement does not in itself show that parties are competing only on the basis of differential issue emphasis. Two parties might place equal emphasis on a given policy, say, taxes, and pledge different specific tax policies while not directly disagreeing by our definition. For example, one party might pledge to lower the overall tax burden, lower the corporate tax, and lower the capital gains tax. A competing party might pledge to raise rates on the highest income earners, lower rates on the lowest earners, and create a new tax deduction for caregivers. The two parties' pledges would not directly disagree, but they are clearly expressing different agendas on the relatively specific topic of taxes. Lack of direct disagreement does not mean agendas are not different, nor does lack of direct agreement suggest no similarities in agendas.

This book did not attempt to directly test the saliency theory of party competition by looking at whether different types of parties consistently

emphasize different policy issue areas; this was not possible because different scholars defined issue areas in somewhat different ways, and some focused only on a subset of issues. Among those who examined the breakdown of party pledges by issue area, some found consistent differences between parties in some areas but generally not all. In both the UK and US, both parties usually placed the most emphasis on economic policy, followed by social welfare, with some differences in emphasis on other areas—for example, the more leftist party in each country tended to emphasize civil rights more, and the more rightist party crime more. The chapter on Spain, which covered only economic issues, found some significant difference in emphasis on subareas, with the Socialists emphasizing labor market pledges and the right-wing People's Party emphasizing fiscal policy. The chapters on both Sweden and Bulgaria found that the social democratic or socialist parties placed more emphasis on social welfare policy, along with some other differences in emphasis. Future research could more directly test the saliency theory of party competition by using a common set of policy areas across countries.

Ideology and party pledges. We found that, as would be expected, left-wing versus right-wing parties differ in the degree to which they emphasize tax cuts, whereby parties further to the right make such pledges more frequently than do parties to the left. Similarly, parties to the right make fewer pledges to expand government programs than do parties to the left. We also found that there is significant cross-national variance in the degree to which parties on the left versus right emphasize government expansion. That is, for example, the Swedish Social Democrats emphasize expansion more than the British Labour Party, and both are more expansionary than either the Canadian Liberal Party or the US Democrats.

We also found that there is only a very weak relationship between parties' ideological proximity using Manifesto Project scores and the proportions of their pledges that are in agreement. The distinction between parties' election pledges and ideological positions is important for our understanding of how parties compete for votes. A great deal of comparative research on party competition focuses primarily on parties' ideological positions as represented in either a single or multidimensional space (e.g., Benoit and Laver 2006; Klingemann et al. 2006; Steenbergen and Marks 2007; Kriesi et al. 2012). An underlying assumption of these spatial studies is that parties that are located closer together in a policy space espouse more similar policies. Somewhat counterintuitively, our research shows that this is not necessarily the case. Parties may be close together ideologically while formulating quite distinct election pledges. We would welcome

further research on the relationships between parties' ideological positions and their election pledges. Such research could examine the conditions under which parties are compelled to distinguish themselves vigorously from other parties with which they agree on general principles.

17.2. The Fulfillment of Party Pledges: The Pledges-to-Policy Linkage

We now turn to our main findings with respect to pledge fulfillment. As we discuss the findings, we will also highlight some of the questions they raise for further exploration.

Examples of Pledges and Their Fulfillment

One of our key conclusions is that *parties make and fulfill many substantive and important pledges*. Each of the country chapters concluded that pledges are made and fulfilled on central issues for voters and country. They provide many examples of specific policy pledges, and many of these pledges were fulfilled. In some cases, parties made and carried out pledges that made dramatic shifts in policy.

The UK case provides perhaps the clearest example, where we see significant differences between the two dominant parties prior to substantial policy changes for the period discussed. The Labour Party in October 1974 made a number of quite significant economic and social policy changes that they managed to fulfill, including some nationalizations of industry, pro-labor legislation, a new tax on oil companies, and the creation of a new earnings-related pension. Much has been written of the massive changes in a neoliberal direction during the Thatcher years, and chapter 5 makes clear that these changes were first laid out to voters as pledges, as was true of periods of less dramatic change. Under Thatcher, privatization, the curbing of trade union power, and the sale of council housing were the most significant changes. The Labour Party manifestos at the time not only opposed those changes but proposed moving in an entirely different direction. By 1997, Labour had dropped its opposition to much of the neoliberal agenda, but at the same time it proposed and acted on some quite significant changes: signing the Social Chapter of the European Union (EU), reforming the House of Lords, and allowing referendums on regional assemblies for Scotland and Wales, among others.

