Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Working Paper 150/2015

Parliamentary Oppositions in Established Democracies: A Comparative Approach

Or Tuttnauer

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Contents

Introduction

Political opposition exists whenever and wherever there is a political community. In democratic theory, it is a hallmark of the very idea of modern democracy. And yet, the research in this field has not made significant progress, either theoretically or empirically, since Dahl's works over 40 years ago (Helms, 2008; Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). This is especially true of the sub-field of parliamentary opposition.

Parliamentary opposition, defined as the sum of all parties represented in parliament and not members of the governing coalition, is considered the most advanced and institutionalized form of political conflict, and a feature important and possibly necessary for democratization (Lipset, 1963; Ionescu & de Madariaga, 1968). Its duties include monitoring the government, criticizing it, and perhaps most importantly, competing with it for the public mandate. But despite its importance, parliamentary opposition has thus far been quite understudied.

While the last couple of decades have seen the publication of a number of essays on political opposition—theoretical and empirical, historical and quantitative—most of these have been case studies dealing with opposition as a whole, without focusing on its parliamentary facet. Such are the special issues of the *Journal of Legislative Studies* from 2008 and 2015 focused on parliamentary opposition, compiling mostly single-case studies (such as Schrire, 2008; Inoguchi, 2008; Gemenis & Roula Nezi, 2015) or cases describing a small group of similar countries (such as Andeweg, De Winter, & Müller, 2008; Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008). A notable exception is Maeda's comparative analysis of opposition parties' tendency to merge or split under various institutional setups (2015). Additionally, some model-oriented studies have emerged, investigating the behavior of parliamentary opposition in specific cases or scenarios (Dewan & Sperling, 2010; Stecker, 2011). However, there is still a need for further comparative research to improve our understanding of the strategies and behavior of parliamentary opposition.

In this paper I develop a comparative analytical framework, based on extant literature, designed to conceptualize the abilities of parliamentary oppositions and investigate their behavior. With this framework I aim to offer a set of parameters for the comparative study of parliamentary opposition. This entails considering three

characteristics of parliamentary opposition: its institutional power, its structural power, and its past governmental participation.

This paper is organized into three sections, each aiming to answer a distinct question and using a different dataset. The first section examines the features of parliamentary opposition which determine its abilities and their patterns across European and other Western democracies. The opposition formations of 17 countries are investigated from 1945, or the beginning of democratization in each country, until the present day. The second section analyzes the plenary voting patterns of a single opposition composition (meaning a single set of opposition parties over a timeframe of one legislative term or less) in each of these countries in an attempt to distinguish the institutional and systemic factors defining the opposition's confrontation of the government. Finally, the third section conducts a focused comparison of two very different countries—Finland and the United Kingdom—analyzing the plenary voting behavior of their individual parties over roughly 20 years in each country, in order to distinguish the mechanism defining confrontation at the opposition-party level.

1. Comparing parliamentary oppositions

In his seminal work, Robert Dahl proposed six parameters in which oppositions differ: their cohesion; competitiveness vis-à-vis the government; the arena in which they are manifested; their identifiability; their goals; and their strategies (Dahl, 1966). Later, Blondel (1997) narrowed these parameters down to three: the type of opposition body (its arena); its structural cohesion; and the nature of its goals (specifically the degree to which they differ from the government's). Dahl's other parameters should emerge from these.

When applying Dahl's and Blondel's parameters to the specific form of parliamentary opposition, it is apparent that some are redundant. The type of opposition body and the arena are given: it is political parties in parliament that do the opposing. Identifying the opposition, particularly in parliamentary regimes, is also usually straightforward. Assuming intraparty cohesion, the opposition's cohesion is a product of the number of opposition parties, their respective sizes, and the size of the parliamentary opposition as a whole. Thus, it is mainly determined by the nature of the party system, which itself is determined by the electoral system and social cleavages (Helms, 2008; Blondel, 1997; Dahl, 1965; though cf. Maeda, 2015). Goals and strategies may differ from one opposition party to another, but two assumptions can be made. One is that like every political party, an opposition party has a mix of three goals: electoral success, office benefits, and policy influence (Strøm & Muller, 1999). The second is that the strategies of an opposition party will be affected by the options it is presented with by the parliamentary and electoral institutions. These strategies and their antecedents will determine the last parameter, the opposition's electoral and legislative competitiveness vis-à-vis the government (Blondel, 1997).

Therefore, two main parameters remain: the opposition's structural features of cohesion and size; and the institutional framework in which it operates, which will supposedly account for its strategies and competitiveness. I will call these parameters the opposition's *structural power* and its *institutional power*, respectively.

The relationship between these two types of oppositional power is expected to be a negative one. Powell (2000) schematically shows that strong institutional powers are given to oppositions in multiparty systems, or what he calls "proportional regimes." In

these systems, with a high number of parties, one would also expect to find multiparty, and hence fragmented, oppositions. Moreover, multiparty systems tend to produce more non-minimal-winning-coalitions than two-party systems (Dodd, 1976), which may mean larger coalitions and smaller, weaker oppositions. This argument would lead one to expect that a negative correlation exists between the opposition's structural power and its institutional power. Recently, Maeda (2015) finds that weak institutional powers reduce the fragmentation of the opposition, corroborating the above expectation while establishing a causal link in the opposite direction from the one hinted at by Powell. Thus, my first hypothesis is as follows:

> *Hypothesis H1.1: The structural power of the opposition will tend to be lower in high-institutional-power countries than in low-institutional-power countries*

An opposition's structural power and institutional power are indicative of the potential it has to serve its functions. To coherently criticize the government and offer an alternative approach, an opposition should be cohesive. To effectively scrutinize the government's actions and promote different interests, it needs powerful institutional tools. To offer an alternative to the government, the opposition needs to be both cohesive and large enough. However, it also needs some level of previous governmental experience for the alternative to be credible. For that reason, I will propose another parameter of parliamentary opposition, its level of past governmental participation.

Giulj (1981) links patterns of government alternation and institutional powers of the opposition. She distinguishes between "confrontation regimes" and "conciliation regimes" according to the degree of policy influence the parliamentary opposition has, and its relationship with the government. In confrontation regimes, the government is in charge of policymaking and implementation while the opposition has no influence on policy; its sole purpose is to confront the government and criticize it. In conciliation regimes, the opposition takes part in policymaking, mainly through the parliamentary committees, and its interaction with the government is one of cooperation rather than confrontational competition. These regime types are said to be related to different patterns of government alternation. Confrontation regimes presume, or require, a rather frequent and regular alternation in office which mitigates the conflict between

opposition and government and facilitates its containment within democratic conduct. Conciliation regimes, on the other hand, are meant to make up for a lack of regular government alternation by affording opposition parties influence over policymaking even without holding office (Giulj, 1981; Dahl, 1965). Maeda (2015) suggests the same negative correlation between government alternation and institutional powers but reaches it from the opposite direction by arguing that weak institutional powers drive opposition parties to merge in order to be better positioned to replace the government. If this strategy is successful, structurally stronger oppositions will presumably lead to at least partial government alternation, which will be reflected in higher rates of past governmental participation by the opposition as recent governing parties enter it. Thus, the degree to which opposition parties occasionally replace the incumbent party or parties in government is not only beneficial to opposition parties aspiring to appear as a credible governmental alternative; it is also an indication of how successfully the opposition fulfills this function (Johnson, 1997).