The US case also shows both parties making specific policy pledges that

reflect their ideologies and agendas. Looking at fulfillment allows us to trace the relative success of the parties in this power-sharing system. The Reagan years, like the Thatcher years, are notable for shifting policies in a neoliberal direction, and chapter 6 shows that this policy direction was clearly pledged to voters in party platforms. Tax cuts and moves toward deregulation stand out as key economic policy pledges that were at least partially fulfilled. We can see that the socioeconomic pledges of the parties for the most part reflect the left-right difference we would expect on issues like taxes, regulation, and benefits, and we also see that laws identified by Mayhew (2005) as most significant generally reflect prior party pledges.

In Spain, pledges made and fulfilled included two sets of comprehensive labor market reforms, a new income tax, and a new business tax. The chapter on Portugal notes that “both governments fulfilled many pledges that were substantially important and expensive”; these included a new minimum wage, free treatment for pregnant women and newborns with AIDS, free milk and lunches at school, significant education and health reforms, an “ambitious privatization plan,” and pension reforms. Again voters were given a clear road map to the plans of the government via manifesto pledges.

In Sweden, the 1994 Social Democratic government fulfilled multiple pledges to undo policies of the previous right-wing government related to benefits and labor rights. The following Social Democratic governments fulfilled pledges to increase other benefits, as well as pledges to be tougher on organized and economic crime. The two center-right coalition governments under the Alliance for Sweden thereafter significantly lowered income taxes and taxes on housing, among other changes.

Pledges made and at least partially fulfilled in Ireland included a reduction of the highest income tax rate, an increase in tobacco taxes, and the establishment of a new training fund for the unemployed. They also included a pledge *not* to increase income taxes for those earning less than a set amount (going against a previously agreed National Recovery Plan for the economic crisis) and a pledge *not* to reduce the minimum wage (also going against the Plan).

In Italy, a number of quite significant reforms were pledged and carried out: reforming administrative practices, substantially restructuring the welfare state, legalizing temporary work, moving the country toward federalism, reforming labor laws (enacted by a center-right government while strongly opposed on the left), and others.

In Germany, substantial pledges that were fulfilled included pledges to reduce corporate taxes, increase the VAT tax, reform federalism, and

reform the legislative process (reducing the amount of legislation requiring upper house approval). By contrast, some substantial status quo pledges (such as no reduction in unemployment compensation and social welfare benefits) were *not* fulfilled, as the government responded to a commission set up to make recommendations for welfare state reform.

The chapter on Austria examined two right-wing governments that came in after a long period of centrist grand coalitions. One of the significant policy pledges that was carried out was retrenchment in the public pension system and measures to promote private pensions. Other fulfilled pledges concerned the introduction of child care allowances, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and a reform of the higher education system. Praprotnik and Ennser-Jedenastik argued, "It is safe to assume that none of these measures would have materialized had the SPÖ retained executive office" (as it had during the grand coalition years).

Austria also offers an interesting case study of a radical party adapting to being in power and struggling to manage office seeking with other motives. The populist right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) included many radical pledges in its 1999 manifesto, such as combining all social insurance institutions (a key part of Austria's corporatist system), a complete end to immigration, and mandatory drug testing for all teachers and social workers. None of these pledges was fulfilled, and the FPÖ's overall pledge fulfillment rate was low. Its participation in government appears to have led to a moderation of its positions in its 2002 manifesto. A far higher percentage of the FPÖ's 2002 pledges were fulfilled. However, the price of government participation was a split between the moderate and radical factions within the party, eventually resulting in the creation of a new party in 2005, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), consisting of those who were primarily oriented toward being a governing party. This case also illustrates one of our findings from chapter 4: parties that enter government without recent government experience tend to have lower rates of pledge fulfillment than incumbents or recent past incumbents do.

The chapter on the Netherlands looked at the fate of party pledges in the area of welfare benefits, shop-closing hours, and taxes. Concerning welfare benefits, the parties disagreed on whether to keep a system in which welfare payments were automatically adjusted in relation to average income, with the Labour Party pledging to maintain the system and others pledging to change it. The issue of changing it came up in two of the governments examined, with Labour winning the debate each time. On tax policy, the parties made somewhat different pledges over the course of three governments, including *not increasing* the overall tax burden versus

reducing specific income taxes. Income taxes were finally reduced by the third government in the study, in which all three coalition partners agreed. Finally, on shop-closing hours, the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) opposed liberalization of the law while all other parties supported it. A minor liberalization was enacted during 1989–93, breaking the governing CDA's pledge, and in the following government, which excluded the CDA or one of its predecessors for the first time since 1917, a major reform was enacted. Thomson notes, "It is unlikely that such changes would have been introduced if the CDA had been in office."