The degree of opposition parties' participation in government over time, and their chance of getting into office in the foreseeable future, may also impact the positions they adopt as well as their behavior. Low rates of government alternation may encourage permanent opposition parties to adopt different, more extreme, ideologies and modes of behavior (Sartori, 1966a,b; Dahl, 1965; Giulj, 1981; Mair, 2007). On the other hand, parties with no hope of taking over the government may prefer to cooperate with the incumbent government in order to achieve policy benefits, making them act more moderately than other parties (Steinack, 2011). Recently, Schumacher et al. show how low office aspirations, the result of being long out of office, affect the frequency of change in parties' manifested ideology (Schumacher, van de Wardt, Vis, & Klitgaard, 2015), and Falcó-Gimeno (2011) shows how the time spent in opposition increases parties' impatience in coalitional bargaining.

Following Giulj (1981), Powell (1989, 2000), and Maeda (2015), higher levels of past participation in government should be correlated with both the institutional power of the opposition (more institutional power compensates for less participation) and its structural power (more cohesive oppositions lead to more participation). This last

statement may be understood either in terms of simple correlation or in terms of causality. Thus, my next hypotheses are:

Hypothesis H1.2: Past governmental participation will be lower in high-institutional-power countries than in low-institutional-power countries.

Hypothesis H1.3a: Past governmental participation will be higher as the structural power of the opposition increases.

Hypothesis H1.3b: Past governmental participation will be higher as the structural power of the previous opposition (lagged structural power) increases.

Data and Methodology

The data for this section includes all opposition and government compositions in the 17 countries studied since 1945, the country's founding, or its democratization. A single opposition composition is a distinct set of opposition parties, equivalent to a single cabinet as defined by the Parlgov database. This definition follows Budge and Keman (1993), regarding a new cabinet (and thus, in this study, a new opposition) with 1) any change of parties with cabinet membership, 2) any change of the prime minister, or 3) any general election. The countries were selected by the availability of data on plenary voting and institutional powers. The raw data include every government and opposition's party composition (in bicameral parliaments, data is only for the lower house) since the end of WWII, the state's independence, or democratization, according to each case. Overall 515 compositions with a total of 3,747 party-observations are included. Table 1.1 details the studied countries, the number of opposition compositions, and the analyzed timeframe for each country.

Table 1.1

Section 1 dataset features.

Country	# of Opposition Compositions	Start Date	End Date
Austria	32	04.12.1945	02.12.2008
Belgium	44	13.03.1946	06.12.2011
Denmark	36	07.11.1945	02.10.2011
Estonia	13	21.10.1992	05.04.2011
Finland	50	17.04.1945	22.06.2011
France	61	21.11.1945	18.06.2012
Germany	24	20.09.1949	28.10.2009
Greece	21	21.11.1974	20.06.2012
Ireland	24	18.02.1948	07.05.2008
Israel	70	10.03.1949	02.12.2014
Latvia	22	07.05.1990	22.01.2014
Poland	19	24.08.1989	18.11.2011
Slovakia	14	27.06.1990	20.10.2011
Slovenia	15	16.05.1990	20.03.2013
Sweden	30	31.07.1945	19.09.2010
Switzerland	17	11.12.1947	10.12.2008
UK	23	26.07.1945	27.06.2007

The degree to which the parliament's institutions enable the opposition to influence the policymaking process is usually assessed by the strength of the parliamentary committee system as its proxy. This is not only because of the crucial role the committee system may play both in legislation and oversight, both highly important processes to the opposition's ability to influence decision-making, but also because its powers are statistically correlated with other features of opposition influence which are harder to quantify (Strøm, 1984, 1990; Powell, 2000). Here I rely on Martin's (2011) committee strength index, a measure of a committee's ability to impact legislative

process ranging from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 7. However, following Strøm (1984, 1990) and Powell (2000)—who argue that whether the opposition receives committee chair positions, or alternatively the coalition heads all parliamentary committees, matters greatly to the opposition's influence on parliamentary decision-making—Martin's index is averaged with a dummy that equals 1 if the opposition heads some of the committees, and 0 otherwise.[1] The resulting eight-point index (ranging from 0 to 4 in 0.5 increments) is a more nuanced version of Powell's "Legislative Committee Structure" variable, which is an additive index of just two criteria and is used by Tuttnauer (2014) and Maeda (2015).

The structural power of the opposition is computed by taking into account the opposition's size, fragmentation, and polarization. Based on the extant literature, it is assumed the opposition is structurally more powerful when it is larger and more cohesive. Opposition size is the total seat-share of all opposition parties. The opposition fragmentation is operationalized by the effective number (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979) of opposition parties. The same measure is used by Maeda (2015). The opposition's polarization is computed as 1 minus the absolute difference between the size of opposition to the left of the government and the size of opposition to the right of the government.[2] The three values are combined into a variable that ranges between 0 and 1, computed by a single formula. As the structural power of an opposition is supposed to increase with size but decrease with fragmentation and polarization, the first is put into the numerator while the second and third are put into the denominator. A constant of +1 is added to the polarization value to prevent cases of unipolar opposition (polarization=0) ending up with zero in the denominator. Thus, the formula for structural power is:

$$SP=Size/[ENPS_{opp}*(1+Polarization_{opp})]$$

For this section I also calculated country averages of the oppositions' structural power, weighted by duration—meaning more "durable" oppositions weigh more than short-lived ones.

[1] Values for Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, and Slovakia were coded by the author. Others were taken from Powell (2000) and Strøm (1990).

[2] Absolute value is used, rather than the square of the difference, in order to reduce the deviation of extreme cases.

For governmental participation, there is no agreed and specific measure, which is to be expected as most literature treats this feature only in passing. However, two studies recently addressed similar concepts, using two different measures. Falco-Gimeno (2011) uses a simple count of years in which a party has been in opposition; Schumacher et al. (2015) use a more sophisticated measure as their proxy for a party's office-holding standards. Dividing the number of years a party has been in office by the number of years it has existed, the essential difference between their measure and Falco-Gimeno's is that it takes into account not only the current spell in opposition but also any spells predating the last tenure in office. Taking past governmental participation into account, it makes sense that not only the years since the last time in office matter but also the history before that. Take, for example, a party that has now been in opposition for the last 10 years, and has existed for the last 60 years. If before the last time it left office it had been the predominant party, ruling for the previous 50 years, most likely it is still regarded as a candidate with a credible governmental reputation. However, if its last tenure in office has been a short one, for example, as part of an emergency grand coalition, an exception to a status of perennial opposition, the picture is quite different. Hence, I choose to use a measure more similar in nature to Schumacher et al.'s (but more attuned to my purposes). However, since the literature does not give a clear theoretical account of a mechanism behind this feature, I will also use a measure similar to Falco-Gimeno's.