Explaining Variation in Pledge Fulfillment

The following summarizes our main findings.

Governing parties have higher pledge fulfillment rates than opposition parties. Put more precisely, parties that hold executive office after an election are more likely to fulfill their campaign promises than are parties that do not hold such office. More surprisingly, opposition parties' pledges often have a reasonable chance of being fulfilled too. The gap in fulfillment for governing and opposition parties is greatest in single-party governments (other than in the US). The US case is quite different from parliamentary systems in that the "opposition" (the nonpresidential party) may sometimes be the majority party in the legislature, with significant opportunities for pursuing its own agenda. Not surprisingly, then, opposition pledge fulfillment is highest in the US, at about 50 percent, followed by coalition governments at about 39 percent and then single-party parliamentary governments at 28 percent.

While the multivariate analysis found no significant impact of type of government on opposition pledge fulfillment, there was a tendency for more power sharing to yield somewhat higher fulfillment rates for opposition parties. The analysis also found that opposition parties that support parties with minority governments are more likely to fulfill pledges, as are opposition parties that hold the median legislator. Finally, opposition parties' pledges that agree with pledges made by other parties, both other opposition and other governing parties, are more likely to be fulfilled. This indicates that pledges with broader cross-party support are more likely to be fulfilled.

The country chapters also offer some more specific reasons as to why opposition parties' pledges were fulfilled. For instance, the chapters on Ireland and Bulgaria point out that some opposition party pledges were fulfilled because they had made pledges reflecting the terms of an

agreement that the previous government had reached with its international creditors.

Fulfillment of opposition party pledges is consistent with the “agenda model” set forth by Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge (1994, 44–48). The model is based on the idea that societal changes over time bring new issues to the agenda, to which parties respond at different paces. For example, an opposition party might support an initiative in response to its perception of a societal need, and the governing parties may catch up belatedly to this perception and enact a policy now perceived as popular. The topic of what drives policy agendas is one that is systematically addressed by the Comparative Agendas Project (Green-Pedersen and Walgrave 2014; Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Baumgartner and Jones 2009). Future research could integrate the study of pledges with the study of parties’ agendas more extensively.

Of governing parties, single-party governments are more likely to fulfill pledges than are coalitions. Governing alone rather than in a coalition is far more important to pledge fulfillment than is governing with a legislative majority rather than a minority. Pledge fulfillment for single-party parliamentary governments is about 72 percent, for US presidential parties about 62 percent, and for coalition governments about 54 percent. The multivariate models in chapter 4, which controlled for several competing and complementary explanations, confirmed that single-party government is a decisive factor in pledge fulfillment.

Nevertheless, there is some variation by country within each government type. Among single-party governments, the UK and Sweden consistently have the highest pledge fulfillment at over 80 percent fulfillment, followed by Canada, Spain, and Portugal at over 70 percent, and Ireland, the US, and Bulgaria at over 60 percent (with one Bulgarian outlier).¹ Among coalition governments, the most common range is about 50 to 60 percent, with some lower (Italy) and some higher (Sweden).² For our two countries with cases of both single-party and coalition governments, fulfillment rates for each within-country government type are not as far apart as for the full sample of countries: fulfillment rates in the midrange for Ireland for both single-party and coalition governments and high for Sweden for both government types. The fact that there are some fairly consistent cross-national differences within government type and similar fulfillment across government type within countries suggests that idiosyncratic country factors or systematic factors yet to be identified may be at play.

It might be expected that partial, as opposed to full, fulfillment would

vary with the degree of power sharing, but this is not consistently the case. Partial fulfillment rates for government party pledges under single-party minority, single-party majority, and coalition governments are not more than 1.5 percentage points different. The same is true of partial fulfillment of opposition party pledges. Within each government type, there is again considerable variance across countries.

Single-party minority governments do just as well as single-party majority governments. To be more precise, our findings indicate that if single-party minority governments last a reasonable length of time—at least one year—they are at least as likely to fulfill their election pledges as are parties that govern alone with legislative majorities. This is a surprising finding from the perspective of the way minority governments are often portrayed as weak and indecisive. It is, however, a less surprising finding from the perspective of previous research, which demonstrates that minority governments (and divided presidential governments) can work effectively in terms of legislative productivity (Strøm 1990; Mayhew 2005). Single-party minority governments often consist of large centrally located parties that control the median legislator, which, as Crombez's (1996) model demonstrates, can enable minority parties to form viable and effective governments.

We also found that for minority governments, *having a formal agreement to cooperate with other parties enhanced pledge fulfillment* for the government—and tended to help the supporting party as well. Chapter 8 explored the mechanisms of this in the case of Spain. There the centrally located Catalan nationalist party served as the supporting party first for a minority socialist government and then for a minority center-right government. Its centrist ideological position made it willing to cooperate with both parties in exchange for support for its regional agenda; therefore, each minority government was able to do about as well as or better than when they governed as a majority. In addition, in Spain minority governments led to higher pledge fulfillment not just for the cooperating partner (compared to when they had no such agreement) but also for the main opposition party (the Socialist Party or People's Party). Artés speculated that this was due to the fact that cooperation with the *Convergència i Unió* pulled each party toward the center and thus closer to the position of its main opposition.

Given the widespread occurrence of minority governments in parliamentary democracies, more theoretical and empirical research on pledge fulfillment in these types of governments would be welcome.

Within coalitions, the chief executive usually fulfills more pledges. The party

of the chief executive takes the lead in the process of government formation, which gives it an advantage over junior coalition partners. However, the difference between holding and not holding the chief executive post is not always large, especially considering the prominence of this post in some models of policymaking in coalitions (Austen-Smith and Banks 1988; Baron 1991; Huber 1996; Diermeier and Feddersen 1998; Thies 2001; Dewan and Hortala-Vallve 2011). Many of these models imply that the party of the chief executive has a monopoly on policymaking power; our findings suggest that they do not.

Two country chapters considered *size of coalition parties* as a factor influencing relative pledge fulfillment of the partners. In Germany, the two “regular” coalitions (between the large Social Democratic Party and the small Greens, and the large Christian Democratic Party and the small Free Democratic Party) produced a fulfillment advantage of about 20 percentage points for the larger party, while the grand coalition, in which the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats were nearly identical in size (in terms of votes, legislative seats, and cabinet positions), produced nearly identical fulfillment rates for the two. However, in Austria, the first ÖVP-FPÖ coalition, in which the parties were equal in size (in legislative seats and ministerial portfolios), produced a larger gap in pledge fulfillment between the governing parties than the second such coalition, in which the partners were less equal in size. This case suggests that ideological compatibility between parties mediates any effect of party size; once the FPÖ moderated its position to be closer to the ÖVP, they fulfilled more pledges relative to the previous government in spite of their reduced size.

Holding the relevant ministerial portfolio sometimes facilitates pledge fulfillment, but the finding is not robust. We do not find clear evidence that a party’s pledges are more likely to be fulfilled if it obtained the relevant ministerial portfolio after the election (cf. Laver and Shepsle 1996). In some statistical models and country studies, there is some evidence of an effect of portfolio allocation, but the finding cannot be described as robust. Instead, the findings are more in line with theories that highlight mechanisms of collective policymaking and constraints on ministers (Warwick 1999; Dunleavy and Bastow 2001).

These weak and mixed findings with respect to the effects of holding the posts of chief executive and the relevant ministerial portfolio suggest that there may be conditional relationships, which are opportunities for future research. Relevant conditions include mechanisms within executives for interministerial coordination, procedures for parliamentary control over executives, and/or characteristics of political leaders. With respect to interministerial coordination, when governing gets under way, prime

ministerial parties use interministerial committees and cabinet-level coordinating committees to exert centralized control over ministers (Kassim 2013; Kassim, Peters and Wright 2000; Gärtner, Hörner, and Obholzer 2011; Leinaweaver and Thomson 2016). Inministerial coordination may also be managed through the appointment of junior ministers (Thies 2001, 585). Some work on Austria suggests that there are differences between portfolios that are under the sole control of one coalition party and portfolios in which the junior minister is affiliated with a party different from that of the minister; a party is more likely to fulfill its pledges if it controls the relevant ministry entirely (Praprotnik 2017a; Schermann and Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a). Large-*n* studies find that junior and cabinet-level ministers tend to be from different parties in multiparty coalitions (Lipsmeyer and Pierce 2011; Carroll and Cox 2012), which suggests that junior portfolio allocations could be a powerful explanatory variable.