I begin with the basic intuition that the length of time spent in opposition matters. To be more precise, the ratio between time in opposition and time in coalition matters. Hence, the core party-level index (GPIp—Governmental participation Index party-level) is rather simple—subtract the number of days in opposition (OT) from the days in coalition (CT) and divide by the total days of existence (TT):

$$\mathbf{GPI(p)} = \frac{CTp - OTp}{T \sqsupset p}$$

The outcome is a variable ranging from (-1) if the party has always been in opposition, to +1 if the party has always been in coalition. This index does not address how long the party has existed compared to others. For instance, a party that has been in parliament for four years, during one of which it was in opposition, and another party

that in 20 years spent five years in opposition, both get an index of +0.5. Of course, a party existing in parliament for six months and a party in parliament for 60 years both get an index of (-1) if they spent all their time in opposition.

Taking account of a party's age, as well as size, is important when looking at the governmental participation of an opposition as a whole. One would like bigger parties to weigh more than small ones, and longstanding parties to weigh more than new ones. What is needed, then, is to calculate an average of all opposition parties' GPIp values, weighted by both size and age. This index, as the GPI for a single party, ranges from (-1), meaning all opposition parties were never in government, theoretically to +1, which means that up until now all current opposition parties were always in government. The formula, then, is (with S_i being the number of seats belonging to an opposition party):

$$\mathbf{GPI}(o) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left[\left(GPI(p)\right]_i * Si * TTi\right)}{\sum_{j=1}^{m}\left[(TT]_j * Sj\right)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}[(CTi - OTi) * Si]}{\sum_{j=1}^{m}\left[(TT]_j * Sj\right)}$$

This opposition-level measure has one drawback, which is its sensitivity to the current opposition composition. Consider a country with a one-party opposition, containing a party which up until very recently has been the predominant ruling party in single-party governments. The GPIo value of such an opposition will be close to +1, but concluding that this country tends in general to have an opposition with high governmental participation would be quite misleading, as up until very recently the opposition had no governmental past whatsoever. Thus, a final measure is calculated, which is a country average of GPIo weighed by the duration of each opposition composition.

As mentioned above, an alternative to these GPI measures is simply counting the consecutive years each opposition party has been out of office. An opposition-level measure, its "opposition age," will simply be an opposition average weighted by each party's seat-share. Finally, a country-level measure will be a weighted average, similar to the country-level GPIo.

Findings

Table 1.2 summarizes the opposition features of each country, sorted alphabetically. The average effective number of parties in parliament is shown in the first column. The next column describes the institutional power of the opposition. The third column shows each country's (duration-weighted) average structural power. The last two columns deal with the governmental participation indices, the duration-weighted GPIo, and opposition age.

Table 1.2

Section 1 results.

Country	Effective # of Parties	Institutional Power	Structural Power	GPIo	Opposition Age
Austria	2.68	3.5	0.19	-0.18	6.14
Belgium	5.84	2.5	0.13	-0.15	4.88
Denmark	4.72	3.0	0.14	-0.28	7.30
Estonia	4.70	3.5	0.15	-0.27	1.31
Finland	5.10	3.0	0.13	-0.16	4.73
France	3.39	1.5	0.19	-0.14	4.20
Germany	2.81	2.5	0.30	-0.10	5.27
Greece	2.29	0.5	0.26	-0.11	2.61
Ireland	2.92	2.5	0.23	-0.10	3.18
Israel	5.33	2.5	0.10	-0.24	4.54
Latvia	5.14	3.0	0.14	-0.50	1.84
Poland	4.06	2.5	0.17	-0.27	1.32
Slovakia	4.87	4.0	0.14	0.17	0.68
Slovenia	5.57	3.5	0.14	-0.00	1.61
Sweden	3.54	3.0	0.17	-0.51	10.1
Switzerland	5.23	3.0	0.03	-0.89	20.4
UK	2.18	2.0	0.30	-0.08	5.62

Analysis of correlations between the institutional power and the time-weighted averages of the other measures, shown in table 1.3, affirms hypothesis H1.1, as a strong, negative, and significant correlation emerges between the average structural power and the institutional power of the opposition ($r=-0.50$, $p<0.05$). Hypothesis H1.2 is not affirmed as the correlation between institutional power and GPIo is substantively and statistically insignificant. There is also a strong, positive correlation between the institutional power of the opposition and the fragmentation in parliament (ENPS, $r=0.52$, $p<0.05$). However, the correlation between institutional power and effective number of parties is insignificant, contrary to Maeda's findings (Maeda, 2015).

Table 1.3

Country-level correlations.

	Institutional Power	Structural Power	ENPS	Opposition ENPS	GPIo
Structural Power	-0.497**	1.000			
	0.042				
ENPS	0.525**	-0.851***	1.000		
	0.031	0.000			
Opposition ENPS	0.406	-0.882***	0.823***	1.000	
	0.106	0.000	0.000		
GPIo	-0.059	0.512**	-0.228	-0.487**	1.000
	0.823	0.036	0.378	0.047	
Opposition Age	0.039	-0.372	0.055	0.396	-0.764***
	0.883	0.142	0.834	0.116	0.000

N=17. All values except Institutional Power are time-weighted country averages.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 1.4 shows the opposition-level correlations between structural power and the governmental participation measures. Hypothesis H1.3a is affirmed as average structural power is positively and significantly correlated with average GPIo ($r=0.39$, $p<0.001$). Also checked is the correlation between structural power and a cumulative GPIo measure, equivalent to the weighted country average up to each corresponding

opposition composition. This correlation is also positive and significant, albeit weaker (r=0.17, p<0.001). The opposition-age measure is also significantly correlated with structural power, but the strength of the correlation is twice as low as the GPIo correlation (-0.18, p<0.001).

Table 1.4

Opposition-level correlations.

	Structural Power	Structural Power (Lagged)	GPIo	Cumulative GPIo
Structural Power (Lagged)	0.678***			
	0.000			
	496			
GPIo	0.392***	0.306***		
	0.000	0.000		
	496	494		
Cumulative GPIo	0.169***	0.223***	0.470***	
	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	513	496	496	
Opposition Age	-0.176***	-0.182***	-0.456***	-0.192***
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	513	496	496	513

N=17. All values except Institutional Power are time-weighted country averages.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Finally, the correlation between GPIo and the lagged structural power is positive and significant (0.31, p<0.001). To further affirm hypothesis H1.3b, a linear OLS regression was performed with GPIo as the dependent variable, and lagged GPIo, lagged structural power, and institutional power as independent variables. The results, shown in table 1.5, affirm hypothesis H1.3b, with lagged structural power significantly

increasing GPIo, suggesting that a large and cohesive opposition is more likely to result in government alternation.[3]

Table 1.5

Regression on GPIo.