The coalition agreement is another possible constraint on ministerial autonomy. The chapters on the Netherlands and Austria reported that if a pledge made it into the coalition agreement it was highly likely to be fulfilled and discussed the importance of coalition agreements in that context. This was not, however, an explanation we explored in our broader comparisons. In related research that examines more countries, Timmermans (2006) and Moury (2013) find that ministers are highly constrained by coalition agreements. They also point out that coalition agreements vary considerably in detail, length, and the time it takes to negotiate them. In terms of future theory formation, the linkage between the allocation of ministerial portfolios and the content of coalition agreements is worth further scrutiny. According to Laver and Shepsle's (1996) model of coalition policymaking, the main mechanism through which portfolio allocation conditions parties' influence over policy concerns the credibility of bargains between coalition members. Parties will participate in a coalition only if they believe it is credible in terms of policy, which is to say parties will only join a coalition if they believe that the coalition agreement will in fact be carried out. In practice, the content of coalition agreements do not perfectly reflect the policy preferences of the parties that are allocated relevant portfolios. The question is what the impact on pledge fulfillment is when a minister is charged with fulfilling another party's pledge.

The existence of a pre-electoral coalition with a common manifesto has a positive impact on pledge fulfillment. In spite of this result in the multivariate analysis, our two cases of pre-electoral coalitions—Sweden and Italy—have quite different results, with Sweden having some of the highest fulfillment results for coalitions and Italy some of the lowest. The chapter on Italy suggests a possible explanation. The process of drafting the manifesto of

the pre-electoral coalition in Italy did not include all coalition party leaders, was not ratified by party bodies, and left many controversial issues unresolved. In contrast, Naurin notes that in Sweden the Alliance for Sweden emphasized that its agreement on common pledges would lead to quick fulfillment, and “after the election, internal government institutions . . . were created and made sure that joint obligations were respected and that few new ones were brought forward” (chap. 10, this vol.). It seems, then, that the process by which common manifestos are written and post-election efforts to enforce agreements are crucial to the fulfillment of joint manifestos.

Economic conditions matter for pledge fulfillment. Specifically, in our regression models, stronger economic growth increased the likelihood of pledge fulfillment for both governing and opposition parties. Low growth puts a strain on government resources and makes it less likely that expensive pledges are fulfilled and promised outcomes achieved. The country chapters spanned a number of global economic crises or slowdowns, including the post-oil-crisis 1970s, recessions in the 1980s and 1990s, and the financial crisis of 2008. Many of the country chapters make reference to these economic conditions as factors in pledge fulfillment, as well other economic slowdowns specific to each country. For leftist governments in the late 1970s in both the US and the UK, the economy was likely a factor in the abandonment of and even U-turns on some pledges. Both governments—the UK Labour government of 1974–79 and the Carter administration of 1977–80—did fulfill substantial percentages of pledges, but the UK government had the lowest percentage of pledge fulfillment for the UK and the Carter administration fulfillment rate was not the highest for the period in spite of being the only fully united government in the US analysis. Canada’s pledge fulfillment, at least 70 percent for three of the governments in the period, was only 62 percent for the 2008–11 government during the financial crisis. In Portugal the minority government’s fulfillment rate was about ten percentage points higher than the majority’s, and the stronger economy in the minority-government period likely played a role.

The chapter on Ireland covers a particularly long time span and confirmed a significant correlation between economic growth and pledge fulfillment for governing parties. The low-growth years experienced by a 1982–87 government and crisis years by the 2007–11 government were associated with government pledge fulfillment rates below 50 percent (well below for the latter) while the highest rates—60 to 70 percent—were experienced by governments in the boom years of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Both the worst- and best-performing governments were majority

coalitions, clearly highlighting the fact that circumstances can overtake institutional environments in importance.

Both the Irish and Bulgarian cases highlight an interesting finding concerning the intervention of international financial institutions. Economic crises that are bad enough to lead to IMF or EU intervention reduce the likelihood of pledge fulfillment at the time of the crises. However, if the next government to be elected incorporates the externally mandated obligations into its manifesto in the form of pledges to act, the fact that the actions are externally mandated leads to higher pledge fulfillment for that government.

In some case studies, the effect of the economy was less evident. The Swedish 1994 election took place in the midst of an economic crisis, yet the government that followed fulfilled 88 percent of its pledges. The variation in the impact of the economy across countries raises the question of whether some parties are better at adapting their pledges to the prevailing conditions in terms of likely availability of resources. Thomson and Costello (2016) argue that in Ireland elites do not appear to adapt their pledges to the current state of the economy. By contrast, the chapter on Spain made the observation that manifestos written during a strong economy had more pledges to expand government and those written in a weak one had more pledges to cut government. While Artés emphasized that the findings show that parties are pledging the opposite of what Keynesian economics would recommend, their actions are rational in terms of showing an understanding the current impact of the economy on revenue. The question of the degree to which elites make pledges in accord with prevailing and expected conditions, or in accord with a coherent economic philosophy, is one that deserves further attention and ties in with the need for more research on the actors involved in the manifesto-formulation process.

The length of government matters: shorter governments have lower rates of pledge fulfillment. Our quantitative analysis confirmed that, as common sense would predict, having close to a full term in which to govern enhances pledge fulfillment. Still, there is a considerable range within each category, showing that other factors can enhance fulfillment for a short government or inhibit it for a full-term government.

While “type of government” is important for pledge fulfillment, not all government institutions matter. While our main explanation of variation in pledge fulfillment formulated in chapter 4 took an institutional perspective, our findings indicate that not all institutions matter. Following other work that considers the impact of various institutions on policymaking (e.g., Lijphart 1999; Powell 2000; McGann and Latner 2013) and given the countries we have examined, we included (semi-) presidentialism, bicameralism, federalism, and EU membership as possible constraints on governing parties. Of

these institutional variables, only presidentialism had a significant effect on the likelihood of pledge fulfillment for governing parties, indicating that pledge fulfillment for the US president's party is less likely than for single-party executives in parliamentary (or semipresidential) systems. As discussed in chapter 6, there are a number of characteristics of the US system that tend to produce lower pledge fulfillment than occurs in parliamentary systems: the potential for "divided government," a powerful legislature in general and an equally powerful upper and lower house, relatively weak party discipline, and the existence of the filibuster. Because not all presidential systems share these features, more research is needed on other presidential systems before we can draw general conclusions about pledge fulfillment in such systems.

While we found that bicameralism had no significant effect on pledge fulfillment, we did not include a variable for other characteristics of legislatures. In related work (Thomson et al. 2017), we found that negative investiture rules, which are associated with longer government duration, are also associated with a higher likelihood of pledge fulfillment by parties in minority governments. There is a growing body of comparative research on the impact of parliaments on policymaking—including committee systems and rules pertaining to executive and legislative powers as a whole. (See Martin and VanBerg 2011, 44–45; Powell 2000; Döring 1995; on committees, see Kim and Loewenberg 2005; Carroll and Cox 2012; Mattson and Strøm 1995.)

What do our case studies suggest about the importance of the strength of legislatures? First, the UK has what is often considered one of the weakest legislatures in the world, and government pledge fulfillment is very high and opposition pledge fulfillment low. On the other hand, Sweden has a relatively powerful legislature, yet it also has high pledge fulfillment under both single-party and coalition governments. Italy is another case with a powerful legislature, but it has much lower pledge fulfillment than Sweden. These results would seem to suggest that variation in parliamentary powers has no consistent impact on pledge fulfillment. A possible explanation for this could be that the existing literature suggests two *contradictory* ways in which parliamentary power might matter for pledge fulfillment. First, a strong legislature may act as a "veto player," inhibiting the ability of governments to pursue their agendas. This is most obviously the case in the US, but strong legislatures in parliamentary systems may play this role as well. Moury, Conti, and Fernandes address the role of a strong parliament in promoting gridlock in Italy in the past and suggest that reforms in the 1990s did not entirely alleviate the problem. The

second way in which powerful parliaments might matter is that once a coalition agreement is reached legislatures may be “helpful for resolving intra-coalition tensions and facilitating coalition governance” (Martin and Vanberg 2011, 31).

In terms of pledge fulfillment, then, it seems that more powerful parliaments may either help or hinder government parties in fulfilling their pledges. It may also be the case, as suggested above with executive characteristics, that conditional relationships may exist. Future research could devote more attention to specifying and testing the impact of a wider range of legislative procedures on the strength of the pledges-to-policy linkage.

Do characteristics of individual politicians matter? Notwithstanding the explanatory power of some of the institutional variables we examined, people make policies. Our analysis did not systematically examine the role of individuals in policymaking, although we did see that at times the ideologies of particular party leaders were important in determining the direction of their parties and government policies (for, e.g., Reagan and Thatcher and their neoliberal agendas and Clinton, Blair, and Wim Kok in their advocacy of a “third way” approach). A major theoretical and empirical challenge for future research is to incorporate individual agency into rigorous comparative analyses.

A model of how such research could be developed is given by Alexiadou (2015), who formulated a typology of ministerial types and applied it to social welfare policy. She found that ministers with strong ideological convictions or leadership aspirations affect governments’ propensity to introduce reforms, while those whose primary loyalty is to existing party leadership do not. A broader comparative project, the Selection and De-selection of Political Elites (SEDEPE), is examining the characteristics of individual ministers (Dowding and Dumont 2015). Connecting such systematic comparative research on political elites with research on the pledge-to-policy linkage has the potential to strengthen our understanding of the role of individual elites in policymaking.