Lagged GPIo	0.461***
	(0.041)
Lagged Structural Power	0.393**
	(0.170)
Institutional Power	-0.018
	(0.028)
Constant	-0.135
	(0.090)
Observations	478
R-squared	0.278

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

To sum up the findings of this section, I have suggested a conceptualization of opposition abilities based on three features: the institutional setting, namely the degree to which the parliamentary organization offers the opposition influence on decision-making; the structural features of the opposition's size and fragmentation; and the governmental reputation the opposition enjoys. Together, the three measures define the degree to which the opposition can achieve policy gains as well as improve its chances to enter government.

It was found that, as expected, the institutional and structural powers of the opposition are negatively correlated, meaning large, cohesive oppositions usually

[3] Results are robust to adding country dummies. A similar regression using opposition-age shows only lagged opposition age as a significant factor.

operate in institutional settings that deny them real decision-making influence, while oppositions enjoying such influence are usually smaller and more fragmented. It was also found that the more structurally powerful the opposition is, the more it tends to enjoy past governmental reputation, which may also help it achieve (at least partial) government alternation in the next cabinet formation. I now turn to the question of how all this affects the actual behavior of parliamentary oppositions, by studying the quintessential parliamentary action: plenary voting.

2. Conflict versus Cooperation: To Influence or to Replace

In parliamentary democracies, being in opposition does not necessarily imply constantly opposing the actions of the government. In fact, consensus in plenary votes may be not only frequent but sometimes the norm (Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006; Moury & De Giorgi, 2015). What then influences the extent to which the behavior of a given opposition toward the government will be conflictual?

Dahl (1966) considers competitiveness, in the electoral as well as the legislative arena, one of six parameters for characterization of political opposition. To avoid confusion, I will hereinafter limit the use of the term "competitiveness" to the electoral arena, using "conflict" or "rate of conflict" instead. Dahl explains the notion of competitiveness thus: "…two parties are in a strictly competitive (or zero-sum) relation if they pursue strategies such that, given the election or [parliamentary] voting system, the gains of one will exactly equal the losses of another" (Dahl, 1966:336). Focusing on the legislative arena, Dahl goes on to state that "two parties are strictly competitive in a legislature if they pursue strategies such that both cannot simultaneously belong to a winning coalition" (ibid.), later qualifying this statement to regard only what he calls "key votes," as in reality no legislature is entirely conflictual.

When it comes to the opposition's perspective, it appears that strict legislative competition with the government restricts it to having a marginal effect on legislation, with only delay and raising public awareness as its weapons.[4] Opposing the government may bring down a bill only when the government itself is torn between supporting and opposing factions and only assuming the opposition is cohesive, which may be quite rare for multiparty oppositions. Alternatively the opposition, or parties within it, may choose to cooperate with the government on consensual subjects. An opposition party might choose to abstain from voting altogether, seeing that it cannot change the outcome and perhaps does not want to. In fact, in most cases abstaining is tantamount

[4] Three exceptions can be noted. One is the case of minority government, when the opposition holds the parliamentary majority. However, here we will rarely witness strict competition since the government knows it cannot legislate without some degree of cooperation from the opposition. Another exception is votes requiring supra-majority support, as change to fundamental laws may require in some countries. The last exception is when the opposition attempts, by stringently opposing a bill, to force the government to depend on its centrist MPs in order to push the bill through (Dewan &Spirling, 2010). This strategy is applicable only in very specific scenarios, however.

to supporting the majority (in terms of the outcome), but without the public repercussions of cooperation with it. In sum, with each new bill the opposition faces two options: to oppose or not to oppose. An opposition which tends to the first choice may be called "robust," while one which tends to the second may be called "cooperative" (Schrire, 2008).

How do the features of parliamentary opposition delineated above affect the degree to which the opposition leans toward conflict or cooperation vis-à-vis the government? The main intuition is that the more likely the opposition is to succeed in replacing the government in the near future, the less cooperative it will be. This is because a) it may see less need to compromise on its policy positions with the government, and b) it will place more emphasis on policy differentiation in order to attract disgruntled government supporters in the next elections.

The first implication of this intuition is that the more structurally powerful the opposition is, the more likely it is to confront government rather than cooperate with it, striving to defeat it in both the parliamentary and electoral arenas.

Regarding institutional power of influence on decision-making, as noted above, Giulj (1981) links the degree of policy influence the parliamentary opposition has and its relationship with the government. In confrontation regimes (with low institutional power of the opposition), the government is in charge of policymaking and implementation while the opposition has no influence on policy, leaving it with the sole purpose of confronting the government and criticizing it in the hope of replacing it in the future. In conciliation regimes (with high institutional power of the opposition), the opposition participates in policymaking, mainly through parliamentary committees, and its interaction with the government is one of cooperation rather than confrontational competition (Giulj, 1981; Maeda, 2015). Lijphart's (1999) conceptualization of majoritarian and consensus regimes ties together the two features with the rate of conflict. Whereas majoritarian regimes are characterized by executive dominance over the legislative and party systems with few parties, consensus regimes are characterized by "executive-legislative balance of power" (Lijphart, 1999:3) and multiparty systems. This is reflected in the relationship between the majority and the minority(ies), as "the majoritarian model of democracy is exclusive, competitive, and adversarial, whereas

the consensus model is characterized by inclusiveness, bargaining, and compromise" (Lijphart, 1999:2). In essence, the two models differ in their answer to whose interests the government should be responsive to, with the former arguing that it is "the majority of the people" and the latter arguing that it is "as many people as possible" (ibid). Thus, my first two hypotheses are:

Hypothesis H2.1. The stronger an opposition is structurally, the more conflictual it will be.

Hypothesis H2.2. The stronger an opposition is institutionally, the less conflictual it will be.

Finally, the logic underlying the expected effect of past governmental participation of the whole opposition relies on the individual party level, and thus will be expounded on in the next section. The main proposition, however, is that oppositions with less governmental past will also be less expected to enter government in the near future (Schumacher et al., 2015), and will therefore prefer to cooperate with the government to achieve at least some policy gains rather than compete with the government and risk having neither policy nor office gains (Steinack, 2011). This leads to the third country-level hypothesis:

Hypothesis H2.3. The less governmental past an opposition holds, the less conflictual it will be.

Data and Methodology

The data for this section include 61 opposition parties[5] in the 17 countries analyzed in section 1 (an average of 3.59 opposition parties per country, ranging from 2 to 7). In each country, all votes are taken from the same parliamentary term, representing a single coalitional and oppositional composition. The data of 15 countries is from the year 2004 or later, while the data of the two remaining countries is from 1996 and 2000 (Germany and Belgium, respectively). The dataset is based on 9,590 votes (an average

[5] Special minority representatives, independents, and single-legislator parties were not included.

of 564 per country, ranging from 63 to 1917) on which the government was not neutral.[6]

Opposition conflict was aggregated from the original, legislator-level data (originally collected by Coman, 2015, except for Israel). Original legislator votes were coded as: For (+1), Against (-1), or Abstain (0). A party-vote level position was calculated by averaging across all voting party MPs, resulting in a party position ranging between -1 and +1.