17.3. Implications for Assessing Democratic Performance Across Countries

We have found that the fulfillment of government party pledges varies systematically across government type. More specifically, among parliamentary systems, single-party governments typically fulfill a large majority of their pledges while coalition governments fulfill some of each party’s

pledges, with an overall government fulfillment rate that is lower than that of single-party governments. Average fulfillment rates for the US presidential party lie between the two parliamentary types. We also found slight variation in fulfillment rates for opposition parties, with rates being lowest under single-party parliamentary governments, higher under coalition governments, and highest for the US presidential system. What are we to make of these results? Here we present some preliminary thoughts on the normative significance of what we have found.

The mandate model arguably makes an implicit assumption that a higher rate of pledge fulfillment is good: voters have chosen the party (or parties) closest to their preferences, and when the government fulfills those pledges it is reflecting voter preferences, ensuring that democracy is representative. Powell puts forth a more nuanced view; he suggests that there are two alternative “visions” of democracy, which “envision rather different roles of elections in connecting the preferences of citizens and the formation of policy-making coalitions” (2000, 26). The majoritarian vision sees elections as enabling citizens to choose between alternative governments and pick a winner that will enact policies after the election. This is essentially the mandate model as envisioned by Downs and others. The proportional vision, in contrast, “emphasizes the importance of equitable reflection of all points of view into the legislature” (26; see also Lijphart 2012). While Powell and Lijphart categorize countries according to a variety of factors, it could be argued that the single-party versus coalition government distinction we have used here somewhat corresponds to the two “visions.” Our study of pledge fulfillment thus adds to the voluminous literature assessing the performance of these alternative types of systems.³ There are clearly trade-offs between the two “visions” of democracy. Single-party governments have the potential to produce more change over the course of a government while coalition governments might be expected to produce more incremental policy change borne out of compromise between parties.

One way to better assess the alternative models would be to explicitly bring voters into the analysis. The mandate model makes the assumption that voting majorities represent the “will of the people.” As we discussed in chapter 1, one of the most compelling critiques of the model is the argument that election results rarely give a clear expression of the will of the people and even the idea that “the people” have “a will” is problematic. Empirical work has addressed this critique in a number of ways, including finding evidence that voters have clear left-right positions, that they are able to accurately perceive party ideologies, and that both are factors in

vote choice (Van der Eijk, Schmitt, and Binder 2005; Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2011). There is also a considerable body of literature that finds “congruence” between median voter ideology and the ideology of governing parties (Dalton Farrell, and McAllister 2011; Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2000; McDonald and Budge 2005). Most of this literature also suggests that there is greater “congruence” in systems that use proportional representation compared to single-member district systems (although see Powell 2009, which suggests that the difference between systems has declined in recent years).

The most straightforward way to bring voters into a study of party pledge fulfillment is by simply looking at the percentage of people voting for governing parties. The first question to ask would be whether or not a majority of voters support a given elected government, as assumed by the mandate model. As a starting point, minority governments, by definition, are elected by a minority of voters. For the purposes of this book, US governments that were “divided” (those in which the president’s party did not control a majority in both legislative houses) were classified as minority governments although that status did not pertain to electoral support. We thus consider the US case separately and note that in four of the six elections included in this book, presidents were elected by a majority of voters.

Turning to parliamentary and semi-presidential systems, of the 51 such governments included in this book, 15 were minority governments and hence elected by minorities.⁴ Perhaps surprisingly, of the 36 *majority* governments we have considered, over half (22) were also voted in by less than a majority of voters.⁵ Contributing to the high number of minority-elected governments is the well-known distorting effect of the single-member district plurality (SMP) electoral system used by Canada and the UK.⁶ That is only part of the story, however, since these two countries make up just 12 of the 37 governments in our sample that were chosen by electoral minorities. Most of the nine countries in this book that use some form of proportional representation elected at least some of their governments with minority support. Only Austria and the Netherlands had majority support for *all* the governments included here.

Looking at average electoral support by type of government and comparing that with pledge fulfillment results shows a counterintuitive finding: governments with the least electoral support tend to be the ones that fulfill the most pledges. Single-party governments in our sample have average voter support of 42 percent and fulfill 72 percent of their pledges. Coalition governments have average voter support of 52 percent and fulfill 54 percent of their pledges. Finally, the average US presidential vote for the period

included here was 50 percent, with average presidential party pledge fulfillment of 62 percent. By these measures, it might be argued that coalition governments offer the greatest level of “congruence” between voter support and pledge fulfillment. Also perhaps worth considering is the fact that coalition governments have a tendency to fulfill more opposition pledges than single-party governments do. All this provides some evidence that the “proportional vision,” as described by Powell, indeed reflects more “points of view.” At the same time, the relationship between electoral results and the specific coalition formed can be an uncertain one, in some countries and at some times depending on elite bargaining; in contrast, elections that produce clear single-party winners can enhance accountability to voters. Again there are trade-offs.