The per-vote party positions were used to calculate the government and opposition average positions for each vote (weighted by seat-share), also ranging between -1 and +1. It is worth noting that the government is found to be habitually cohesive (81% of vote positions are ±0.8 and above), which cannot be said about the opposition (48% of vote positions are ±0.8 and above). The country-level dependent variable was then calculated, representing the share of votes in which the opposition's average position was completely opposite to that of the government, with the cutoff threshold for a contentious vote being a "distance" of 1.8 between the two positions.[7]

The independent variables are the opposition's institutional power, structural power, governmental participation index, and age, as described and operationalized in section 1 above. The frequency of voting, calculated by dividing the number of votes analyzed in each country by the number of years analyzed (rounded to halves), is used as a proxy for the level of strategy needed to call for a recorded vote. As it is reasonable to assume that the difference in frequency reflects not an actual difference in the number of votes held per year in each country, but a difference in the rules regarding which votes are recorded, this variable captures the level of strategy put into recording votes, which ranges between no strategy when all votes are recorded (hence high frequency) and high strategy when only roll-call votes are recorded and these are difficult to initiate (hence low frequency). The level of strategy needed to call for a recorded vote should influence the level of conflict, probably increasing it, as recorded votes under high-strategy regimes will be used in conflictual votes either to enforce government party

[6] Cases in which the government was neutral were censured because it is meaningless to look for oppositional conflict or cooperation in cases where the government itself is neutral. The censured cases account for 9% of the original population.

[7] Since the opposition is seldom cohesive in votes, relying on a rounded position would result in overestimating conflict at the opposition and country levels. A high cut-off threshold of 1.8 ensures that only clear cases of opposition-government conflict will be regarded as contentious.

cohesion or as an attempt by the opposition to publicly expose cleavages within the government.

Additional controls were added to the regression analysis such as electoral system permissiveness, federalism, and strong upper legislative house, but none had a significant effect and therefore they are not expounded on.

Findings

Table 2.1 shows the countries with their rates of conflict, institutional and structural powers of the opposition, its governmental participation index, and opposition age, as well as frequency of votes. It is worth noting that three groups of countries emerge from the data: low-conflict countries including Switzerland, Israel, Denmark, and the young democracies, with conflict rates ranging between zero and 0.18; medium-conflict countries including the Scandinavian and post-consociational countries, grouped between 0.31 and 0.36; and high-conflict countries starting at 0.65 upward, and including Greece and the other West European countries.

Table 2.1

Country-level conflict rates.

Country	Conflict Rate	Institutional Power	Structural Power	Opposition GPI	Opposition Age (years)	Frequency
Switzerland 2007	0.00	3	0.06	-1	33.6	690
Israel	0.03	2.5	0.04	-0.11	8.5	871
Estonia 2008	0.03	3.5	0.22	-0.33	1.0	681
Latvia 2008	0.07	3	0.08	-0.32	2.0	573
Slovakia 2008	0.10	4	0.16	0.21	2.0	206
Poland 2009	0.12	2.5	0.19	-0.20	1.4	1922
Slovenia 2008	0.18	3.5	0.13	-0.14	4.5	381
Denmark 2006	0.18	3	0.18	-0.13	10.5	427
Finland 2008	0.31	3	0.12	0.17	4.2	723

Country	Conflict Rate	Institutional Power	Structural Power	Opposition GPI	Opposition Age (years)	Frequency
Sweden 2008	0.35	3	0.30	0.42	11.6	532
Austria 2009	0.35	3.5	0.09	-0.73	8.2	25
Belgium 2000	0.36	2.5	0.11	0.25	6.9	454
United Kingdom 2007	0.65	2	0.16	-0.02	13.6	238
France 2009	0.72	1.5	0.40	-0.28	6.9	467
Germany 1996	0.74	2.5	0.30	-0.31	10.5	48
Greece 2004	0.90	0.5	0.34	0.19	2.6	21
Ireland 2007	0.92	2.5	0.15	-0.38	10	612

Regarding the institutional and the structural powers of the opposition, however, there does seem to be a pattern in which the high-conflict countries are ones in which the institutional power is low and the structural power is high, compared with the lower-conflict countries. This is corroborated by bivariate tests shown in table 2.2, with both institutional and structural powers having strong and significant correlations. On the other hand, neither GPIo nor opposition is found to be correlated with the rate of conflict.

Table 2.2

Country-level conflict correlations.

	Conflict	Institutional Power	Structural Power	Opposition GPI	Opposition Age
Inst. Power	-0.699	1.000			
	0.002				
Str. Power	0.591	-0.533	1.000		
	0.012	0.028			
Opposition GPI	0.153	-0.178	0.303	1.000	
	0.558	0.493	0.238		
Opp. Age	-0.039	0.004	-0.241	-0.516	1.000
	0.883	0.987	0.351	0.034	
Frequency	-0.429	0.071	-0.200	-0.067	-0.085
	0.086	0.788	0.442	0.797	0.746

Completing the country-level section with multivariate analysis, a stepwise linear OLS regression, adding variables one by one, and leaving only those with coefficients significant at the 0.1 level,[8] results in only the institutional power of the opposition being significant, together with the vote frequency control variable (Table 2.3). The substantive effect of both is significant: holding frequency to its mean (500), a country with the lowest institutional power score in the data (0.5) is predicted to show a 96% conflict rate, while one with the highest score (4) is predicted to show a 3.6% conflict rate. Holding institutional power at its mean (2.72), a country with the minimum frequency (20.6) is predicted to have a 20.6% conflict rate, while a country with the maximum frequency (1,922) is predicted, again, at 3.6%. It is important to also note that the two variables alone explain 67% of the variation (Adjusted R-square=.61), the institutional power of the opposition explaining by itself over half of the variance in the data (not reported here).

[8] The small number of cases in the country-level analysis—sixteen—does not allow for regressing on all independent variables simultaneously.

Table 2.3

Cross-national country-level regression.

Institutional Power	-0.256***
	(0.062)
Frequency	-0.000**
	(0.000)
Constant	1.207***
	(0.173)
Observations	17
R-squared	0.634

In sum, the country-level results affirm hypothesis 2.2 regarding the institutional power of the opposition. Hypothesis 2.1 regarding the structural power of the opposition seems to be ruled out by the multivariate analysis; that is, the bivariate correlation between structural power and conflict is the result of the strong correlation between structural and institutional powers of the opposition, found in our data as well as in previous works (Tuttnauer, 2014). These findings are in line with Maeda's (2015) argument that opposition fragmentation is determined by what I identify as its institutional power, rather than the two being independently determined. Finally, hypothesis 2.3 concerning governmental participation is also not affirmed by either of the measures.

These findings highlight the importance of longstanding institutional features such as the parliamentary rules, norms, and organization compared to more ephemeral features reliant on the specific composition of the opposition. If parliamentary rules and organization indeed speak to one model or the other of democracy, as Giulj (1981), Lijphart (1999), and Powell (2000) argue, the above findings highlight the importance of the prevalent democratic model in a country in its effect on the relationship between government and opposition. The next topic to be investigated is another level of

features, those particular to the individual opposition party. This will be done by focusing on two dissimilar countries: Finland and the United Kingdom.

3. Conflict of Individual Opposition Parties

What makes a specific opposition party lean toward conflict or cooperation with the government? The first party-level factor to consider is, of course, party ideology. As Blondel (1997) stresses, the key here is not the opposition party's ideology as such but rather its distance from that of the governing party or coalition. It can be assumed that as the distance between the preferences of the government and those of the opposition grows, the more likely are higher rates of conflict on average, as the two sides will agree on fewer bills and initiatives.[9] While this relation between ideological distance and conflict is intuitive, a complication may arise for opposition parties which are on the same ideological side as the government, in contrast to the majority of the opposition. Although in general one would expect these opposition-within-opposition parties to be less conflictual vis-à-vis the government, because of their ideological proximity to the government relative to other opposition parties, the marginal effect of being on the government's side may actually be the opposite. This is because ideologically siding with the government may entail stronger electoral incentives for these parties to differentiate themselves from it. Hence, my two-part hypothesis is:

> *Hypothesis 3.1a. The larger the ideological distance between an opposition party and the government, the more conflictual the opposition party will be.*
>
> *Hypothesis 3.1b. An opposition party located on the same ideological side as the government will be more conflictual than others, ideological distance being held constant.*

Another party-level factor is its seat-share in parliament. Echoing my country-level hypothesis regarding the structural power of the opposition, it can be argued that as an individual opposition party increases in size, it can more credibly aim to replace the government (Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006; Falco-Gimeno & Jurado, 2011). Thus, as a party's size increases it is more likely to choose to confront the government instead of cooperating with it.

[9] This might hold true only for a certain type of opposition—the loyal, or constitutional, opposition (Kirchheimer, 1957; Sartori, 1966a)—and not necessarily for anti-system parties, who might choose not to oppose but abstain from voting altogether.

Hypothesis 3.2. The larger the seat-share of an opposition party, the more conflictual it will be.

Finally, a third party-level factor is its governmental reputation, measured by the governmental participation index. The theory behind the influence of this feature is unclear. Maury and De Giorgi expect "radical" opposition parties that are perennially out of office to be more conflictual than others, and they find supporting evidence for their expectation in southern European countries and the European Parliament (Moury & De Giorgi, 2015; De Giorgi & Moury, 2015). However, this view has two drawbacks. First, as Brack and Weinblum (2011) show following a thorough literature review, treating opposition parties as intrinsically radical or "anti-system," and thus as a unique category of opposition, is problematic and inconsistent from a theoretical as well as an empirical point of view. This is because a) it is usually the mainstream that labels the "anti-system" parties as such, and not the parties themselves; and b) more often than not, the so-called anti-system parties accept the "rules of the game" and use the same modes of activity as other parliamentary parties. Second, it seems that Moury and De Giorgi confuse extreme ideology with exclusion from government. Does a radical opposition party conflict with the government because it is in opposition for a long time, or because the two are ideologically very distant? One can accept a claim such as Sartori's (1966) regarding national parliaments, similar in nature to Mair's (2007) regarding the European Union, that being deprived of real influence for a long time may push a party to adopt a more extreme, populist, or "irresponsible" stance toward the regime. Yet according to such arguments, the time spent in opposition affects ideology, not confrontation directly. This means that at any single point in time what would make such a party more conflictual is its ideological extremism, not its long tenure in opposition per se. Maintaining ideology as a constant, as I do, the "radicality" of the party is subsumed under its ideological distance from the government instead of being a separate factor. This leaves no reason for time in opposition to further increase confrontation. On the contrary, as Steinack (2011) argues, parties with low chances of gaining office in the near future may opt to cooperate with the government to achieve policy gains and prove their worth to their voters, suggesting that parties with long

history in opposition, and therefore with low chances of gaining office (Schumacher et al., 2015) will be less conflictual. Thus, my hypothesis is:

> *Hypothesis 3.3. The longer an opposition party has been in opposition consecutively, the less conflictual it will be.*

Data and Methodology

As mentioned above, in this section I focus on two countries—the United Kingdom and Finland—with two goals in mind. Longitudinal analysis of the two cases will serve to reaffirm key findings from the cross-section analysis, which may suffer methodologically from including only a short time period from each country. The United Kingdom and Finland were selected as representatives of the high-conflict and medium-conflict groups, respectively. Their advantage as case studies over other countries in their respective groups is their within-country variation of party-level conflict rates (comparison to other countries not reported in this study), which will facilitate estimating the effect of party-specific factors. The two countries also have strikingly different electoral and party systems. The United Kingdom holds first-past-the-post elections resulting in a two-party or moderate multiparty system, and usually a majority single-party government. In contrast, Finland has a districted PR system resulting in a pluralist multiparty system with a tendency to oversized coalitions. Should the same opposition behavior be found in such different political environments, it may be indicative of more universal patterns.

The timeframe of the study is approximately 20 years for each country—May 1997 to March 2015 (four Commons terms and cabinets) for the United Kingdom, and May 1991 to March 2011 (five Eduskunta terms and seven cabinets) for Finland. The number of votes analyzed is 4,907 in the United Kingdom and 12,024 in Finland.[10] Eight different opposition parties in the United Kingdom and nine in Finland were included, excluding independents and single-member parties.[11] As the unit of analysis is the position of a certain opposition party vis-à-vis the government's position in a certain vote, the result is a dataset of 30,713 opposition party-votes in the United Kingdom and

[10] These figures exclude votes for which the government rounded position was neutral, see section 2.
[11] The Finnish PS held a single seat in two terms and thus was not included in these terms.

48,719 opposition party-votes in Finland. A vote-level binary dependent variable received the value of 1 if the position of the party was opposite to that of the government, both rounded to either -1, 0, or +1.[12] In addition, a party-level variable was calculated as the share of those votes in which the opposition party's position was opposite to the government's position. Analysis of these party-votes was conducted within each country, and results will be described together for convenience of comparison only.

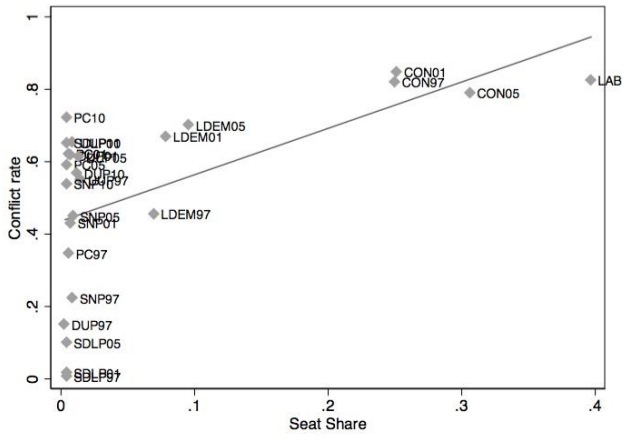
Starting with the conflict rates of each party within each cabinet term, Figures 3.1 to 3.6 show how parties are scattered according to their conflict and seat-share (3.1-3.2), ideological distance from the government (3.3-3.4), and time in opposition (3.5-3.6). It is worth noting that while in both countries there is a positive correlation between conflict and seat-share (UK: $r=.57$, $p<.01$; FIN: $r=.52$, $p<.01$), the United Kingdom shows a clear distinction between the largest, and most conflictual, party and the rest, while in Finland the distinction is less clear both in terms of size difference and conflict difference. Figures 3.3-3.4 do not show a clear trend (though there is a significant correlation—UK: $r=.40$, $p<.05$; FIN: .34, $p<.1$), but they do show that in both countries the larger parties (Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, and Labour in the United Kingdom; KESK in Finland) are more conflictual than might be predicted by their ideological distance.