In terms of assessing the normative implications of our work, one more issue is worth mentioning in light of illiberal pledges made by populist politicians and mainstream politicians threatened by populists’ success in recent years. The desirability of high rates of pledge fulfillment is questionable when what is promised threatens fundamental democratic principles such as the protection of minority rights (Riker 1982; Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). Principled opposition to the fulfillment of illiberal pledges, even when promised by a party that obtained an overwhelming victory, is fully consistent with a recognition of the general importance of the pledge-to-policy linkage for the practice of representative democracy.

17.4. Concluding Remarks

Our “headline” finding is that in most countries most of the time governing parties fulfill a majority of their pledges, and in some countries, consistently, considerably more than just a majority.

This finding will be surprising to many observers, and many people might choose to focus on the unfulfilled pledges, of which there are many. The cross-country comparisons showed that in most coalition governments governing parties fulfilled only around half of their pledges, and even then only when we count “partial” fulfillment as fulfillment. Moreover, even when conditions are conducive to pledge fulfillment, many pledges remain unfulfilled.

We have no desire to forestall robust criticism of political parties. Rather, our main concern is that the criticism be based on evidence, not

the vacuous assertion that politicians “never” or “hardly ever” keep their promises, or that campaign pledges are trivial. Recent analyses of public opinion show that the narrative of the promise-breaking politician is widespread among the general public (e.g., Naurin 2011; Thomson 2011). Our work suggests that to a large degree the facts belie these views. In addition, as the last section demonstrated, an argument can be made that maximum pledge fulfillment may not always be the most desirable outcome.

We hope that our work serves to inform the opinions of researchers, students, opinion leaders, and the general public. There is undoubtedly a hunger for rigorous evidence-based analysis of democratic representation among the public in many countries. Many of the researchers who have contributed to this book have experienced this firsthand. For instance, most national newspapers in both Sweden and the Netherlands reported on the findings of those country studies when they were first published, and there have been similar experiences in other countries. In Canada the website poltext.org run by researchers at the Université Laval tracks promises made by national and regional politicians and has been a prominent source of information for Canadian political journalists. Such outstanding examples of serious public engagement by political scientists are worth replicating in other countries, particularly as social scientists are encouraged to demonstrate the relevance of their research.

There are a multitude of alternative routes that future research on pledge making and fulfillment could take. In this chapter we highlighted some of the research opportunities that are most closely related to the institutional perspective we took in this project, and we have not attempted to enumerate all possible avenues. Pledge fulfillment research has the potential to contribute to literatures and debates about all aspects of the “chain of democratic linkage”: voters, parties, the media, executives, legislatures, and comparative policy.

Looking ahead, we hope that this book is a beginning and that it will encourage other researchers to join our work. We believe it offers a model of how comparative, qualitatively based political science can address issues of broad theoretical and social importance. There is still much work to do both in terms of the theoretical developments to which we have alluded and in terms of expanding the evidence base. We hope that future studies will expand the set of countries and time periods considered beyond the established western democracies on which we have mainly focused here. We are confident that working together in this way will lead to further improvements to our understanding of how representative democracies work.

NOTES

1. This is attributed by Kostadinova to the government being led by a new party with no experience, as well as it being the country's first minority government.

2. The low result for Italy is heavily influenced by the very low pledge fulfillment of the 1996–98 Prodi I government. As chapter 12 notes, if one looks at the entire 1996–2001 period in which center-left governments re-formed without Prodi, that governing period has 57.1 percent fulfillment. If that period is eliminated entirely, the remaining governments have 51 percent fulfillment.

3. In contrast to much of the work in this area, our variable of interest is type of government, not electoral system. Proportional representation systems can have both single-party and coalition governments, and our findings suggest that these alternatives perform differently in terms of pledge fulfillment.

4. It's worth noting that minority governments typically rely on the support of "outside" parties in the legislature, sometimes via explicit agreement, as we have discussed. Thus, the voters of such parties arguably are having some of their views considered, raising the level of total voter support for the governments.

5. Voting data were taken from the Manifesto Project Dataset.

6. Of course, the US also uses the SMP electoral system, but because its two parties are so dominant we tend not to see the kind of disproportionality found in Canada and the UK, where smaller parties win a significant proportion of the vote but tend to be punished in numbers of seats by the electoral system.

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