[12] Opposition parties were overwhelmingly cohesive, even more than the highly cohesive governments, justifying the decision to use rounded values for both.

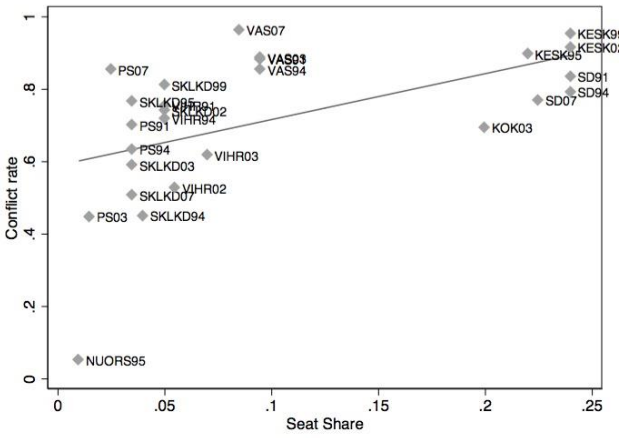
Figure 3.1-3.6. UK and Finland Party-Level Conflict Rates

United Kingdom **Finland**

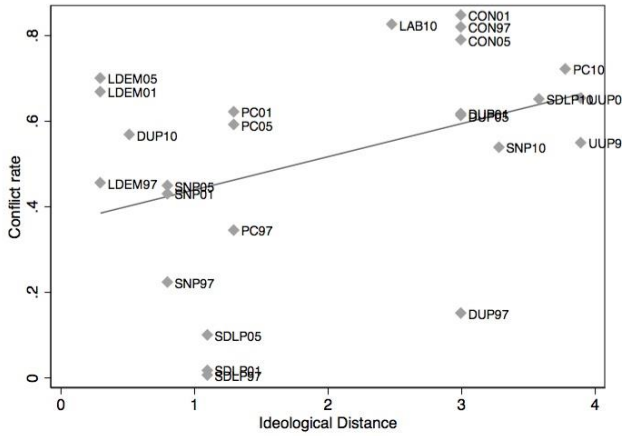
3.1



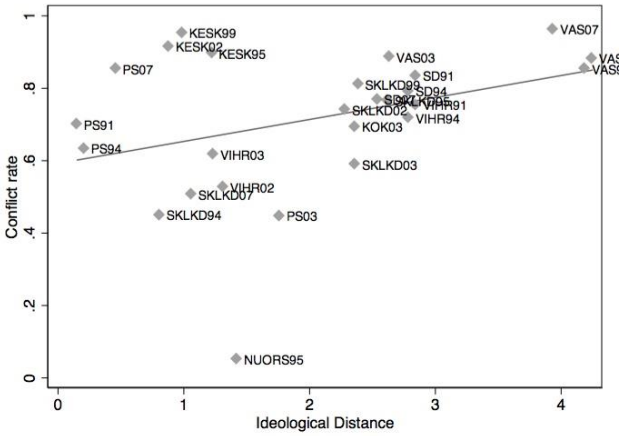
3.2



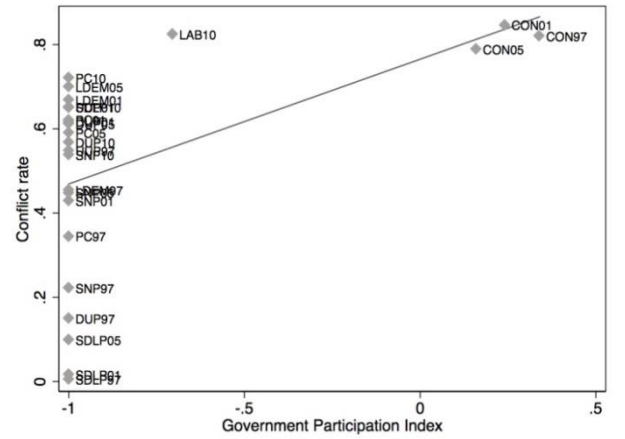
3.3



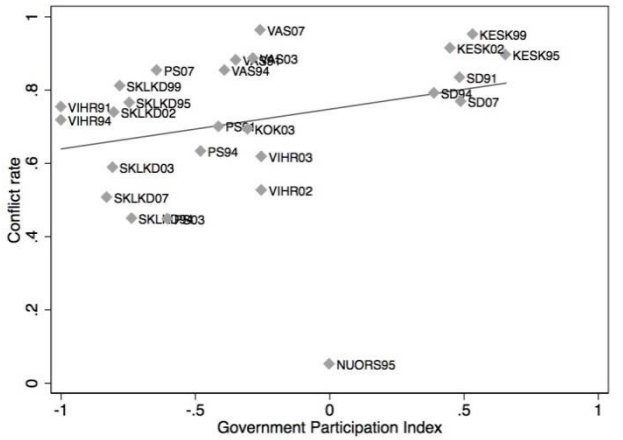
3.4



3.5



3.6



Finally, Figure 3.5 is worth highlighting since, while there seems at first glance to be a negative correlation between conflict and time in opposition in the United Kingdom, following each party reveals that their conflict actually rises, across almost all parties. This seeming contradiction is caused by the realities of the British party system, where at the time investigated the medium-large parties were also only a short time in opposition, while the small parties had been in opposition a long time, ever since their entrance to parliament.[13] Neither of these trends appears in the Finnish case (Figure 3.6).

We now move to a deeper-level analysis, that of the single party-vote level. This kind of analysis was unsuitable for the 16-country data, but is relevant here as one vote-level independent variable is available. This is the number of days from the previous elections. As this number grows, the parliament inevitably comes closer to the next elections, and one would expect electoral motivations (differentiation and competition) to become more salient. Thus one would expect more conflict the farther one gets from the previous elections. Performing a logistical regression of conflict at the party-vote level on the above variable together with the party's seat-share, ideological distance, time in opposition, and being on the government's side, while controlling for party identification and clustering by vote, yields the results shown in table 3.1. The results are reported in odds ratios, meaning each coefficient represents the ratio in which the odds change with a change in the independent variable of one unit. Hence, values greater than one represent a positive effect, and values smaller than one represent a negative effect.

[13] The Conservatives entered opposition in 1997; Labour entered the dataset as an opposition party when it lost the 2010 elections; and the Liberal-Democrats entered parliament in 1992. All other parties entered parliament, and have since then been in opposition, from the 1970s onwards.

Table 3.1
Vote-level regression analysis (odds ratios reported).

	(1)	(2)
	UK	Finland
Time from Elections	1.012	0.911***
(Years)	(0.0155)	(0.0106)
Seat-share	1.310***	1.463***
(0-100)	(0.0293)	(0.0335)
Ideological Distance	2.96e+08***	1.721***
(0-10)	(5.28e+08)	(0.2005)
GPI	1.52e+08***	0.057***
(0-1)	(2.91e+08)	(0.0111)
Government Side	3.76e+20***	2.059***
(0/1)	(1.67e+21)	(0.3339)
Constant	7.649e+11***	0.00296***
	(1.545e+12)	(0.00154)
Observations	30,712	48,719

Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Time from elections has been recoded to appear in years. Seat-share has been recoded to range between 0 and 100. GPI has been recoded to range between 0 (always in opposition) and 1 (always in coalition). Additional control—party affiliation. Clustered by vote ID.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

The results of the two countries are mostly similar. Most importantly, in both countries, the larger a party, and the more ideologically distant it is from the government, the more likely it is to conflict with the government. Being ideologically closer to the government's position than to the larger part of the opposition also has the same effect of raising the likelihood of conflict in both countries. These findings affirm

Hypotheses 3.1a, 3.1b, and 3.2. The two countries differ, however, in the effect of GPI. In Finland, the effect of being more (less) in government in the past has a very negative (positive) effect on the chances of conflict, contrary to Hypothesis 3.3. In the United Kingdom, the effect is completely opposite to that in Finland. As mentioned earlier, there is a clear gap in the British party system between the large opposition party, which Norton (2008) would call the Opposition, and the rest of the opposition parties in terms of seat-share, ideological distance,[14] and GPI. Because only "The Opposition" holds GPI values different than -1, the GPI variable in this case acts more like a dummy for the Conservative and Labour parties. This is perhaps exactly the effect the variable should capture—the difference between being a government candidate and being a perennial opposition party. Finally, the vote-level variable shows varying results across the two countries. While in the United Kingdom the effect is substantively and statistically insignificant, in Finland the odds drop by 9% each year, contrary to the expectation. This may be because newly established coalition governments tend to promote their most controversial bills early in the life of the parliament, to cash in on coalition agreements, and to take advantage of the coalition's cohesion before it erodes as the next elections draw near, making defection from coalition lines less costly and increasing the importance of brand differentiation.

In sum, the findings in this section affirm my hypotheses that party size and ideological distance from the government increase the party's rate of confrontation. My hypothesis concerning the effect of past governmental participation receives mixed results, appearing affirmed in the United Kingdom but not in Finland. Finally, proximity to the next elections has no effect in the United Kingdom while having a negative effect in Finland, contrary to the expectation.

[14] Since smaller opposition parties, except the DUP, are left-wing, and Labour was in office from 1997 to 2010, the Conservative party as the "the Opposition" was always ideologically more distant from government than its smaller counterparts.

Conclusion

As this paper includes several sections, each with its own dataset and distinct level of analysis, it is worth reviewing the main findings. The first section introduced three features of parliamentary opposition which determine its ability to promote its preferred policy and credibly pose itself as an alternative to the government. These features are the opposition's institutional power, or the degree to which the parliamentary organization provides it with opportunities to influence decision-making; the opposition's structural power, its size and fragmentation; and its governmental reputation. The institutional power and the structural power of the opposition are negatively correlated, implying that large, cohesive oppositions usually exist where they have little chance to affect parliamentary decision-making, while small and fragmented oppositions usually enjoy greater influence in parliament. This is in line with accounts of two archetypical "models" of democracy, be it confrontation versus conciliation regimes (Giulj, 1981), majoritarian versus consensus regimes (Lijphart, 1999), or majoritarian versus proportional regimes (Powell, 2000). This study does not, however, confront the question of whether the two said powers of the opposition are independently determined by some prior democratic rationale, as implied by the above researchers, or if one is causally prior to the other as argued by Maeda (2015). The structural power of the opposition is also found to be correlated with higher rates of past participation in government by the opposition. A further analysis suggested a possible causal connection between the two, as higher structural power leads to higher levels of governmental participation in the next cabinet, hinting at higher chances of government alternation. This finding requires more rigorous robustness checks, but if correct it demonstrates that what I call structural *power* indeed affects the opposition's success in accomplishing one its main goals, namely replacing the government.

The second section moves on from assessing opposition abilities to analyzing opposition behavior. The main finding here is that institutional power is the main country-level factor affecting confrontation between opposition and government, explaining by itself about half of the observed variance. This means the rules and organization of the country's parliament alone account for much of the opposition's conflictuality vis-à-vis the government. When oppositions are given the opportunity to

influence decision-making from outside the government, the resulting policies are much more an outcome of consensus than of the majority imposing its will. When the option of parliamentary influence is blocked, however, the opposition focuses on winning the next elections, thus resorting to stricter competition and conflict vis-à-vis the government of the day. Keeping in mind the strong negative correlation between the institutional and structural powers, one can summarize this section's findings by saying that parliaments which provide the opposition with strong influence on decision-making usually feature fragmented oppositions with a tendency to prefer cooperation with the government over direct confrontation over legislation and other plenary votes, while parliaments that provide little to no influence to the opposition usually have large, cohesive oppositions that find confrontation and competition are their best option in striving to replace the government. The fact that structural power seems to correlate with the rate of conflict only through its correlation with institutional power may further suggest that long-lasting features, such as institutions and norms, affect parliamentary behavior more than ephemeral structural features of the opposition's "landscape."

The third section moves from the country level to that of individual opposition parties, with a focused longitudinal comparison of two "least similar" countries. The hypotheses concerning party size and ideology were affirmed, as larger and more ideologically distant (vis-à-vis the government) parties are more conflictual than others. Size matters, as larger parties have better chances to win office and replace the government, attesting to the importance of competition motivations in determining the parliamentary behavior of opposition parties. This is also the case with the conflictual effect of being on "the government's side," which reveals the stronger needs of those parties to differentiate themselves from the government.

The weakest support for my hypotheses pertains to the governmental past. In both configurations of this variable, its effect was found insignificant in the cross-national analysis and in two contradictory directions in the focused comparison between the United Kingdom and Finland. One possible explanation is that the nature of the relationship between governmental past and conflict is not linear but curvilinear, such that, for example, conflict is lower at very high and very low values of GPIo and maximizes at the middle. Another possibility is that governmental past interacts with

another independent factor in its effect on conflict, such as structural or institutional power of the opposition. I believe this feature of opposition is the least theoretically developed of the three in extant literature, which leaves further conceptualization and analysis of governmental past as a main, and I believe also an intriguing, challenge for future research.

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